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Space, Place, and Music in New Orleans

A dissertation submitted in partial satisfaction of the
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in Ethnomusicology

By

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ABSTRACT OF THE DISSERTATION

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Professor Anthony Seeger, Chair

This dissertation explores ways in which many people in New Orleans use, experience, form emotional attachments to, and make sense of space through music. It analyzes how music intersects with geography and how the musical experiences of New Orleanians bring meaning to the built form. It examines the role of the agent in the social construction of space, and how people use music as a *spatial enabler* in New Orleans. It proposes that music enables people to socially construct space because it accesses the nexus of memory and emotion, operates in a greater cultural context, and is a useful tool for variable expression. In order to present varied experiences with the musical construction of space, this dissertation approaches its subject through four case studies: place attachment through the “second line” parading tradition and North Claiborne Avenue, the fixing of memories in space at the Ernie K-Doe Mother-in-Law Lounge, the negotiation of public space through musical performances in various contexts, and the creation and growth of a music community in the New Orleans Habitat Musicians’ Village. In so doing, it illustrates that New Orleans, as a musical city, is greater than a soundscape or a cultural identity—it is the sum of myriad musical experiences that individuals in New Orleans have had as they interact with the space around them.

The dissertation of Julie Michelle Raimondi is approved.

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VITA/BIOGRAPHICAL SKETCH

Julie Michelle Raimondi earned a Bachelor of Arts in Music and a Bachelor of Science in Business Administration from the University of Rhode Island. She then studied Musicology, with a concentration in Ethnomusicology, at Tufts University, where she earned a Master of Arts degree.

Raimondi has had various musical experiences throughout her educational journey. Her main instrument is the string bass, but she also enjoys picking up the banjo or accordion on occasion. She has had the opportunity to perform in a West African drumming ensemble, Javanese and Balinese gamelans, a Near East ensemble, orchestras, jazz ensembles, and bluegrass, old-time, and country ensembles. She has taught as an adjunct music professor at Rhode Island College, and has served as a teaching assistant at Tufts University and the University of California, Los Angeles.

Raimondi's research interests include music and religion, music and place, and musical agency. She is particularly interested in the vernacular musics of the southern United States as a geographical region. She currently resides in New Orleans, where she continues to learn about the city's rich cultural traditions and is inspired by its residents on a daily basis.

Chapter 1: Exploring Space in New Orleans

Introduction

In this dissertation I explore the ways in which culturally invested people in New Orleans use, experience, form emotional attachments to, and make sense of space through music. Place is an integral part of the human experience, and is an essential component to all music-making events. In some respects, place has always been central to ethnomusicology. It helps define the discipline as one that studies music “in the field,” and it encourages ethnographic research from around the world as a reaction against the study of Western art musics. Yet ethnomusicological works have tended to sidestep the messier issues of place as they concern personal and communal experiences. The resulting interpretation of place in ethnomusicology tends to be one that describes a place’s soundscape, or else theorizes on place-based cultural identities. With few exceptions, we do not look at the mechanism that acts as a connective tissue between place and music. Instead, we have been satisfied to use place as a platform to study cultural identity, nationalism, and globalization.

This essay thus pulls from a few different disciplinary areas relating to the study of place, mainly settling between human geography and ethnomusicology. As I show in this chapter and in the chapters to come, theorists working with the social construction of space focus on how people socially construct space through experiences, but tend to provide evidence confined to visual or verbal information (de Certeau 1984; Low 2005; Lynch 1960; Tuan 1977). The sonic impact on communal experiences and memories is neglected by this oversight. Within ethnomusicology, excellent work has been done

examining place in identity formation, usually at citywide or national levels (Cohen 1995; Feld 1990; Reily 1997; Sakakeeny 2006; Sancar 2003; Stokes 1997). Related arguments delve into globalization, global markets (Taylor 2004), space and cosmology (Seeger 2004), and placelessness (Cohen 1997). In this work, I study how culturally invested people musically experience space. I explore the ways in which music intersects with physical geography and brings meaning to the built form through the lived experiences of New Orleanians, in a sense introducing a deeper level of humanistic geography to ethnomusicology. I approach space and music from several different angles as I analyze four fundamental musical-spatial experiences. Lastly, I study the role of the agent in the social construction of space, and I present music as a *spatial enabler* in New Orleans.

I did not choose this dissertation topic; it chose me. A native of Rhode Island, I came late to knowing New Orleans. The cultural signifiers that represent the city to outsiders informed my understandings of what the city was about. What little I had heard about the jazz, the Voodoo, and the rituals of Mardi Gras, intrigued me. As my musical education progressed, I began to understand more and more the impact that the city's musical heritage has had on that of the rest of the nation. But it was not until 2006, while on road trip with my two sisters, that I first experienced the city. Our visit happened to coincide with the one-year anniversary of Hurricane Katrina. Nervous about encountering despair and terrified of crime as it was represented on television, I was surprised to find such a welcoming community of individuals with a strong drive to maintain their historical and cultural heritage. I became fascinated with this city that defines itself by its culture, branded as a gumbo pot of ethnicities yet represented by a sole crawfish eating, trumpet playing, second lining image—an image which is

propagated by the tourist industry but also celebrated by locals. I wondered how such a distinct culture could exist, bounded and defined by city limits, and I marveled at how the city continued its cultural practices with such vigor. I sensed that music was not only a way in which local residents defined their culture, but it was also a medium for people to heal, rebuild, remember the past, connect with each other, and build a future together. Eventually, I came to realize that music in New Orleans is seen by many as a fundamental right—the right to freedom of expression about themselves and their city.

In this chapter, I will introduce the role of sound and music in New Orleans, provide a brief literature review, and explain my research methodology. I will then summarize some topics that I do not fully address elsewhere; they are not the focus of this dissertation but their importance requires acknowledgement. Lastly, I will provide a short summary of the chapters that follow.

Sound and Music in New Orleans

To say that New Orleans is a musical place is to speak a tired cliché, but a true one. Music is as integral to the local “soundscape” (a term coined by R. Murray Schafer in 1977) as are the trains, the streetcars, and the cargo ships blowing their whistles on the river. The sounds from live musical performances spill out into the streets, both uptown and downtown. Though rare, a few active street callers selling vegetables or sweet potato pies serve as the remaining vestiges of the once popular method of personalized musical advertising. Buskers perform all over the French Quarter and

Marigny neighborhoods, and marching bands and brass bands project their sonic power across great distances.

After living in the city full-time for over three years, I have become accustomed and somewhat desensitized to this musical soundscape. However, there are still occasions, be it upon returning to the city after a trip away, or else in a random turn of events, that I am completely overcome with the immensity of sound and music in New Orleans. On occasion, even the physical, built environment of the city seems to be a musical entity.

For example, it is so commonplace for me to hear the sound of the calliope on the Steamboat Natchez that I normally tune it out of my conscious thought; I hear it while I work on the east bank of the river, and I hear it at my home in the Westbank. The carnival-esque timbres of the steam organ and the repeated arrangements of “Waiting for the Robert E. Lee” (written by Lewis F. Muir, lyrics by L. Wolfe Gilbert) and “What a Wonderful World” (written by Bob Thiele and George David Weiss, most famously performed by Louis Armstrong) sound trite to me and to others who live in the city. But on one occasion while I was walking in the French Quarter, the wind took just the right speed and direction to bring those calliope tunes over the river, down the levee, and across Decatur Street.¹ The sound waves reverberated and echoed in the streets,

¹ On occasion, sound-oriented people will opine to me that New Orleans has acoustical qualities that differ from other cities. Matt Sakakeeny (2010) describes the usual soundscape of New Orleans, as part of a larger study on orientation toward sound in the New Orleans soundscape. He cites musician Danny Barker’s thoughts on how New Orleans has “a different kind of acoustics,” perhaps due to surrounding swamps and other bodies of water and the peculiar ways in which air currents move (as cited in Shapiro and Hentoff 1966:38-39). The love of the sound particular has led to such projects as Open Sound New Orleans: A Collaborative Soundmap of the City, a web-based community repository of sound bites (Booth and Brancasi).

bouncing off of walls that date to the Spanish colonial era. The sounds disoriented me by tricking my ears into thinking that an odd ensemble of glass flutes was performing somewhere deep in the heart of the French Quarter. The source of the moving sound was indiscernible; it seemed as if the Quarter itself was singing to me its circus-like melodies. What was otherwise commonplace to me suddenly became very strange. In this moment, a spatial phenomenon was created through an unusual juxtaposition of place and music. It was a personal, visceral experience, yet it was created through the space around me as the music interacted with the built form. This experience may at first seem to be an insignificant example of sound intersecting with the built environment to create an unusual soundscape. But my *reaction* to the sound was a product of my own musical upbringing and by my understandings of ragtime steamboat songs and what they convey to me. My disorientation was a result of my expectations about where such music should be coming from, combined with an overactive imagination that allows for the French Quarter to be a mysterious place. What may at first seem to be an example of a passive actor being subjected to a musical act created by the environment is in fact illustrative of the complexity and interpretive nature of an experience at the intersection of space and music. The components of memory, perception, expectation, and understanding, in other words, are essential to understanding how space and music coincide. These sorts of deeper levels of spatial understandings through music are what I explore in this dissertation.

New Orleans is an ideal place to study the ways in which culturally invested people understand and use space musically. Music lives in a special axis intersecting memory and emotion, and New Orleanians who actively engage in musical and cultural practices generally care deeply about the communal memories of their city. In addition,

although New Orleans has such a large amount of live musical performances, I will show that one does not need to be actively producing music, or be in the presence of others who are, to be experiencing space musically. Agency is, however, an important factor in people's spatial experiences, and it reemerges several times as I discuss the musical mapping of space in New Orleans.

Literature Review

As scholars use the terms “space” and “place” in varying ways in many different discourses, some clarification is needed. In general, I use a commonly held understanding, where the term “space” either represents space in the abstract, or else refers to the structural qualities of the physical environment. In opposition, “place” includes the dimensions of lived experience, or the interaction and use of a space by its inhabitants or users. Place can therefore be thought of as space embedded with meaning.

Space as an entity worthy of theoretical consideration has been contemplated since at least the eleventh century. A complete literature review would be disparate and daunting, perhaps beginning with the mathematical theories of polymath Ibn al-Haytham and mathematicians Isaac Newton and Albert Einstein. By the eighteenth century, space started entering philosophical discourses. Immanuel Kant, in his 1781 work *Critique of Pure Reason*, stated that time and space are not derived from experience, but rather are preconditional (Kant 1998).

Recent discourses on space—those more relevant to my work—can be found in social anthropology, humanistic geography, and sociology. Scholars in these areas explore how people understand, use, produce, are subjected to, and construct places around them. Sociological and urban studies discussions stem, in large part, from the ideas promulgated by the University of Chicago School of Sociology in the first half of the twentieth century. The first significant writer from this time period is Ernest Burgess, who developed a concentric-zone model of urban growth to examine the changing ways of life brought on by industrialism (Burgess & Park 1925). He “sees the expansion of the City as a process whereby groups and individuals are sifted through competition for space according to their residence and occupation which gives a particular ‘form and character to the city’ (Bridge & Watson 2005:237).” The central business district is at the center of this model, followed by a zone of transition, a zone of workers’ residences, a residential zone, and a commuters’ zone. Other writers from this school, such as Robert Park and Louis Wirth, also dealt with the concerns of modernization and industrialization in a similar fashion.

Such paradigms dominated the discourse until the late 1960’s, when Marxist approaches influenced spatial discussions. These writers viewed the city as an economic entity, emphasizing the effects of capitalism on the uses of city space. Two major theorists in this area include David Harvey, who wrote *Social Justice and the City* in 1972 (Harvey 1998), and Manuel Castells, who wrote *The Urban Question* in 1979. These texts explore the “marginalization and exclusions of the working class through the processes of capitalist production and reproduction (Bridge & Watson 2005:238).” In later essays (1978, 1989) David Harvey criticized the transformations taking place in urban design and governance through capitalism and late capitalism. Similarly, Castells

(2005) looked at society under capitalism, the “Network Society:” a situation requiring shared cultural codes and the affirmation of identity.

Scholarship in urban studies tends to view communities as being subjected to the constraints of the urban environment, including the physical boundaries of the built spaces of the city and the chains of socio-political and economic factors. Remarkable work has been done in this area, finding relationships between city planning and public uses of space: for example, James Holston works with modern architecture (1989, 1999) and Gary McDonogh with postmodern city design (1991). These authors look at major changes to city design, with postmodern architecture and design in particular as forces that have decimated the pedestrian street and alienated residents from their own cities.

Another major area of urban studies that relates to my research has to do with the contestation of public space, the increasing privatization of space, and the use of surveillance to control space, as a reaction to afore mentioned postmodern architecture discourses and the movement towards a privatized America. These topics are very much relevant today in cities such as New Orleans. In *Discipline and Punish: The Birth of the Prison* (1995), Michel Foucault addresses panopticism, describing it as the “general principle of a new ‘political anatomy’ whose object and end are not the relations of sovereignty but the relations of discipline.” Foucault influenced many urban theorists, including, presumably, Mike Davis. In *City of Quartz: Excavating the Future in Los Angeles* (2005), Davis examines the “obsession with physical security systems, and, collaterally, with the architectural policing of social boundaries, [that] has become a zeitgeist of urban restructuring, a master narrative in the emerging built environment of the 1990s.” He described the “destruction of public space” and the “sadistic street environments” of Los Angeles that appear to be waging a war on the homeless. Foucault

and Davis thus study policies that are enacted within the city, decisions made to construct spatial manifestations of power and control access to the physical, built environment.

I have indicated that discourses in urban studies and sociology normally deal with the built environment and its effect on the population. However, these scholars are influenced in part by theorists who work with more abstract notions of space. The French philosopher Henri Lefebvre in some senses established the modern take on spatiality as a philosophical discourse. His work was slow to be translated into English, but has had a strong impact since. As the end product of a series of works dealing with space, *The Production of Space* (1974) seeks to bridge the gap between theoretical space and everyday uses of space—what he terms the *quotidien*. He focuses on the line between theoretical and practical spaces, and views the production of space as serving the capitalist hegemonic system. In “The Right to the City,” he explains the city as an object of cultural consumption (Bridge & Watson 2005).

The preceding authors have studied the effect of the built infrastructure on community interaction, as well as socio-economic factors that influence the city environment. In general, these tend to follow a view “from above,” and do not particularly emphasize issues of individual agency. While their work is valuable and useful to me, I am also interested in studying the ways in which people can follow, interact with, or go against the constraints of the city environment. The following scholars have been the most inspirational and influential in my thinking thus far, in terms of broad theories of space and place—theories that seek to bridge outside forces and individual experiences.

The philosopher Yi-Fu Tuan wrote *Space and Place: The Perspective of Experience* in 1977. Though his work is not often cited in the anthropological and sociological literature I have encountered, his theories on how humans transform space into place is influential in fields such as literature and theater. With examples from cultures around the globe, he explores experiential perspectives, spatial values and the body, mythical space, time, attachment, and intimate experiences with space. Tuan does not cite Henri Lefebvre, most likely because he was unaware of his as yet untranslated texts, but there are parallels between their works.

In addition, I am inspired by the scholarship of Michel de Certeau, who analyzes how people reappropriate space despite the constraints of urban planning. To de Certeau, everyday life is a repetitive and unconscious practice of daily existence. Individuals create places for themselves by using “tactics” against institutions and structures of power, who in turn use “strategies” (1984) to meet their spatial goals. He explores the ways in which people unconsciously navigate city streets: by taking shortcuts or wandering aimlessly, a person is using a tactic instead of following the intended flow of the city layout. DeCerteau does not appear to be influenced by Lefebvre, instead citing Foucault and Bordieu.

The final influential spatial theorist in this project is Setha M. Low, a social anthropologist whose work I find especially applicable to actual community practice. She takes the work of urban theorists who deal with the built environment, and adds a dimension of individual agency. Of earlier theoretical models, Low states: “They fail...to account either for the agency of the individual or for the details of how spatial structures influence human behavior and, conversely, how behavior influences the experience, utilization, and allocation of space (2005:113).” I believe this view to be a more accurate

perception of the way many communities function: humans are subjected to their environment, yet engineer ways of perceiving and using their environment.

Lacking in the above literature is, of course, theory on how musicians and community members conceive space *musically*. Some work in this area has been done; Martin Stokes (1997), Sara Cohen (1995), and others have theorized on the connection between music and place. However, most of the arguments made by these writers are limited to how space reflects, defines, and influences collective identity. In fact, all of the contributing essays in *Ethnicity, Identity, and Music: The Musical Construction of Place* (1997), an oft-cited ethnomusicological text for place and music, examine identity as a socially constructed phenomenon that they use to approach place on national, city, and community levels. In a sense, this method of studying place by defining place-based identities is almost analogous to defining and delineating the place's culture.

Ethnomusicologists and other cultural theorist scholars also write about place-based cultural identities in terms of race and diaspora. Major writers in these areas include Paul Gilroy (1993), LeRoi Jones (2002), and Stuart Hall (2010). Other current ethnomusicologists who work with spatial concerns tend to approach space on a larger scale, as nationalism (Rice 2004) or globalization (Taylor 2007), citing key writers in globalization (Appadurai 1992, 2010) and nationalism (Anderson 2006) when working with these areas. Again, place is approached as a field upon which to situate cultural identity.

One notable exception to this general rule is the work of Anthony Seeger. In *Why Suyá Sing* (2004), Seeger provides detailed ethnographic evidence of specific spatial experiences as they relate to musical practices, including conceptions of space within the Suyá community. The Suyá are a Gê-speaking people in Mato Grosso, Brazil. In

addition to providing layouts of Suyá land and their village, he maps out spatial representations of how participants move during the the Mouse's song, which is performed as a part of the Mouse Ceremony rite of passage. He states that "singing and silence were part of the constant re-creation of significant space" (2004:69), and later concludes that "Suyá cosmology was expressed with special clarity in the design of the village, the use of space, and the ornamentation and use of the body...Suyá created space, time, and the person, as well as introduced and controlled the power of transformations through their singing" (2004:132). Thus, place for the Suyá is a socially constructed entity that is part of a larger cosmology.

A landmark work for sound and ethnography is Steven Feld's *Sound and Sentiment: Birds, Weeping, Poetics, and Song in Kaluli Expression* (1990), in which he wrote on Kaluli weeping, poetics, and song as they relate to the natural and spiritual world. Although he does not theorize specifically on space, it is the undercurrent to all of his research with sound in the forest. His later work with what he terms "acoustemology," or "acoustic knowing," (1996) is particularly relevant to this study (see Chapter 4), because it describes a sonic way in which people make sense of their particular geography.

Some musicologists have written about spatiality and the production and consumption of music. Timothy D. Taylor (2004) writes on the marginalization of recordings labeled as "world music" by the dominant music industry, framing these artists as "ethnicized or racialized others who are politically oppressed and reside in urban spaces, and whose music employs lyrics that are frequently political" (2004:84). Adam Krims opines that researchers should discontinue the treatment of space and place as being diametrically opposed. In his analysis of music production and

consumption in the changing cities of the developed world, he states, “the pleasures of place have now become unified with the structuring force of global space in contemporary cities. [Place]...is also one of the crucial cornerstones of the economic remaking of cities, conditioned by the movement and reproduction of global capital” (2007:54).

Thus far, we see that spatial discourses have had a limited effect within the ethnomusicological realm. There is a dearth of ethnomusicological work on musical space and place that searches beyond generally accepted definitions of culture. Although there are exceptions, most scholars working on space, place, and music generally ignore the intricacies of individual experiences, fail to theorize on the tension between the built environment and the way the environment is actually used and experienced, and do not study the mechanism by which people create places with music, beyond a description of how people create place-based cultural identities. Furthermore, although ethnomusicologists study key writers in the structure-agency dialectic, such as Anthony Giddens (1984), Pierre Bourdieu (1977, 1990), and Michel de Certeau (1984), the role of the individual agent is not fully addressed in ethnomusicological literature as it concerns place.

Methodology

This dissertation is multi-disciplinary in nature, being primarily ethnomusicological but located somewhere between ethnomusicology, historical musicology, social anthropology, human geography, sociology, and urban studies. My

methodology therefore takes an integrated approach and utilizes research methods employed by these disciplines. My research consists of historical research in archives and ethnographic research with living musicians and community members. I combine this with the study of theoretical ideas about space and place and current events in books, articles, websites, social media, and by living life in New Orleans.

Historical research is necessary for this project because every aspect of current musical performance of New Orleans music signifies at least one musical tradition that has come before it. For example, brass bands that are made up of young players often pull from newer musical genres such as rap, and are more likely to dress in matching T-shirts instead of a suit and band cap. Yet their performances draw on themes and traditions of the brass bands that precede them; they also perform standard dirges and hymns and they follow traditional second line parade routes. Musical styles are “reversioned” over time (Keyes 1996), yet the newer versions are created with an understanding and respect for the old. Without understanding the history of the second line parade route, and the history of the New Orleans brass band musical canon, the reader cannot fully appreciate the meaning of these musical signifiers. The same concept applies to other musical traditions in New Orleans.

I conducted the majority of my archival research at the Hogan Jazz Archive at Tulane University, which has an outstanding collection of materials relating to jazz, including recorded interviews with musicians. There I found valuable information about music venues throughout jazz history, as well as newspaper clippings discussing second line parades and their routes. The Historic New Orleans Collection at Williams Research Center is another treasure trove for New Orleans history and culture in general. I found their digital library to be most useful. The Amistad Research Center at Tulane University

has a wealth of materials relating to Black history, culture, and everyday life in New Orleans. There, I was able to read archived issues of the local Black newspaper *The Louisiana Weekly*, learning about organized contestations against the construction of the I-10 overpass above North Claiborne Avenue and proposed solutions for the beautification of the space. I also used the public library to research city records, particularly regarding city ordinances. These collections are precious sources for information, primarily from the early twentieth century to the present. Earlier data are scarcer; one reason so much conjecture and romanticism revolves around cultural traditions of colonial and antebellum New Orleans is that very few records of the activities of non-dominant cultural groups exist from these periods. For example, Connie Zeanah Atkinson in her Ph.D. dissertation (1997) explains how the few existing detailed accounts of the lives of enslaved Africans are scattered throughout France and Spain, and have never been translated into English. In addition to these collections, I broadened my scope to include non-archival information sources, such as when I spoke directly to the Chief Engineer of Public Works about the design of Claiborne Avenue and the public relations contact at the New Orleans Area Habitat for Humanity about the work of that organization.

In addition, I engaged in ethnographic research through formal interviews, participant-observation, and everyday life. I documented and participated in cultural events where New Orleans musicians perform, such as second line and Mardi Gras parades, street corner performances, jazz funerals, festivals, jam sessions, and concerts. I conducted twenty-five formal interviews with musicians and community members. When conducting interviews, I asked my informants about their experiences playing music in various places, how audience members and musicians conceive of musical

spaces, and how all these things change over time. I obtained permission to perform these interviews from the UCLA Internal Review Board for Human Research Subjects. During initial trips to New Orleans, I interviewed brass band musicians including Roger Lewis, “Uncle” Lionel Batiste, and Phil Frazier, and community members such as Kenneth Jackson, grandson of Frank Painia, who was the former owner of the legendary Dew Drop Inn. Later interviewees included musicians and others who were knowledgeable about New Orleans cultural practices. Some interviews, such as with deejays Billy Delle and A. J. Rodrigue, originated from my WWOZ network. For others, like architect Edward Mathes and museum worker Robert Francis, I had had no prior contact. The interview process had has created numerous friendly relationships, and I am grateful to have had the opportunity to get better acquainted with people in this manner.

In addition to formal interviews, I engaged in countless informal conversations with people connected to the music community in New Orleans. Although I enjoy the more focused approach of a scheduled, sit-down interview, the amount of information I gathered from living in New Orleans and partaking in impromptu conversations is invaluable. These sorts of everyday activities also earned me a certain level of insider status that, from a New Orleanian's perspective, must be proven through time, will, and experience.

I am most fortunate to have been able to secure employment at community radio station WWOZ. The station is a sort of cultural hub in New Orleans; it enables local musicians to bring their art to a worldwide audience. I was therefore able to “soak in” a wealth of information and to learn from the many experts connected to the station, even when I was not learning in a formal or focused manner. I continue to marvel at the

knowledge that WWOZ's volunteer deejays, employees, and other volunteers hold about historical and current musical heritage in the city. My everyday work was similar in effect to engaging in informal ethnographic research, as I learned about conceptions, attitudes, and intentions relating to New Orleans' music cultures and musical places.

Topics not Fully Addressed

Katrina. This is not a study of cultural recovery after the devastation of hurricanes Katrina and Rita in 2005. However, "the storm" permeates every aspect of my research, and the emotional significance of this lurking monster has succeeded in making my ethnographic research a draining experience, especially in the initial few years. There are times when I feel as though my choice of topic is superfluous or ungrounded when so many residents continue to struggle with larger issues in New Orleans. How can I write about musical places, when in recent memory and a few blocks from where I live, White vigilantes organized themselves, barricaded streets, and shot and killed Blacks in a manner that they compared to pheasant hunting? Why do I waste time writing about abstract ideas on the construction of space, when starving dogs recently fed off of dead human bodies in the streets?

The short answer is that I do not have the emotional fortitude to write about such things, and the fact that I was not in the city before or during the storm makes me ineligible to write as an expert. However, the ways in which I write about musical places in New Orleans are connected to the ways in which New Orleanians recover and heal from tragedy: they practice who they are in order to reify their sense of identity and

place in this world. Despite this relentless emotional intensity, I have found the city to be remarkably inspiring. The will to persevere and to continue cultural traditions in New Orleans is both a constant struggle and a source of great satisfaction. I have seen public protests over the BP oil disaster of 2010 followed by community fish fries, crawfish boils, and oyster shucking festivities. I have seen the intent on the face of a man in a wheelchair who would not give up on moving himself down the uneven and littered streets for three sweltering hours in a “second line” parade. I have seen a woman cry with emotion when recalling her first experience riding in the female-only Muses parade on Mardi Gras day, which she still does every year. This will to persevere hints at the agency of individuals in New Orleans to create and experience places through their musical culture. Many times, outsiders see only the celebratory aspects of New Orleans culture. What needs to be understood is that, behind the passion of the celebration, behind such intense celebrational fury, is an understanding of past struggles. One example to easily illustrate this point is the Saints National Football League team, a franchise established in 1966. From that year until the 2009 season, the team failed miserably, only making it into the playoffs on a few occasions. Yet, their faithful fans always continued their support and maintained their belief that the team would one day succeed. When the Saints won the 2010 Super Bowl, the city nearly exploded in ecstatic joy. Massive celebrations took place, and longtime fans felt redeemed. It was both a release of years of frustration and a validation that the city’s hopes and dreams were worthy of realization. The effect cannot be overstated; churches incorporated Saints victory themes to teach about faith in their sermons, and a significant baby boom occurred nine months after the Super Bowl. This is the same mechanism that has

brought residents back to New Orleans after Katrina, despite outsiders' doubts about the value of the city or the practicality of rebuilding.

Race, Representation, and Authenticity. Also under-theorized in this dissertation are critical approaches to racial representation and authenticity;² two areas that are interconnected in a way that should become clear in the following chapter. To unpack musical authenticity in New Orleans, one must address race. Although I do not take in-depth, critical analyses of racial representations in this dissertation, I must briefly describe the state of racial oppression, the mechanism of racial representation, and racial and musical authenticity in New Orleans.

Clearly, New Orleans continues to operate in a racialized hegemony that was established through the practice of slavery (see Delgado and Stefancic 2001; hooks 1990, 1992 for critical approaches to matters of race in a post-colonial nation). Like many cities in the United States, New Orleans has an unequal distribution of wealth along racial lines. Blacks, pre-Katrina, constituted 67% of the population, but 30% lived in poverty, compared to 9% of Whites who were living in poverty. In the state of Louisiana, the average White person makes almost double (\$40,049) the average Black person (\$21,461) and 69% of the children living in poverty are Black (Uzundu 2005); the income gap is only growing since the flood and again after the national economic

² The ways in which I represent communities in this dissertation will at times seem homogenous and oversimplistic, if the reader assumes them to represent the whole city. In reality, not everyone in New Orleans is invested in music or local culture, or even understands what the city's particular traditions are about—this includes native-born New Orleanians of all races and ethnicities. I, however, network and conduct research in musical and artistic communities. These groups are very much aware of their city's cultural heritage, regardless of their ethnicity, and are actively engaged in its continued practice. I feel comfortable with my generalizations within this context, particularly since many in these communities willfully help propagate these generalizations.

recession that began in 2008. Since at least 2007, Louisiana has had the highest incarceration rate in the nation, and consequently in the world. Sixty percent of prison inmates are African American (American Civil Liberties Union 2008), even though the 2010 census states that African Americans comprise only 32 percent of the population in Louisiana.

As will become clear in the chapters to follow, the vast majority of New Orleans' native musical traditions have been developed in large part by Black and Creole musicians, with influences from Latin American and European musical contributors. Scholars have named New Orleans as an important locus of the African diaspora (Floyd 1995, Jones 2002, Roach 1996, Southern 1997, to name a few), and state that New Orleans music has retained African sensibilities and encompasses a Black aesthetic.³ Music has been an opportunity for countless Black musicians to provide for their families, to enjoy their communities, and to have a voice for self-expression. A large proportion of *listeners and consumers* of Black New Orleans music culture, however, has always been White. Stuart Hall describes this White gaze upon Black cultural practices as a process of racializing the “other,” through marking difference (1997). This was true in the eighteenth and nineteenth century Congo Square ring shout-style dances, and it is true today. The power structure inherent in working class Black New Orleans musicians and White consumers is a potential subtext of virtually all musical performances in New Orleans.

³ Ingrid Monson, however, warns us not to assume an idealized “Africanness” in transnational Black music, instead stressing the need to reject “static African essence in favor of a more continuously redefined and negotiated sense of cultural authenticity that emerges from generation to generation in response to larger geopolitical forces” (2003:3).

I still struggle internally with racial representations in this city; ideas about race and how to represent race in New Orleans are very complex. My background has ingrained in me the need for racial sensitivity, yet I also strive to understand things as a native New Orleanian might. The Black community as a whole in New Orleans has always had disproportionately less economic capital, but has had a majority population and even, for many years, Black governance and political power. This creates a very complicated sort of hegemony, where Blacks produce the cultural capital, and for many years controlled the political capital. Whites, however, hold the economic capital and control the cultural capital by commodifying the city's cultural heritage and transforming it into economic capital through the tourist industry.

This cultural and racial commodification sustains some of the representations of life in New Orleans as the sleepy, antebellum south. Values from the Civil Rights Movement, Black Nationalism, or color-blind political rhetoric do not always apply in New Orleans. Outsiders can and do accuse locals, musicians included, of acting as Uncle Toms,^{4 5} and for not seeking critical solutions to the hardships of living as poor and

⁴ The term "Uncle Tom" or "Tom" of course references the 1852 novel *Uncle Tom's Cabin* written by Harriet Beecher Stowe. Although Stowe wrote it as an anti-slavery platform, it helped solidify racial stereotypes such as the Mammy and the Picaninny figures. The characterization of the Tom character is one of the Black stereotypes that remain in the American consciousness today, and that continue to be reinforced in media such as film and television. Proposed as one of five stereotypes by Donald Bogle (1973) and adopted and explored by scholars such as Stuart Hall (2003:251), Toms are the agreeable, submissive, and ever faithful "good Negroes." The other four stereotypes Bogle lists are Coons, Tragic Mulattos, Mammies, and Bad Bucks. The 1915 D.W. Griffith film *Birth of a Nation* visually introduced these racialized characters to American viewers, influencing White American perceptions of African Americans.

⁵ Louis Armstrong can serve as an excellent example. Throughout his career, Armstrong, in part pressured by his manager, maintained his roots in traditional jazz and entered the world of schmaltzy pop while distancing himself from experimental bebop. Miles Davis and Dizzy Gillespie were highly critical of Armstrong's catering to a mainly White audience and of his ever-smiling, apparently happy-go-lucky approach to life. Black and White critics compared him to a Sambo figure or a plantation character

Black in a city that profits from cultural appropriation.⁶ For example, in New Orleans, Blacks, and some Whites, annually don a particular style of blackface, grass skirts, “afro” wigs, and white gloves for the rolling of Zulu, one of the two largest Mardi Gras parades. To some, there cannot be a more offensive way of costuming, and critics mourn that this cartoon-like, essentialized representation of a “primitive” African furthers stereotypes about Blacks as being simple-minded and unsophisticated. However, the members of the Zulu Social Aid and Pleasure Club, and the Zulu parade kings, are Black men of high social standing. Mayors, business executives, and other city leaders vie for their positions in the club or on the floats, and proudly wear the necessary costumes. Their faces are painted with great reverence, as if the participants were preparing for battle. Of course, for some practitioners, the Zulu parade is a process of reclamation, of taking ownership, or of redefining racial stereotypes through the inversion of meaning. For others, investing so fully in such racial tropes is an effective way to mock Rex, the historically powerful and predominately White Mardi Gras parade. But for still others, Zulu is solely a New Orleans tradition, and to participate is to display pride for their community’s culture, without concern for anyone else’s opinion on what it might mean. Perhaps if racial representation were the focus of my dissertation, I could investigate whether the case of Zulu could be an example of one of three “counter-strategies” to reverse racial stereotypes as proposed by Stuart Hall (2003). The strategy in question “locates itself *within* the complexities and ambivalences of representation itself, and

(Teachout 2009). Yet, members of New Orleans musical communities have nothing but respect and appreciation for Armstrong and his music.

⁶ Of course, some musicians in New Orleans do include overt political messages in their music, to varying degrees. Later in this dissertation we shall see examples of nuanced politics in music.

tries to *contest it from within*" (2003:274). Rather than introducing new content (replacing blackface and grass skirts with another costume), this method makes stereotypes "work against themselves" by drawing attention to and making explicit the otherwise hidden narratives of subordination and representation.

By illustrating this unusual practice of racial representation, I intend to introduce the topic of cultural authenticity in New Orleans.⁷ In general, New Orleans defines its authenticity from its uniqueness and from its difference from other places. Some of my contacts in New Orleans—people emotionally invested in New Orleans culture—make comments that indicate they believe that there is a sort of magical property, an essential marker of authenticity, inherent in New Orleans people, places, objects, and customs. This reminds me of the first categorical definition of authenticity as described by Richard Handler (2001), in which authenticity is viewed as a property inherent in cultural objects. I personally find his second meaning of authenticity, that authenticity is socially constructed and is located in the discourses surrounding the objects in question, to be an apt explanation of the process of cultural authenticity in New Orleans. So much attention is given to the semiotics of New Orleans culture that authenticity, though changing all the time, is created through the process.

For example, the stories told and retold about the personalities and almost magical musical qualities of legendary performers such as Professor Longhair, James Booker, and Dr. John define these musicians as "true" or "authentic" New Orleans musicians. Dr. John, however, is a slightly unusual example. He is a White musician

⁷ See Barker and Taylor 2007, Grazian 2003, Magrini 2003, Moore 2002, Peterson 1997, and Taylor 1997 for analyses of musical authenticity in popular music.

who has overcome his racial obstacle (in terms of authenticity, not of privilege) and nonetheless earned a legendary amount of authenticity; he earned it through growing up and socializing with Blacks and by creating a rough, hoodoo, witch doctor persona to complement his musical abilities. The reader can imagine, especially after their introduction in later chapters, how Mardi Gras Indians and related groups like Skull and Bone gangs hold an enormous amount of authenticity, and are revered by the cultural consumers who respect them.

Authenticity, though held by musicians and other cultural representatives, seems to be critically defined by cultural consumers, who are often White. For the sake of complete honesty and self-reflexivity, I admit that I include myself in this cultural consumer category. Although I try to remain neutral and color blind in theory, I've found that, when placed in situations where I wish to present "real" New Orleans culture to a complete outsider, I often catch myself thinking that 1) "real" New Orleans music is made by Black musicians, and 2) that White tourists tend to enjoy the spectacle of the performance without really understanding it. I find myself weighing musical authenticity in terms of musical places (Frenchmen Street is more authentic than Bourbon Street, but the Candlelight Lounge in the Tremé is more authentic than Frenchmen) and the audience (White tourists who clap on beats one and three are not authentic New Orleanians or true appreciators of music), and I am more critical of non-Black New Orleans musicians who perform traditionally Black genres of music, at least until they prove their worth. My views are likely a combination of my knowledge that most, if not all, musical genres in New Orleans were developed in large part by people of color, plus my exposure to discourses of authenticity on a regular basis.

Perhaps surprisingly, it seems that the people who are the least critical about the definition and distribution of musical authenticity—or concerned about stereotypes based in minstrelsy—are the musicians themselves. For example, I have witnessed musicians such as Glen David Andrews teaching audiences how to clap properly, on beats two and four, without a trace of smug criticism during performances or in interviews. Whether this apparent respect towards musically ignorant outsiders and seeming disregard for subtexts of authenticity is a reflection of the musician's thoughts or a version edited for presentation to me is impossible for me to tell, for despite whatever connections I may have to musical communities, I remain a White and female outside observer. Musicians do, however, make blatant claims of authenticity in terms of *place*. The neighborhood a musician grew up in, the school a musician went to, whether a musician participates in second lines, and whether a musician is still actively performing in New Orleans, as opposed to touring or moving elsewhere, *are* vocalized conditions of authenticity. I believe this underscores the powerful connection between music and place in New Orleans.

Chapter Overviews

I organize Chapters 2 through 7 in such a way as to carry the reader through different types of spatial concerns. Chapter 2 provides the reader with a historical background of New Orleans. Chapters 3 through 6 introduce areas of spatial theory; in these chapters I use case studies to explain and explore different ways in which culturally invested people experience space with music. I then summarize my findings in

Chapter 7. In the case study chapters, I move from the more intimate experiences people have with music and space, to communal contestations of space, to the intentions of the built environment and how people react to these intentions.

In Chapter 2, I describe the context in which the music culture of New Orleans has developed. I provide a skeletal overview of the area's geography and political history. I describe the city's racial demographics, and how these definitions have changed over time. I then provide examples of important musical places in New Orleans—those that are somewhat representative of the musical genres most associated with the city. I provide generalized musical characteristics that create a “New Orleans musical sound,” and finally I begin to analyze local conceptions of space through mental mapping, spatial semiotics, and the need for spatial definition. I also take a critical look at imagined space.

In Chapter 3, I introduce the notion of “place attachment,” as theorized by early humanistic geographers. I explore place as home and place as process through the “second line” parading tradition. I examine North Claiborne Avenue as a particular place that has been reified by the second line tradition, and the role of brass band music in strengthening the bonds of place attachment through identity, community, and memory.

Chapter 4 addresses music and memory, and the use of physical objects to affix memories in space. I analyze the sustainment of a nightclub named after a New Orleans rhythm and blues star. I do so on three levels: object, place, and community. I take an approach inspired by phenomenology, and Steven Feld's concept of acoustemology, when I describe the multi-sensorial experience that is the Ernie K-Doe Mother-in-Law lounge.

Chapter 5 concerns people's rights to musical performance in public space in New Orleans. I state that a larger, global movement in loss of access to public space finds opposition in New Orleans, where musical performances in public are viewed by many as an inalienable right. I discuss how brass band music, through the second line parading tradition, is a covert political tactic that disguises an expression of discontent through celebration.

In Chapter 6, I explore my final case study. Here, I discuss intention and tradition in the Musicians' Village, a planned community created as a housing solution for displaced New Orleans musicians. I describe the genesis of the Musicians' Village—a Habitat for Humanity project—and both praise and critique its ideological motivation, which is to provide continuity for a music culture. I explain how the experience of residents in planned communities often differ from the intentions of the planners, and speak to the need for agency in the creation and continuation of a musical community.

In Chapter 7, I summarize my findings and conclude my dissertation. In particular, I explain how agency is a recurring theme in all of my chapters. It arises when I discuss tensions between planners and users of space, and of the agency of individuals to create places out of spaces. I outline four musical-spatial experiences that occur through the actions of agents, and I explain my conclusion that music is a *spatial enabler* in New Orleans.



Fig. 1: Statue of Louis Armstrong in Algiers Point. The statue was created by Blaine Kern's Mardi Gras World. Photo by the author, 2012.



Fig. 2: The string band Yes Ma'am, busking on Royal Street in the French Quarter. March 28, 2012. Photo by the author.

Chapter 2: Music and Place in New Orleans

Introduction

Any ethnographic study pertaining to New Orleans music requires historical contextualization, for all contemporary cultural and musical customs in New Orleans originate from a deep historical lineage of socio-cultural factors. In this chapter, I provide: a brief history of the city; an outline of the city's various racial and ethnic groups, both past and present; and a description of select musical places that have nourished local musical traditions. I then attempt to define a "New Orleans musical sound," I explain the city's particular geography, and finally, I analyze local conceptions of space. I intend for this chapter to provide a basic outline of the subject areas covered, and to function as a starting point for understanding the people, places, and traditions that resurface in the chapters that follow.

Socio-political History, Peoples, and Key Musical Spaces

I divide this section into the following major time periods: Pre-European Conquest (1000 BCE – 1682), Pre-Louisiana Purchase (1682 – around 1803), Antebellum, Civil War, and Post-Bellum Periods (1803 – around 1890), Pre-jazz and Jazz Ages (1890 – 1930s), Pre-Katrina (1930s – 2005), and Post-Katrina to the present (2005 – 2012). Within these larger sections, I first cover the political history of the era, then I describe the migrations and developments of the diverse groups of people that settled in New Orleans in the era, and lastly I note a few key musical places that became

established in the era. These subsections contain some overlap. However, they do provide a skeletal overview of the changing face of New Orleans by time period.

By describing the major ethnic groups that have settled or developed in New Orleans and the surrounding area, I aim to provide the necessary tools for the reader to understand how New Orleans' musical and cultural traditions have flourished, through the inter-mixing of diverse groups of people and their resulting syncretic musical and cultural traditions. I then approach genres and musical traditions by the spaces in which they have taken place. I have selected musical places from all the major musical genres commonly associated with New Orleans, but this list is in no way a complete representation of the wealth of musical places or traditions in New Orleans. For example, I omit an explanation of the brass band tradition, which is an essential ingredient in New Orleans musical culture, because it is described elsewhere (see Chapter 3 for an introduction to brass bands and second lines).

Pre-European Conquest (1000 BCE – 1682)

Native Americans. Mississippian culture peoples inhabited the area we now know as New Orleans since sometime before 1000 BCE. They manipulated the local environment by building earthworks and creating portages for trade routes, well before French explorers did. A Mississippian exchange network linked hundreds of communities throughout the southeast, and the boundaries of their chiefdoms likely retained flexibility in order to adapt to the natural forces that affected their agriculture (National Park Service). Developing from these early inhabitants, numerous Native American peoples have since lived and traveled through Louisiana, most notably the Natchez, Choctaw, Choctaw Seminole, Cherokee, Houma, and Chickasaw groups.

Pre-Louisiana Purchase (1682 – around 1803)

The French colonial era began in the seventeenth century, and the original territory of French Louisiana, stretching from the Great Lakes to the Gulf of Mexico and from the Appalachian Mountains to the Rocky Mountains, was established in 1682. French explorers arrived in the New Orleans area by 1690. La Nouvelle-Orléans was founded in 1718 by the governor of the French colony of Louisiana, Jean Baptiste Le Moyne, sieur de Bienville. New Orleans was named after Philippe d'Orléans, Duke of Orléans and Regent of France. The French secretly ceded the city to the Spanish in 1762, and reclaimed sovereignty in 1800.

New Orleans has a long history of diversity. In earlier eras, the complexity of people's races, ethnicities, and cultures was perhaps unmatched elsewhere in the United States. As a busy port city, New Orleans was a major hub that enabled the mixing of people from around the world in a small space. Some were brought in forcibly, some came to seek out fortune, while still others found refuge from places of political upheaval. During the colonial eras, a remarkable number of cultures become established in Louisiana through the movement and settlement of massive numbers of diverse peoples.

The French and the Spanish. As the colonial superpowers, the French and the Spanish had a major influence on the culture that would develop in New Orleans. They brought with them Catholicism, an interest in conquering the land to profit from crops such as sugarcane and cotton, and a taste for “high culture” that manifested in the values they placed on cuisine, music, and leisure time. As the Spanish had political control for only a short period of time, their language never took hold as an official or

popular language of New Orleans. In general, French culture superseded that of the Spanish. Both the French and the Spanish largely influenced the architecture of New Orleans and Louisiana, however. In south Louisiana, settlers built houses in the French style.⁸ The Great New Orleans Fire of 1788 destroyed 856 of the 1,100 wooden French-style structures in New Orleans, and another 212 burned in The Great New Orleans Fire of 1794. Rebuilding thus occurred while New Orleans was a Spanish colony, meaning that virtually all surviving colonial-era structures in New Orleans today are in the Spanish style.

Africans. Some Africans were forcibly brought to Louisiana straight from their homelands for permanent or long-term servitude, though a much greater number were moved *through* the city as part of the slave trade. Due to a historical and administrative relationship between Senegal and Louisiana, an unusually large percentage—two thirds—of enslaved Africans who were forcibly settled in Louisiana by the French were transplanted from the Senegambian region of West Africa. Some major West African cultures include the Wolof, the Bambara, and the Sereers. Historian Gwendolyn Mildo Hall states that roots of Louisiana’s Afro-Creole culture can be found in that of the peoples of Senegambia; three of the principal languages in Senegambia include Sereer, Wolof, and Pulaar, and so we can assume these languages were spoken in Louisiana. The climate and rich soils of Senegambia are very similar to that of Louisiana, and all of Louisiana’s eighteenth-century major crops, including rice and cotton, were also grown

⁸ Some plantation houses and residences also incorporated West African building methods. Laura Plantation, for example, is a Creole plantation whose main house was designed by an African master builder and built by additional skilled slaves. It was constructed of cypress trees cut in the swamp, following a prefabricated methodology, and then assembled on site without the use of nails.

in Senegambia (Hall 1992: 29-35). In addition to farmers, other skilled African tradespeople, including metalsmiths and builders, constructed the built form of New Orleans and Louisiana.

Creoles. The term “Creole” carries different meanings, even within Louisiana. In earlier eras, it referred to a person born in the colonies who was an ancestor of French or Spanish colonists. Today, the term usually denotes a person with French and African heritage. In this dissertation, I use the term “Creole” as synonymous with “Creole of Color,” to represent people of French and African lineage who were born in or immigrated to Louisiana. Some Creoles were Haitian emigrants. Many others were the result of mixed relationships—referred to as the *plaçage* system—where White men would take on, and economically support, mistresses of color. “Quadroon balls” were held to provide liaison opportunities between mixed-race women and wealthy White men (Guillory 1997). These Francophone, Catholic Creoles were often part of New Orleans high-society, and some were slave owners. French and Spanish rulers in New Orleans enabled a racial system that was distinct from that of their northern, British counterparts. For example, in New Orleans, people of color were defined by percentage of African blood at numerous gradient points: griffe (three-quarters African), mulatto (half African), quadroon (one quarter African), and octoroon (one eighth African) are examples of defining terminology. Now, however, the city effectively follows a Black and White dichotomy.

Maroons. The word “Maroon” has several different meanings. One of them, depending on the context, refers to people of mixed African and Native American blood. The swampy terrain of Louisiana that was home to native peoples was virtually inaccessible to the colonists. Runaway slaves were able to hide in the dense swamps with

the Native Americans who harbored them, forming outlaw communities as they did elsewhere in the Americas.

Haitians and Cubans. New Orleans is sometimes called the “northernmost Caribbean city” due to its close historical ties to Cuba and Haiti. The city experienced several waves of Haitian immigration, particularly after the Haitian Revolution of 1791-1804, also referred to as the Haitian Slave Uprising. Over a six-month period of time in 1808, around 10,000 emigrants from Saint-Domingue—present-day Haiti—arrived in New Orleans, doubling the city’s population in the process. One third of these refugees were White, one third were free people of color, and the remainder were enslaved (Brasseaux 2007). These Haitians further enriched the vibrant Creole culture extant in New Orleans, establishing the state’s first newspaper, introducing opera to Louisiana, influencing local cuisine, and bringing the already syncretic Haitian Vodou practices that would meld further with Catholicism and Hoodoo to create the Louisiana form of Voodoo. Cubans have contributed to New Orleans culture, too; the first Cuban migration to New Orleans occurred in 1809, as part of the Haitian migration of that year. These Cubans, however, had actually been Haitian refugees for years, until they were expelled from Cuba.

Cajuns. Cajun heritage derives from the French-speaking “Acadians” who lived primarily in what is now the Canadian Maritimes (particularly Nova Scotia), and some who lived in eastern Quebec and northern Maine. During the French and Indian war of 1754 to 1763, a large number of Acadians were forcibly exiled by the British through the Great Expulsion. Some Acadians eventually settled in the bayous of south Louisiana, the secluded nature of which enabled the growth of a very strong culture, apparent in its

cuisine, dialect, music, and other ways of life. The word “Cajun” is an elision of “Acadian.”

Many non-locals misunderstand New Orleans as a center for Cajun life and traditions. Some New Orleanians do have Cajun heritage, and aspects of Cajun culture, such as the cuisine, have merged with Creole cultural forms in the city. However, Cajun music, culture, and folkways largely exist not in New Orleans but in Lafayette and the small towns in southern Louisiana—in the significantly Francophone area known as Acadiana.

Antebellum, Civil War, and Post-Bellum Periods (1803 – around 1890)

Changes in ownership and control. In 1803, a mere three years after France reclaimed sovereignty, Napoleon I sold the Louisiana Territory to the United States—the transaction known as the Louisiana Purchase. New Orleans was therefore under French and Spanish rule for nearly a century. This fact is essential to understanding New Orleans culture; residents then and now consider themselves as distinctive from people in surrounding areas of the United States south.

Louisiana became a state in 1812. At the end of the War of 1812, 11,000 British soldiers were sent to New Orleans in an attempt to capture it; Andrew Jackson’s forces were able to defeat the British in the Battle of New Orleans in 1815. Louisiana seceded from the Union in 1861, signaling the start of the Confederate era and the Civil War. New Orleans surrendered in 1862, well before the war ended in 1865, avoiding the level of destruction that many other southern cities faced. Southern reconstruction began in 1863, and ended in 1877. Jim Crow segregation laws that affected New Orleans residents were enacted from 1876 – 1965.

Industry. Early on, New Orleans was a major port city, uniquely situated in a prime location for connecting the interior of North America to other countries. Revenue was earned by connecting trans-Atlantic trade routes to the Mississippi River, and by moving goods throughout the nation. Trading was profitable and adventurous; during the American Revolutionary War, for example, port traders smuggled aid to the rebels. Of course, antebellum New Orleans profited dramatically from the Atlantic slave trade. Although comparatively fewer slaves were retained in the city than in other areas of the south, New Orleans had the largest slave market in the nation by the 1840s. Over two-thirds of the more than 1,000,000 slaves brought to the United States arrived via New Orleans, and about 100,000 human transactions took place in New Orleans. The barbaric practice generated great wealth for those involved directly in the slave trade industry and its ancillary businesses; New Orleans' economy was heavily reliant on this source of revenue. This fact may be difficult to digest when one considers that the city also had the largest and wealthiest community of free people of color in the United States, because some of them owned slaves themselves. There were several slave markets in New Orleans. Slave traders caged Africans by the thousands, in pens located throughout what is now the Central Business District, while sales were pending. A pen the size of a house lot would store 150 men, women, and children (Johnson 2000).

Changes in racial definitions. Before Reconstruction, there was a significant cultural divide between what we might call Creole and Black cultures in New Orleans. Creoles were considered to be a third tier in the social classes between the top tier French and Spanish, and the bottom tier of enslaved West African peoples and other socio-economically poor Blacks. These groups were clearly differentiated in terms of language and culture. The Francophone Creoles lived in downtown New Orleans; they

were Catholic, and tended to be highly educated and cultured in European artistic and musical forms. “Blacks” on the other hand, were the slaves and the Anglophone “American” people of color, usually uneducated, Protestant arrivals from other, Anglo-colonized parts of the American south, who settled in the uptown areas of New Orleans. In terms of local power, these groups were distinct in socioeconomic class; Creoles held political positions of power and influence on the city, and Blacks did not. In terms of musical backgrounds, too, Black and Creole cultures were quite different. Creole musicians were schooled in the aspects traditionally valued in western art music, such as sight-reading and precise intonation. These skills were apparent in some early New Orleans jazz bands and brass bands. But it is likely that some of the distinctive characteristics of jazz, such as improvisation and playing “off the head,” were also influenced by Black musicians, particularly blues musicians, who were less musically trained in the Western sense.

Political decisions during the post-bellum period in New Orleans, specifically the 1896 *Plessy versus Ferguson* high court ruling legalizing mandatory racial segregation, along with Louisiana state law defining all people of African descent as “Negroes,” forced the union of two segments of the local “Black” population who had heretofore considered themselves to be very much distinct. After the Reconstruction period, the complex labeling system to describe the percentage of one’s “black” blood—down to the level of “octoroon”—collapsed into a binary of black and white. During Reconstruction, Creoles under the new system were suddenly labeled as “Black,” and lost their social standing in the process. Though English speaking Protestant African Americans had little in common with the Francophone Catholic Creoles, the two groups were thrown into a common bottom-rung socio-economic level. The Protestant, Anglophone Blacks,

of course, did not gain any power from this transaction, despite the supposed advancement for Blacks that Emancipation meant to provide. Today, Creole culture still exists in Louisiana, but most Blacks with Creole heritage would describe themselves as African American or Black.

The “Americains.” A significant number of U.S. citizens entered colonial Louisiana beginning in 1788, when Spain softened its immigration policy (Campanella 2002). Following the 1812 admission of Louisiana into the United States, a wave of Anglo-Americans settled in the state. These English speaking, Protestant immigrants—the “Americains” or “Americans”—differed culturally from the longtime Louisiana residents, many of whom had European and African heritage, spoke French, and practiced Catholicism. The difference helped solidify Creole self-awareness and identity. Difference was further established by geographical areas of settlement; the new “Americans” moved to the “other” side of Canal Street from the old city downtown. This “American” area, which is now considered uptown New Orleans, was for a time called Faubourg Ste. Marie (New Orleans was subdivided into three semiautonomous municipalities in 1836). The distinction of two cultures separated by a barrier street may or may not be the etymology of the term “neutral ground,” which New Orleanians continue to use to refer to street medians.

Other European immigrants. In addition to the French and the Spanish, Europeans of many origins settled in New Orleans. The 1850 census recorded “925 foreign-born families residing in Orleans parish, hailing primarily from Ireland (41 percent), Germany (23 percent), France (18 percent), Great Britain (9 percent), and other countries” (as cited by Campanella 2002: 116-117). Two prominent groups were the Germans and the Irish, whose massive waves of immigration made New Orleans the

second largest immigrant port in the nation between 1820 to 1870. German and Irish workers labored in some of the most dangerous low-wage jobs to supply the city's needs for menial labor, replacing the enslaved Africans and European convicts who had been supplying it previously. Jewish culture was extant in New Orleans for centuries but largely under the radar. Jews settled in New Orleans and Louisiana in several waves; Spanish and Portuguese traders in the 1700s, immigrants from Western Europe in the early to mid-nineteenth century, and immigrants from Eastern Europe in the late nineteenth to early twentieth centuries (Levitas 1999). Italians, mainly from Sicily, settled in New Orleans, as well as in other Louisiana communities. Between 1850 and 1870, New Orleans had more Italian immigrants than anywhere else in the nation, and by the early twentieth century, the French Quarter was called "Little Palermo" due to the large number of Italians living here. The Italian influence on jazz was significant; Nick LaRocca's band was the first to be recorded on wax. Sicilians faced considerable discrimination, however. When police Chief David Hennessy was murdered in 1890, 19 Italian men were rounded up and tried for the crime. Although the nine who had been tried for their alleged role in the murder had been acquitted, a mass mob of New Orleanians broke into the prison and lynched eleven of the men in 1891. The event was one of the largest mass lynchings in United States history.

Opera Houses. One early musical institution that music historians emphasize is the New Orleans opera house. Having an art form as esteemed as the opera was a point of pride for European and Creole residents, for it established New Orleans as a city sophisticated enough to support one. In fact, New Orleans had the first permanent opera company in the New World (Koenig 1985b:4). According to the archivist for the current New Orleans Opera Association, New Orleans had operatic performances

approximately once a year by 1796. The Théâtre St. Pierre on St. Peter Street between Royal and Bourbon in the French Quarter, and later the Théâtre St. Philippe at St. Philip and Royal streets in the French Quarter, served as opera venues in the early years. These theaters featured plays, comedies, vaudeville, and light opera. The most important pre-Civil War venue for opera in New Orleans, however, was the Théâtre d'Orléans. The first Théâtre d'Orléans opened in October 1815 on Orleans Avenue between Royal and Bourbon streets in the French Quarter, but soon fell victim to fire. It was rebuilt and reopened in November of 1819. By 1859, the old theatre building had deteriorated, and was replaced by a new theatre, The French Opera House. It was located at Bourbon and Toulouse streets in the French Quarter, and was in operation until 1919 (Belsom 2007). The heavy concentration of operatic venues around Bourbon Street led to its epithet, “opera street,” (Koenig 1985b), referencing musical performances of a notably different variety than what the street is known for today. The opera house environment likely influenced Creole composer and piano virtuoso Louis Moreau Gottschalk. He was born in the French Quarter and performed locally as a young boy before embarking on a European musical education and a career of performances in Europe, the Caribbean, Central America, and South America. Gottschalk is an unusual case in the Western art music world, both for his mulatto background and for his incorporation of Louisiana, Caribbean, and South American musical characteristics in his compositions.

Congo Square. At approximately the corner of St. Peter Street and North Rampart Street, just lakeside of the French Quarter, there remains a small space within Louis Armstrong Park. Its official name has varied from “Place Publique” to “Place d’Armes” and later “Beauregard Square,” and it has also been unofficially known as “Circus Square” and “Congo Square,” the latter being the name that remains today. This

area was located just outside the earthen rampart that defined the city's original limits (the original city now constitutes the French Quarter). Enslaved Africans and free people of color used the area as a market and social gathering place. By several accounts, people of European descent would at times venture to this area to watch with curiosity the customs practiced by these "exotic" Africans, with their filed teeth and foreign music and dance. Because Congo Square performances were a rare example of enslaved Africans being allowed to practice their customs relatively freely in a public space, they are often said to have directly influenced the development of jazz. The potential influence is, however, indirect, because the styles of dances performed in Congo Square and the types of musical instruments played appear to have incorporated generations of New World influences before the jazz age began. The Afro-Caribbean influence on jazz is therefore more direct than the African.

The allowance of such a practice was very unusual in the United States, of course; the vast majority of American slave owners wished to control, diminish, or destroy any vestiges of African culture, particularly those traditions that call for public gatherings of large numbers of people. French and Spanish slave owners tended to allow their workers a comparatively greater level of autonomy and freedom in the New Orleans area than many of their contemporaries elsewhere in the American south. Their apparent benevolence may have been due in part to cultural differences and values between the Catholic French and Spanish and the Protestant "Americans," but it is more likely to have stemmed from a fear of a massive slave uprising, as had occurred in Haiti in 1791-1804. By allowing such freedoms of movement, worship, and the ability to purchase their way out of enslavement, such plantation owners meant to reduce the level of frustration that could potentially lead to a revolt. In addition, the swampy terrain that

covered Louisiana at the time made complete control over their slaves' whereabouts impossible. Regardless of the reasoning that led to the practice, slaves in New Orleans were granted Sundays off from forced labor and were allowed on this day to gather in Congo Square to buy and sell goods, and to drum and dance for enjoyment or religious worship. Little documentation of this practice has been preserved, but it must have been a remarkable cultural experience. Africans from disparate areas of West Africa all practiced their various drumming and dancing styles, and spoke and sang in different tongues simultaneously. The tradition began possibly as early as the mid-eighteenth century, and ended in 1862 (Donaldson 1984). It was outlawed from 1843-45 (Estes 1990). Early references to Congo square from the notes of European travelers dating back to 1799 are presented as personal stories about witnessing great numbers of Africans—hundreds or even thousands (Donaldson 1984)—gathering in this area, and drumming, fifeing, and dancing in large rings. The most descriptive antebellum account of this tradition was in an 1819 diary entry by the well-known architect Benjamin Henry Latrobe (Estes 1990). Attracted by a great cacophony, he ventured outside the city limits and observed two women dancing in a ring with handkerchiefs, accompanied by musical instruments including a large cylindrical drum and a calabash string instrument. Other observers witnessed banjo precursors and rattles made from horse jawbones (the description sounds akin to the Latin American *quijada*). A newspaper reporter wrote decades later that at “...about three o’ clock the negroes [sic] began to gather, each nation taking their places in different parts of the square. The Minahs would not dance near the Congos, nor the Mandringos near the Gangas” (as cited in Donaldson 1984). These various West African nationalities were likely performing religious services.

Dances performed, such as the popular bamboula and the calinda, may or may not have had Voodoo or Vodun lyrical bases.⁹

Pre-jazz and Jazz Ages (1890 – 1930s)

Mardi Gras Indians. Mardi Gras Indians are technically not a distinct race or ethnicity. Nor are they necessarily “Indian,” in the sense of “American Indian,” though as is the case with many Blacks in New Orleans, there is always a possibility of Native American heritage. Mardi Gras Indians are a community of Black individuals who “mask” (masquerade, or don costumes or regalia) at certain times of the year. We might consider Mardi Gras Indians to be a community extant through performance practices. I include them in this section because their importance as cultural representatives in New Orleans demands discussion, their heritage requires explanation, and there is no other logical place to do so in this chapter. Descriptions of “Indian” musical practices and characteristics will resurface later in this chapter.

According to the most popularly accepted explanation of how Mardi Gras Indians came to be, their nod to “Indian” customs stems from the intermixing of escaped slaves with the Native Americans who granted them safe shelter away from the plantations (Sands 1991:83-84). Although maroon heritage exists in Louisiana, and although many Blacks from old southern families have some Native American heritage, we cannot know

⁹ The most comprehensive Congo Square study to date was recently published by music scholar Freddi Williams Evans (2011). Although no clear documentation exists on the earlier songs that were strictly African, Evans describes Haitian Creole and Louisiana Creole songs that were popularly performed in Congo Square. Some of these songs contain African words; for example, “Ouendé, ouendé, macaya! Mo pas barrassé, macaya!” is a blend of African and Creole *patois*, loosely translating as “Go on! Go on! Enormously! I ain’t one bit ashamed—eat outrageously!” (2011:77). Using Creole was a way for Africans of disparate cultures to communicate with one another.

definitively whether this intermingling of cultures is the actual genesis of Mardi Gras Indian masking. Another theory is that regalia design ideas came from the Buffalo Bill Wild West Show, which spent four months in New Orleans over the winter of 1884-1885. Fifty to sixty Plains Indians were likely on the streets on Mardi Gras Day that year (Salaam 1999). The fact that the first Mardi Gras Indian tribe to form in the 1880s was called the Creole Wild West supports this theory.

Jazz and Jazz Venues in the 20th Century. We can see that, by the twentieth century, the level of ethnic and cultural diversity in New Orleans had laid the foundation for new, native musical forms to develop. From accounts of the events that transpired at Congo Square, African music was being performed in New Orleans. It is likely, however, that Congo Square was just one of numerous sites for African cultural practices and religious rituals, and that the documentation of events at Congo Square was solely due to the area's close proximity to the city. Soon, African musical sensibilities began to incorporate characteristics of the music practiced by "American" Blacks, Creoles, the French and Spanish, other Europeans such as Italians and Germans, and Cubans, Haitians and other Latin Americans. Historians generally agree that jazz, the genre credited as being the United States' first musical art form, developed from blues, spirituals, Christian hymnody, ragtime, orchestral pieces, and music of other popular music ensembles including string bands and dance bands, as well as marching bands and brass bands.

According to jazz historian Karl Koenig, the relatively large number of venues for live music at the turn of the twentieth century reflects an era of economic and cultural growth in a busy port city, and these performance spaces laid the foundation for the development of jazz. In 1906, there were 200 clubs, 600 saloons, and 200 brothels that

featured live music. Ensemble types such as brass bands, string bands, and ragtime orchestras—ensembles that produced danceable music—would later develop into jazz bands (Koenig 1985b).

We may discuss pre-jazz and jazz venues in three significant geographical areas: the Tango Belt, Storyville, and Black Storyville. These three areas were considered distinct in terms of the clientele that frequented the establishments and the genre of music typically performed in the establishments. Despite the distinctions between these areas, they are in close geographical proximity to each other.

The Tango Belt was a very small area in the French Quarter, about two blocks long and two blocks wide, without clear boundaries but centered on Iberville Street between Burgundy Street and Basin Street. Approximately fifty-five places in the French Quarter featured jazz as part of their entertainment, and the most concentrated area of jazz places was the Tango Belt. Tango Belt saloons and dancehalls that played jazz include the Elite on Iberville, and the Dreamland Café on Iberville. Some of the vaudeville cabarets were Brooks Cabaret and the Alamo (Koenig 1985:5). The Tango Belt, with its large dance halls and cabarets, was a lively social scene and a destination for larger groups of patrons.

Situated close to The Tango Belt was New Orleans' red light district, Storyville. Storyville is cited as enabling the birth of jazz in New Orleans, complete with all the lascivious connotations that the area historically suggested. The Storyville district was bounded on one side by the first block of Basin, Iberville, St. Louis, and N. Robertson Streets, just lakeside of the French Quarter. Storyville was created in 1897, after New Orleans alderman Sidney Story drafted an ordinance sequestering all houses and establishments of a questionable nature to a distinct area. "Storyville" is a nickname

applied to the area in ridicule of Mr. Story. Interestingly, Storyville venues tended to hire solo artists or duets; jazz bands were actually more likely to perform in the Tango Belt. Jazz legends such as King Oliver, Louis Armstrong, and Jelly Roll Morton established their careers in Storyville. Tom Anderson's Saloon was the first saloon in the country to be lit with electricity. Big 25 was another significant venue, where Black musicians would gather after hours. Two more dance halls are the 101 Ranch and the Tuxedo. Storyville officially closed in 1917, by order of the United States Army and Navy, to protect locally stationed WWI soldiers from encountering hotbeds of venereal disease. The last musical building of importance—Mahogany Hall—was torn down in the mid 1940s. The Iberville housing projects take up much of the area that Storyville once occupied.

Black Storyville was an area of jazz venues that were frequented by Black patrons. Black Storyville was situated within a larger section that Louis Armstrong reportedly termed the "Battlefield," because it was a violent, under-policed part of town. A small, two-block wide and one mile long area, Black Storyville was bounded by Poydras, Gravier, Rampart, and Liberty Streets. The area is difficult to map now, as construction has eliminated this section of Liberty. Black Storyville is associated with early jazz sounds by musicians such as Buddy Petit and Chris Kelly. The most cited jazz venue from Black Storyville was the Funky Butt Hall at 1319 Perdido Street, which is today the site of the Louisiana State Office Building. Legendary cornetist and ragtime musician Buddy Bolden was a key figure in the development of jazz, and is sometimes even credited as being the originator. This claim is due to his melding of ragtime with blues and with Baptist church music, and his loud, improvisatory style. The Funky Butt was a regular performance space for Bolden. The Bolden tune "Funky Butt," later known as

"Buddy Bolden's Blues," is one of his pieces that remains a New Orleans standard. The lyrics of a typical version:

Thought I heard Buddy Bolden say,
Funky-butt, funky-butt, take it away,
You're terrible and awful, take it away,
I thought I heard him say.

Thought I heard Buddy Bolden shout,
Open up that window, and let that bad air out,
Open up that window, and let that foul air out,
Thought I heard him shout.

The persistence of "Funky Butt" in the local musical canon helps increase knowledge not only of the club by the same name, but an important musician, about whom we otherwise have very little documentation.

Pre-Katrina (1930s – 2005)

Black politics, Black struggles. People of color continued to make up a large percentage of New Orleans residents during this time period. Despite a Black majority in population and city governance,¹⁰ the Pre-Katrina timeframe provides a good example of the struggles Blacks faced in New Orleans. These hardships, however, are apparent in every era, and surface in various parts of this dissertation. As was the case in many United States cities, white flight affected New Orleans to a large degree, starting in the 1950s, when affluent Whites began to move to suburban neighborhoods. Although Blacks had gained legal equality in the Civil Rights movement, white flight increased

¹⁰ In fact, the current mayor, Mitchell Joseph "Mitch" Landrieu, elected in 2010, is the first White mayor to run the city since the end of his own father's mayoral career in 1978. Perhaps the most well-known of Black New Orleans mayors is former mayor Clarence Ray Nagin, Jr., who drew international attention through his behavior in the aftermath of Hurricane Katrina. He infamously referred to New Orleans as a "chocolate city," stating that it was God's will to retain a large Black population.

gaps in income and education between Whites and Blacks, leaving an urban population that was primarily poor and Black. See Chapter 1 for more on wealth disparity in New Orleans.

Secondary Cuban migrations. Previously, I mentioned an initial wave of Cuban immigrants in the early nineteenth century, many of whom were originally from Haiti. Larger Cuban migrations, however, occurred much later. They began in the 1960s, following the 1959 Cuban revolution, and occurred again in the 1980s and 1990s (González and Hall 1999). Later in this chapter, I will discuss the influence that Cuban music has had on that of New Orleans. Curiously, this influence does not seem to be directly correlated with the twentieth century Cuban migrations, suggesting instead a significant previous link to Cuba through travel and trade, rather than permanent migration, even though little documentation on this phenomenon is available.

Vietnamese. Although the overall Asian population is small in New Orleans and Louisiana, a substantial Vietnamese population has settled as a permanent and distinct community. The first generation were immigrants who fled from Vietnam in the mid-1970s during the upheaval. An estimated 12,000 (Kilbourne 1999) to 20,000 (Lashinsky 2007) Vietnamese-Americans now live in the New Orleans area. Their communities concentrate in two areas in the fringes of the city: New Orleans East and the West Bank (mostly in Algiers, as well as Avondale, which is outside city limits). In New Orleans East, the neighborhood of Village d'Est is one particularly concentrated area, where many Vietnamese continue to practice traditional cooking and farming customs. Many Vietnamese work as fishermen or boat builders, trades they learned in Vietnam.

Cosimo Matassa's J&M Studio. Although major waves of immigration continued to enrich the cultural landscape of New Orleans in this era, the city had an established

and unique New Orleans culture—showcased primarily by Black musicians—that developed a local flavor of rhythm and blues and rock and roll when the genres were in their formative years. A few places are particularly associated with this important movement. Designated as a historic Rock and Roll Landmark in 2010 by the Rock and Roll Hall of Fame and Museum in Cleveland, Ohio, the J&M Recording Studio is attributed to having nurtured the earliest years of rock and roll. The building—now a laundrette—is located at 840 North Rampart Street. The recording studio was founded in 1945 by Cosimo Matassa, who engineered and produced some of rock and roll’s greatest hits, including Fats Domino’s “The Fat Man” and Little Richard’s “Tutti Frutti.” Other greats who performed on J&M recordings or contributed to the production of recordings include Harold Battiste, Ray Charles, Allen Toussaint, Irma Thomas, Sam Cooke, Jerry Lee Lewis, Professor Longhair, and Dr. John (Reckdahl 2010). Local musicians and professional or amateur music historians speak of Cosimo Matassa’s J&M Recording Studio as essential to the formation of not only rock and roll, but of New Orleans rhythm and blues, soul, and funk, and opine that it serves as the most historically important recording studio in the area.

Dew Drop Inn. There have been a number of places that showcased rhythm and blues in New Orleans, such as Club Tiajuana on Saratoga Street (Lichtenstein and Dankner 1993). For this section I describe what is perhaps the most important of all these rhythm and blues clubs—the Dew Drop Inn. Frank Painia opened the Dew Drop Inn in 1939 at 2836 La Salle Street uptown. The club was highly successful in the 1940s and 50s, when it served as a center for Black nightlife in New Orleans, in the rhythm and blues, jump blues, jazz, and soul scenes during those eras. When fully operational, the

complex comprised a hotel, restaurant, barbershop, and a nightclub that seated two hundred.

Local musicians such as Allan Toussaint, Ernie K-Doe, Raymond Lewis, Edward “Kidd” Jordan, Deacon John (Moore), Charles Neville, and Irma Thomas frequented the Dew Drop Inn. In addition, national acts on tour, such as Little Richard, Joe Turner, Diana Washington, James Brown, Ike and Tina Turner, Otis Redding, Sam Cooke, and Etta James, would stop by after their gigs at White clubs, sit in on late night sessions, and stay in the hotel. Ray Charles even lived there for a spell, and was friends with Painia, who served as a sort of mentor. Harold Battiste Jr., musician, arranger, composer, educator, and founder of All for One (AFO) Records—the first Black-owned and operated record label in New Orleans¹¹—devotes a section of his autobiography (Battiste and Celestan 2010:12-14) to the Dew Drop Inn, as it influenced him in his formative years when his family was living across the street in the now-demolished Magnolia housing project. The Dew Drop also had regular emcees and side acts running the show, including shake dancers, snake dancers, female impersonators (most notably the regular emcee Patsy Valdalia), comedians, ventriloquists, and a man who went by the name of “Iron Jaw” Harris who would pick up tables by his teeth. Painia was tolerant of homosexuals, and featured a Halloween ball where gay and straight men alike would

¹¹ AFO is also the first record label to be initiated by a Black *musician*, specifically to meet the needs of Black musicians, and to retain control over all aspects of the recording and publishing processes. Battiste founded AFO in 1961, in the form of a collective, 40 years after the establishment of Black Swan Records (the nation’s first record label to be owned and operated by, and marketed to, African Americans), and 42 years after Broome Special Phonograph Records (the first African American owned and operated record label). The notion of Black ownership in the music industry was still very rare in 1961.

compete for the best costume with fancy gowns, furs, and jewelry. All the same, it was a clean, family friendly establishment.

The Dew Drop Inn was a safe respite for traveling Black musicians who were struggling with the difficulties of segregation. Painia was not only a successful Black entrepreneur during the Jim Crow years, but he was also active in the Civil Rights movement. He disobeyed segregation laws by allowing Whites into his club, including country singer Hank Williams. I am fortunate to have had the opportunity to interview Kenneth Jackson, Painia's grandson, who essentially grew up in the Dew Drop. He explained to me:

As time went on, business got better and better, and folks was coming from all over. And the thing about the Dew Drop, that basically set it off from a lot of places, as the business got bigger, they started having problems with allowing races to mix in the building. Whites weren't allowed in the building, according to the law. But my grandfather never did discriminate. They used to come in and raid the place, one time they caught Zachary Scott, who was an actor, they caught him in here and took him off to jail, they did that regularly. Until, they fought and fought, my grandfather would go down before the City Council...it got to the point where [the police] just gave up. They just stopped, they realized this was just the way it was here, and it wasn't a problem. ...

They actually pulled up with paddy wagons outside, and just hauled off everybody out the place, you know. They would arrest *everybody* in the building, everybody in the place at that time, because they were mixing with the opposite race. ... The majority of the judges and the elected officials were regulars here. The police were regulars. But I guess they had to make an example at some point, saying they couldn't turn a blind eye to the fact that the law was on the book. And according to the way the law was written, they were actually in violation. But it was so crazy, because everybody just came to have a good time (Jackson 2008).

Jackson has fond memories of the Dew Drop; he used to find excuses to sneak in the nightclub to catch a glimpse of the act on stage, and he would amuse himself with the house drum kit and Hammond organ in the daytime. He grew up under the care and supervision of his grandmother who would put her young grandchildren in blanketed

beer boxes-cum-playpens. In fact, many members of his extended family were involved in the operations of the restaurant, barbershop, and hotel. The Dew Drop has been in various states of disrepair since the 1960's, and has been mostly closed since the 70s. It suffered damage from Hurricane Katrina, particularly from the helicopter that rescued stranded guests from a rooftop patio. Jackson plans to fully re-open the Dew Drop Inn when he retires.

Post-Katrina to the Present (2005 – 2012)

Industry. Today, New Orleans' economy is supported by a few different industries that have supplanted farming and manufacture. The greater New Orleans area is a base for onshore and offshore petroleum and natural gas production, and New Orleans remains the country's fifth-largest port. The tourism and convention industry is a staple in New Orleans; it brings in about 5.5 billion dollars annually, and employs about 85,000 people in the hotel industry alone (Louisiana Department of Culture, Recreation & Tourism 2006-2007).

Hurricane Katrina. Recent history of course is marked and defined by the devastation endured in New Orleans, and the Gulf Coast, after Hurricane Katrina hit on August 29, 2005 and was followed by Hurricane Rita on September 23, 2005. Although the New Orleans area had experienced numerous major hurricanes in recent history, the failure of the levee system resulting from Hurricane Katrina caused an unprecedented catastrophe. Katrina, or the failure of the Army Corp of Engineers-designed levee system, caused an estimated death toll of at least 1,464 Louisiana residents, 40% of whom died by drowning. Almost half of the victims were elderly residents who could not evacuate the city to safety. Eighty percent of New Orleans was under water, with some flood areas rising to up to ten feet. Over a million people evacuated the Gulf Coast region, and New Orleans lost over half of its population. By 2010, the population was still only 71% of what it was in 2000 (Schigoda 2011).

The city has made extraordinary progress in its recovery efforts since 2005. Residents continue to slowly return, the school systems are improving, and the local economy has experienced fewer job losses from the current recession than many American cities. However, the flood continues to impact every aspect of life for New

Orleanians who suffered through the experience, whether they evacuated or remained in the city. Lawsuits involving levee breaches and police brutality that occurred under a virtual state of lawlessness are only now finding resolution in court. Many residents suffer from the painful memories which haunt their daily lives; individual horrors continue to manifest in long-term anxiety disorders and impairments.

Changing racial make-up. Within the city itself, New Orleans' racial and ethnic determinations make for a less diverse city than many other American cities, and from some perspectives, even compared to the rest of Louisiana. In 2010, the United States Census Bureau counted a total of 343,829 people in New Orleans. The Hispanic/Latino population totaled 5%, leaving a 95% remainder of non-Hispanic or Latino residents. Whites made up 33% of the population, African Americans 60%, Asians 3%, American Indian and Alaska Natives 0%, others 2%, and those who identify by two or more races as 2% (U.S. Census Bureau).

Hurricane Katrina changed the balance between Black and White population figures, but the two groups still retain dominance over all other races in the area. New Orleans is a smaller city overall, having lost 118,526 Blacks (60% down from 67%), and 24,101 whites (climbing to 33% from 28%) since 2000. Blacks were the least likely to return to the city.¹² It should be noted that the number of whites in 2010 included a significant number of people from other areas of the United States who have moved in since 2005, which at times creates tension with long-time residents, regardless of race.

¹² Another significant change after Katrina was the loss of people under 18, moving from 27% in 2000 down to 23% in 2010; children were among the least likely to return to New Orleans after Katrina.

Hispanic migrations. One major area of growth was the Hispanic population; the city gained 3,225 Hispanics in the 2000 - 2010 decade, and the greater metropolitan area gained an astonishing 33,500 (Greater New Orleans Community Data Center 2011). Census records, however, are not necessarily accurate accounts of the people who are actually living in a given area. The devastation the city faced after Katrina provided rebuilding opportunities that brought on an influx of Mexican, Central American, and Brazilian workers, many of whom are undocumented. One 2006 account estimated 10,000 to 14,000 illegal immigrants living in New Orleans (Eaton 2006), and another claims that the Hispanic population jumped from 15,000 pre-Katrina to over 50,000 in 2007 (Moreno Gonzales 2007).

Native Americans. Native Americans continue to thrive in Louisiana, though not primarily in the urban realm. Social scientist H. F. Perry lists six major Louisiana Indian peoples active now: the Alabama, the Koasati (Coushatta), four groups of Choctaw, the Chitimacha, the Houma, and the Tunica-Biloxi (Gregory 1999). Non-experts in Native-American cultures may be surprised to learn that Louisiana has the second largest Indian population in the eastern United States. In 2011, the Houma made headlines for their efforts to be federally recognized as a nation. Native tribes have had an influence on the cuisine, material goods, and ways of living in New Orleans. A great number of place names originate from native languages or are derived from them, from Tchoupitoulas Street to the Muskogean original of the French translation, Baton Rouge. Although the census reports a miniscule percentage of Native Americans in the city, a much larger but indeterminable number of people, especially Blacks, have Native American heritage.

European heritage. I have already outlined some of the political ramifications resulting from French and Spanish rule in colonial Louisiana. As dominant forces in New Orleans, Spanish and especially French customs have informed local culture. The cuisine, the language, the Catholic faith, and the laissez-faire approach to life and business continue to permeate modern-day culture in New Orleans. The French influence is obvious in place names and foodways. The cherished architectural gems remaining in New Orleans, with thick brick walls, courtyards, and wrought iron balconies, however, are, with very little exception, of Spanish design. Other European heritage is recognized as well. Today, European-American communities celebrate their ethnic pride the New Orleans way, through parading; the Saint Patrick's Day Parade, the Saint Joseph's Day Parade, the Krewe du Jieus Mardi Gras marching Krewe (social club for walking in Mardi Gras parades), and Oktoberfest are all public celebrations of pride in European heritage. The French influence is multi-faceted, however, for it interweaves with French Haitian influences and the syncretic Francophone Creole culture of New Orleans.

Gateways to the Caribbean. New Orleans continues to have ties with Haiti, a link that became more obvious after the Haitian earthquake of 2010. For example, in 1986, a group of New Orleans Haitian-Americans formed a local non-profit organization, the Association Haitienne de Developpement Humain, Inc., to promote the welfare of those living in Haiti. Due to their direct ties to the motherland, this organization was able to provide a fast response in the relief effort following the earthquake.

Changes in Vietnamese communities. In recent years, the Vietnamese community in New Orleans East has had to accept an influx of Latino residents who have been settling there. The population in New Orleans East is still sparse following the

area's massive flooding from Hurricane Katrina; this is attractive to the post-Katrina Latino migrant workers, due to low living costs, and in some cases, the ability to live "under the radar."

Jazz venues. Although the city profits from signs of jazz—travel pamphlets and commercials abound with trumpet players and smoky jazz club scenes—modern jazz is difficult to find in present-day New Orleans, and relatively few musicians from other cities perform in New Orleans. Highly successful New Orleans musicians such as Nicholas Payton build their careers elsewhere. Snug Harbor on Frenchmen Street is the most reliable source of modern jazz; another is Irvin Mayfield's Jazz Playhouse in the French Quarter. Other clubs, such as the Spotted Cat, also on Frenchmen, or Preservation Hall, also in the French Quarter, regularly feature the many traditional jazz bands that appeal to the jazz revivalist circuit. However, it is very possible that a tourist will not encounter a single jazz band during their visit to New Orleans, though they may instead hear several brass bands.

Churches. Churches are certainly places where many residents first hear music, and where many musicians first learn the foundations for music making. As mentioned elsewhere in this dissertation, brass bands and jazz bands often perform gospel pieces when in the streets or in smoky clubs—there is no distinction about the appropriateness of setting for sacred lyrics. Since church music is normally first encountered in the many small churches around the city, there are few outstanding examples of churches as obvious musical places; the experience is more of a personal one. However, one example of concentrated sacred music is found at the annual New Orleans Jazz and Heritage Festival, where seven full days of gospel music, complete with full choirs and backing bands, sing their praises with extraordinary volume and power in a large tent. Many of

the groups are from out of town, yet the experience itself is associated with New Orleans, particularly for the devotees who attend the festival and spend time in the gospel tent every year.

An unusual example of church music in New Orleans is that of the jazz masses occasionally held at Saint Augustine Church. Saint Augustine Church itself is a rarity; it is a Catholic church that was dedicated in 1842 as a Catholic church for free people of color, and even in the early days, the pews sat free Blacks, slaves, and whites. It calls itself the “Oldest African American Catholic parish in the United States.” Activity at Saint Augustine Church has lessened in recent years, but parishioners will occasionally hold a mass or “jazz mass.”

Schools. As will become apparent in later chapters, an important source of musical education and provider of early performance opportunities is the middle school and high school marching band tradition. Marching bands have been a popular activity for high school and middle school young adults to engage in. Marching bands, along with majorettes, not only perform at football games, but also march in the many parades during carnival season. A couple of the best and most well-known bands are the Saint Augustine Marching 100 from “Saint Aug” High School, and the McDonogh #35 Marching Band, representing McDonogh #35 College Prep High School.

Indian practices and meeting places. Mardi Gras Indian traditions continue in 2012, and the number of participants and level of effort involved are only gaining strength since Hurricane Katrina. Mardi Gras Indians spend all year constructing their “suits” by hand, and spend thousands of dollars in the process. In the past, the Indians would deconstruct their suits after Mardi Gras Day in order to recycle precious materials, but today they are often saved, put on display, or reused. Costumes tend to

follow one of two types, Native American style or African style, although the particular combination of vivid feathers and intricate beadwork is unique to New Orleans. Indians compete with each other to be the “prettiest,” which is determined by the style, creativity, and level of intricateness of their suits. Most of the Indians are adult males, but more and more women and children have been participating in recent years. The last day of Carnival and the day before Lent commences—Mardi Gras (Fat Tuesday)—is the most widely recognized day for Indians to come out. However, Super Sunday and especially Saint Joseph’s Night are perhaps even more significant for Mardi Gras Indians,¹³ because at these events, the Indians are not competing with myriad other parades as they do on Mardi Gras. The Uptown Super Sunday is a family-friendly daytime event where the Indians gather at Taylor Park uptown for festival-like activities, and then form a parade nearby. Lesser-known are the Downtown and Westbank Super Sundays. The Saint Joseph’s Night event takes place in the evening hours on Saint Joseph’s Day—a holiday more commonly associated with Italian Catholics.¹⁴ On this night, the Indians will wander around their uptown or downtown territories, congregating in certain spots such as First Street and Dryades Street uptown. When

¹³ Curiously, published articles that I have encountered that analyze the Mardi Gras Indians (Sands 1991; Sinclair and Taylor 2000; Smith 1994; VanSpanckeren 1989-1990) neglect to mention these non-Mardi Gras occasions. Perhaps Super Sunday and Saint Joseph’s Night were largely unknown through the 1990s and have become more popular in the 2000s. Mardi Gras Indians will also appear at sponsored events such as the New Orleans Jazz and Heritage Festival. The authors of these articles also tend to minimize the roles that women and children play in public Mardi Gras events. It seems as though the tradition has been moving away from its original culture of violence and “cutting” of raggedy costumes, and more towards a family-friendly tradition with an emphasis on the quality and elaborateness of costume. This trend could be accelerating post-Katrina.

¹⁴ St. Joseph’s Day (and therefore St. Joseph’s Night) always falls on March 19th. The Uptown Super Sunday normally occurs on the third Sunday of March, and the downtown, Bayou St. John Super Sunday normally occurs on the Sunday closest to St. Joseph’s Day. The Westbank Super Sunday is also scheduled around this time. The relevance of St. Joseph’s day may originate in the opportunities for masking and parading afforded by the holiday.

members of different tribes meet, they enact a mock battle. Each actor will have a role to play, roles which repeat in each tribe: spy boy, flag boy, big chief, wild man, etc.

In addition to these public events, Indians hold regular “practices,” normally in neighborhood bars, to prepare for events like Mardi Gras and Saint Joseph’s Night. The H&R Bar on Second and Dryades streets uptown is one example of a practice space. Elders and otherwise seasoned Indians will teach the call-and-response chants to newer or younger Indians. Tambourines, drums, and other percussive instruments provide a rhythm closely tied to the “second line beat” that will be described later in this chapter. A few popular chants include “Indians, Here they Come,” “Jockimo,” and “Two Way Pock-a Way.” These Indian practices become weekly rituals for the Black Indian community to gather and socialize while performing music.

Bourbon Street, Frenchmen Street. Present day musical venues continue to be scattered throughout the city, from Tipitina’s uptown to BJ’s in the Bywater downtown, to the Old Point Bar in Algiers Point on the Westbank. However, there are two main areas that are unmatched for concentrated musical experiences that can be had through “bar hopping:” Bourbon Street in the French Quarter and Frenchmen Street in the Marigny. The difference between the two is the typical user: locals perceive Bourbon Street, a street with a long history of jazz and opera, to be a tourist mecca now. Much of the music found on Bourbon Street today is either recordings of rock music played on massive speaker systems or “cover” bands that play well-known rock hits. In contrast, however, there are several gay clubs on Bourbon Street that attract locals and tourists alike; they are grouped in the center and downriver parts of the French Quarter, a bit removed from the tourist spots and strip clubs that congregate in the upriver end. A Bourbon Street staple is Chris Owens, a burlesque dancer and musical performer who

has been entertaining since the early 1960s. She owns and operates The Chris Owens Club and Balcony and draws a clientele that enjoys campy performances. Locals are generally more likely to go to Frenchmen Street, which features both modern and traditional jazz, funk, experimental ensembles, and rock. A few clubs include the Apple Barrel, d.b.a., The Blue Nile Nightclub, and La Maison de la Musique. On a typical night, Frenchmen Street will also feature live music from bands busking on the street, as well as other buskers, such as poets for hire.

Tipitina's, The Maple Leaf. Tipitina's and the Maple Leaf are two uptown nightclubs. Although they both feature a wide variety of music, I am using them to examine places of New Orleans funk. Funk in New Orleans is not as place-specific as other genres of music, but its prevalence locally and influence nationally and internationally prohibits me from neglecting it for the sake of a tidy chapter. Classic funk musicians include The Meters, Eddie Bo, Professor Longhair, The Wild Magnolias, Dr. John, and Lee Dorsey. Current funk bands include Big Sam's Funky Nation, Papa Grows Funk, and Ivan Neville's Dumpstaphunk. Some of these artists are also considered to be in the rhythm and blues category, and some are New Orleans piano playing legends. A group of music fans established Tipitina's in 1977 in recognition of New Orleans rhythm and blues icon and early New Orleans funk originator Professor Longhair, and to provide a place for him to perform until his death in 1980. Tipitina's is named after one of "Fess's" most popular and influential tunes. The Maple Leaf was similarly created with an intention for musical preservation; a group of traditional jazz and poetry enthusiasts created the club to provide a space for such activities to take place. Today, the Maple Leaf features funk bands among its varied roster; Papa Grows Funk, for example, is a frequent act.

Defining the New Orleans Musical Sound

In the previous section, I alluded to numerous genres and traditions of music in New Orleans by approaching them through an examination of their places. The reader may find the earlier musical traditions to be rather disparate; opera was being performed within a few blocks of indigenous West African music, for example. But as these foreign traditions have developed into native New Orleans traditions, we see more and more common elements coalescing into a generalized musical style. This is due in large part to the remarkably high level of musicianship that extends across various musical traditions in the city. Many New Orleans musicians play in multiple bands with minimal rehearsing needed for new gigs. Bands often choose pieces from the New Orleans musical canon, or, when this is not the case, the musicians pick up on common song forms and chord progressions very quickly. This musical exchange follows a long history of virtuosity in New Orleans. In this section, I analyze musical characteristics that approach a definition of a contemporary New Orleans musical sound that could symbolize the general musical canon of the city. I first describe what is known as the “second line beat,” followed by representative instrumentation, and finally I mention some understated influences that bridge genres.

Second line beat. The term “second line beat” describes the rhythmic device that characterizes much of contemporary New Orleans music. It is heard prominently in brass band music, the tradition from which it is assumed to have stemmed, but it is carried into other genres as well. Many New Orleans musicians are schooled in brass band style and method, and they often bring the second line beat into performances of funk, jazz, and rhythm and blues. In brass band music, the second line beat is built from interlocking rhythms of the tuba, snare drum, and bass drum. The tuba and bass drum

together provide a foundation of syncopated rhythms, while the snare drum provides accents to enrich the rhythmic complexity.

New Orleans drummer Stanton Moore (2005) cites three rhythmic characteristics that specifically make up the distinctive second line beat, characteristics which I find to be useful and clear. The first rhythmic characteristic is “playing in between the cracks.” This phrase means that New Orleans music that employs the second line beat is neither straight nor swung. We may imagine a continuum with Western European art music or military marching band music on one end, and big band swing jazz on the other, in terms of the ensemble’s approach to performing eighth or sixteenth notes. The military marching band will perform eighth and sixteenth notes “accurately” as depicted on paper. To jazz musicians, the same notes are not to be performed exactly as notated, but are to be “swung” to approach something closer to dotted rhythmic figures, such as a dotted eighth with sixteenth note rhythm to replace two eighth notes. The swing style performed by big bands features the most extreme swing feel, while many other jazz styles play less so. The second line beat, however, is especially nuanced, lying somewhere between the two ends of the spectrum, neither straight like a John Philip Sousa march nor swung like a jazz standard. Thus, New Orleans musicians play “in between the cracks.”

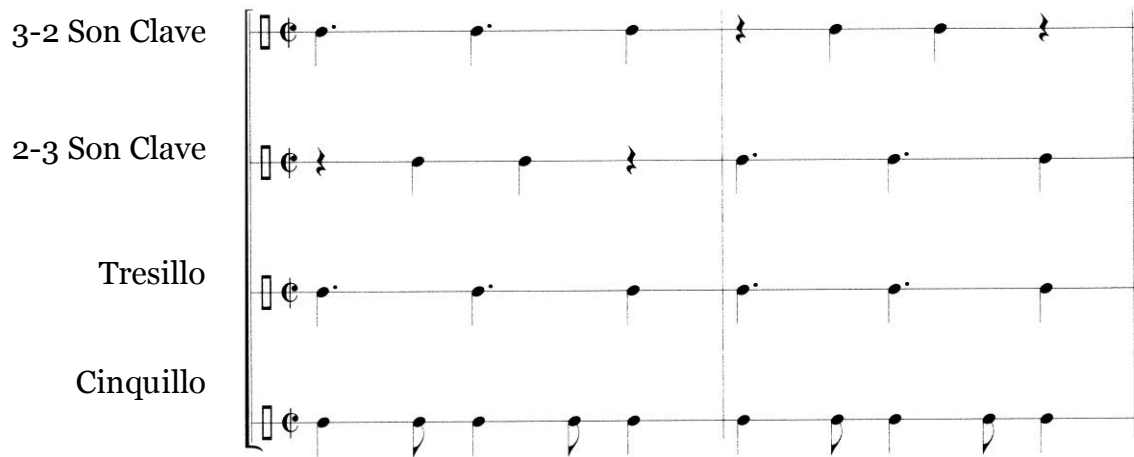
Related to this first musical characteristic is the heavy reliance on an underlying *clave* rhythm, which developed from Afro-Cuban connections to New Orleans. John Storm Roberts (1979) composed one of the first significant musicological accounts of the vast influence that Latin American musical styles have had on music of the United States since the late nineteenth century. Music scholars are just beginning to acknowledge the heretofore understated impact of Brazilian, Cuban, and Mexican

musical idioms on music of the United States. New Orleans musicians were inspired by the late nineteenth century Cuban *habanera* craze, which had an enormous impact on the development of jazz.¹⁵ Direct evidence of this can be found in the works of Jellyroll Morton, who not only included these rhythmic devices in his compositions but also spoke of a “Spanish tinge” during his interview with Alan Lomax in 1938 at the Library of Congress (Doheny 2005-2006:8). Peter Narváez (1994) has written on the effects of Hispanic music cultures on one musician in particular: New Orleans blues and early rhythm and blues musician Professor Longhair (born Henry Roeland Byrd), who was an essential contributor in a long line of great New Orleans pianists. Even composer Louis Mareau Gottschalk “made extensive use of Cuban elements” in his orchestral pieces (Roberts 1979: 24). The *hananera* dance music craze likely brought the *clave* to New Orleans, as it featured the *clave* rhythm, among others.

The *clave* (or *son clave*) rhythmic pattern, a five-stroke pattern organized over two measures, can be approached as either a 3-2 *clave*, or a 2-3 *clave*. New Orleans music has primarily appropriated the 2-3 *clave*. See Fig. 1, which is modeled after the figures provided by Christopher Washburne (1997:60).

¹⁵ A small amount of research investigates Latin or Hispanic influences on New Orleans jazz other than the Afro-Cuban influence. For example, there is some evidence that traveling Mexican bands who performed in New Orleans, particularly for the World’s Industrial and Cotton Centennial Exposition in 1884-1885, had a lasting effect on New Orleans bands. Jack Stewart (2007) states that these Mexican bands inspired New Orleans musicians with their compositions, musicianship, “dissonant” harmonies produced by persistent thirds, three-over-four syncopations, and chord progressions, among other factors.

Fig. 3: Clave, Tresillo, and Cinquillo rhythmic figures.



Although New Orleans music uses 3-2 *clave* rhythms at times, the 2-3 *clave*, combined with military drumming techniques carried through the marching band traditions into the brass band tradition, is an underlying foundation of the second line beat (Moore 2005). The second line beat is performed “in between the cracks,” meaning that the New Orleans “clave” is performed slightly differently than a “true” Latin *clave*.

Adding to the *son clave*, Christopher Washburne (1997) describes two more Cuban/Caribbean rhythms that are major contributors to the development of jazz: the *cinquillo* and the *tresillo*. I maintain that all these rhythms are incorporated into contemporary New Orleans musical styles; the interrelatedness of the rhythms can be viewed as variations on an underlying feel.

The final second line rhythmic characteristic is termed the “big four.” As mentioned above, New Orleans music that incorporates the second line beat is often organized into two-measure phrases that follow a 2-3 *clave* rhythm. In New Orleans, the fourth beat of the second measure is heavily accented. This beat also coincides with the final stroke of the five-stroke 2-3 *clave*. It may be accented in the snare drum, bass

drum, tuba—any instrument. This “big four” gives a cyclic finality, and a special “pop” that is especially effective because it lands on what might otherwise be considered a very weak beat.

Instrumentation, tone. In addition to these three second line rhythmic characteristics, there are other commonalities among various New Orleans musical genres that we may highlight. In terms of instrumentation, New Orleans music features a heavy reliance on brass instruments. Since the years of early jazz in the start of the twentieth century, virtually all genres of New Orleans music, sacred music not excluded, have featured trumpets, trombones, saxophones, and tubas or sousaphones. The trumpet is a particularly iconic instrument, due in part to Louis Armstrong and other musicians that emulate his style. The preference for the brassy sound helps inform values of timbre, and methods of attack and embellishment indicate a preference for diversity and excitement in execution. In New Orleans, precision is valued much less than effects that portray energy and personalization. Pitches do not need to be exactly in tune when trombones are sliding, trumpets are growling, and sousaphones are squealing an occasional high note. Voices are exempted from exact pitch or time. The preferred timbre in general is not a clear one, but one full of varied tone colors. Even snare drummers are encouraged to use the full range of sounds from hitting different areas of the drum and the rim.

Call-and-response. Another common musical device is the frequency of call-and-response lines; they can occur between sections of the ensemble, but the practice is even more striking when it happens between the band and the audience. New Orleans musicians are particularly skilled at stage presence, and are adept at encouraging audience participation. Funk, jazz, gospel, and brass band musicians involve the

audience by encouraging dance, and by instructing them to make motions such as clapping and “getting low” to the floor. New Orleans musicians can involve musical novices by employing call-and-response vocal forms in their performances, by instructing the audience exactly what to say, or by having them repeat improvised phrases of nonsense syllables. Seasoned audiences know proper responses to certain calls, without the caller requesting them. For example, “I got a girl from Baltimore...” brings a response of “Lil’ Liza Jane,” and “Lord, lord, lord, lord,” brings “Sure been good to me.”

In addition to these prescribed call-and-response occurrences, there are common melodic and rhythmic phrases that New Orleans musicians and those who are familiar with New Orleans music recognize and respond to. These phrases can be inserted into a piece regardless of the tune being performed. Perhaps the most powerful of these phrases is a trumpet call—whether played by a trumpet or the entire ensemble—that is sometimes heard as a call for the band to assemble and begin the performance. For this use, it is best known as the start of the brass band standard “Second Line.” But it is more commonly heard within a piece of music as a means to build audience excitement and participation. It can occur in virtually any upbeat piece of New Orleans music, but it most often occurs in brass band music. When the trumpet or other brass instrument plays the following phrase, the audience responds with a shout on cue, with hands thrust into the air.

Fig. 4: Trumpet Call



This phrase is then repeated. The audience response of “yeah” does not have to be on any particular pitch, of course. I believe this trumpet call to be the most well-known melodic and rhythmic device for audience participation in New Orleans. Brass band and jazz musicians have one or two other calls to indicate the start of a tune or to communicate within a tune. In addition, there are several phrases used to indicate the end of a piece; these phrases function as tags and can even be added to each other like blocks.

The Mardi Gras Indian influence: a curious link. I have alluded to the role of brass bands in the formation and transmission of the second line beat, of brass instrumentation, and of call-and-response forms, and these points arise elsewhere in this dissertation. I should mention, however, another source of influence that is often understated in writings on New Orleans music: the Mardi Gras Indian influence. For example, there is a direct link between Mardi Gras Indian music and New Orleans funk, though this fact tends to get lost in discussions of funk on a national level. An early and obvious explanation of the heavy “Indian” influence in New Orleans funk dates back to a 1970 single and two subsequent albums featuring Big Chief Bo Dollis and the Wild Magnolia Mardi Gras Indians, who were backed by a rhythm and blues band called The New Orleans Project. Furthermore, Alexander Stewart (2000:300) describes the

equivalent of the “big four” when explaining Mardi Gras Indian street beats that influenced other New Orleans musics, and how such rhythmic patterns developed into funk.

Mardi Gras Indian music may also be an influence on bounce music, which is New Orleans’ homegrown brand of rap and accompanying dance style that developed in the early 1990s. Often overtly hypersexual, bounce lyrics are chanted phrases—often short, rhythmic, and repeated—performed over what is termed the “Triggerman beat.” The “Triggerman beat” is constructed mainly from a sample of the song “Drag Rap” by the New York-based Showboys, itself using a sample of the theme song from the television show, *Dragnet*. Bounce likely incorporates an “Indian” influence in its heavy, if not constant, usage of call-and-response. Although call-and-response occurs in many Black musical genres (Southern 1997), bounce calls are repeated chants that are particularly reminiscent in some respects to the Mardi Gras chants, albeit quicker.

It is impossible to say which of the contemporary musical genres that employ the second line beat occurred first: brass band music or Mardi Gras Indian music. It is tempting to study “Indian” call-and-response chants because the stripped-down version that is performed in the streets and in practices appeals to the scholar looking for “primal” sources of rhythmic devices. In analyzing Indian chants that incorporate only voices and tambourines, for example, we can easily see Caribbean influences and normative New Orleans music characteristics. The *clave*, and the “big four” accent of the *clave*, are clearly outlined in the tambourine. Through such analysis, we discover foundational elements that are common to musical traditions that might otherwise seem disparate. It is impossible to say whether *clave* or *tresillo* rhythms played by Mardi Gras

Indians derive from a direct linkage to Hispaniola or even West Africa. I think it more likely that these rhythmic features have become a generalized New Orleans musical feel.

The above generalizations about New Orleans music describe the dominant musical traditions in contemporary New Orleans. Many other small musical circles exist of course, such as indie rock bands, blues, rap, sissy bounce, experimental music, folk music, western art music, as well as minute amounts of country, bluegrass, Brazilian samba, salsa, and flamenco. The examples I provide generally make up the distinctive New Orleans flavor of music, and are representative of the city. Such musical traditions in New Orleans are largely developed by Black musicians, and are deeply rooted in African American, Caribbean, and African musical foundations, with Latin, European, and American influences. Although a significant amount of New Orleans musicians are not Black, there is a general understanding that the musical traditions are owned by Black New Orleanians, who share their musical heritage with others.

Geography and Spatial Understandings in New Orleans

Geography. The city of New Orleans is located at 30° north latitude 90° west longitude in the southeastern part of the state of Louisiana. The majority of the city is nestled between Lake Pontchartrain and the Mississippi River—major bodies of water that define and influence city geography, movement, and life. For millennia, the dramatically shifting Mississippi River delta topography provided lush, fertile, and swampy grounds that European settlers and American engineers have spent the last few centuries attempting to conquer.

The city of New Orleans developed around a chosen spot at a bend in the snaking Mississippi River. Its dramatic twists and turns necessitate a street plan that does not conform to cardinal directions. Streets are patterned in radiating arcs that mimic the shape of the river. Geographer Richard Campanella explains that this radiating street pattern—sometimes described as spokes of a wheel or wedges in a pie—emerged from the *arpent* land-surveying system. This French colonial system determined plantation delineation, and in New Orleans, these original boundary lines helped outline city streets. In the *arpent* system, land was divided into long lots—rectangular parcels with depth-to-width ratios of 3:1 up to 10:1 or more. In this manner, a greater number of farms could benefit from at least a small amount of valued resource at one end, whether that resource be a road, or a waterway such as the Mississippi River (Campanella 2002: 84-85).

Local directional terminology supersedes cardinal directions. There are two sides of the river: the east bank, where the city was founded, and the Westbank. While on the east bank, the terms “lakeside” (for Lake Ponchartrain, generally northerly of the area) and “riverside” (for the Mississippi River, which bounds the east bank generally to the south) are used to signify areas that are generally northerly or southerly, or to refer to sides of the street. “Uptown” or “upriver” versus “downtown” or “downriver” are used for directions that are somewhat easterly and westerly. Thus, a New Orleanian could give directions by saying, “We are a couple of blocks lakeside of St. Charles at Washington, walking to the parade... No, no, Washington is six blocks uptown of Jackson.”

When founded, the City of New Orleans was bounded by Canal Street, North Rampart Street, Esplanade Avenue, and the Mississippi River. This area now constitutes

the French Quarter, or *Vieux Carré*. The city now includes areas that surround the original city, and even extends over the Mississippi River a bit. Locals perceive New Orleans at the most macro level as being divided into two main sections: uptown and downtown. Canal Street generally marks the dividing line between the two; everything upriver of Canal is uptown, and everything downriver of Canal is downtown. Unlike some cities, the term “downtown” does not indicate a financial or industrial area; New Orleans’ version is called the Central Business District and it lies just uptown of the French Quarter. Campanella maps seventy-two neighborhoods (2002:83) in New Orleans, as determined by the New Orleans City Planning Commission. He also maps seventeen national historic districts and thirteen local historic districts. In practice, these neighborhood designations have soft boundaries. New Orleans is also divided into seventeen wards. This nineteenth-century ward system was used to elect aldermen, and the designations still stand today. Depending on the area, it may be just as common to name an area by its ward number; in wards such as the ninth ward or the seventh ward, residents take pride in referencing their ward numbers.

Spatial conceptions. Navigating the city can be a challenging experience for newcomers, who may be unaccustomed to street plans that cede to natural land formations. Through my experiences learning the city and speaking with New Orleans natives, I quickly learned that, in order to conceptualize the city in a mental map, one needs to first imagine the large bodies of water that structure the city, and then anchor the most important streets. Some essential anchor streets include: those that generally follow the direction of the river, such as Tchoupitoulas Street, Magazine Street, St. Charles Avenue, Claiborne Avenue, and St. Claude Avenue. Some of the spokes that radiate from the river include Carrollton Avenue, Napoleon Avenue, Louisiana Avenue,

Jackson Avenue, Canal Street, Esplanade Avenue, and Elysian Fields. From this frame, one can understand secondary streets in relationship to these anchoring streets.

I discovered that learning how to get from place to place is best understood through experience. Drummer and baritone horn player Gene Harding has an excellent understanding of the city's layout, which he gained from trips with family members who were taxi drivers. He can determine his location based on block numbers, which radiate out from Canal Street in either direction, and where the block numbers intersect with other streets. However, his initial conceptions of space in the city come from landmarks and imposed boundaries around his home, combined with the weighted experience of the placement of the two schools he attended.

Growing up here, for me, it's a lot easier, I expect, than somebody else [who is not from New Orleans], because before I even knew any of that [the block numbering system], I walked these streets. I went around them, I know them by location. I know them by landmarks. I learned as a kid, there was a place called Jim's chicken. My mom would say, "You better not go past this, or go past that." When I was a kid and I was supposed to trick-or-treat, I couldn't go past Robert E. Lee school, it's on Carrollton, and I think, Green. And I wasn't supposed to go past that. And so in my mind, I have landmarks, I wasn't supposed to go to the levee, which was about nine blocks from my house. I wasn't supposed to go, but I'd sneak and go fly kites with my little brother (2009).

Spatial layout is therefore experiential for Gene. This phenomenon is certainly not exclusive to New Orleans, but the geography of the city and insular nature of the neighborhoods makes this a particularly interesting case to note it.

Spatial semiotics. Residents of New Orleans embrace parochialism in a manner that is often self-aware or even ironic. A local system of semiotics represent both the city and areas within the city through signs that are meant to be understood by locals and by fans of the city. To reach "insider" status, transplants must prove their affection for the city through the ability to speak this language. One example of this phenomenon is the

“Yat” lexicon. “Yat” refers to a dialect, accent, or type of person who speaks it. A Yat is normally a White native of downtown New Orleans, but the manner of speech is similar to that of Blacks and Creoles, and the term is sometimes used as an all-inclusive city identity marker. In some respects, the accent sounds similar to a Brooklyn accent; this may be due to the similarity in waves of immigration, such as the Italian immigrants who settled in New Orleans and New York. The term derives from “where y’at,” which means “where you at?,” a greeting used in the city. Phrases such as “ya mom ‘an ‘em (a collective term for the immediate family),” “shoot da chute” (a playground slide), and “making groceries” (going grocery shopping) are strictly local phrases, self-reflexive and consciously applied to celebrate the hyper-local. More recently, the phrase “who dat” has been developed into a multi-faceted system to represent local residents, the Saints NFL team, and the city itself following the Saints’ 2010 Super Bowl win.¹⁶

Pronunciations also signify the local: insiders know to pronounce the street names “Calliope” as “CAL-yope,” “Chartres” as “Charters,” and “Burgundy” as “bur-GUN-dee.” Any other pronunciation is considered incorrect, and marks the speaker as an outsider. Plenty of non-lingual signs also represent the city, of course. The fleur-de-lis, red beans and rice, crawfish, and Mardi Gras beads all symbolize New Orleans.

¹⁶ “Who Dat” is an idiom that originated in minstrelsy. The chant now associated with the Saints, which goes, “Who dat! Who dat! Who dat say dey gonna beat dem Saints!” may have developed at Southern University in Baton Rouge. Leading up to and following the Saints’ super bowl win, “who dat” has become a sort of meme in New Orleans. Myriad variations have developed, including “we dat!” as a (nonsensical) affirmation, “two dat” to encourage an encore win, and even “boo dat” for Halloween.

Fig. 5: T-shirt designs by local shirt company, Dirty Coast. Used with permission.



“Kenna Brah” is Yat for “Kenner, Bro(ther).” The dialogue and image represent an affirmation for the suburban city of Kenner, lying just westerly of New Orleans, for its preponderance of drive-through daiquiri shops. It may also be a tongue-in-cheek tease that Kenner is only fit for driving through.



“504” is the telephone area code for the City of New Orleans. Those three numbers are often used to reference the entire city, and are used as call-and-response lyrics in musical performances. Here, Dirty Coast provides a t-shirt with 504 pride.

The need for spatial definition. At times, I still marvel at the need for New Orleanians to mark their city as distinctive, but in prescribed ways.¹⁷ A sort of underdog mentality is at play in many aspects of New Orleans society. New Orleanians need to create and maintain the space of their city and the culture within it, through signs and definitions that are constantly practiced and reaffirmed. Many New Orleanians are aware of how things are done in other cities—it is the difference that makes New Orleans special, and that difference is continuously celebrated.

Although New Orleans is not a nation, and living and practicing New Orleans is not technically a religion, I find that aspects of Benedict Anderson’s statements about

¹⁷ This is not to say that creativity in re-defining traditions is discouraged; quite the contrary. One example might be the “Tit Rex parade, a four-year-old Bywater marching club that features miniature (*petit*, or “tit” for short) floats that are pulled by hand. The name “Tit Rex plays off of Rex, which in some senses is understood to be the most powerful Mardi Gras organization; Rex crowns the King of Mardi Gras each year. The case of “Tit Rex, however, also illustrates a gap between old-school New Orleans institutions and young people who are potentially new to the city; in 2011, Rex demanded that “Tit Rex change their name, with threat of legal action.

nationalism apply. He defines a nation as imagined (though the small population of New Orleans means that there are fewer *unknown* “fellow-members”), as limited by boundaries, as being sovereign (in attitude), and as imagined as a community (Anderson 2006:6-7). Just like nations but to a lesser degree, New Orleans is “understood by aligning it, not with self-consciously held political ideologies, but with the large cultural systems that preceded it, out of which—as well as against which—it came into being (2006:12).” I maintain that New Orleans’ cultural rituals are performed in a manner similar to a religion, with as much fervor as a zealous religious sect.

Imagined Space. Transitioning into another use of the term “imagined,” I will now briefly examine the spatial imaginings not of the residents and cultural participants, but of city representatives and “outsiders.” The tourism industry in particular has for decades profited off of musical narratives that are quite imaginative at best, and at worst, offensive. New Orleans as a city has one of the strongest “brands” or “flavors” of all metropolitan areas of the United States.¹⁸ This city branding primarily equates, of course, to the claim to jazz. Tourists who flock to New Orleans have a vague idea of the city as being an adult playground for lust and excess, ideas that are often associated with jazz music, despite the lack of truth to this assumption. Consider the following article entitled “Birthplace of Jazz,” from New Orleans Online.com, the

¹⁸ As music is essential to New Orleans tourism, and therefore to the local economy, musical associations are a critical aspect of most, if not all, of the exchanges of goods and services in the city. Music in New Orleans affects city planning, the job force, employment, social habits, and even the school system. Henri Lefebvre proposed a neo-Marxist theory of space as being socially produced. He also stated that space has been reproduced to serve the hegemonic capitalist system (1991). I believe one could apply this theory to musical spaces that thrive within a system to increase tourism.

“Official Tourism Site of the City of New Orleans.” This site is owned by the New Orleans Tourism Marketing Corporation.

In the late 19th century, while the rest of America was stomping their feet to military marches... New Orleans was dancing to VooDoo rhythms. New Orleans was the only place in the New World where slaves were allowed to own drums. VooDoo rituals were openly tolerated, and well attended by the rich as well as the poor, by blacks and whites, by the influential and the anonymous. It was in New Orleans that the bright flash of European horns ran into the dark rumble of African drums; it was like lightning meeting thunder. The local cats took that sound and put it together with the music they heard in churches and the music they heard in barrooms, and they blew a new music, a wild, jubilant music. It made people feel free. It made people feel alive! It made people get up and dance. And they danced to the birth of American music. And nobody played it like they played it in New Orleans, a city already used to feeling jubilant, and expressing its jubilation. A city where you could dance down the middle of the street, in the middle of the daytime, in the middle of the week, and instead of people wondering why you weren't at work, they'd be wondering how they could join you. The glory of New Orleans is that it's still that way today. Everyone loves a parade. Everything is touched by the joyous anarchy called New Orleans Jazz. And everybody's middle name is "Celebrate." (New Orleans Tourism Marketing Corporation 1996-2011).

The New Orleans Tourism Marketing Corporation was established in the 1980s, as part of a city plan to increase tourist revenue. With the mention of “VooDoo rituals,” the “dark rumble of African drums,” and the use of words like “joyous” and “celebrate,” the corporation can highlight and edit romanticized and exoticized notions of New Orleans culture already existent in American minds. New Orleans is known as the home of jazz, and is awash with “gumbo” narratives and jazz hero lore, in addition to non-musical imaginings like vampires and voodoo practices. Connie Zeanah Atkinson would call these cultural imaginings “fantasies of sin and danger (2004:173).”

Racial spaces in New Orleans are also often imagined or exaggerated. Textbook definitions of New Orleans culture and local ethnic expression describe New Orleans residents as complex products resulting from ethnic mixing, yet at the same time, they

are romanticized and simplified. The image of enslaved Africans dancing with abandon to dark African rhythms in Congo Square is preferred over that of high-society Creoles performing in a symphony orchestra, of “professors” who taught their students how to play jazz while stressing the importance of sight-reading abilities rather than playing by ear, or of Cuban influences that gave jazz its “Latin tinge” (Roberts 1979). Some ethnic groups, such as Jews and Italians, are spatially removed from history, despite their connection to and influence on the music scene in New Orleans. The story of Louis Armstrong growing up in a boys’ home for at-risk orphans is an oft-repeated tale, but the culturally complicated fact that he always wore a Star of David around his neck is not. Despite an international respect for jazz, representations of Armstrong continue to follow caricatures of minstrelsy.

To continue our analysis of imagined spaces in New Orleans, we might examine some imagined musical neighborhoods. One can quickly get a sense of imagined space with a low-budget documentary entitled *Storyville: The Naked Dance* (Harris and Craig 2000). This film is meant to be an informative and educational look at the semi-legal red light district that existed from 1898 to 1917. Consider the description provided on the DVD cover:

...Set against the stark backdrop of Victorian morality, 2000 prostitutes worked the 16 square blocks of twinkling lights and rat-infested alleyways. Storyville's gateway Basin Street, made legendary through song, was lined with extravagant bordellos -- from the infamous octoroon madam Lulu White's Mahogany Hall to Emma Johnson's mansion, where sex circuses were regularly staged. It was a district filled with greed, excitement, sin, and the raucous rhythms of a new American music: jazz.

The narrator speaks in a sultry tone, and continues the lore that jazz began in the brothels of the gritty Storyville section of New Orleans. Some jazz historians (including Rose and Souchon 1967, Hersch 2007) would be quick to point out that jazz also

developed out of less lascivious and more public contexts such as picnics, ball games, and churches. Picnics are not sexy, however, and do not attract tourists or inspire myth; they have not stood the test of time in the American imagination. Thus, Storyville remains the somewhat mythical home of jazz. Stuart Hall (2003) would likely attribute this spatial imagining to the fetishization of the Black body, and for the need to essentialize an African American musical tradition into a base, sensual activity rather than a high art form.

Complicating the issue, however, is the acceptance of these imagined narratives by locals, including the marginalized musical community. The stories are retold and propagated not only by New Orleanians in general, but often by the musicians and cultural representatives themselves. Concern for authenticity and accuracy are more likely to be expressed by music scholars or other music enthusiasts who are not the practitioners of these cultural traditions. Musicians will encourage these narratives if it means they are better able to feed their families. They are also largely unconcerned about “purity” or “authenticity” in their musical practices, racial or otherwise.

Summary

In this chapter, I have provided a basic contextual framework for an overview of New Orleans history; described the unique racial and ethnic mixes that developed in New Orleans; mentioned some important musical places; defined a generalized New Orleans musical sound; and discussed spatial conceptions and semiotics in New

Orleans. I hope that the usefulness of my brevity outweighs any disrespect to the traditions I gloss over by necessity.

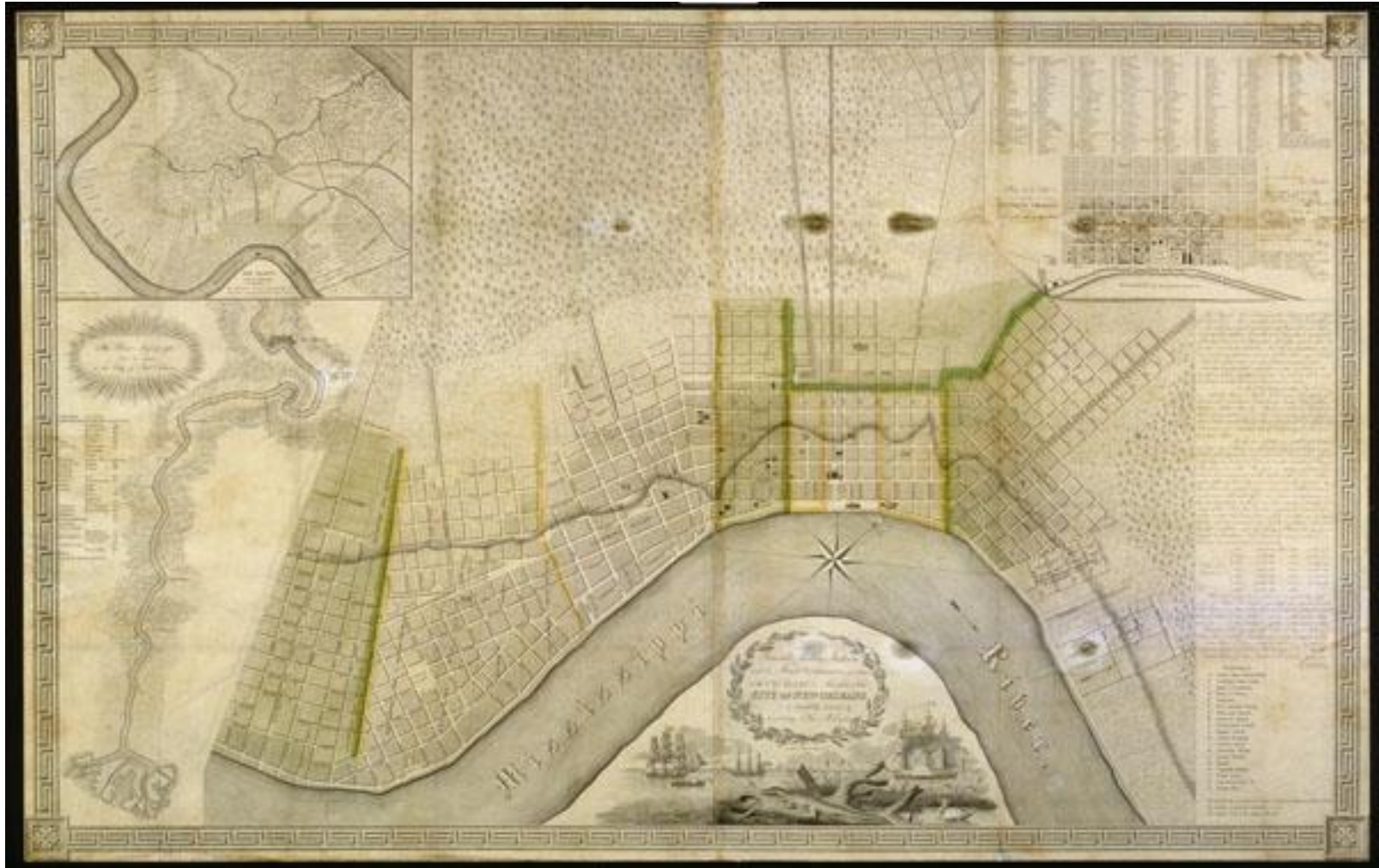


Fig. 6: Map of New Orleans from 1829, entitled "Plan of the City of New-Orleans." Created by Francis B. Ogden/Peter Maverick. The Historic New Orleans Collection, accession no. 1971.21 i-v.



Fig. 7: A more current street map of New Orleans.



Fig. 8: The Dew-Drop Inn. Photo by the author, August 2008.



Fig. 9: Queen Wanda of the Cheyenne Warriors, a Mardi Gras Indian Tribe. Photo by the author, uptown on Saint Joseph's Night, 2011. Used with permission.



Fig. 10: Ad hoc samba drumming in the Bywater neighborhood, before the procession of Saint Anne, early Mardi Gras morning, 2011. Photo by the author.



Fig. 11: The North Side Skull and Bone Gang using tambourines and rattles while chanting, to wake us up and remind us of our mortality. On the porch of the Backstreet Cultural Museum, early Mardi Gras morning, 2011. Photo by the author.

Chapter 3: Second Lines and Place Attachment

Introduction

In this chapter, I introduce perhaps the most fundamental area of inquiry regarding people's musical experiences with space through an analysis of the ways in which people develop a "sense of place," or how they form "attachment" to places. Some designers and planners use the term "sense of place" to explain the meaning created between a person and the person's physical environment; John Agnew has defined "sense of place" as the subjective and emotional attachment a person has to a place (1989). In my exploration of people's subjective and emotional attachments to place, I mainly draw from theoretical frameworks inspired by the early humanistic geographers—Yi Fu Tuan (1977, 1990), David Seamon (1979, 1980), Edward Relph (1976), and so forth—who approached place by emphasizing subjectivity and experience, and who drew from existential and phenomenological philosophies (Cresswell 2004). Tuan's term *topophilia* describes the bond people have with their places: "it can be defined broadly to include all of the human being's affective ties with the material environment (1990:93)." The synonymous term "place attachment" is used less often by geographers, being favored by environmental psychologists (Low & Altman 1992), designers (Sancar 2003), and the occasional sociologist (Milligan 1998). I find "place attachment" to be a more straight-forward term, and I employ it in this chapter. Although ethnomusicologists very often describe people's affective connections with their places—communities, cities, and nations—they seldom cite humanistic geography theorists in their work. And not surprisingly, humanistic geographers do not, as a

practice, analyze how music may be an essential factor in the formation of affective bonds with places.

Some scholars view place as home (Seamon 1979, Bachelard 1994, Rose 1993), and some interpret place as process or practice (Seamon 1980). The musical case study in this chapter—the New Orleans “second line” parading tradition—facilitates place attachment, through the use of music, in a manner that clearly encompasses both place as home *and* place as process. As I will illustrate, second lines musically reify places that are “home” to the participants in the tradition. They also interpret space through a practice that is not merely quotidian but not exclusively ritualistic; the spaces the parades inhabit are used in daily life, but they are also highlighted through movement and music during special occasions.

These points will be explored as I examine the musical mapping of space in the second line parading tradition. Before these issues are addressed, however, I shall offer an explanation of the second line parade and brass band traditions in New Orleans. I will then delve deeper into place attachment, using North Claiborne Avenue—a common street included in second line parade routes—as a spatial case study. I will then explore the ways in which New Orleans second line parades, along with New Orleans brass bands, bond people to places, by approaching place simultaneously as home and as process.

Second Line Parades and New Orleans Brass Bands

On a predictably hot and sticky Sunday afternoon during Labor Day weekend in September 2009, a few hundred people gathered outside of Sweet Lorraine's Jazz Club on St. Claude Avenue in New Orleans, Louisiana. They were celebrating the sixteenth anniversary of the Black Men of Labor, a social aide and pleasure club that was formed in 1993 to acknowledge local working class African American men. Vendors called out to advertise their homemade barbeque and "ice cold" beer, which they sold from the back of their pickup trucks. Neighbors socialized with each other while they waited. After sufficient anticipation had built, the Treme Brass Band started up the beat and the crowd immediately began to move to the sounds of a traditional New Orleans Brass Band; the interlocking rhythm supplied by tuba and drums and the head arrangement of "Lord, Lord, Lord, You Sure Been Good to Me"¹⁹ rang out from the trumpets, trombones, saxophones, and clarinet. The members of the Black Men of Labor strutted out the door of the club one at a time, showing off their elaborately decorated pink, green, and white suits with matching umbrellas. The Treme Brass Band with their mentored students the Young New Orleans Traditional Brass Band, as well as the New Birth Brass Band, slowly inserted themselves between the two divisions of the club members. After the members and musicians established a general sense of a procession, vast numbers of onlookers-turned-participants joined behind them and flanked them along either side. Dancing while marching became the mode of movement. Some of the

¹⁹ I am not completely certain that this was the actual first piece performed at this particular parade, as I did not bring a video camera. However, "Lord, Lord, Lord, You Sure Been Good to Me" is a popular opening number for the Treme Brass Band.

most talented dancers kept close to the brass bands in order to simultaneously supply and feed off of the musical energy. At a couple of points, the two divisions of the Black Men of Labor stopped the forward progression for an interlude of partially choreographed, highly stylized dancing with their umbrellas.

The parade continued. Hundreds of enthusiastic revelers, escorted and pushed along by police on motorcycles and horses, completely filled the West(ish) bound four-lane North Rampart Street, causing traffic problems on the other side. After three quarters of a mile, the parade marked its first important place: Congo Square, an area, within what is now Louis Armstrong Park, where enslaved Africans would once gather on Sundays for music, dancing, and commerce (see Chapter 2). The Black Men of Labor then moved directly across the street to Donna's Bar and Grill—formerly known as “the brass band headquarters”—and took a brief respite for drinks and bologna sandwiches. This parade, known as a “second line parade” or simply a “second line,” continued to travel the streets of the Tremé neighborhood for over three hours, down major streets and narrow neighborhood streets, under the overpass, stopping for food and drinks at various points along the pre-determined route. What is the motivation behind holding these parades? Are they celebratory displays of community pride? A way to pay respect to cultural forebearers? An opportunity to invert everyday social roles? All of these explanations are valid, and each individual participant will have a different experience while parading. To “second liners” and those fascinated with New Orleans culture, this tradition serves as a vital practice of historical continuity as well as an opportunity to socialize with other community members.

Certainly, the City of New Orleans has no shortage of parades—a remarkable accomplishment considering the slow rate of residential return post-Katrina. Locals

consider parading to be an essential part of life, continually invent new excuses to have them.²⁰ The parades for Mardi Gras are perhaps the most grandiose—the 2010 carnival season included no less than ninety-six “official” parades in the greater New Orleans area within the month-long span leading up to Mardi Gras. These sorts of parades share common characteristics; they are organized by Mardi Gras “krewes” (social clubs formed explicitly for the purpose of organizing Mardi Gras parades in their name), they tend to feature large decorated floats with masked riders, they include between seven and thirty high school marching bands and dance troupes, and they feature numerous walking “krewes” (social groups who march in the parade for a fee). They interact with the stationary parade watchers by dispersing coveted “throws” such as beads, doubloons, plastic cups, toys, or coconuts. These highly-organized parades are well-known for encouraging consumerism and excess, and they advertise and publish their routes in local newspapers and magazines.

Locals describe “second line parades,” or “second lines” as an entirely separate category of parades.²¹ Second lines are foot parades—no significant floats are used,

²⁰ For example, after the Saints (the New Orleans National Football League team) won the playoff game that qualified them to play in the 2010 Super Bowl—the ultimate challenge in American football—more than one “official” parade was held to celebrate this fact, in addition to smaller second line-style parades that spontaneously occurred immediately after the game ended. When the Saints won the Super Bowl itself, several smaller parades were held. Then the city hosted a massive parade to honor the team members. An estimated 800,000 people attended this event, indicating that it rivaled the biggest Mardi Gras parades.

²¹ The etymology of the term “second line” is contested. The general understanding is that it stems from a binary between the notion of the main line, which comprises the members of the club and the brass bands; and the second line, which constitutes the community members who feel inclined to join in on the activity. Over time, “second line” came to describe the entire event, emphasizing the participatory nature of the tradition—in fact, “second line” takes a verb form in addition to several noun forms, and can refer to the parade, the process, or a person (a “second-liner”). It is also used in a general way to describe this style of parade, meaning that a second line can occur separate from a social and pleasure club. For the purposes of this essay, I take the second line parade to mean any community-based, sponsored parade,

although a couple of cars may be present to carry the parade “kings” and “queens.” The emphasis on the street is the key to understanding the value in second lines, for the street is the stage that second liners use for self-expression. Through the streets, parade participants move as a solid mass of music and energy, led up front by musicians and important community figures. Second lines travel great distances through various neighborhoods, despite the likelihood of intense heat or rain. As they progress they tend to pick up more participants; there are always more people second lining than watching. The loud music—always supplied by several brass bands—continues throughout the parade, except during official stops. When the second line moves, the music does too; the brass bands are the propellant as well as the glue that keeps the parade together.

The second line parading tradition in New Orleans dates back to the nineteenth century. During Reconstruction and Jim Crow, Black men and women, including those that were formerly considered Creole, were denied burial insurance coverage by White-controlled insurance agencies. In response, Blacks formed their own social aid and benevolent societies to provide social services like funerals; the New Orleans Freedmen’s Aid Association, for example, was founded in 1865 to provide loans and education to newly freed slaves. When a member died, she or he would be rewarded with a full burial service, complete with a brass band. This “funeral with music” tradition was modeled after White military burial services, in terms of the method of honoring and paying respect to the deceased as well as the instrumentation of the band (Knowles 1996). The version created by the Black community, however, was known for

with no floats, that describes itself as a second line, focusing mainly on those that are sponsored by social and pleasure clubs.

its “hot,” lively, syncopated rhythms—the precursor to jazz—and for its high level of community participation. These parades publicly celebrated the life of the deceased while mourning their loss. Roots of this celebratory style of funeral parade, including its performance traditions (Roach 1996) and the bobbing of decorated umbrellas and the waving of handkerchiefs, can be traced back to Cuba, Haiti (Regis 1999:487; Sands 1991), and West Africa (Berry 1988; Owens 1999; Siler 1999; Smith 1994). Other cultural influences likely emerge from Catholic parading traditions, most notably from Italian (Boulard 1988), Spanish, and French residents. This combination of influences created a parading tradition with a much different performance style from the comparatively stoic parades of the Protestant and Anglo “Americans” outside of Louisiana—such parades retained a closer resemblance to military parades.

Out of this “funeral with music” tradition, which some refer to as a “jazz funeral,” the second line parade was born. Over a century later, the practice continues; each social aid and pleasure club celebrates its existence with an annual parade, normally occurring on a Sunday afternoon between September and June, and hires local brass bands to march in the parade with them. According to the Backstreet Cultural Museum, there were forty-six second line parades scheduled by New Orleans social aid and pleasure clubs during the 2009/2010 parading season.

The first Black brass bands in New Orleans functioned much like any other brass band in the United States, performing marches from arrangements that they would read. The earliest brass band to become known for playing in the distinctive “hot” style—the precursor to jazz—was the Tuxedo Brass Band, sometime after 1910 (Burns 2006:2). Bands in this early era, such as the Excelsior Brass Band and the Onward Brass Band, would have ten to twelve players: two trumpets, two trombones, a clarinet, a tuba,

baritone and alto horns, a snare drum, and a bass drum. In 1920, the Eureka Brass Band helped usher in a new era, featuring more improvisation and less written music. During the Great Depression, saxophones began replacing the alto and baritone horns. Brass bands had fallen out of style by the 1960's. A revival occurred in the 1970s, in large part through the formation of the Dirty Dozen Brass Band, assembled by banjoist Danny Barker, with members schooled in the Fairview Baptist Church Brass Band. These musicians brought a new level of virtuosity to the genre, enriching the sound to include strong influences from funk and R&B. Bands that lead the scene today, such as the Rebirth Brass Band, the Hot 8 Brass Band, and particularly the Soul Rebels, incorporate elements of hip hop into their music, in addition to funk and R&B. The Soul Rebels strongly favor performances on stage in clubs, but the Hot 8 Brass Band still frequents the streets. Members of the Rebirth Brass Band participate in second lines as well, when they are not on tour, and they continue a long-standing Tuesday night gig tradition at the Maple Leaf.

The musical style of New Orleans brass bands is completely distinctive from other types of brass bands and marching bands. In Chapter 2, I described characteristics of a generalized New Orleans musical sound; these characteristics also describe the New Orleans brass band sound. At the most fundamental level, the sense of time is characteristically New Orleanian. Referred to as “playing between the cracks (Moore 2005),” the New Orleans second line beat is neither straight nor swung, despite the connection to jazz. Additionally, the basic beat carries remnants of a 2-3 clave, most likely influenced by Cuban rhythms (Moore 2005; Roberts 1979; Washburne 1997). It also tends to accent beat four in the second measure of each two-measure phrase, referred to as the “Big Four (Moore 2005).” Other distinguishing musical characteristics

include frequent call-and-response segments with second liners and the use of head arrangements. These attributes identify New Orleans brass band music as particular to New Orleans—a self-identity that is celebrated and rearticulated.

Similarly, the musical canon differentiates New Orleans brass band music. New Orleans brass bands tend to recycle spirituals, gospel hymns, and Tin Pan Alley era pop tunes, in addition to newer soul, funk, and rap influences. Brass bands frequently borrow—some would claim steal—their competitors’ compositions. The repertoire of songs, therefore, remains within the realm of what a casual fan would recognize and expect to hear on the street. One benefit to this practice is that every second line brings to the participant the feeling that they are experiencing a long-standing tradition. The predictability of what the band might play makes for powerful and emotionally-laden musical experiences. For example, many funeral processions will begin with the dirge “Just a Closer Walk with Thee.” The association between the melody of this song and the loss of a loved one is so strong that the first three pick-up notes can bring one to tears.

Place Attachment in New Orleans

Why do second lines take the routes they do, and what determines where they will stop? Not surprisingly, second line parade routes are designed to highlight places that are important to the supporting organization, which is normally a social and pleasure club. They originate at the club headquarters, make stops along the route at favorite local bars, and even walk past the homes of deceased members (Regis 2001). Secondly, parade routes are subject to some restriction from city ordinances; large

parades that involve floats are only allowed on major thoroughways, and with little exception, none are allowed in the French Quarter²². Next, parade streets need to be easy to traverse. Parade routes will always include at least a couple of major streets, in part to help advertise the parade to a greater number of people. Some second liners, however, often prefer the intimacy of the smaller streets, when the group is forced to keep close together (Francis 2010). Lastly, smooth streets are preferred to those full of potholes and bumps, to prevent people from tripping (Jones 2009).

Parade planners design routes for reasons that go beyond practicality, however. The phenomenon we are about to explore can be explained with one short statement: memory runs deep in New Orleans. As participants of an insular city, New Orleans residents place great value on the places that they deem important. The limited number of places that exist in New Orleans condenses the meaning involved in each one. The small and compact number of places, combined with the city's intense history, makes for some very important areas—over time, wards, neighborhoods, landmarks, streets, and buildings become imbued with meaning and emotion. The various parading traditions in New Orleans deepen these grooves, reinforcing the meaning associated with places on an annual basis.

The notion of place attachment, mentioned in this chapter's introduction, is a useful tool in our analysis. Simply put, place attachment is a person's emotional bond

²² The Krewe du Vieux Mardi Gras parade, as well as second lines sponsored by the French Market Corporation, are some exceptions. Though these parades are smaller than typical Mardi Gras and second line parades, and do not use tractor-pulled floats, it is unclear to the author where the municipal language exists to allow for these exceptions. The New Orleans Code of Ordinances states that: "No parade route shall include any of the streets bounded by Canal Street, Esplanade Avenue, Rampart Street and the Mississippi River, except that parade routes may include Canal Street and Rampart Street." These boundary lines form the French Quarter.

with a particular place. Place attachment is useful in studying the process of producing space, by transforming space as abstract idea into place as meaningful space.

Geographer and philosopher Yi-Fu Tuan explains the idea most clearly; “Space is transformed into place as it acquires definition and meaning” (Tuan 1977:136) and “what begins as undifferentiated space becomes place as we get to know it better and endow it with value” (1977:6). Tuan is one of the few spatial theorists unafraid to use the term “love” when describing the mechanism of place attachment, and he stresses the importance of personal history in the process. “Awareness of the past is an important element in the love of a place (1990:99).”

Attachment to places within New Orleans is reflective of a greater attachment to the city as a whole, which I have suggested in Chapters 1 and 2 in regards to authenticity, dedication to the city, and the importance of spatial semiotics. The attachment runs deep enough to enable the city’s reconstruction and to further propagate New Orleans cultural lore. This point goes counter to the exclusionary element of a statement made by Fahriye Hazer Sancar, one of the few scholars who have worked with place attachment and music. She studied the establishment and expression of place attachment in Istanbul songs in Turkish classical music from 1700 to the present, declaring that music in general, and Turkish music in particular, captures the essence of the bond between a place and its people (2003:274). She states, “Is this type of place attachment unique? A review of the scholarly literature on aesthetic perception shows that it is rather unusual to find a city to be the object of deep love. The West is ambivalent about cities...(2003:287).” I would argue that songs about New Orleans, like Istanbul songs, also express “in a most public way” a love for the city, even though the time span they cover may be closer to one century, rather than many. A few such love

songs include “Do You Know what it Means to Miss New Orleans?” (written by Eddie DeLange and Louis Alter and performed by many), “My Darling New Orleans” (written and performed by L’il Queenie & The Percolators), “Crescent City Morning” (written and performed by Swanson and the Wiseowl), and “Summertime in New Orleans” (written and performed by Anders Osborne). I would estimate that there are at least a dozen more songs that directly express a love for the city of New Orleans, and many dozens more that do so indirectly.

New Orleanians become quite attached to smaller places within New Orleans as well. They have had, and continue to have, a remarkable ability to form attachments to buildings, parks, streets, and so forth—alternatively defined as paths, edges, districts, nodes, and landmarks by Kevin Lynch (1960). The love for places extends beyond the individual home, to places that are enjoyed by communities. A few places that enjoy special attachment include the Superdome, Congo Square, the intersection of Second and Dryades,²³ and Hansen’s Sno-bliz.²⁴ Places that no longer exist remain in people’s memories, too, and are still used in the local lexicon—Charity Hospital, for example, or “K&B.”²⁵ A few songs written about particular paths and districts in New Orleans include “Basin Street Blues” (written by Spencer Williams), “Tremé Song” (written and performed by John Boutté), and “Bourbon Street Parade” (written by Paul Barbarin).

²³ The intersection at Second Street and Dryades Street (referred to as simply “Second and Dryades”) is an important location for uptown (as opposed to downtown) Mardi Gras Indian rituals. It is the most significant meeting place for uptown Indian activity on Saint Joseph’s Night, the annual event where Mardi Gras Indians wander the streets in their suits and enact mock battles with other Indian tribes. The building—the H&R Bar—is also the headquarters of the Wild Magnolias Mardi Gras Indian tribe.

²⁴ One of the best known “snoball” or “snowball” establishments in New Orleans that serve flavored shaved ice.

²⁵ This term “K&B purple” is used to describe a certain color of purple. The color was used extensively in the décor, uniforms, and packaging of private label goods in the local K&B drug store chain, which was bought out in 1997.

Second lines are a communal, public expression of attachment to local places. Figure Seven is a route sheet for an uptown second line parade, which I present as an example of the sorts of places that second lines draw attention to, and thereby encourage place attachment for. Such fliers are distributed through channels used in the second line community, for example by handing them out at the prior week's second line. Second line route sheets always advertise the social and pleasure club, the date of the event, any people who are being specially honored or memorialized by the parade, and a textual (and sometimes visual) description of the route the parade will take. This includes the starting and ending points, the places where the parade will stop, and the streets it will travel down and the direction it will travel in. For example, the 2011 VIP Ladies & Kids Annual Second Line started at Silky's; stopped at The Other Place, Turning Point (home of We Are One Social Aid and Pleasure Club), Horace's, and Edna's Place; and disbanded at Tapps II. These stops are local uptown neighborhood bars and clubs that are supported almost exclusively by African American patrons. The parade transversed larger streets such as St. Charles, Washington, and Louisiana, but also included smaller, residential streets. It paused mid-route to honor Magnolia Shorty, a well-known female bounce emcee who was brutally murdered in 2010. (See Fig. 19 for the route sheet.)

North Claiborne Avenue

One street that is important to the Black community and that is frequently visited in downtown second line parades is North Claiborne Avenue; it therefore serves as an

ideal case study to discuss the notion of place attachment. North Claiborne Avenue was once a beautiful oak-lined street in the center of a thriving middle-class African American community in the historic Tremé neighborhood. As a social and commercial strip, North Claiborne Avenue was a “bustling center of minority-owned and operated retail and service shops (King 2001).” Residents used the shady “neutral ground” (the local term for the grassy median that separates a two-way street system) as a park and public social center. In the mid-to-late 1960’s, the vitality of this street was sacrificed for the construction of the Interstate 10 highway. The elevated superhighway was erected in such a way as to directly cover the North Claiborne neutral ground. The implementation of this decision immediately lowered housing values, devastated local businesses, and caused a rapid outmigration of residents in the surrounding community.

There was always controversy surrounding this decision. A group of architects, social scientists, engineers, and other community members formed the Claiborne Avenue Design Team (CADT), initially pressing City Hall for North Claiborne Avenue revitalization in 1970. In 1976, they presented a multi-use study in response to neighborhood dissatisfaction. Contributor Rudy Lombard stated that “the general situation among residents of the Claiborne Avenue corridor is one of noticeable frustration, permeated by a quiet but evolving tension (Claiborne Avenue Design Team 1976).”²⁶ The proposal failed, and North Claiborne Avenue remains an eyesore today.²⁷

²⁶ The origins of the CADT Study are in the 1969-70 efforts of the Tambourine and Fan Club (T&F), a “black, neighborhood based education and cultural organization working in the 6th and 7th Wards of downtown New Orleans (Claiborne Avenue Design Team 1976).” It was important to this group to include plenty of neighborhood level participation.

Yet, despite being a loud, dusty, concrete wasteland directly below an elevated highway, North Claiborne Avenue remains a popular site to include in second line parade routes, in addition to Mardi Gras Indian ceremonies and “jazz funerals.” Curiously, while these parades are full of music and energy from start to finish, the North Claiborne overpass is one place that enjoys special attention. The moment the second liners are under the I-10 overpass, the group stops its forward movement, and the energy and enthusiasm greatly intensifies. The brass bands play at a much greater volume, and participants use the opportunity to dance at a heightened level. It seems as though second liners and brass band musicians plan ahead for this increase in energy expenditure by conserving their movement and volume a bit in the blocks leading up to the overpass; the anticipation thus builds as the bridge nears. Once under the bridge, the horns scream out, the drums play louder, the crowd closes in, and the more talented of the second liners show off their best dancing moves, at times bringing their bodies low to the ground or directly onto the pavement.

There may be several reasons for including North Claiborne as a parade street. Practically speaking, it may simply be a central vein that is wide enough for a parade and that helps advertise its existence to passers-by. For some second liners, the overpass may be a welcome source of shade from the hot Louisiana sun, and the break may be an optional moment to catch one’s breath, at least in terms of forward movement. I know for certain that some musicians like the natural amplification provided by the

²⁷ We might compare the socio-economic effects of the I-10 cutting through the Tremé to the construction of the Cross Bronx Expressway in New York (Caro 1974). This freeway, constructed between 1948 and 1972, has been widely criticized for furthering the decay of a primarily African American borough.

reverberation of sound waves bouncing off the concrete (see Sakakeeny 2010 for acoustemological considerations regarding this particular soundscape).

Despite these practical reasons, I believed some second line participants to be fully cognizant of the heavy meanings implied by the continued use of this space—acknowledging the historical importance of this former community locus in the process. Parades, after all, publicly display their refusal to change cultural traditions simply because the city changed the physical makeup of the space. I assumed, therefore, that second liners would outwardly express a sense of anger at the place having been decimated. When I ask residents how they feel about the overpass, however, their responses are not always as politically motivated as I had expected (see Chapter Five for more on politics and power in relation to second line parades). Some of the people I've spoken to see the loss of the former oak lined avenue as a shame, but direct their frustrations away from the past. Curiously, they see the section of North Claiborne as no less important for its change in physical structure. They completely flip the assumed value system on its head, disallowing the “powers that be” the opportunity to denigrate their culture any further. This phenomenon is described by Christy Grimes, a photographer who documents second lines and Mardi Gras Indians. I asked her whether there were any downtown places of importance that came to mind when she thought of second lines and other related events:

The Claiborne underpass...because...it's a nice sound chamber. And also because the Claiborne neutral ground that that overpass kinda killed, doesn't seem to have really killed whatever was going on when that was still a neutral ground. Have you noticed people are always doin' stuff under the bridge? As if the bridge wasn't there? I think [people still hang out there] because there was a power to tradition and precedent that was strong enough that even paving over the neutral ground and putting a noisy freeway over it—that was where people congregated for certain reasons, and they just weren't gonna stop! I think...that it's like an ancestral—ancestral is a strong word, but—that was kind of like a sacred ground

in a way. And I think it's an expression of the unwillingness to let that—a power of place is what I think is expressed by people's continuing to do what they do, in spite of the changes.

The phrase “power of place,” one that Grimes uses on her own accord, but that is also attributed to John A. Agnew (1989), is fitting terminology to describe the extent of place attachment that has occurred with this section of North Claiborne Avenue. It speaks to the agency of the individual and of the community to reclaim space and to maintain the value inherent in space, despite socio-economic disempowerment. These second liners may not have the means to affect decision makers in City Hall, but what they *can* control is their *response* to the architectural changes.

The Overpass as Home, the Overpass as Process

To help sort out some of the varying phenomena of spatial conception and experience, I will approach these instances of place attachment by viewing place as home and place as process. Place as home and place as process are two frameworks that some spatial theorists have used to describe how people form emotional attachments to places.

The above described uses of the space below the overpass on North Claiborne Avenue—as a Mardi Gras Indian meeting place and as an area of intense music and dancing during second line parades—suggest that active second line participants conceive of this section of North Claiborne Avenue with all the emotional attachments of home. This method harkens back to the idea of the “dwelling” as proposed in the phenomenology of Martin Heidegger (1971). He claims that the domestic space that is

the home is the central point of reference from which other action occurs. Inspired by Heidegger's dwelling, Seamon (1979), Gaston Bachelard (1994), and Tuan (1977, 1990) have written of the home space as a center of meaning; as a place that is understood in a primal way; and as an intimate space of rest. As philosopher Bachelard states, home space is intimate and intensely experienced space; "For our house is our corner of the world. As has often been said, it is our first universe, a real cosmos in every sense of the word (1994:4)." Another common description of home space is that home is where people feel "rooted." David Seamon explains "rootedness" as "the power of home to organize the habitual, bodily stratum of the person's lived-space. Literally, the home roots the person spatially, providing a physical center for departure and return (1979:79)." He lists rootedness as one of five aspects of at-homeness, the others being appropriation, regeneration, at-easeness, and warmth. As a place with a deep, personal history, continual usage of the space on North Claiborne helps center and root the community. They feel a sense of ownership, get restored, feel at ease, and be nurtured.

The area underneath the North Claiborne overpass can be conceived of as home for the simple reason that the area itself is in the neighborhood of residents, particularly Black residents, who follow and participate in the Black traditions of second lining, masking Indian, and actively maintaining membership in social aid and pleasure clubs. This area of North Claiborne, as explained above, lies as a central vein in the historically Black Tremé neighborhood. And, as drummer and baritone horn player Gene Harding explains, it is close to several major housing projects whose many residents have had ties to this culture:

Before Louis Armstrong integrated Bourbon Street—he was the first Black person to really play on Bourbon Street—so before Bourbon Street, you had, they call it Basin Street. And you hear people sing about the "Basin

Street Blues,” well that’s where all the Black artists were. And that’s where everybody wanted to go, cause that was where some of the best musicians were. And that was right around the Tremé area, and that’s why you have such a strong influence of music in Tremé. And also, later on, you have something called the Tambourine and Fan, which is under Claiborne. So they would gather, it became a big gathering place under the Claiborne bridge, which is right by two major projects, the Iberville, and...I forgot the other project [the Lafitte Projects]. But these were major projects that are no longer in existence now,²⁸ all the projects been torn down, but these people would mainly come out the Calliope, the Iberville, the Saint Thomas Projects, the Melpomene Projects. All of these projects, that’s where all of these people lived. I’m talking about the Indians in general and the people that were in these [social and pleasure] clubs. The New Orleans projects took up probably...the projects had to have at least a third of the people in the city. You gotta realize that the Florida and Desire Housing Projects were the largest housing projects in the world... (2009)

The North Claiborne overpass is thus an accessible place for many of the musicians and second liners who live in downtown New Orleans. The area is a special kind of home for the Black musicians, Mardi Gras Indians, and community participants whose families have historical ties to the area. Such participants will have spent their formative years building layers and layers of meaning upon these spaces.

“Home” in this sense is not, of course, the literal house one grew up in, but the greater neighborhood and the places found therein. As many New Orleanians spend much of their time in outside space (front porches, streets, parks, etc.), this is hardly a stretch of the definitions supplied by Heidegger, Seamon, and Bachelard, philosophers and geographers who I presume had a vastly different home experiences than Black New

²⁸ Actually, the Iberville Projects remain standing . The Lafitte Projects are being demolished and redeveloped, following a U.S. Department of Housing and Urban Development decree. The Calliope Projects are being demolished. The St. Thomas Development was demolished, and is being replaced by a new mixed income development. The Melpomene Projects are slowly undergoing demolition.

Orleans residents in the Tremé.²⁹ The emotions associated with a New Orleans street corner halfway between a school and a levee can have just as much personal meaning as a frequently visited nook inside a quiet European house. Indeed, when describing formative musical places to me, native New Orleanians often talk about outside places like front porches, where musical mentors ran through scales, or the field in which their high school marching band practiced.

Nevertheless, the local understanding of place as home ties in with the aforementioned scholars' notions of home as center of meaning, intimate and primal space, and place of rootedness. It does *not*, however, necessarily follow the idea of home as a place of rest, for the space is continuously used, interacted with, and reinterpreted. By continuously visiting the space under the I-10 overpass, residents refuse to allow city planners to exclude them from space that was formerly theirs. Leaving would mean forgetting. Furthermore, residents reinterpret the use of this space for the purposes of reclamation. Residents have tried to beautify the dismal concrete by painting the supporting poles with images of local figures and scenes (see Fig. 17). They also embody North Claiborne by dancing on nearby porches or any other available surface. By continuously using, reinterpreting, and reclaiming the space, it remains home.

This interactional process brings me to the second area of humanistic geographical discourse that I am exploring to theorize on place attachment—that of place as process. By “process,” I mean place that is understood through movement—

²⁹ Feminist scholars have also critiqued this sort of utopian view of the home as being one of quiet, nurturing, intimate space. Feminist geographer Gillian Rose claims that the “enthusiasm for the home and for what is associated with the domestic, in the context of the erasure of women from humanistic studies, suggests to me that humanistic geographers are working with a masculinist notion of home/place (1993:53, as cited in Cresswell 2004).”

understood because the place is embodied. Here I find discomfort in the existing literature; process is either interpreted as an everyday habitual activity, or as an infrequent, ritualistic activity that is not part of everyday experience.

In the introduction to this chapter, I mentioned that second line parades function somewhere between a quotidian practice and a ritual activity. As special occasions, they are heightened experiences of space. Yet, the homage being paid is not to areas reserved for ritualistic use; they celebrate paths and places that are used in everyday life. Tuan (1977) explores time and place by viewing the world as process. “As a result of habitual use the path itself acquires a density of meaning and a stability that are characteristic traits of place. The path and the pauses along it together constitute a larger place—the home (1977:182).” Seamon takes the habitual framework even further. He says, “Cognition plays only a partial role in everyday spatial behavior; that a sizable portion of our everyday movements at all varieties of environmental scale is pre-cognitive and involves a prereflective knowledge *of the body* (1979:35).” He uses terminology borrowed from French phenomenologist Merleau-Ponty; for bodily intentionality, he uses the term “body-subject.” “Body-subject is the inherent capacity of the body to direct behaviors of the person intelligently, and thus function as a special kind of subject which expresses itself in a pre-conscious way usually described by such words as “automatic,” “habitual,” “involuntary,” and “mechanical (1979:41).” Body-subject thus learns through action. The body-subject moves in a “body-ballet,” which is “a set of integrated gestures and movements which sustain a particular task or aim (1979:54)” —operating as what he terms “time-space routines.” Lastly, “Body-ballets and time-space routines mix in a supportive physical environment to create a “place ballet”—an interaction of many time-space routines and body-ballets rooted in space (1979:56).” In place ballets, individual

routines meet regularly in time and space. Thus, in this view, the quotidian experience with space is a habitual process composed of individual routines intersecting in the places that people inhabit. Merleau-Ponty's approach to habitual body movement is similar to Pierre Bourdieu's approach to practical sense and the body; Bourdieu uses the term "doxa" to describe "the relationship of immediate adherence that is established in practice between a *habitus* and the field to which it is attuned, the pre-verbal taking-for-granted of the world that flows from practical sense... The relation to the body is a fundamental dimension of the *habitus*³⁰ that is inseparable from a relation to language and to time" (1990:68, 72).

This view of place as being experienced pre-cognitively, out of habit, has some application for the North Claiborne overpass: a daily place ballet occurs with commuters on the 1-10 above, and drivers, bicyclists, and pedestrians on the streets below. Daily use—shopping, transportation, parking, recreation—has ebbed and flowed in this space for hundreds of years, with its slowly changing physical form and conceptions for appropriate use.

However, during certain occasions, people put amplified energy into the space. By staging special events like second lines and Mardi Gras Indian meetings under the bridge, users elevate the space to a special place worthy of ritual ceremony. In this way, second lines are not indicative of quotidian uses of the streets in New Orleans. Frequent though they may be, they sustain a level of intensity that clearly indicates their importance. Though second lines are not necessarily conceived of as a religious

³⁰ See Chapter 7 for further analysis of the *habitus*.

experience, and not a rite of passage *per se*, there are elements of Victor Turner's concept of *communitas* (1969). This community of marginalized individuals temporarily functions as a "society as an unstructured or rudimentarily structured and relatively undifferentiated *comitatus*, community, or even communion of equal individuals who submit together to the general authority of the ritual elders (1969:96)," elders in this case being the members of the social aid and pleasure club. Furthermore, there are aspects of Christian and Catholic ritualistic traditions incorporated into second lines: 1) the act of the procession itself may draw in part from Catholic holiday processional traditions, and 2) the brass band's musical choices often include Christian gospel hymns. These elements are ritualistic signifiers of customs that originate outside the second line tradition, while other elements (the second line dance steps, the brass band traditions, and social and pleasure club suit styles) outline ritualistic customs that are specific to second lining.

The Efficacy of Music in New Orleans Place Attachment

Spatial theorists have seldom highlighted the role that musical experiences play in the process of place attachment. The above responses to place become more effective through the use of music, which in this tradition means New Orleans brass band music. I posit that parade participants, through the communal experiences of moving through space, enjoy an even deeper level of meaning when music is involved. In New Orleans, music strengthens the bonds of place attachment. Here the themes of identity, community, and memory come into play.

It is a fair generalization to state that, to a certain extent, New Orleans brass bands represent the city of New Orleans. As ethnomusicologist Matt Sakakeeny explains, “Assemblages of hundreds or even thousands of people marching to brass bands are fundamental to the practice of everyday life in New Orleans, and they generate a sonic landscape that provides the most identifiable acoustemological symbol of the city (2006:2).” More specifically, they identify a particular subset of New Orleans residents in terms of musicianship—the African American community that is directly involved with the longstanding traditions of second lines, jazz funerals, and Mardi Gras Indians. Brass band musicians grew up in the neighborhoods that these second lines traverse, and so their identities, at least in one dimension, are personified by the music. “Music conveys emotion directly, and the intensity of musical experience makes it particularly effective in producing a sense of identity and belonging (Sancar 2003:273).”

Lastly, New Orleans brass bands intensify memories through their style and their canon. Brass bands enliven the streets every Sunday, with their distinctive timbre, volume, and rhythm; the tradition transforms the streets and clubs, through practice, into a sort of communal home. Many of the tunes are performed over and over, played by multiple bands for generations. Despite stylistic changes over time, the core meaning held by brass bands ensures that second line memories will not die.

Whether second lines are quotidian or ritualistic, they help create a sense of community, which in turn helps reify the places the parades outline and inhabit. Music helps people form community when they move together as a unified group. Moving musically together creates a powerful feeling of togetherness, that reaches a level quite distinct from marching silently or chanting while marching. “...music plays a very particular and sensual role in the production of place partly through its peculiar

embodiment of movement and collectivity (Cohen 1995:1).” Joseph Roach (1996:279) speaks to the power of the second line parade to foster community through cooperation and consideration, phenomena that occur when people are dancing together as a large mass.

With the essential dimension of music, the second line experience becomes emotionally deep. Music has the rare quality of encompassing identity, community, and memory, and it intensifies people’s experiences. Moving in a second line parade with music enables participants to form place attachments, both with the intimacy of place as home, and with the interactional, habitual, and ritualistic functions of place as process. When meaningful sound intersects with the spatial dimension of place, the effect is intense. The place becomes an entity of great importance, full of emotion through communal musical experiences. Furthermore, the process is reciprocal; the place collects more meaning while the spatial experience also brings meaning to the music. Spaces become musical places, and the music tradition reifies itself through practice.

Conclusion

In this chapter, I have introduced the phenomenon of place attachment, with a musical case study of New Orleans brass bands as they perform in second line parades and a spatial case study of North Claiborne Avenue. By presenting North Claiborne Avenue as place as home and place as process, I have attempted to explain how New Orleanians who participate in second line parading traditions feel intimately rooted and connected to places like the North Claiborne Avenue overpass and how they embody the

built form despite the undesirable changes made to it. I stated that music is an essential element in the place attachment process; without the ability of music to carry forth identity, community, and memory to the group of people who are parading, any sense of place attachment would be weak in comparison.

These methods for developing place attachment are used in highly-valued places in New Orleans, and the ideas presented in this chapter can be used as a model when studying many other places in the city. Before we are tempted to look for universal applications, however, we must remember that music in New Orleans is understood differently from many other places. In cities where residents do not experience and participate in music as a fundamental experience of community life, or do so to a lesser extent, people rely on other means to construct their senses of place attachment. In New Orleans, music helps grow the love between people and their places.



Fig. 12: Gregg Stafford, left, and Benny Jones, right, of the Black Men of Labor, are followed by the Treme Brass Band, of which Mr. Jones is also the leader. Seen on trumpet is Kenneth Terry. Mr. Stafford is also a trumpet player. Black Men of Labor 2009 second line parade. Photo taken outside Louis Armstrong Park on North Rampart Street. Photo by the author.



Fig. 13: Funeral parade for Monica Katherine Andrews. On North Claiborne Avenue, under the 1-10 overpass. Musicians from various brass bands, including Rebirth Brass Band. August 8, 2008. Photo by the author.



Fig. 14: North Claiborne Avenue at St. Bernard, in 1954. The Circle Food Store, a grocery with historical significance, can be seen on the right in both photographs. The Historic New Orleans Collection, accession no. 1979.325.5139.



Fig. 15: North Claiborne Avenue at St. Bernard in 2008. The Circle Food Store is currently abandoned. Photo by the author.



Fig. 16: A second liner dances on top of the Circle Food Store at North Claiborne and St. Bernard, in front of a billboard sign. This is one creative way to reinterpret the intended use of space. Taken during the *Keepin' It Real* second line on March 8, 2009. Photo by Jess Raimondi.



Fig. 17: One of many painted poles that support the 1-10 overpass where it covers North Claiborne Avenue. This one, painted by Rene Pierre, honors Dr. Rivers Frederick, a Louisiana surgeon born in 1874. Other poles feature Mardi Gras Indians, New Orleans musicians, and other important local figures. Photo by the author.

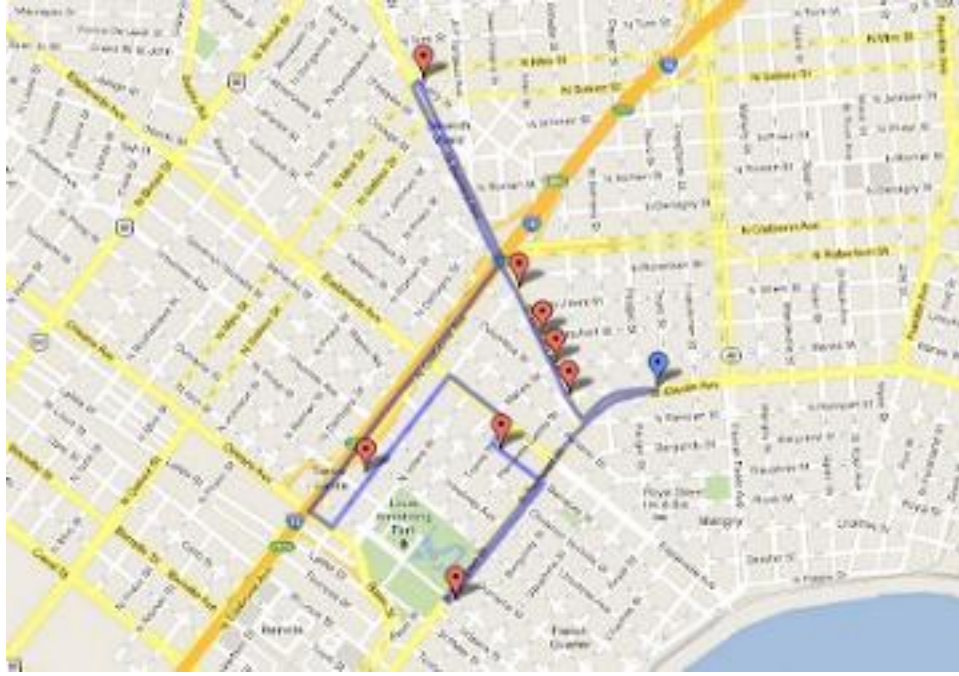


Fig. 18: Map of the 2009 Black Men of Labor second line parade that took place on September 6. The heavy orange line is I-10, with North Claiborne Avenue underneath. Route data, as distributed by the Backstreet Cultural Museum, is shown below. Map data © 2012 Google.

Start: Sweet Lorraine's Jazz Club, 1931 St. Claude Ave. [Blue marker.] Up N. Rampart.

Stop: Donna's Bar and Grill, N. Rampart and St. Ann. Down N. Rampart. Left on Barracks.

Stop: Little People's Place. Down Barracks to Treme St. Right on Treme. Down Treme to Esplanade Avenue. Left on Esplanade. Down Esplanade to N. Robertson. [Left] on N. Robertson.

Stop: Candle Light Bar (Dumaine Gang). Out N. Robertson to Basin. Right on Basin to N. Claiborne Avenue. Right on Claiborne. Out Claiborne to St. Bernard Ave. Left on St. Bernard Avenue.

Stop: Seal's Class Act, St. Bernard Ave. and N. Miro. U-Turn, down St. Bernard.

Stop: Sunday S&P Club, St. Bernard and N. Robertson. Continue on St. Bernard.

Stop: The Perfect Fit, St. Bernard and Urquhart St. Continue on St. Bernard.

Stop: Popular Ladies S&P Club, corner of St. Bernard and Maris St. Continue on St. Bernard.

Stop: Sidney's Saloon, corner of St. Bernard Ave. and St. Claude. Out St. Bernard to N. Rampart. Left on Rampart.

Disband back at Sweet Lorraine's



Fig. 19: Route sheet for the 2011 VIP Ladies and Kids second line.

Chapter 4: Music, Memory, and Place Making at the Ernie K-Doe Mother-in-Law Lounge

Introduction

This chapter concerns the housing of musical memories. It seeks to approach an understanding of the mechanism at play at the intersection of memory and the built form. By analyzing a particular site that holds a rich, if comparatively short, history, we shall see how musical memories saturate physical structures and objects, even when no music is present. In the process, I wish to instill in the reader the depth of emotion orbiting and inhabiting this special place. The community of individuals that has formed in association with this place, and the musical legacy it represents, has seen to its physical sustainment, despite many obstacles that might otherwise lead to the place's demise. After providing a theoretical backdrop of objects, places, and communal memory, I analyze how the objects, place, and community involved in this case study work to such an effective (and affective) degree. Analysis of this material is useful not only in the study of how people preserve culture, but also in studying how people heal together after suffering communal loss.

As I have mentioned in previous chapters, the field of ethnomusicology has made great strides theorizing on places in terms of cities, communities, and nations. We see how place helps inform local identities, and we study the effects of globalization. Sometimes in our discussions of soundscapes, however, we neglect to scrutinize the physical structures that both contain and propagate the music people make. Brick and mortar are mentioned merely to describe the background setting where musical events occur. This low-priority relegation is logical for the field of ethnomusicology, if we are

meant to discover, as John Blacking says, how musical *man* is, not how musical man's places are (2000). Jeff Todd Titon's definition of ethnomusicology as being "the study of people making music" seconds this idea (2005). Such arguments seek to distinguish the field from methods employed by comparative musicology; our very *raison d'être* in part is to provide alternatives to the study of the text as object. Tangible forms like buildings and musical objects may therefore remind us of the values inherent in earlier eras of musicology.

However, some musical places are a key part of the music making process, and are instrumental in promoting legacies of both the living and the dead. Western music scholars see recital halls as spaces for musical performance, and libraries as spaces dedicated to housing scores and biographies of musicians. Musical memories, however, can be stored in any setting that is experienced and used by people over a length of time, not just places officially deemed "musical" by a traditionally institutional definition. Communities, including those in New Orleans, use a variety of spaces to house their collective memories. Due to the preponderance of and high level of respect paid to musical traditions in New Orleans, these spaces of collective memories often have a strong musical component. In this case study, we will see a musical place serve as a fundamental element in the *memory* of music making. The place, in other words, embodies the memories associated with a musician and the micro-culture surrounding him.

The Lounge and its Key Contributors

The Ernie K-Doe Mother-in-Law Lounge was³¹ located at 1500 North Claiborne Avenue in New Orleans, Louisiana. What was once a nondescript cement building is now covered in huge, brightly painted murals that feature key actors in the lounge's history. The building lacks windows, especially on the ground floor where the lounge is. The main door operates with a buzzer that allows it to be remotely unlocked for security purposes. During part of the time I was researching the lounge, plywood covered the front door to temporarily repair the latest of six apparent attempts of vehicular access.³² The outside area is one of the lounge's distinct draws; it features a grassy lawn sprinkled with bathtub planters, tables and chairs, and other objects. There is a small outside stage and bar area with a thatched roof. Inside are two main rooms; one had a small stage, a table for red beans and rice, and a huge head from a Mardi Gras float. The other room had a bar, a large television, a jukebox, and a well-adorned "statue," regally nested in his shrine.

During its operation, the Mother-in-Law Lounge appeared to be completely covered in *things*. Mardi Gras beads hung from tables, photographs and posters covered the walls. A curios cabinet featured dozens upon dozens of memorabilia. Years ago, decorated umbrellas hung from the ceiling. The clutter, in fact, had become one of the

³¹ In describing the Mother-in-Law Lounge, my choice of verb tense may at first be confusing to the reader. The Mother-in-Law Lounge as a business officially closed in December 2010. As of January 2011, the building and its murals remain. The nightclub is slated to re-open under new management, but the business will mostly likely be under a new name.

³² For some inexplicable reason, vehicles have run into the Mother-in-Law Lounge six times. Club owner/operator Betty Fox reported to the Times-Picayune that four of the accidents occurred while her mother Antoinette K-Doe ran the nightclub, and two of the accidents occurred under Betty's management—on March 3, 2009, and March 3, 2010 (Williams 2010).

distinguishing characteristics of the Mother-in-Law Lounge. This clutter was not simply a mass of junk, however; it was a collection of loved, often handmade, items. All of the stuff was connected to the Mother-in-Law Lounge in that it related to, in order of centrality: Ernie K-Doe, Antoinette K-Doe, New Orleans rhythm and blues, New Orleans culture, and African American history and culture.

The Mother-in-Law Lounge was created to honor the legacy of Ernie K-Doe. Born Ernest Kador, Jr. in 1936, K-Doe was a rhythm and blues singer perhaps best remembered for his exuberant, outrageous personality. His dance moves rivaled those of James Brown (in fact, James Brown actually opened for Ernie once), and he often dressed in ornamented shirts, ostentatious wigs, and in later years, a cape. He deemed himself the “Emperor of the Universe.” He began his career in 1954 with the Blue Diamonds, before going solo. Some of his most popular songs include “T’aint it the Truth,” “Te-ta-te-ta-ta,” and “Certain Girl.” His biggest hit, “Mother-in-Law,” the inspiration behind the lounge’s name, was written by New Orleans songwriter and producer Allen Toussaint and released in 1961 on the Minit label. It reached number one on both the Billboard pop and R&B charts.

Ernie’s bravado found a platform on the airwaves for a few years—he was a disc jockey on local community radio station WWOZ, as well as on Tulane University station WTUL. Fellow WWOZ deejay Billy Delle told me stories of how Ernie would sit in on many of his shows. While Billy did the engineering, Ernie would “run his head,” spouting out wild, improvised stories and strings of self-inflation. His particular lingo included catch-phrases like “Burn, K-Doe, Burn” and “I’m a Charity Hospital Baby.” To illustrate his particular style, which is so loved by fans to this day, I transcribed a

portion of one of his shows, which was recorded on an unknown date and given to me by a fan.

*Yes indeed, this is me! Yeah, baby! How you been doin', honey? Oooh, wee. It's gonna be hot tonight. I know you're sittin' out there on your porch, and some sittin' in they living room, enjoying theyself. Wherever you may be, you listening to number one deejay in the city of New Orleans, and bar none. And I tell you one thing, if you don't think I'm the number one...some people say understanding is the greatest thing in the world, but I always did say, "Pay attention *first*, and then you will be able to understand." From day one, when you first went to school? Um hmm. What did the teacher tell you. "Pay attention, children, so you can understand." It's gonna be a hot one tonight. I'm gonna start hot, and when I finish I'm gonna be hot. But I sure got a damper to cool me down. BURN, K-DOE, BURN!*

K-Doe has even found success from beyond the grave, when, in 2007, the British cosmetics store Boots used his 1970 tune "Here Come the Girls" in their holiday television commercial. He also had a postmortem faux mayoral campaign in 2006, one of several organized by his widow and her friends as a reaction to their disappointment with local politics.

Ernie K-Doe was indeed a great success during the height of his career. Even today, music fans regard him as a local legend. In 2009 he was inducted into the Louisiana Music Hall of Fame. Though he is loved by many for his eccentric nature, those who are familiar with New Orleans rhythm and blues especially appreciate his talent and his drive. In sum, he is regarded by many as New Orleans' star rhythm and blues performer.

Ernie's life is not a complete success story, however. His early accomplishments as a performer were overshadowed by alcoholism, fueled in part by an awareness that people in the music business were profiting from his recordings while he struggled financially. As his drinking problem continued, and he became less reliable of a

musician, nightclubs became more and more hesitant to hire him for gigs. Like many of his rhythm and blues peers, he fell into obscurity, and was homeless for a decade. He operated a shoeshine stand, and even sang for change during the darkest times.

Then, in the mid-1990s, K-Doe met Antoinette Fox. Miss Fox had her own eccentricities and an endless supply of generosity. Antoinette was well-respected in the community on her own accord—over the years she took in about sixty neighborhood children and fed hundreds of people for free, including Katrina rescue workers. She did everything from welding, to working at a shipyard, to cleaning houses. She got acquainted with Ernie while she was running a bar and Ernie would come in to sing for change (Parker 2010). A long-time K-Doe fan, Antoinette took it on herself to revive Ernie's career, and eventually helped him beat his addiction to alcohol. Since the other clubs would not give Ernie gigs, she decided she would create her own nightclub—for Ernie. A natural born businesswoman, the lounge thrived by virtue of her in-person promotional campaigns and sales of homemade trinkets. Her networking skills reportedly allowed her to operate the club without having to pay the building owner rent for the first floor. The lounge was established in 1994, and the couple married in 1995. They resided in the apartment above the nightclub, on the second floor of the building.

From its early days, the Mother-in-Law Lounge was always atypical for a Black bar in the Tremé neighborhood, which otherwise features quiet, nondescript corner bars. The lounge's tendency to produce flamboyant, kitschy, performance-based musical spectacle attracted primarily White audiences of post-punk rockers and hipsters. Notably, the music and puppetry duo Quintron and Miss Pussycat, attracted to the lounge's eccentric style, happened on the bar on its first day of operation. They made the Mother-in-Law Lounge their second home and helped bring in a regular clientele.

Antoinette reportedly received occasional criticism from neighborhood residents for her choice of target audience, but my sources inform me that she and Ernie loved to present spectacle in whatever form, to whatever audience would accept it. A brilliant marketer, Antoinette had found her niche. In the early days, Ernie would use a citizens' band microphone to give live vocal performances to his own recordings—karaoke style—whether the audience consisted of one person or twenty. And once a week, he would perform with keyboardist Rico Watts. The lounge had also become a base location for certain Black social clubs that traditionally parade on Mardi Gras, including Mardi Gras Indians and the North Side Skull and Bones Gang. In particular, it became home to the parading krewe known as the Baby Dolls, an old Black New Orleans tradition that Antoinette resurrected, whose female members dress in ruffled doll costumes.

Ernie K-Doe passed in 2001, and, following a large and emotionally charged funeral parade, was buried in Saint Louis Cemetery #2. Since the lounge was established in 1994 to promote the musical legacy of Ernie K-Doe, some might assume the club would close with its muse's passing. After K-Doe died, however, Antoinette kept it going with increased vigor. She gifted the nightclub with a fully-dressed, enshrined mannequin of her late husband (see Fig. 26). The "statue," as she called it, with a face chiseled to resemble that of Ernie's, can either sit in a wheelchair or stand for dancing purposes. At one point, it contained a chip that would broadcast K-Doe phrases to a limited radius.

Antoinette dedicated her time and energy to keep the lounge open. She did it to honor and promote Ernie's legacy. Her daughter, Betty Fox, explained to me,

She was more driven after he passed away than when he was living. Because, I think that, when he was alive, people forgot about him. But she made them remember who he was. And when he passed away, she wanted

to make *sure* that people did not forget who he was. And it looked like it made her more driven than ever. His legacy became an obsession for her (2010).

WWOZ show host A. J. Rodrigue, who has taped many of K. Doe's shows, concurs. He told me, "Ernie K-Doe will always live in my book. And it's amazing, cause when he was alive, I don't think he was as...maybe popular? As he is now (2010)."

Antoinette passed on February 24, 2009, which happened to be Mardi Gras Day, and soon thereafter was commemorated and celebrated with her own large funeral parade. Yet the story doesn't end with Antoinette, either; the club remained open for almost two additional years thanks to Antoinette's daughter Betty Fox. After her mother's passing, Betty did not immediately plan on operating the club. But she began to think of how disappointed its long-time fans would be to lose their beloved place, and how the city would lose an important cultural locus. She left her job in Tennessee, moved back to New Orleans, and reopened the Mother-in-Law Lounge. Thus, the lounge, created to promote the legacy of Ernie K. Doe, continued operation in order to honor Antoinette.

The lounge is a prime example of how some New Orleans residents resist cultural homogenization and historical amnesia. Locals tend to be invested in the culture of their city, and they strive to sustain their heritage to a remarkable degree. For example, there are more Mardi Gras Indian tribes with active members now than there were before Hurricane Katrina. Similarly, many social aid and pleasure clubs and local bands remain active, and new bands and clubs continue to form. While it is true that many musicians have not yet returned, and that New Orleans will never be quite like it was pre-Katrina, the attachment to the past is palpable and the rate of cultural preservation is astonishing, given the extreme circumstances. Like many other New Orleans cultural

landmarks, the Mother-in-Law Lounge was preserved through the will of its fans. It has endured many challenges since its establishment in 1994, including the death of its inspirational muse, over five feet of Katrina floodwaters, and the aforementioned car accidents.

Thus far I have begun to illustrate the motivation behind creating the Mother-in-Law Lounge, as a place to relive and re-experience emotional memories. This point will become even clearer in the proceeding sections, where I shall explain the methodology behind the club's sustainment. I see the spatial dynamics propelling the Mother-in-Law Lounge perpetuation phenomenon occurring on three levels, which can be represented as a series of concentric circles (see Fig. 30). These levels consist of 1) the objects, 2) the place, and 3) the community. I will now describe these three levels, and then theorize on their efficacy in the preservation and social construction of this place. I will then assemble these levels together with an attempted explanation of what makes the Mother-in-Law Lounge such a powerful place.

The Objects

In the Mother-in-Law Lounge, the intention to preserve memories was transferred to physical objects—objects like the rhythm and blues-filled jukebox and the photographs on the wall. They were tangible representations of Ernie K-Doe and his followers, and they filled every nook and cranny of the club. These things brought a soothing nostalgia to those who were familiar with them. Spatial philosopher Yi-Fu Tuan explains that objects anchor time, and that attachment to things and veneration

for the past often go together (1977: 186-188). It would seem as though Antoinette and her cohorts, by covering every available inch of space with something that represents Ernie, Antoinette, or New Orleans rhythm and blues, were trying to preserve the heritage Ernie represents—heritage that is not properly documented elsewhere. Perhaps, accustomed to loss, they were motivated by a fear of losing their culture.

Some of these items were contributed; some were collected. Others were produced and distributed by Antoinette herself. Music writer and promoter Alison Fensterstock, and her husband, bass player, promoter, and deejay David “Lefty” Parker, were friends with Ernie, and even closer with Antoinette. They fondly reminisced with me about the sorts of things that Antoinette crafted and sold to promote her husband and his legacy:

Lefty: She took photographs of Ernie, had hundreds of them made, like not 8 x 10s, like just little photos. And then cut the actual photograph, cut Ernie out of it, and then would glue it to coffee mugs, or anything that she could—

Alison: Garden mats.

[Everyone laughs.]

Lefty: Yeah, there was a garden mat, which was always my favorite one. Because, these items were non-functional, you couldn’t use them for the thing that they were—

Me: She just glued it on?

Lefty: Yeah, because if you washed the Ernie cup, then it would be gone. I have a plate, still, that plate that they made, where she basically glued a picture on it, and then took markers and wrote—

Alison: And I’ve tried to clean it, and you can’t clean it. You have to take a Swiffer cloth and gently wipe it, otherwise it’ll fall apart. He has a little lamp, with a picture of Ernie stuck to it...It was like vaudeville, it was such a shtick (Fensterstock 2010; Parker 2010).

Such items have become fetishes for the fans who purchased them. Proudly displayed at home, these objects, which have no value in most markets, are highly cherished signifiers of a specific social status in New Orleans.

Some objects were more important than others for the process of continuity of memory. Perhaps the most precious of all is the life-size representation of Ernie; it not only served as the club's main attraction, but also as a memorial. Antoinette commissioned the fashioning of the mannequin to her late husband's likeness to prolong his legacy and, I suspect, to facilitate her own emotional healing. She brought the "statue" around with her to events—he could be wheeled around in a wheelchair, and he even had a secondary set of immobile legs attached to a wheeled base so she could dance with him at events. Up until its official closing, the statue had a home in the Mother-in-Law Lounge, where it rested on a throne, dressed in Ernie's wig and suit.³³

We can see that these physical objects anchor memories into points in space—little places that are mobile in their own right but representative of a larger place and community, as well as a past era. The process of cementing a memory into an object fixes emotion and time into a concrete thing. The contribution of the *musical* element makes this emotional signifier that much more affective, as I aim to show later in this chapter.

³³ The statue, especially when in its shrine, reminds me of Miriam Kahn's description of a *buderi*. The Warmirans from Papua New Guinea use this term for a "material object that represents emotional events and triggers memories (Kahn 1996:187)." Such an object becomes its own smaller place within the large place of the lounge. The Ernie K-Doe "statue" is similarly admired, revered, and reflected upon. It is the focal point of the club.

In analyzing the Mother-in-Law Lounge as a special place carved out of undifferentiated space,³⁴ we find that it serves as a good example of people creating a space to house their collective memories. This phenomenon is not at all particular to this case study. Studying Western Apache concepts of wisdom and how this wisdom is transmitted via known and experienced places, anthropologist Keith Basso states that “[Places] serve as excellent vehicles for recalling useful information (1996:76).” Wisdom in this sense becomes meaning embedded in places; critical knowledge is created and placed through a communal process. Thus, a tree or a bend in the road could represent a moral parable or lesson, rich with history. Philosopher Gaston Bachelard’s statements are congruent with this concept of the nexus of time and space. He says, “Memories are motionless, and the more securely they are fixed in space, the sounder they are (1994:9).” At the Mother-in-Law Lounge, memories become fixed in the geographical region that is defined by the four walls and the grassy lawn. WWOZ deejay A. J. Rodrigue agrees that the lounge is a physical manifestation of nostalgia for the past. He said to me,

The Mother-in-Law, it may symbolize a lot of old things we’ve lost in the past, and we’re just trying to hold onto it. Maybe it’s just that the Mother-

³⁴ Of course, undifferentiated space does not really exist in the physical realm. The space at 1500 N. Claiborne Avenue has always had *some* kind of meaning. Edward S. Casey (1996) takes a phenomenological approach in his writing to critique a pre-Husserl “natural attitude” that allows for the assumption that place is made out of space. Casey points out that there is “no knowing or sensing a place except by being in that place, and to be in a place is to be in a position to perceive it (1996:18).” This paper views this space from the perspective of someone who is interested in the place conceived of as the Ernie K-Doe Mother-in-Law Lounge, ignoring whatever the space represented before the Mother-in-Law Lounge’s history began.

in-Law brings back the memory of K-Doe and is allowing his fans and his disciples to keep it alive, man (2010).

Visitors are reminded of K-Doe by entering the club, or even by driving past or thinking about the place.

We have seen how people's interactions with the Mother-in-Law Lounge help construct meaning out of undifferentiated space. A useful tool in understanding this phenomenon is what social anthropologist Setha Low terms the "social construction of space," which is, "the actual transformation of space—through people's social exchanges, memories, images, and daily use of the material setting—into scenes and actions that convey symbolic meaning." The social construction of space can run counter to the intentions of urban planners, builders, architects, and so forth, whose motivations Low terms the social *production* of space. The social *production* of space refers to, "those factors whose intended goal is the physical creation of the material setting (2005:112)." Though I do not have access to the original blueprints for the building at 1500 North Claiborne Avenue, I feel it is safe to assume that the planners or builders did not expect that the space would one day form a pseudo-museum, or that it would house a much-loved mannequin. At the lounge, the social construction of space is evident; individuals interpreted and added to a space that already existed through social interaction and experiences. We could claim that the social production of space is apparent as well, through the painting of walls and the hanging of pictures. Yet those physical modifications made to the space are also processes of social construction, because they are manifestations of interpretations of symbolic meaning.

Betty and I discussed this notion of the social construction of space, similar to what other scholars describe as the transformation of space into place, with the analogy

of transforming a house into a home. Antoinette took a plain building, and spent countless hours transforming it into a place full of very specific meaning. Other contributors, like mural painter Daniel Fuselier, helped the transformation, too, by pouring their emotions and memories of K-Doe into the space. Daniel spent seven years of his life, on and off, painting those murals without monetary compensation. But contributions to the social construction of this space are not limited to the altering of the building's physical form—the lived experiences of fans repeatedly visiting the Mother-in-Law Lounge are also a vital element in the construction process. For some, the Mother-in-Law Lounge became a communal home, which is what Antoinette desired. Some frequent visitors to the Mother-in-Law lounge have told me stories of how walking into the Mother-in-Law Lounge literally felt like walking into someone's living room. Antoinette's slippers would be peeking out from under the couch. Or perhaps she and Ernie would be upstairs sleeping but would arise to entertain whenever the doorbell rang, throwing on their signature long haired wigs, which they reportedly shared between the two of them. The home-like quality of the Mother-in-Law Lounge was even bestowed upon *new* visitors, so that they could immediately begin to participate in the social construction process. Betty told me,

It is a home, actually. When you walk in the Mother-in-Law Lounge, you get this feel over you, that you have been there before. Even though it's new to you, and exciting...you see all this New Orleans history, you see pictures of Ernie when he was a baby and as a teenager, and you see pictures of Baby Dolls, and you see pictures of Fats Domino and Ray Charles and all these different people throughout the years...

Indeed, newcomers to the Mother-in-Law Lounge often assumed it was much older than its sixteen years—they assumed that it was created in the 1950s or 60s. This sense of

history was crafted intentionally by people who loved Ernie's larger-than-life persona, and who wished to help others remember the people and events of years past.

The Community

In the previous two sections, I have indicated that human agency is an essential element in the installment of the objects filling the lounge, and of the social construction of the place in general. Modifications to the built form, and the fetishes that fill it, would not exist if it were not for dedicated individuals who made their contributions. Yet, we have also seen that the most essential characters of this story—Ernie and Antoinette—have both passed away. This leads us to beg the question: if the Mother-in-Law Lounge functioned via memory, who was doing the remembering? Some customers *were* acquainted with the initial key contributors in the socio-spatial construction. But for other visitors, such as the hipsters who came to watch the Saints games, or musically aware tourists who ventured out of the French Quarter on a musical pilgrimage, any sort of “remembering” was tinged by their interactions with *representations* of Ernie, Antoinette, and of New Orleans rhythm and blues in general. I include myself in this latter category, as I never had the opportunity to meet Ernie, and I only met Antoinette once, shortly after moving to New Orleans in December of 2008. My affection for the people represented by the place is fed by my contact with musical recordings, interactions with the physical objects in the lounge, and the stories I hear about Ernie and Antoinette. Collective memories, therefore, inform my understanding.

The stories I hear indicate an affection for the people represented by this space that extends beyond the love of spectacle or a respect for a musical genre. For example, Lefty Parker described for me his connection to the Mother-in-Law Lounge. In the early years, he was schooled in both rhythm and blues and stage presence techniques by Ernie, an education that he greatly appreciates. However, his attachment to the lounge is highly emotional—greater than a teacher-student relationship might suggest—because his friendship that formed over the years with Ernie, and even more so with Antoinette, led him to consider the couple family. He looked to Antoinette as a source of critical advice and motherly comfort. Similarly, Billy Delle relayed to me his fond memories of Ernie, whom he considered a good friend. Oftentimes, he would take Ernie home to the Mother-in-Law Lounge after radio shows at WWOZ, per Antoinette’s request, and they would share food and drinks together. He told me that many times upon their arrival at the club, Antoinette would be up on a ladder, painting the walls or affixing something or other to the ceiling.

The lounge does not function to inform as a museum or archive would. I sense that the mission of the lounge is to encourage idolatry and legacy, more than to propagate factual information. These goals are met in part through the process of story telling. For example, at least two different informants have re-told to me a story about “the time Antoinette cut off her finger.” They begin by telling me that Antoinette had cut off the tip of her finger with a knife while working behind the bar, or else that it got caught in a slammed door. As they describe how Antoinette drives herself to the hospital, I assume the tale to be a story of Antoinette’s self-reliance. However, I soon discover that the story is actually about *Ernie*. Ernie had found Antoinette’s finger behind the bar, and, following the emergency room doctor’s suggestion, was bringing it

to the hospital in a cup of ice. Since Antoinette had taken the car, Ernie was forced to catch a city bus. One version of the story recounts that Ernie became so distracted chatting with a fan on the bus, and was so challenged by his purported drunkenness, that he missed the stop for the hospital. The bus driver, charmed by Ernie's personality, was kind enough to take him back after his route was complete. The other version recounts that Ernie did get off at the correct bus stop, but he was so distracted with having to reach Antoinette at the hospital, he left the finger on the bus. Each time, I ask the storyteller about the outcome; "So, was Antoinette's finger successfully reattached?" The storyteller at this point usually looks a little confused and responds that they are not sure whether or not her finger was surgically repaired, but perhaps it was. I then realize that in relaying such a story, the storyteller was really trying to propagate Ernie legends and to impart to me the "lovability" of his antics. The main point of the story was that Ernie's personality caused him to make a humorous disaster of his wife's fingertip delivery—it was not about Antoinette's medical emergency and its outcome.

Put another way, the facts of such stories matter little, but the act of telling and remembering is essential. Anthropologist Kathleen C. Stewart writes about a similar experience she had in her study of folks living in the hollers of West Virginia, and their struggles in post-industrial coal country. Through narratives told and retold, she discovered how an "intense social imaginary" was at play in making sense of her interviewees' world. She explains that this social imaginary cannot be reduced—as an outsider might attempt to—to causes of events and explanations of things that had occurred.

There is a poetics emergent in the daily practices of textualizing *things that happen* in precise, mimetic detail that dramatizes rhythms of life, artful turns of phrase, and palpable tensions and desires... It depends on

the dialogic provisionality of things remembered and retold; it begins with things overheard or seen out of the corner of the eye and ends in *what they seem*, and yet people search for signs of palpable if ephemeral meaning. The sense of place grows more, not less, present and pressing as a social imaginary emerges in talk and signifying action—a network of signs that are scanned and *studied on* and collected like the dense layers of trashed objects that demarcate people’s *places* in the hills (1996:138-9, italics hers).

This social imaginary is the same sort of mechanism that is employed by the Mother-in-Law Lounge community to create and sustain the lounge. By choosing such stories to be told and re-told to newcomers such as myself, the personalities of Antoinette and Ernie remain legendary, with semiosis as the method of constructing sense. The social imaginary is found in the myriad signs associated with the Mother-in-Law Lounge. Signifiers like the caricature-like Mardi Gras float head—a larger-than-life representation of Ernie’s legacy, whose features, reminiscent of minstrelsy, make sense only in the context of a Mardi Gras parade. Even in Ernie’s own representation of himself—performing solo to his own recordings in the jukebox—were signifying actions of something from the past relived in the present. These signifiers are collected, reiterated, and reinforced through community interaction. Through selective memory and reenactment, the Mother-in-Law Lounge community grows and defines the K-Doe brand.

A Sense of Place: Five Senses and Three Spatial Levels

I have explained three different levels that I see existing in the social construction of the space that is the Mother-in-Law Lounge: the objects, the place, and the community. We can visualize them as a set of concentric rings, with objects as the center

ring (see Fig. 30). The objects in the lounge serve as tangible points of interest and historical reminders that the community (outside ring) uses to create the place (middle ring).

Phenomenology informs us of the role that our five senses play in how we experience and make sense of our world. A few anthropologists and other soundscape scholars have worked to draw attention to the oft-neglected efficacy that sound—and music—have on the lived experience. Anthropologist Steven Feld points out that geographic studies have traditionally focused on the visual: “...by and large, ethnographic and cultural-geographic work on senses of place has been dominated by the visualism deeply rooted in the European concept of landscape (1996:94).” In the process of approaching an ethnographic analysis of synesthesia, a term which he uses to explain how people embody places through sensorial information that transposes from one sense modality to another, he developed a notion that he terms acoustemology, or “acoustic knowing.” Through acoustemology, he sought to discover how “sonic sensibility is basic to experiential truth in the Bosavi forests” for the Kaluli people of Bosavi, Papua New Guinea (1994). I take a similar approach, and as an ethnomusicologist, I of course highlight the sense that enables the detection of sound and music in my research. However, I feel it is necessary to not remove the experience of hearing from the other four senses employed in the typical human experience, in order to understand how a place such as the Mother-in-Law Lounge represents emotions and memories in its community. Otherwise we would ignore too many facets of historical understanding. Sound experience does not exist in a vacuum, apart from the other senses.

I take this approach because the Mother-in-Law Lounge was a curious cross-section of these sensorial categories. It was a musical place in that it was created to honor a musician, promote his legacy, and even remember his hit song. It attracted music experts, former friends of the original musicians, and current musicians. However, in some respects, the Mother-in-Law Lounge was not particularly musical—music was not performed or heard often. During the early years, Ernie would perform to the jukebox, with Rico Watts, and rarely, with a full live band. Year later, Betty would organize occasional concerts with performers like local blues musician Guitar Lightnin’ Lee. However, the stage setup and audience area were less than ideal, the acoustics poor, and the concerts infrequent and ill-promoted. People did not go to the Mother-in-Law Lounge for music. It was a musical place because of *memory*, and the memory was translated not only through sound, but through touch, sight, and to lesser extents, taste and smell.

Elizabeth Macy (2010) describes in detail the New Orleans “holy trinity” that is local food, culture, and music—with music as the primary element—and explains how the city banks on this “cultural trifecta” to support and construct its tourism base. This narrative is not only used to draw tourists; it is also the way locals conceive of New Orleans culture. New Orleanians do not separate food from music (nor do they separate food and music from Saints football, but that is beyond the scope of my study). In practice, this means that cultural events normally involve food and music; second line parades always attract local food and drink vendors, music clubs and corner bars with jukeboxes often serve “plates,” etc. Art forms are understood by multiple modalities at once; ethnomusicologists studying New Orleans music must therefore never remove the

musical component from its larger context(s). This argument finds congruence with Anthony Seeger's assertion:

Ethnomusicologists should not study only those forms that resemble what our society calls music. They should examine the entire speech-music continuum, and in some cases the interrelationship of different performing arts such as music and movement, or movement and sculpture, in order to see what, if anything, makes music different from non-music for its practitioners and its audience (2004:138).

The various art forms/branches of New Orleans culture are experienced through all five senses, which we can analyze through our three spatial levels. On the level of objects: the statue could be seen, felt, smelled (the vintage clothing, like the club, smelled a bit moldy), and at one time, heard (when the statue contained a radio chip). The jukebox could be seen, heard, and felt. The Mardi Gras head could not help but be seen, and it was close enough to touch. On the level of the place, the Mother-in-Law Lounge could be seen, heard, felt, smelled, and tasted, particularly when Antoinette (and later, Betty) cooked up a pot of red beans inside or barbecued ribs or boiled crawfish outside. As for our outer ring, the community tastes, feels, and smells. It sees and is seen, it hears and is heard. It hears stories and relays these stories to others. The community members live in a city where all these sensorial signifiers make a great deal of meaning. We can see that the Mother-in-Law Lounge experience is representative of the greater context of New Orleans.

To conclude this section, I wish to stress that the synesthetic experience of the Mother-in-Law Lounge, despite its various forms of culture, is still represented by its musical component. By this I mean two things. First, the Mother-in-Law Lounge was a musical place, even though there has always been more to the club than music—food, drink, art, objects, etc. It was a musical place in that it was created to honor a musician

and promote his legacy, was named after his hit song, and attracted music experts, former friends of the musicians, and other musicians. Secondly, I mean that music itself is understood to be more than what might be accessed through the sense of hearing. In other words, that the music represented by the lounge is felt, tasted, seen, and smelled, as well as heard. This synesthetic experience supports the significance of memory at the Mother-in-Law Lounge, which in turn provides the recognition of the nightclub as a musical place, despite a relatively low level of musical performance.

Summary

In this chapter, I introduced the Ernie-K-Doe Mother-in-Law Lounge as a special musical place that represents a rhythm and blues legacy. I analyzed the nightclub through the levels of objects, place, and community, as a means to approach the different methodologies used in its creation and sustainment. Following Tuan, I indicated that objects are a tangible anchor of time—a way to affix memories in place. The place also fixes memories into space, a finding that is similar to what Basso and Bachelard have argued. I then built off of Low's notions of the social construction and social production of space to explain how people have transformed the space into a "home." In analyzing the community, I argue the importance of story-telling, and borrow the term "social imaginary" as used by Stewart. I then cross these three spatial levels with the five senses common to the human experience, using and critiquing Feld's notions of acoustemology and synesthesia in the process. I stress the need, following

Seeger, to not remove the musical component of the Mother-in-Law Lounge from the other aspects of New Orleans culture.

What was—and in many senses remains—the Ernie K-Doe Mother-in-Law Lounge is currently undergoing another stage of loss and renewal. After two years of trying to honor her mother’s project, and several reversed decisions to close, Betty has finally given up on the Mother-in-Law Lounge. She held a final tag sale on the weekend of December 4th and 5th, 2010, and a closing party on December 12, 2010.

It remains to be seen exactly what will happen to the Mother-in-Law Lounge in terms of what it will represent and how it will be experienced. However, trumpet player, singer, bandleader, and cultural icon Kermit Ruffins announced in January 2011 that he will lease the building and establish his own nightclub at the site. Kermit already has a history of successful club ownership; Vaughn’s has been his musical and culinary home every Thursday night since the early 1990s. He also leases Sidney’s Saloon, and he performs each Tuesday night at Bullet’s Bar. His announcement of intended involvement comes as a relief to many. Because Kermit is local and a musician himself, the community trusts him to not whitewash the history that is held within the building’s walls. As a case in point, he has already decided to not paint over the murals, “I can’t mess up that beautiful artwork. The outside is going to stay the same (Spera 2011).” He has already been approached by Jeannie, Antoinette’s former close friend and bartender, to manage the place. If Kermit proves to be the sort of non-invasive club owner that locals expect him to be, and if the nightclub is managed by Jeannie or another person with a similar vision and commitment to preservation, the Mother-in-Law Lounge will retain its essence as the singular place for Ernie K-Doe and his adorers. New objects may need to be dedicated to the club if this restoration is to occur, but we

have seen that only memory and the drive to promote that memory is required, so long as the person in charge understands the process.

I find the Mother-in-Law Lounge inspiring because it reminds us of the agency of individuals to create places out of spaces, and to sustain these places despite obstacles. Many of us cannot create our own places from the ground up—we work with what we have, to varying degrees of success. It takes extraordinary intention to produce extraordinary results, and that is what we see with the Mother-in-Law Lounge. After Ernie died, and after the levee failures in 2005, it would have been so easy for Antoinette and the others to give up. But those were the moments when it became even more important to dedicate efforts to cultural preservation.



Fig. 20: Artist Daniel Fuselier has covered the Mother-in-Law Lounge with murals of Ernie, Antoinette, and other musicians and local personalities. Photo by the author, 2010.



Fig. 21: Memorabilia in the curios cabinet. Photo by the author, 2010.



Fig. 22: Betty Fox behind the bar. Photo by the author, 2010.



Fig. 23: The audience during a special concert. Photo by the author, 2010.



Fig. 24: Outside the Mother-in-Law Lounge. Photo by the author, 2010.



Fig. 25: Betty's red beans. Photo by the author, 2010.



Fig. 26: The “statue” of Ernie K-Doe. Photo by the author, 2010.



Fig. 27: The Mardi Gras float head was purchased and will be displayed at the Mid City Lanes Rock ‘n’ Bowl. Photo by the author.

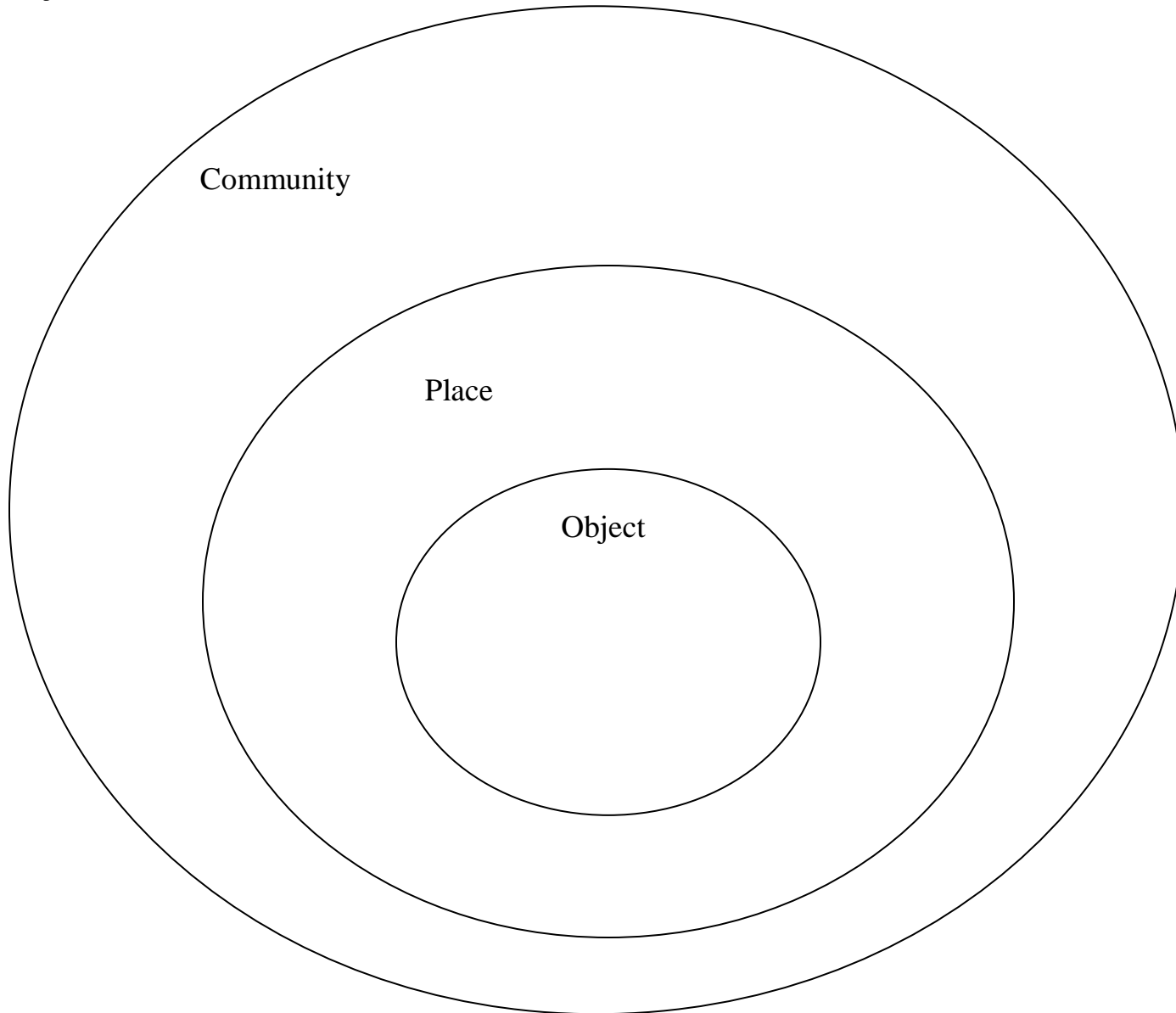


Fig. 28: The walls began to empty with the final yard sale on December 4-5, 2010. Photo by the author.



Fig. 29: A fan looks at a newly emptied wall at the closing party on December 12, 2010. Photo by the author.

Fig. 30: Spatial diagram



Chapter 5: New Orleans Music and the Politics of Spatial Negotiation

Introduction

This chapter concerns the interplay between entities that seek to assert control over musical instances in public spaces within New Orleans and the music makers and other cultural practitioners who resist this control. The intricate nature of public performances in New Orleans—each musical event having the capacity to encompass decades of tradition and veiled political statements—provides an excellent opportunity to study the intersection of power, play, race, and space through music. In this chapter, I approach these ideas by analyzing neighborhood and racial boundaries, the police versus the public, and the perceived relationship between parading and violence.

After a brief literature review on two scholars whose work concerns public space and the control of bodies in space, I will provide a historical backdrop of music and public space in the City of New Orleans. I discuss recent controversies regarding dated and sporadically enforced city ordinances that intent to limit busking in certain areas. For contrast, I also describe a recent conflict between the police and Mardi Gras revelers in the Bywater neighborhood. I will then focus on what is arguably the most powerful and political New Orleans musical ensemble—the New Orleans brass band through the second line parading tradition—as a case study to explore the chapter’s themes. The flow of this chapter therefore begins as a theoretical overview and moves increasingly toward specific examples and the mechanisms that support them. I choose these examples to illustrate how culturally invested people can assert their rights to public space while engaging in a celebrational practice.

The examples I provide in this chapter all illustrate people negotiating the movement of their bodies in public space, and the production of sounds with their voices and via musical instrumentation. We shall see how musicians and their sympathizers view the New Orleans Police Department (NOPD) and City Hall to be agents that act to diminish or control this right to movement and sound in public space. Here we can draw from the pioneering work of Michel Foucault in regards to the condition of the imprisoned body in the modern penal system. In *Discipline & Punish: The Birth of the Prison*, he introduces the term “docile bodies” to describe the mechanism of control in the detainment and rehabilitation of the condemned. As he states, “...discipline proceeds from the distribution of individuals in space.” He further elaborates that discipline sometimes requires enclosing or partitioning individuals, to prevent inmates from forming collective groups (1995:141-143). These initial points are immediately interesting in regards to examples that will follow in this chapter; although the majority of Foucault’s research is on the prison system, he states that this model has been adapted into many other institutions that incorporate a system of control or discipline. If we assume for the moment that persons representing entities of authority, such as officers of the NOPD, have been trained in a system that directly or indirectly derives from this disciplinary model, then the role of such authority figures when encountering collective gatherings of people in public space calls for the partitioning of individuals or the herding of crowds to form controlled groups, as Foucault discusses. In reality, police officers have only a tenuous ability to control the location and distribution of bodies in public space, in differentiation to convicts in a prison yard. Officers may therefore feel a sense of anxiety upon realizing their lack of true control; this may help

explain some of the disproportionately dramatic reactions displayed by officers, as described later in this chapter.

Mike Davis (2006) has written extensively on a trend that is occurring worldwide but that he feels is accelerated in Los Angeles—the destruction of public space. He describes the “post-liberal Los Angeles” built environment as one that supports and is controlled by the wealthy elite, whose paranoia has spurred a “war on the poor,” executed primarily through private entities who police and abolish undesirables through municipal policy and through architectural strategies that diminish public access to spaces and services. He explains,

...the defense of luxury lifestyles is translated into a proliferation of new repressions in space and movement, undergirded by the ubiquitous ‘armed response.’ This obsession with physical security systems, and, collaterally, with the architectural policing of social boundaries, has become a zeitgeist of urban restructuring, a master narrative in the emerging built environment of the 1990s (2006:223).

Of particular interest to this chapter, Davis analyses the criminalization of the “street person” as part of the surveillance and militant policing process. He describes the post-liberal landscape ideology thusly: “...good citizens, off the streets, enclaved in their high-security private consumption spheres; bad citizens, on the streets (and therefore not engaged in legitimate business)... (2006:253).” Inherent in the desire to minimize people on public streets is the need for crowd control. He describes the police’s fear of public gatherings, and their overactive responses to crowds in public space, particularly when the crowds are made up of young people or people of color.

Perhaps my view is skewed from growing up as a Northerner, but I remain amazed at the extent to which people spend time out of doors in New Orleans. The mild winters allow folks to relax on their front porches year-round, and the intense summer heat seems hardly a deterrent. I see porches as liminal spaces, personal property that is used as a median point between private space and public space. Porches serve as places to gather with friends, to greet neighbors and passers-by, and watch events transpiring in the neighborhood. This practice is common in neighborhoods both uptown and downtown, amongst Whites but more particularly amongst Blacks, but is comparatively rare in the surrounding suburbs. Similarly, transportation is often an outdoors practice; many people who do not have cars—and some who do—walk or ride bicycles rather than ride in enclosed busses. New Orleans has no underground or elevated subway system; the closest equivalent—the streetcar—provides a fresh air environment, as the windows are left wide open.

Many musical events occur in public space, and there is a general sense amongst locals that music in public space is a “natural” part of life in the city. Musicians occasionally practice on their porches, though this is a rare occurrence to witness. During the school year, it is not uncommon to run into a high school or middle school marching band practicing on neighborhood streets or in the school’s football field. At the level of the small, intimate gig, busking is a major aspect of New Orleans street culture. In addition to non-musical buskers such as tap dancers, puppeteers, poets for hire, and human statues, many small group musical ensembles perform on streets in New Orleans; they mostly concentrate on Royal Street, Decatur Street, and Bourbon

Street in the French Quarter, and Frenchmen Street in the Marigny. This sort of street performance is an essential element in the tourist experience, and buskers can make decent tips on a good night.³⁵ Festivals are of course a major example of public music that occurs on a large scale, as a significant number of festivals remain free and open to the public. French Quarter Festival is the largest free festival in New Orleans; it drew approximately 533,000 attendees in 2011. Other concert series, such as the twelve-week Wednesday at the Square series and seven week Wednesdays on the Point series, are also free public musical events. In addition to festivals, Mardi Gras parades are of course examples of free performances in public space, with music provided primarily by high school and middle school marching bands.

Some public musical events, however, are especially dear to the hearts of musicians and followers of New Orleans music culture. For example, many musicians and community members fondly remember the free musical performances that used to occur in Jackson Square in the French Quarter. Led by the esteemed sousaphone player Tuba Fats (otherwise known as Anthony Lacen), these French Quarter concerts provided free musical education opportunities in a public setting to up-and-coming musicians. Due to the nature of these events being held outside rather than in bars, this was an unparalleled opportunity for young players to learn from seasoned professionals. Lacen began performing in Jackson Square in the 1970s, and became a regular feature there by the 1980s. In the 1990s, some local residents began to attempt to limit the

³⁵ A working hierarchical system exists amongst street musicians, whereas groups with more seniority are understood, by other buskers, to have the right to preferred locations. Newcomers may face opposition when they attempt to secure the spots that are “claimed” by the more established groups. Anthropologist Sherri Lynn Colby-Bottel explores this phenomenon in her Ph.D. dissertation (2012).

amount of music performed in Jackson Square, and in the early 2000s, Councilwoman Jackie Clarkson removed the metal benches in the square, stating that they attract a “bad element” (Reckdahl 2002).³⁶ Tuba Fats passed in 2004, and the concerts—concerts for which jazz fans traveled from around the world to witness—no longer exist. Such a decision falls precisely in line with the very actions that Mike Davis criticizes—the changing of design elements in the built environment making public space unfriendly to the public, in an attempt to make it less appealing to undesirables, as a byproduct of the privatization of public space. In our case, undesirables are defined not only by socio-economics, but apparently by enthusiasm for public musical performances as well.

Music and Sound Regulation in New Orleans. Like most cities, New Orleans legislation governs at least some aspects of busking and performing music in public space. From my own attempts at research, however, I find these laws to be rather difficult to unearth, confusing to understand, impractical to follow, and not universally applicable to all spaces and situations. City ordinances regarding parading—to be explored later in this chapter—are unclear in their intent; Mardi Gras parades for example have their own section and are treated as separate entities from second lines. For music in public spaces more generally, Article IV of Chapter 66 reads as follows:

³⁶ This is the very sort of architectural strategy Mike Davis criticizes in *City of Quartz* (2006). In addition to deliberate city plans to make water sources and toilets impossible for the homeless to access, along with sadistic inventions like randomly timed water sprinklers and spiked cages to protect refuse, the Los Angeles Rapid Transit District introduced barrel-shaped, “bumproof” bus benches that make sleeping impossible. The particular infrastructure and economic system in New Orleans makes these sorts of elaborate strategies impossible to enact. However, there is a history of New Orleans police moving homeless encampments. In February of 2011, police and sanitation workers eliminated an encampment that had established itself underneath the Ponchartrain Expressway overpass and outside of the New Orleans Mission. Dozens of homeless had been living in the encampment. They cleared out the area again in October 2011, while Occupy New Orleans protestors were camping in Duncan Plaza across town. The number of homeless people immediately doubled following Hurricane Katrina, to about 12,000.

Sec. 66-205. - Persons playing musical instruments on public rights-of-way.

It shall be unlawful for any person to play musical instruments on public rights-of-way between the hours of 8:00 p.m. and 9:00 a.m. Persons may obtain a temporary permit as provided by this article. The provisions of this section shall not apply to any person who has obtained a temporary permit as provided for by section 66-176 or are specifically exempted from the provisions of this article as provided by sections 66-138 and 66-139 or any noise resulting from activities of a temporary duration, for which a temporary permit has been granted by the city as provided for in section 66-176. (Code 1956, § 42A-15)

Temporary permits cost \$20, and if granted, can be used up to four times in a six week period of time. Exemptions to the code include city-sponsored parades and jazz funerals, but not busking performances. Some musicians are aware that a rule such as this exists, but an even greater number are not. The idea that it is illegal to perform music on the streets of New Orleans after 8:00 pm is preposterous to the minds of many. Informal conversations with musicians have led me to understand that, although busking on the streets without a permit is technically illegal, the practice is generally ignored by the police. They say, however, that the issue is raised every few years when a resident complains. When this occurs, someone in the musical community makes a public outcry, and the conflict generally dissipates.

Code 1956, § 42A-15 has not been enforced, to my knowledge, during my time in New Orleans. However, recent controversy regarding busking in one particular area has called this code into question, and more particularly, another city ordinance:

Sec. 30-1456. - Use of Bourbon Street restricted.
It shall be unlawful for any person to perform any street entertainment on the street or sidewalk of Bourbon Street from the uptown side of Canal Street to the downtown side of St. Ann Street between the hours of 8:00 p.m. and 6:00 a.m. (Code 1956, § 42-109.1(b))

In June of 2010, the eighth district NOPD officers reportedly shut down a performance by the To Be Continued Brass Band (aka the TBC Brass Band) as they were performing at the corner of Canal Street and Bourbon Street. They have made this spot their musical “home” since 2001; it is close enough to Canal Street to draw in the tourists who are walking to the French Quarter from their hotels in the Central Business District, and the party-like atmosphere they create on the street fits well with this raucous section of Bourbon Street. No arrests were made, but the event created a reaction within the musical community. Critics have opined that such musical performances are not only beneficial to the city’s cultural economy, but serve as a legitimate and positive activity for young African Americans who have few other opportunities. Gambit Magazine quoted TBC Brass Band trombonist Joseph Maize as questioning the logic behind the targeting of young Black musicians, when so many criminals run free due to inadequate policing (Davis 2010). Others decried this action as being nonsensical for noise reasons alone; this particular end of Bourbon Street—the end that locals tend to avoid—contains several bars that blast cover band music through open doors out into the street, for the sole purpose of enticing drunken tourists. These sound levels vastly exceed that of live bands performing without amplification, yet no formal complaints seem to be made against these clubs. On June 17th, 2010, police superintendent Ronal Serpas issued a statement referencing the above two ordinances, and indicating that the department has for years, and more recently, received complaints from unnamed “residents of the French Quarter” about the musical performances. He said that notices explaining the ordinances were issued throughout the Quarter.

Events such as these have led to the gradual formation of a potential noise ordinance that, if adopted, would replace existing ordinances that many have found

confusing. Councilwoman Kristin Gisleson Palmer—whose District C includes the French Quarter, Bywater, Tremé, and Marigny neighborhoods—along with legislative director Nicole Webre, have been drafting this ordinance. As of September 2011, the current draft of the ordinance would limit acceptable volume levels at 85 decibels on Bourbon Street and at 70 decibels in other locations throughout the city. It also prohibits “plainly audible” noise from one foot from the exterior of any neighboring building between 9:00 pm and 10:00 am (Webster 2011a). The enforcement of such a law would virtually eliminate street performances and all club music throughout the city—such change would undoubtedly alter the cultural fabric of New Orleans.³⁷

Glen David Andrews³⁸ has been a voice of political protest on behalf of the city’s street musicians for some time. Following the events initiated by the harassment of the TBC brass band, he led a protest second line around Jackson Square on June 18th, 2010, and threatened to hold a march and concert in front of City Hall if any more street musicians were harassed, ticketed, or arrested. In an interview, I asked him what he thought about the city’s noise ordinances. Though he has generally ceased making

³⁷ These recent noise ordinance controversies also concern local businesses that feature music on their private property. On August 26, 2011, police officers, sanitation inspectors, and the fire department raided Bacchanal Wine; the bar was temporarily shut down due to an occupational license clerical error. A wine retail store with food and wine service in its outside courtyard, Bacchanal has been featuring live music for ten years. It never did secure a live music license, but like most New Orleans clubs in that situation, was left alone. A couple of “out-of-towners” from Massachusetts moved into the neighborhood and opened up a tattoo parlor next door. According to CityBusiness (Webster 2011), one of these two individuals filed complaints against Bacchanal, initiating the shutdown process. The Bacchanal story is illustrative of a greater movement, perceived or real, of outsiders moving to post-Katrina New Orleans and trying to change the culture. These “gentrifiers,” “carpet baggers,” or “new comers” are allegedly disrespecting old ways of doing things—ways that enable New Orleans to sustain its unique culture.

³⁸ Trombone player Glen David Andrews was born into a musical family in a larger musical community in the historically musical neighborhood of Faubourg Tremé. Legend has it that his pregnant mother gave birth the day after Anthony “Tuba Fats” Lacen blew his sousaphone outside of her house to induce labor. Along with his brother and cousin, he earned his musical education from his musical neighbors on the streets in second lines or otherwise. Trained in brass band techniques and versatile in many genres, his performances often draw from traditional jazz, brass band music standards, and gospel.

political statements in public, he expressed to me that forces of gentrification and agents of cultural change are making it increasingly harder for New Orleans street musicians to pursue their craft. “The veteran musicians right now in the French Quarter, they’re not even aware of how serious the shit is, what they’re about to go through, and how it affects them. They’re so used to just being old school (2011).”

Throughout this chapter, it will become apparent to the reader that many of these musical street struggles target the Black, working class musicians who dominate this trade. However, for contextualization and contrast, I will also mention an event that occurred during the 2011 carnival season, between the police and the primarily White parade-goers in the “artsy,” “hipster” neighborhood of the Bywater. On March 6, 2011, police officers targeted participants in the informal Krewe of Eris parade. This downtown, rebellious set had never obtained a parading permit, but has been growing in size in the last six years. Their parades have had an ethos of self-expression, and participants flaunt wild homemade costumes and perform impromptu music. What initiated the 2011 incident was that the police had barricaded a street on the parade route, and some Eris participants ran the barricade. Some witnesses did report inappropriate behavior on the part of the paraders and onlookers—such as people dancing on cars that were parked on the street and someone throwing a brick at an officer—but more witnesses reported violence on behalf of the police. They claim that the police intimidated the participants with force and brutality, using batons, mace, Tasers, and by causing stampedes and making arrests. The NOPD opened an internal review into the twelve arrests that were made (Maggi and Monteverde 2011), but the results of this review are unclear.

When unfortunate events such as these occur, defenders of New Orleans musicians and artists criticize the hypocrisy they perceive in the heavy policing and legislation of the very same impromptu street performances that are advertised on travel websites, print ads, and fliers to encourage visitors to experience the unique musical culture in New Orleans. The City of New Orleans capitalizes on the musical traditions they simultaneously seek to control. More on the representation of New Orleans music culture was explored in Chapter 2.

Brass Band Music and the Politics of Spatial Negotiation

In Chapter 3, I introduced New Orleans brass bands and the second line parading tradition. I presented this custom as an example of how individuals and groups form emotional bonds with places through musical experiences. In the brass band portion of *this* chapter, I shall theorize on how second line parades function as spaces for political expression. I will discuss how brass bands, through the movement of second lines, enable the musical mapping out of space, and provide the vehicle necessary for these spatial contestations. In so doing, I will touch on themes of territory, race, violence, power, protest, and covert tactics.

Territories and Boundaries. As we have seen, second line parades in general are considered to be representative of the local working class Black population. While some Whites, other non-Blacks, and Blacks of middle and upper socio-economic classes do participate, the general sense is that they are welcome, outside supporters. Second liners do not proportionately reflect the demographics of the city—Regis (2001) indicates that

some White residents in New Orleans are not even cognizant of the existence of these parades, as they never set foot in the neighborhoods where they usually take place. The most “authentic” second line parades take place within the working class Black neighborhoods, such as Tremé, Central City, and Carrollton, while second lines scheduled for the French Market Corporation or the Jazz and Heritage Festival, or new “hipster” interpretations like second lines on bicycles, are sometimes criticized for being staged or inauthentic. I posit that these parades draw such disapproval not only because of the racial or ethnic make-up of the participants, but because of where the parades take place. The geography of a parade route bears the weight of the identity of its participants as much as the other aspects of the parade.

We might interpret second line parade routes as delineations of territorial space. Such territories can exist between any two self-identified groups: by neighborhood, by race—even by sexual orientation. Kathleen O’Reilly and Michael E. Crutcher studied the parallel politics involved when two groups—the Black Men of Labor social and pleasure club and the gay and predominantly White Southern Decadence parade—second lined in close proximity to each other on the same day. They studied how the Black Men of Labor stayed in the Tremé, while Southern Decadence roamed the gay section of the French Quarter. They propose that “these two second line parades are acts of territoriality that concurrently galvanize local communities and define neighborhood spaces (O’Reilly & Crutcher 2006:247),” and that parades establish territorially-based identities. In a similar vein, sousaphone player Kirk Joseph explained to me that Mardi Gras Indians and high school marching bands define and defend their territories, which are usually identified by ward (2008). On the whole, identity-based territories are loosely defined by socio-economic status. Briefly departing from the second line case study, I will note

that most Mardi Gras parades travel the biggest streets uptown, which include Saint Charles Avenue and Canal Street. “Staged” second lines occur in areas considered “safe” for tourists—mostly notably the French Quarter. Second lines sponsored by social aide and pleasure clubs happen in “back-of-town” Black neighborhoods. These spatial understandings are long-held in New Orleans, with assumptions about who gets the right to parade where.

These boundary lines have been contested at times. In past eras, second liners have challenged territorial spaces through their choice of parade routes. On second lines of his childhood, legendary New Orleans jazz banjoist and songwriter Danny Barker (1909-1994) is quoted as saying,

...the children used to be kept out of the second line because of gang wars. The 7th Ward gang had its boundary line, the 6th Ward gang had its boundary line, the back-of-ward boys had their line; another boy would take over for the marching at each boundary; you daren't cross over (Goreau 1966).

No such inter-neighborhood gang violence exists today, but the boundaries marking territories are still drawn via parade routes. Another significant example; in 1969, the African American newspaper *The Louisiana Weekly* printed as front page news that the Zulu King of the Zulu Social Aid and Pleasure Club was to parade on Canal Street for the first time in the club's sixty year history (Rousseau 1969). This significance of this change is monumental, as this historically Black social and pleasure club—who puts on one of the two most popular Mardi Gras parades to this day—was previously disallowed on Canal Street. Canal Street may be considered the biggest parading street of them all, and it separates the French Quarter from the Central Business District—two areas that were not particularly inclusive of or friendly toward African Americans. The Zulu parade still traveled around uptown and downtown Black neighborhoods, but announced the

inclusion of Canal Street as a triumph. Within one parade, the Zulus not only celebrated historically Black neighborhoods, but also infiltrated previously forbidden wealthy White areas. As of 2012, the Zulu parade continues to not only draw enormous crowds on the major parade streets, but also to squeeze into the small streets in Black neighborhoods, both uptown and downtown.

I do not believe that I am overstating the importance of parade space and the power wielded in the practice. Parades in New Orleans are an exercise in the right to parade in public space. When a New Orleanian joins a parade organization along with his or her peers, she or he is making a statement about his or her social identity, and prepares to experience the power wielded in taking over the street for a spectacle. Part of the power in parading is a moving representation of neighborhood pride. By “taking it to the streets,” local residents celebrate their local neighborhood—and the greater second line culture—while exercising the right to hold such a celebration.

Parade Violence. Many people, particularly those who have never attended a second line, negatively associate second line parades with violence. Most televised and printed mentions of second line violence attribute the source to be a generalized poor Black community, based on inaccurate information and confusion between the second line community and those who actually engage in violent or illegal activities. If a murder takes place in the same ward as a second line, though it may be miles and hours away from the parade, the parade may be blamed as the cause. In reality, the middle of a second line may be one of the safest places to be in an otherwise crime-ridden area, as everything that occurs during these parades is very public and visible. Murders do not tend to occur in broad daylight in the middle of hundreds of people moving as a unified

mass. Too, the recent surge in video and cell phone camera usage helps to ensure safety through documentation—second lines are self-policing in this respect.

Despite my above statements, there have been unfortunate occasions of graphic violence that have occurred in close enough proximity to second lines that they discourage attendance, even for would-be participants. For example, on September 5th, 2010, a 32-year old woman was fatally shot, and four others injured, near St. Claude Avenue and St. Bernard Avenue downtown. The recently completed Black Men of Labor second line had passed soon before the incident occurred. Later that month, on September 26th, a two-year-old boy was shot and killed as he was sitting in a car with family members near First and Dryades Streets uptown. A gunman was running down the street, spraying bullets at another moving car. The Young Men Olympian Junior Benevolent Association parade had just passed about a block away from the scene of the crime. In these instances, neither the shooters nor the victims were directly involved with the second line parade. Yet the proximity of time and space to the parade reminds us of the adage, “nothing attracts a crowd like a crowd.” Organizers cannot prevent criminals from attending public events.

This sort of violence is not new. For example, during the 1995 parade for the Original Popular Ladies, gunshots rang out, and a young girl was grazed on the cheek with a bullet (Wyckoff 1995). In 1979, the City Council passed an ordinance prohibiting the possession of weapons within 1,000 feet of a public demonstration, in response to injuries and property damage that had occurred during second lines the prior winter—Louisiana is normally a “traditional open carry state.” The language in the new legislation actually specified weapons such as rifles, hatchets, metal knuckles, mace, clubs, bludgeons, chains, and crowbars (Montaigne 1979).

Social aide and pleasure clubs very often condemn violence in their route sheets and their public statements. The elimination of neighborhood violence is, in fact, one of the goals of the clubs, as represented by the New Orleans Social Aid and Pleasure Club Task Force, and club members and musicians alike try to keep parading and musical traditions alive in part to provide positive activities and role models for at-risk children. Second line parades are meant to be family affairs. They occur on Sundays, and are timed to occur after morning church services let out. Glen David Andrews, himself personally affected by street violence, has for some time been vocal about the issue. He created Trumpets Not Guns, a nonprofit organization that donates musical instruments to area children in order to provide a musical alternative to violence for young adults who are coming of age in New Orleans. I asked him about his exploits in protecting brass band music and second line traditions from the powers of gentrification, about his approach in the reduction of violence, and about the right for musicians to perform in public space:

[There are] a lot of White people that like to change shit. And the Black people are too fucking stupid to stop committing all the crime against each other at the events. See, the Black people gonna shoot each other at the second lines—slaughter each other in the street like dogs. And then they wonder why the White people get together and say, “None of them n—s can’t have no parade on Sunday, that’s too much trouble. Eight police can’t watch all those n—s.” That’s the way that go in this city, this is a Black and White fuckin’ place and it’s very racist. Very fucking racist—my fucking girlfriend is a White girl, I know, trust me, it’s fucking racist here (Andrews 2011).

Andrews operates from a perspective that acknowledges an extremely high level of street violence, too much of which is “black on black” violence, in a city that operates under a high level of disparity between Blacks and Whites in terms of income, education, and opportunity. In the past, he has initiated efforts, in addition to the afore mentioned

Trumpets Not Guns charity, that condemn violence amongst citizens. For example, following the murders of his close friend, Dinerral Shavers (drummer, educator, and founding member of the Hot 8 Brass Band), and another friend, Helen Hill (experimental filmmaker), Andrews, along with Sound Café owner Baty Landis³⁹, organized a city-wide march on January 11, 2007. A massive crowd of people—estimated at 3,000 to 5,000—marched on City Hall to raise awareness of the prevalence of violent crime in New Orleans and its effect on the community. In addition to his protests against violence amongst New Orleans residents in general, Andrews has protested the understated soft violence that is inflicted by the police onto the city’s musicians and Mardi Gras Indians, which shall be covered in the next section.

Police Violence. As the fight for the right to parade in public space is sometimes met with resistance, claims have also been made against the police. Consider the following quote by jazz musician Sidney Bechet (1897-1959), on remembering second line parades as a young person in New Orleans;

The police would come by sometimes and, like I say, some of them didn’t do nothing to stop what was going on, but others used to beat up the people and break them up and get them moving away from there. You’d just never knew which it would be with those police (Bechet 2002:62).

A 1969 *Louisiana Weekly* article describes the mounted police “slugging” and “collaring” children, chasing after a boy while brandishing a pistol, and running their horses into the crowd (Beecher 1969). From accounts such as these, we can discern that,

³⁹ Landis also co-founded a non-profit with Ken Foster and Nakita Shavers, with assistance from trumpet player Shamarr Allen. Silence is Violence, a citizen-action organization, offers violence awareness activities such as peace walks, and weekly music workshops for kids led by Allen, to provide constructive opportunities for area children as alternatives to violence. The organization was founded as a response to Shavers’ death.

historically, gruesome street violence was not just limited to “gangs,” but was practiced by the police as well. Historically, the NOPD has been perceived as a corrupt institution that is unnecessarily violent. In March of 2011, the federal Department of Justice determined that the NOPD would be placed under the supervision of a federal judge, with the New Orleans jail system likely to follow. In a report, the federal department charged the NOPD with incapability and racism, and accused the NOPD of violating civil rights, of using unnecessary and unreasonable force, of being indifferent to law violations by its officers, and of attempting to cover up the shootings of civilians by officers (Fox 2011). This investigation only went back two years, which means it did not include determinations based on investigations related to claims of brutality, murder, and civil rights violations that occurred in the aftermath of Hurricane Katrina. There are close to a dozen federal investigations currently underway, and about twenty police officers have been indicted or found guilty of federal offenses from that time period. Crimes include manslaughter, the burning of bodies, falsifying evidence, lying in testimony, etc. A full account of the scope of corruption and brutality in the NOPD, past and present, is beyond the scope of this paper.

The work of historian Dennis C. Rousey (1996) helps contextualize for us the role and method of the New Orleans police force traditionally, through his research on the policing of New Orleans in the nineteenth century. He posits that Deep South cities, such as New Orleans, were the site of the first major reform of the colonial policing system. In differentiation to the unarmed constables of their northern counterparts, southern cities such as New Orleans adopted a military-style municipal police force, designed specifically to control large numbers of enslaved Africans. This more violent, armed approach developed out of slave holders’ fear of potential slave uprisings. Though

the organizational approach shifted around 1940 to 1950, remnants of the paramilitary style appear to remain in current conceptual approaches. In the nineteenth century, an institution that was run by a White majority controlled the Black majority. Now, the police force is a reasonably attractive career opportunity for people of color as well as Whites, and so a substantial number of police officers are Black. Yet the policing structure, and the desire to control large amounts of people, are reminiscent of the earlier design. The narrative that the police must control large crowds of “wild people” remains.

Stories of police brutality against citizens during second line parades abound within the community. Yet these claims have drastically reduced in more recent years—perhaps due in part to increased second line documentation in the form of photography and video footage through film and digital and social media. As second lines are now too transparent for obvious police brutality to occur, the police and the city government must look for other means of control. In 2005, the police allegedly intimidated Mardi Gras Indians during their annual St. Joseph’s night celebration. The police reportedly taunted and physically assaulted the Indians and forced the crowds to disperse. Chief of chiefs, Yellow Pocahontas Big Chief Allison “Tootie” Montana, was so distraught from the experience, and others like it, that he died of a heart attack while testifying at a City Council meeting soon thereafter. Gambit contributor Chris Rose suggests that the post-Katrina resurgence in Mardi Gras Indian tribes is attracting an even higher level of tension between Mardi Gras Indians and the police; the police reportedly harassed the Seminole Warriors during their 2010 Mardi Gras Day rituals, forcing them to remove their costumes and to temporarily disband, under threat of arrest (Rose 2010). Claims of intimidation are made by brass band musicians and second liners, too. On October 1,

2007, brass band musicians Derrick Tabb and Glen David Andrews were arrested for parading without a permit during a funeral procession for their friend, tuba player Kerwin James (Blumenfeld 2008:48). This incident will be further explored at the end of this chapter.

Intimidation is not the only method the police and City Hall have employed to control and restrict musical street activity, however; raising costs to prohibitive levels is another. In 2006, gunfire erupted during the time two second line parades were taking place. Even though second liners claim the violence was completely unrelated to the parades, the fees for police escorting—a legal requirement for holding a second line parade—were subsequently increased from \$1,200 to \$1,400, bringing the final amount to about three times the pre-Katrina fee.

Some musicians feel as though they are specifically targeted by the police, who test the boundaries of acceptable violence in order to control the actions of community representatives who perform their rituals in public space. Like the 2005 and 2010 Mardi Gras Indian incidents mentioned above, police who target musicians may be trying to break their will to assert access to public space. Once again I quote Glen David Andrews, who feels as though his numerous public statements and threats of protest marches have garnered the attention of the police, who in turn attempt to intimidate him during second lines and other public musical events:

And then all the problems that really persist in this city, they think people like I should speak out about it and get involved, and that way eventually people can put all my personal and medical business and everything in the streets. And it's like, do you get fed up, or do you move on? Because you never get fed up enough because you live here. You get fed up when you

move away from here. ...This place is becoming a national embarrassment and a joke. And what sustains the city, what holds us down, what brought HBO here⁴⁰, is the most exploited of them all. The music and the musicians. So every few years, it's time to target them. Let's fuck with them, let's fuck their day up. Let's ignore all the major shit that's a real, everyday problem, and see what Glen Andrews is doing, let's fuck with him today. And they come fuck with me, and I make it simple for them. Well, I'm not doing that no more (Andrews 2011).

Andrews has grown fatigued of the power structures at play between the police and the musicians. After many years polishing his craft on the streets, he now prefers performing out of state and abroad, where his music is welcomed and cherished, rather than controlled or devalued.

Fear, control, and the body. These occurrences indicate a desire on behalf of the police to control Black bodies, even when the police themselves are Black. Robert Francis works at the Backstreet Cultural Museum, a local showcase for Mardi Gras Indian and second line culture, where his brother Sylvester is executive director. I asked him about the power structures interplaying between the police and second liners. He explained to me that not only do outsiders—such as misinformed gentrifiers—attribute violence to second lines, but that the police themselves are fearful of the parade crowds:

Yeah, the police is afraid of when a whole bunch of people are crowded together... It's like we were talking about—this racial thing. They feel you need police cause they feel Blacks is wild. So they need police around because they feel Blacks need to be controlled...(Francis 2010).

Due to this stereotyping of second line parades as being violent and uncontrollable, police are required to escort second line parades at police-to-people ratios that are many

⁴⁰ The cable television network HBO has been filming a drama in New Orleans, entitled Tremé, that is based on New Orleanians and their recovery following the flooding disaster of 2005. The first season of Tremé aired in 2010, and a total of four seasons are planned. The program regularly features actual characters and musicians in its portrayal of New Orleans culture.

times higher, proportionately, than Mardi Gras parades, which draw tens of thousands of drunken revelers and often occur after dark. Clearly there is a racial component in this disparity.

I have indicated that New Orleans residents, particularly residents of color, have good reason to fear the NOPD. Why, then, should the police fear the public? I believe that the answer lies in Foucault's theories on the prison system, particularly in its application to non-penal institutions. This theory may then be plotted onto the contextual backdrop provided by Rousey, as he explains the history of the New Orleans police force as deriving from a paramilitary-style organization. To these, we may then wed the more generalized phenomenon that is the criminalization of African Americans through the lenses of the White majority public.⁴¹ Summed together, the police, although hired by participants of second line culture, perceive second liners to be wild criminals. They then apply a system of control to the second liners that was originally intended for the incarcerated and that developed from the era of slavery.

Lest this explanation seem too simplistic, we could raise the question again of why second lines are perceived to be such a threat to the police. After all, they are not overtly political and do not articulate any threat to the system. It is somewhat unusual

⁴¹ The writings of Stuart Hall are excellent resources for analyzing racial signifying practices, and how these signifiers become engrained in society. He is known for his work in explaining the mechanism behind racism in representation, drawing from semiotics. What's more, Hall states that, "It has been argued that, in the USA, a fully fledged racialized ideology did not appear amongst the slave-holding classes (and their supporters in Europe) until slavery was seriously challenged by the Abolitionists in the nineteenth century (2003:242)." Racialized ideology therefore supported the very system that required said paramilitary-style policing. As I mentioned in Chapter 2, stereotypes of enslaved Africans as primitive simpletons—whether noble savages or happy natives—developed into more differentiated stereotypes during the age of film—stereotypes that are still extant in the American consciousness. Following a study performed by Donald Bogle, Hall describes five main types: Toms, Coons, Mulattos, Mammies, and Bad Bucks. Black second liners are perceived to fit into the Bad Buck category—savage, violent renegades full of Black rage (2003:244-251).

for participants to hold signs with political messages during second lines or to call out angry chants. It happens on occasion, such as the anniversary parades to commemorate the anniversaries of Hurricane Katrina, but normally none are to be found. Consider this quote from Elgin Hychew, “dig me!..” columnist in the African American newspaper *The Louisiana Weekly*, who in 1963 wrote,

Would in this 90-degree weather, this same group or any other group, pick up the pickets and parade in the interest of social injustice, bigotry, their own second-class citizenship, segregation or any other cause as it relates to human freedom? You probably know what the answer to this question would be. This city’s Negroes just parade too much and they don’t picket enough. It seems just plain nonsense to parade during these times of national social unrest unless there is a bona fide reason (Hychew 1963).

This writer, obviously not a fan of second line parades, raises an interesting question. African Americans in New Orleans may not have the exact same challenges as they did in 1963, but there are certainly plenty of valid reasons to protest—poverty, poor education, lack of suitable housing, and inadequate health care come to mind. Why aren’t second lines places of vocal protest?

Based on the afore-mentioned events that suggest a fear held by the police and some Whites of Blacks congregating in public space, it is reasonable to conclude that a Black parade full of angry, picketing protestors would likely be shut down, or else would provide an excuse for the city to increase the already exorbitant fees for second line permits. Earlier in this chapter, I described the acts of violence that occurred during the predominantly White Eris parade on Mardi Gras. The police attempted to shut down the parade, intimidating participants in the process. A select few paraders taunted, fought back, or challenged the police, and were met with violence and arrests. This particular fight for the right to perform in public space was lost. The question of whether the police were legally justified or not in terminating the parade, as Eris never secured a permit, is

somewhat irrelevant to this argument. What I wish to accentuate is that any threat the police feel towards their system will cause a forceful reaction, and that it is telling that the Black parading population has learned tactics—beyond the obvious securing of parade permits and actual hiring of the police—that allow for masses of dark-skinned “back of town” people who might otherwise be criminalized and targeted by the police to parade in public space.

Hidden transcripts. The fight for the right to public space does not necessarily require aggression, force, or picket signs. Second liners use creative methods for spatial representation. Rather than engage in battles of words and fists, second line parades hide subversive politics underneath surface messages. These spatial contestations are tactics that do not necessarily seek to overthrow the entire system, but to draw attention to issues that matter to the community, while remaining within the hegemonic framework.

A helpful binary to use in understanding this phenomenon is that of strategies versus tactics. In his seminal work, *The Practice of Everyday Life*, Michel de Certeau differentiates between strategies and tactics. By *strategy*, de Certeau means the “calculus of force-relationships which becomes possible when a subject of will and power can be isolated from an environment (1984).” Subjects hold dominant positions of power authority, and assume a place that he calls the *proper*. We can take city authority figures as examples of subjects that employ a strategic model. A tactic, on the other hand, is a “calculus which cannot count on a *proper*...[T]he place of a tactic belongs to the other (1984).” Tactics are ways of operating within the place of the *proper*. Thus, strategies are associated with the system of order imposed by a dominant force, and tactics as the daily interpretations or contestations made by the dominated.

This interpretation runs parallel to the military meanings of the terms: tactics as those many smaller actions made at the ground level and strategy as a method for achieving an overarching goal.

I posit that music is an essential element in the tactical decisions made by brass band musicians and second liners. Music, particularly in New Orleans, can carry hidden meaning. Brass band music can enable subversive statements of protest to be hidden underneath a cloak of celebration. T. R. Johnson—English professor at Tulane University and volunteer show host at community radio station WWOZ—finds a parallel between the fear of Black mob rule in New Orleans and that which occurred from the Haitian Revolution of 1791–1804.

People have pointed out—[author] Ned Sublette⁴² for example—the history of the New Orleans police department has never been about walking a beat...the way they do in any other American city. As an organization, its purpose has always been crowd control, which in the context of this larger history, really means: preventing a slave uprising. Preventing a massive wave of African Americans from just rising up...and taking over the city.

I think the notion holds that large, large, large groups of African Americans coming down the street together is a kind of distant echo of the Haitian Revolution. And it's only tolerable and acceptable to the ruling class if it is delivered as a musical phenomenon. To do that without musical instruments is to suggest that the Haitian Revolution is happening here. This is how people take over the streets without getting shot. Freedom of assembly, in a place like Black New Orleans, in the shadow of Haiti...it's only through music—only under the guise of musical performance are they allowed to take over the streets for a day.

⁴² Music writer Ned Sublette has published two books on New Orleans music (2008 and 2009), in addition to his work with Cuban music. He is influenced by Rousey (1996) in his analyses of the development of the NOPD and its effect on New Orleans' culture.

As Mr. Johnson noted, music is the enabling agent in this equation. By keeping the parades musical and celebratory, second line parades can continue; through music, the political contestation of public space can take place under the guise of celebration.

We might go so far as to compare this phenomenon to the secret messages contained in the sacred text of the African American spiritual (Southern 1997:200). During slavery, seemingly innocuous song texts disguised hidden meaning through metaphor or double entendre. Encoded messages instructed enslaved Africans how to escape and reach safety through the underground railroad. Else, they provided hope and assurance that the bonds of slavery would one day be broken. Ingeniously, these texts were hidden under the guise of Christian song forms and masked with Christian themes. Because slave owners publicly expressed a desire to Christianize Africans—a means of justifying the cruelty of slavery—hiding messages within the double meanings was the perfect way to secretly communicate with other slaves. James C. Scott would call this an example of a “politics of disguise and anonymity that takes place in public view but is designed to have a double meaning or to shield the identity of the actors (1990:18-19).” Christian song texts were used to disguise the “hidden transcript,” following Scott’s terminology, which was meant to be communicated only to other enslaved Africans.

Brass bands communicate a similar “hidden transcript.” Consider the metaphor of the bird; social and pleasure club members and Mardi Gras Indians sometimes display a stuffed or stitched bird on their shoulder (Grimes 2009). A second line expert and participant, upon me asking him the origin of this tradition, once theorized that the doves represent a wish for lost loved ones to “rest in peace.” Perhaps this is my own romantization of this curious ritual, but I like to think that the bird may also represent future potential to one day rise up from all obstacles—the bird represents a way out of

life's difficulties. The American traditional gospel standard "I'll Fly Away"—found in many musical genres—remains one of the most popular brass band tunes for second lining, and fits with this hidden transcript of escape and utopia:

Some glad morning when this life is o'er,
I'll fly away,
To a home on God's celestial shore,
I'll fly away.

I'll fly away, Oh Glory
I'll fly away (in the morning),
When I die, Hallelujah, by and by,
I'll fly away.

When the shadows of this life have gone,
I'll fly away,
Like a bird from prison bars has flown,
I'll fly away (etc.).

By singing "I'll Fly Away," along with hundreds of other community members second lining to the beat, participants can celebrate and protest at the same time. It is telling that this seemingly innocuous Christian hymn was the very same one being performed by Andrews and Tabb on the October 1, 2007 event briefly mentioned earlier in this chapter. On that night, two dozen brass band musicians and around one hundred followers began a series of intended nightly processions for tuba player Kerwin James, "bringing him down" in preparation for his burial. Around twenty police cars arrived, and officers threatened arrest if they heard the musicians playing one more note. The brass band musicians followed orders by ceasing their instrumental performance, but continued to sing "I'll Fly Away" a cappella. The police began making their arrests (Blumenfeld 2008). It seems as though the pride and affirmation displayed in the rebellious act of *singing a hymn in public space* was too threatening for the NOPD to resist displaying their power to control. But the musical and cultural aspects that make

up the second line practice lead many sympathizers to view this action as a particularly sensitive affront to freedoms due and traditions held by musicians and other cultural participants. Events such as this one led the American Civil Liberties Union to file a federal lawsuit in April 2007, invoking the First Amendment in their argument against the hiking of fees required to legally hold a second line.

I find this phenomenon to be a practice of celebrational affirmations that concurrently assert the right to public space. Through “hidden transcripts” transmitted through brass bands and the greater musical traditions, parade participants can make small or large statements without appearing, on a surface level, to protest. Thus, the politics of the New Orleans second line parade contest space not through overt aggression, but through covert tactics. This weekly contestation exists within the system and operates under the guise of celebration, and is made possible through the employment of brass bands. In this manner, second liners, through the assistance of brass bands, assert rights to space.

Conclusion

I began this chapter with an overview of the current politics that concern the complexities of musical performance in public space. Using the work of Michel Foucault and Mike Davis, I explain how the physical restriction of bodily movement and sound, along with city legislation that seeks to control public performances through noise ordinances and structural design, are reflective of a larger movement in the loss of access to public space. In New Orleans, this constriction on public performance goes

counter to the ideologies of musicians and their supporters—whether they are New Orleans natives or transplants—who strongly feel that 1) musical performance in public space is a natural right, and 2) those who feel otherwise both disrespect the city’s cultural customs and profit from a musical narrative that they simultaneously promote and prohibit.

In the second section of this essay, I explore how second liners use brass band music in their covert political tactics. Parade routes in New Orleans define territorial space and are often meant to represent a sense of the collective identity of the users of each territory. There are violent connotations associated with second line parades—both by the police in their need to control Black bodies and in the stereotyping of second line parades as being violent events. In the resulting power negotiation, second liners use brass band music as a tool to disguise an expression of discontent—what James C. Scott terms the “hidden transcript.” Second line parades are persistent, tactical contestations of space. By designing their own flow of traffic through subaltern streets, parade planners exercise the right to public space. In the very continuation of a time-honored tradition, second liners engage in creative interpretations of the use of the built form and declare the right to public space.

What we can discern from this information is that brass band musicians play an important role in enabling a historical tradition to continue, despite the prevalence of signs that might otherwise be interpreted as a threat to a system of order and control. The brass band is the enabling agent that allows large crowds of African Americans to gather and dance on public streets, causing traffic jams in the process, while being overseen by hired officers from a police force that has developed out of a paramilitary-

style system that seeks to restrict the movements and sounds of the public and that tolerates violence as a means of control.



Fig. 31: Police escorts are required for second line parades—they travel in cars, on motorcycles, on horseback, and even march in plainclothes. These two officers are pushing the parade along at the very end. Good Fellas parade, September 20, 2009. Photo by the author.

Chapter 6: The Musicians' Village

Introduction

Previously in this dissertation, I have illustrated some ways in which New Orleanians engage in the city's cultural traditions, whether maintaining old ones or improvising on existing themes in the creation of new ones. Music scholars such as I tend to focus on the actual performances of cultural traditions, and perhaps their immediate contexts, when analyzing the practices of cultural continuity. We must remember, however, that musicians are human, and that they desire food, shelter, and stability, just as non-musicians do. In my study of space, place, and music in New Orleans, I felt the need to include a chapter on place as it concerns one the most basic of needs: housing. In particular, I chose an unusual example of New Orleans housing: a planned community designed specifically to house musicians. This community provides an opportunity to study more than housing, however—the particular motivation behind the community's construction also raises interesting questions about cultural continuity; intent versus use; organic, “bohemian” growth versus planned design; and agency. These questions are relevant to larger questions I address in this dissertation about the ways in which culturally invested people use space in New Orleans to support musical traditions, and of the agency of individuals to experience space through music.

The New Orleans Habitat Musicians' Village—hereafter referred to as the “Musicians' Village” or the “Village”—is a community of newly built homes and a center for music located in the upper ninth ward of New Orleans. The impetus behind its design was to lure displaced New Orleans musicians back to the city following the

devastation of Hurricanes Katrina and Rita in 2005. Volunteer laborers involved with the New Orleans Area Habitat for Humanity (NOAHH) built the Musicians' Village to counteract some of the devastating loss of suitable housing available for New Orleans musicians, many of whom have faced, and continue to face, financial instability.

NOAHH was founded in 1983 to serve as the local branch of Habitat for Humanity International, which is a “nonprofit, ecumenical Christian housing ministry (New Orleans Area Habitat for Humanity 2010).” NOAHH has completed, and continues to construct, a substantial number of homes in the greater New Orleans area, both pre- and post- storm. Perhaps surprisingly, the organization was the largest single family homebuilder in the metropolitan area—for profit or nonprofit—from 2008 to 2010 (National Building Museum 2010). NOAHH has therefore had a strong presence in the area for quite some time, and has housed musicians and non-musicians alike. The Musicians' Village, however, is a unique project. It is the first time NOAHH has designed an entire community to serve people of a particular profession. Furthermore, it is the only Habitat for Humanity project in New Orleans that is an entire planned community; the vast majority of their work in the New Orleans area has been in the construction of infill houses—houses that are selectively built on lots in existing neighborhoods (Tusa 2010).⁴³ It is also, to my knowledge, the only planned community especially created for musicians in the United States.⁴⁴

⁴³ NOAHH *has* completed “concentrated builds” on the North Shore, which is the area north of Lake Pontchartrain in Louisiana (Tusa 2010). Concentrated builds do not, however, target particular groups of people united by elements other than a potential income commonality.

⁴⁴ Certainly, there are examples in the United States of artists living in environments that have been tailored to their creative needs, sometimes being grouped together with other artists to live as a community. One example is Westbeth Artists' Housing in Manhattan's Far West Village, where artists live

Jim Pate, Executive Director of the New Orleans Area Habitat for Humanity, gave an official statement that reads:

Many cities have an ‘accidental bohemian’ neighborhood. The Musicians’ Village provides an intentional model that could preserve, grow, and transmit virtually any cultural tradition of any place (National Building Museum 2010).

This bold statement—one that is a major inspiration for the writing of this chapter—reflects an adoration for New Orleans musical culture, and intends to provide a hopeful path towards recovery from a crisis that occurred on a city-wide scale. Within the first months and years following the flood, there was a genuine fear, held by many, that New Orleans would lose its heritage through the displacement of its musicians and other cultural contributors. The Musicians’ Village—a work in progress—is a proposed solution to a musical problem. It is a model for musical preservation through community design.

Along with praising a successful philanthropic endeavor, in this chapter I seek to explore how intention intersects with tradition in the making of a musical community. The nature of the intention behind this planned community begs the following questions: Can music cultures be sustained through the design of the built form? By housing musicians and providing a place for music making, can we ensure continuity of tradition? How do village residents experience the space in comparison to how the space

in a complex of 13 buildings at the former site of Bell Laboratories. Westbeth houses performing, literary, and visual artists and their families, and is funded in part by a National Endowment for the Arts grant and the J. M. Kaplan Foundation (Westbeth Artists’ Housing 2011). Numerous organizations similarly turn old mill or factory buildings into artist lofts in cities around the country, including the Bywater Arts Lofts and the St. Joe Lofts in New Orleans. However, in such examples, the organizers repurpose existing spaces to serve artists’ needs for living and working, and the incentive to providing the low rents is often a tax break for the large developers.

was designed? And, can a planned musical community ever replicate those that occur in a more traditional, “organic” manner? To approach answers to these questions, I will provide highlights from literature on planned communities and intentional communities, explore both the stated intention behind the village’s design and the experiences of residents who live in the village, and discuss the complications that may arise when trying to impose a model of community design into an historical city for the purposes of cultural preservation.

The Musicians’ Village

The Musicians’ Village is the brainchild of Branford Marsalis⁴⁵ and Harry Connick, Jr.⁴⁶, both established musicians and spokespeople, along with the help of Ann Marie Wilkins, CEO of Wilkins Management, Inc. and president of the New Orleans Habitat Musicians’ Village. This trio proposed their vision to NOAHH in December 2005. NOAHH took on the project as part of its extant *Operation Home Delivery* hurricane rebuilding program, whose goal was to rebuild 300 houses in the Upper Ninth Ward of New Orleans.

⁴⁵ Deemed the “First Family of Jazz,” the Marsalis family received a Jazz Masters award in January of 2011 from the National Endowment for the Arts. Saxophonist Branford Marsalis is one of four sons who perform, following in the footsteps of their pianist father, Ellis. The other sons are trumpeter Wynton, trombonist Delfeayo, and drummer/percussionist Jason.

⁴⁶ Harry Connick, Jr. (Joseph Harry Fowler Connick, Jr.) is known for singing, composing, piano playing, and acting. Since the late 1980’s, he has appeared in many blockbuster films. He is also considered one of the 60 top best-selling male artists in the United States, according to the Recording Industry Association of America (2011). His major awards include three Grammy awards and one Emmy.

NOAHH purchased eight acres of land specifically for the Musicians' Village on January 9, 2006—just over four months after Hurricane Katrina hit New Orleans (New Orleans Area Habitat for Humanity 2010). NOAHH had already been researching this tract of land—the site of a demolished junior high school—as a viable space to construct a housing project known as the Baptist Crossroads Project. The Baptist Crossroads Project was proposed by David Crosby, pastor of First Baptist Church of New Orleans, whose original intention was to build 40 houses in the area. Crosby instead teamed up with NOAHH. The land is situated in the Upper Ninth Ward of New Orleans (see Fig. 34). The Upper Ninth Ward is on the opposite side of the Industrial Canal from the Lower Ninth Ward, which is the area that received media attention after experiencing dramatic damage from the initial Industrial Canal flood wall failures and the resulting surge of water. The Upper Ninth Ward has a strong neighborhood history, but was economically challenged before the storm and remains so today. The core of the Village comprises the majority of four blocks. The area is bounded by North Johnson Street, Mazant Street, North Roman Street, and Alvar Street—Bartholomew Street running through the center—with another single block running down Mazant Street that extends to North Derbigny Street (see Fig. 32).

The houses were designed by the architectural design firm Perkins & Will, who, along with the founders of the Musicians' Village, were awarded a 2010 Honor Award from the National Building Museum. NOAHH workers began construction in March 2006. Seventy-two single-family homes were completed by October 2009, as well as five rental duplexes, which provide a total of ten units for elder musicians (New Orleans Area Habitat for Humanity 2010). The single-family homes are approximately 1,100 square feet, and have porches and back yards. As of the summer of 2011, a much-

anticipated Ellis Marsalis Center for Music—a community center with teaching and performing facilities—is in its final stages of construction. In addition to the Musicians’ Village core buildings, NOAHH has been building houses on over ninety lots in the surrounding neighborhood.

Volunteers from across the nation supplied the labor for the construction of the houses. In addition to this volunteer labor, potential homeowners were required to contribute 350 hours of “sweat equity”—200 hours on their own future home and 150 on another potential resident’s home—to earn their way into a Habitat for Humanity house.

The homes cost about \$80,000, and are sold and financed by NOAHH with no financial down payment (New Orleans Area Habitat for Humanity 2011). Residents pay about \$550 to \$650 per month with a no-interest 20, 25, or 30-year loan with a soft second mortgage. NOAHH is not allowed to discriminate against potential home buyers who are not musicians, but musicians are especially encouraged to apply for the program; currently, more than 80% of the residents living in the Musicians’ Village are musicians (National Building Museum 2010). The soft second mortgage is meant to discourage homeowners from “flipping” their houses for financial gain or from selling to non-musicians. The residents who are musicians represent a wide range of genres, and are diverse in age, sex, and race. To qualify for the program, they must have good credit or no credit, no major outstanding debt, and a yearly income of at least \$19,200. NOAHH, perhaps in reaction to criticism from rumored difficulties musicians were facing in proving their credit worthiness, quickly adopted a more flexible set of regulations for potential Village homeowners to prove their income. Because musicians in New Orleans are infrequently paid through methods that require IRS W-2 or 1099

forms, NOAHH accepted proof of income through “gig books, tour schedules, letters from club owners and managers—even gig posters (National Building Museum 2010).”

Literature Review

My approach to studying the Musicians’ Village falls between the cracks of several disciplines. I draw inspiration from discourses in urban planning, architecture, and anthropology. In order to simplify and clarify these disparate areas, I will break it up into two main areas: (1) urban planning, architecture, and related disciplines that are concerned primarily with the built form and secondarily with people’s experiences with the built form, utilizing the term “planned communities,” and (2) anthropology, which is concerned with humans and their relationship to each other and the spaces around them in the study of communities. From anthropology I will borrow the terms “intentional communities,” “living history communities,” and “communities.”

Many scholars working in urban planning and related disciplines point to the Garden City movement as a major turning point in the conception of how communities ought to be planned. The Garden City movement was a utopian ideal initiated by Ebenezer Howard in his 1902 work *Garden Cities of Tomorrow* (Howard 2010). As a solution to the social ills of Victorian urban living—overcrowding, squalor, pollution—the garden city was a planned community to be built on the edge of the industrial city. A garden city would not only provide fresh air living conditions, but a new socioeconomic order for its inhabitants. The garden city called for two main principles: 1)

environmental, economic, and social sustainability, and 2) communitarianism—a model whereas residents are held responsible for the social life of their town (Gwyther 2005).

Historian John M. Findlay completed a study on the impetus behind the planning of communities with an ideological motivation. In his 1992 text, *Magic Lands: Western Cityscapes and American Culture after 1940*, Findlay analyzes the impact that four planned cityscapes—Disneyland, Stanford Industrial Park, Sun City, and the 1962 Seattle World’s Fair—had on the western ideal of living. These four places “constituted influential landmarks that acted both as exemplars of the idea of virgin cities and as antidotes to the apparent chaos of their respective urban milieus (1992:5).” Though Findlay does not compare these magic cities to Howard’s garden cities, both are viewed as solutions to the perceived ills of their respective eras of growth and change, and both are meant to provide a sense of community and stability for their residents/users.

The most recent literature on planned communities often concerns two areas of interest. The first area critiques the privatization of community space in the gated community phenomenon and the gentrification of public space (Smith 2005, Davis 2006, Caldeira 1999). The second analyzes the popularity of Master Planned Communities (MPCs), which are large-scale developments that seek to cover all aspects of the living experience, including recreation, shopping, and community formation (Gwyther 2005). Gated communities and MPCs share some elements in common with garden cities and with magic lands; gated communities provide a sense of safety and planned communities in general use master plans that follow some sort of a unifying vision. However, scholars working with urban planning are defining community formation as a resource that is honed by large developers—developers who are

motivated by interests of capital more than the desire to find an ideological solution to the problems of society's ills.

Through the above-described discourses, scholars analyze communities in terms of the built form that houses people. None of the models exactly describe the Musicians' Village. Planned communities, with few exceptions, are designed by professional planners and architects, and follow a for-profit structure. The Musicians' Village is a relatively small-scale project that employed professionals in its design stage, but was initiated in part by two musicians and was implemented by a non-profit organization that utilizes volunteer labor. Its goals are to protect and grow New Orleans' musical culture by attracting a very specific group of residents who are united by profession over income.

There have been some interesting studies done in the anthropological realm that I use to analyze the human experience of living as a community. Timothy Miller, with his text *The 60s Communes: Hippies and Beyond*, studied "intentional communities." He defines an intentional community as a "group of people who have deliberately chosen to live together in close geographic proximity in order to achieve some common purpose or goal (Miller 1999). Residents of the Musicians' Village share a few of his defining characteristics—they have self-awareness as a group and they engage in a very small amount of asset sharing, such as the borrowing of the occasional microphone stand or power cable. But, residents do not live in the Village specifically to separate themselves from the dominant outside culture, nor do they suppress individual needs for the greater good of the group—his other defining characteristics. Residents wish to live in the Village primarily because it is an affordable option for home ownership, not to escape the world around them.

As the Musicians' Village is meant to preserve extant New Orleans culture, it might be viewed by some as a means of recreating a historical way of life. Some fascinating work has been done by anthropologists Richard Handler and William Saxton through their research in "living history" communities, such as Plimoth Plantation in Plymouth, Massachusetts, and the Washburn-Norlands living history center in Livermore Falls, Maine. In particular, they explore the gap between living historians' perception of authenticity and the alienation inherent in the simulation of historical worlds—alternatively stated as the "limits of reflexive (or conscious) awareness." Handler and Saxton explain that "...we see living history as part of a larger constellation of modern values that urge individuals to fulfill themselves by having experiences they can define as authentic (Handler and Saxton 1988:247)." Musicians living in the Village, however, are not striving to create a perfect simulation of an historical New Orleans neighborhood. Unlike living historians, Village residents maintain their awareness of their musical roles in the present time. In other words, Village musicians are not highly concerned with notions of authenticity in their daily lives.

In sum, the Village does not cleanly fit into existing models for planned community design or into anthropological approaches to intentional communities or living history communities. As I have explained, it is organized and overseen by a non-profit organization, and was proposed and promoted by musicians. Unlike intentional communities that are formed of individuals who make major lifestyle commitments in order to join, the residents are grouped together only by profession—without the power to exclude non-musicians—and many of the musical residents needed to be wooed or persuaded into applying for the program. Another point to consider is that, though based in part on charity and the sharing of labor, the Musicians' Village still employs a

"top-down" approach in its design. Yes, musicians were consulted in the planning process, but the musicians who *were* involved—Branford Marsalis, Ellis Marsalis, and Harry Connick, Jr.—are part of New Orleans' musico-cultural elite. Issues of power and autonomy will resurface later in this chapter.

I have indicated that the Musicians' Village differs from other modern planned communities in that it lacks a profit-motivated structure. However, like magic lands, the Musicians' Village has both a plan and an ideological motivation—it aspires toward an utopian solution to an urban problem. Though smaller in scale, the goal of the Musicians' Village is bold, and seeks to provide continuity for an entire culture. By bringing back the musicians and providing them a place to live, the creators of the Musicians' Village sought to enable stability for New Orleans' musical traditions, and even to increase the greater economic livelihood of the City of New Orleans. When I asked NOAHH Communications Director Aleis Tusa whether the goal in creating the Musicians' Village was to provide housing for musicians or to preserve culture, she replied:

It was to help preserve the music of New Orleans. Because if the musicians don't come back...what's Bourbon Street without the music. And then if you don't have the music to really make Bourbon Street and all the different places what it is, then...are we gonna get the conventions... So it's kind of like, what comes first: the chicken or the egg (Tusa 2010).

Many displaced New Orleans musicians, particularly the elderly, proclaimed that they had no intention to move back to the city in the first years following the flood. They were enjoying a period of newfound fame in the cities where they relocated, and they distrusted New Orleans city administration and the Army Corps of Engineers for allowing such a catastrophe to occur. Yet, living conditions and long-term performance opportunities were uncertain, and some displaced musicians had family members and memories that they missed back in New Orleans. An offer of long-term, affordable housing was therefore an enticing proposal for many such individuals. NOAHH made it

clear to me that their intention in creating the Village was to house musicians together in a new, clean, and safe environment, which would provide an unprecedented level of stability in the lives of many of the musicians. An official statement of theirs reads:

“Conceived by New Orleans natives Harry Connick, Jr. and Branford Marsalis, Musicians' Village is a multi-generational community created to house the artists who have defined the city's culture and to preserve the sounds that have shaped the musical vernacular of America and the world (New Orleans Habitat Musicians Village).”

Perhaps the goals of the Ellis Marsalis Center for Music are even more lofty than the goals of the houses themselves. The center was designed to serve as a professional grade performance facility that was capable of housing concerts, plays, et cetera, with the intent of drawing audiences from outside the neighborhood. In addition to the building serving as a performance space, however, the designers intend the building to function as a community center. Ellis Marsalis' vision for the center is to have musicians who live in the village provide music lessons to local youth, and for musicians to have access to education that would provide skills in the management and promotion of their careers. To that end, the floor plan of the Ellis Marsalis Center for Music included classrooms and practice rooms. Edward Mathes of Mathes Brierre Architects, the architecture firm that designed the center, explained to me the intention behind its design:

The classrooms can be used during the day, for family groups that live in the neighborhood to pursue whatever—it could be how to cook, how to maintain your house, almost anything—but there are spaces that are there that people can use. The building is designed so that [the classrooms] can be opened up without opening up the hall, or if it's a larger group, they can open up the full hall. It doesn't have to be for a performance, it could be for community get-togethers of whatever size. It was always stressed that it would function not only as a music performance facility, but would function as a community center, a rallying point if you will, for the

neighborhood to get together, which is kind of fascinating. I don't know many neighborhoods in New Orleans, or anywhere, that they have these community centers. In the old days, they used to be, I guess libraries were used for that, schools were used for that. And most schools today, come three or four o' clock, they lock the doors up tight, put a chain through the hardware, and go home (Mathes 2010).

The center was therefore designed as a community meeting space, where music lessons and music business classes could occur in addition to public concerts.

The physical design of the houses and the community center express the original goals and intentions of the planned community in a few ways. First, the houses are designed to meld with the aesthetics of the surrounding neighborhood. They are modest, simple Creole cottages, brightly painted in the manner of a typical New Orleans home. In a similar fashion, the Ellis Marsalis Center for Music is designed so as to not dominate or overwhelm the surrounding community, but to complement it. Its lateral, inviting design mimics that of a house, and is meant to fit in with a residential area, rather than impose upon it.

In sum, the Musicians' Village is an utopian solution to the perceived threat of losing New Orleans musicians and the culture they represent. It seeks to provide the means for cultural continuity in New Orleans. Regarding its design, the Village is meant to appear as a "natural" New Orleans neighborhood that might develop in the more traditional manner from multiple individual builders who build houses on a per-lot basis.

Experiencing the Village

John M. Findlay seeks to discover how “average individuals have come to terms with their city (1992:7-8),” following Amos Rapoport’s claim that that planners of the urban environment do not always correspond with the views of those who use the space for living or working (1982). Similarly, Gabrielle Gwyther investigates “the influence that design and development practices can have on community formation and community outcomes (2005:57).” From these authors’ findings, it is clear that, while design and intent can have an effect on people’s use of space, the effect is limited, and the ultimate course of place-making is determined by those who use and experience the space on a regular basis. When interviewing residents of the Village, I focused a large percentage of my questions on their actual experiences living there. I asked them if they were experiencing a sense of community; I asked for their thoughts on whether the Musicians’ Village could be an “authentic” New Orleans neighborhood experience; and I asked them to opine on whether the Musicians’ Village might be able to preserve New Orleans’ musical culture.

The answer to whether residents of the Musicians’ Village have been able to feel a sense of community thus far is somewhat ambiguous. The residents I spoke with express gratitude for their housing opportunity and warmth toward their neighbors. Radio producer George Ingmire explains the level of kinship he feels with his neighbors:

Like, I can tell you, [Joseph] “Smokey” Johnson [session drummer and songwriter] lives on the end of the street, Steamboat Willie [trumpet player] is right next door to him...then there’s me, I do radio. Nat [Nathaniel Franklin] next door is a producer, Alfred [Growe] is a brass

band musician who works for Cox...Then next door to Nat is Helen Gillet, who is a cello player, amazing cello player. Next door to her [along with others who live in the home] is the [widow] of Dinerral Shavers [drummer and educator], who was murdered⁴⁷... Next door to her house is Nobu Ozaki, who is a bass player. Next door to Nobu is Jeremy Haydel [saxophone and keyboards]... And then at the end of the block is Little Freddie King and Bob French, so you've got a blues guitarist and a traditional jazz drummer. I can name everybody on my block, I've never been able to do that before. Probably never be able to do it again. And it's not like we hang out all the time, but we know each other, a lot of times we'll be walking out at the same time, and kinda wave to each other. Maybe see Helen walking to her car with her cello (Ingmire 2010).

Other informants express similar statements that indicate an appreciation for neighbors that they not only recognize, but respect. Actual interactions, however, are similar to what they would be in any New Orleans neighborhood.

Though myriad definitions of “community” exist in anthropology, Robert Redfield outlined four key qualities in community that are helpful here: “a smallness of social scale; a homogeneity of activities and states of mind of members; a consciousness of distinctiveness; and a self-sufficiency across a broad range of needs and through time (as described by Rapport 2010:114).” Residents of the Musicians’ Village do seem to display these qualities to an extent, which would indicate that, though their daily interactions with neighbors can be the same or even less than what might occur in other New Orleans neighborhoods, their commonalities of profession and proximity of location may be encouraging a sense of community that could perhaps increase over time.

⁴⁷ A twenty-five year old drummer in the Hot 8 Brass Band, Dinerral Shavers was shot and killed while driving in December 2006. The teenage shooter was aiming for Shavers’ stepson. This murder helped fuel a protest march on City Hall against post-Katrina violence in January 2007.

Although residents told me that they feel a growing sense of community in the Village, they did repeatedly stress that they hope the area will be even more cohesive once the “community center”—the Ellis Marsalis Center for Music—is completed. Like the planners, the residents expressed to me high hopes for the center, and indicated that if a cohesive community is to form, it will be there. Curiously, the fact that residents referred to the building as a “community center,” rather than a performance hall, indicates that residents 1) feel the need for a community center, and 2) find more value in having the center serve as a place to foster neighborhood togetherness than in having it serve simply as another music performance venue.

Perhaps we are witnessing community formation occurring not through actual music making, but through kinship that develops when people with similar interests live in close proximity to each other. Cellist Helen Gillet describes a friendship that has grown between her and former session drummer Smokey Johnson—a system of support that would be very unlikely to occur if it were not for their residential placement.

...Smokey Johnson, I always bring him up, not only because he's become a dear friend of mine, and is one of the reasons I'm happy in this village, but because he's such a legend. ...And I talk about him as much as I can. I talk about Smokey when people mention that drumbeat, or a funk—“Oh, New Orleans, that funk song, ‘It Ain't My Fault,’ that's New Orleans music.” And I'm like, “Smokey Johnson—all the credit goes to him.” ...That kind of thing happening is special, just having him close by. And being a musician, he encourages me. Some days when I'm feeling really overwhelmed, like I said, I'm doing my career all by myself, and it's a little crazy, but also necessary...he is so encouraging. He comes by, he's in a wheelchair now, he hasn't played drums in a long time because he had a stroke. But he's such a great person with amazing stories. He tells me stories about Johnny Cash and Fats Domino... All the stories that come out of his mouth are so valuable and precious. And then at the same time that I'm hearing this amazing person telling me this amazing story, I'll say “Okay, well I gotta

go, I gotta get ready for a gig,” and he asks me what I’m doing, and he’s like, “Go make that money, Girl! You got get ‘em, killer!” And he’s always, always—every time I drive by I stop the car, wave at him, and he asks me what I’m doing, and tells me he’s gonna go tell Wardell Quezergue⁴⁸ that I’m back in town, maybe I can get some strings on a session... That to me is so valuable. It’s just as valuable as having the roof over my head, it’s really, really special (Gillet 2011).

This example of a retired Black male musician mentoring a young, White, female cellist is the result of informal porch conversations that are occurring due to geographical proximity and commonality of profession.

One assumption may be that, in order to encourage the preservation and promulgation of New Orleans musical traditions, the community structure and design ought to replicate a traditional New Orleans neighborhood. That was, after all, the goal of the Village’s structural design. As many “accidental bohemian neighborhoods” have developed elsewhere in New Orleans, the question of authenticity is a vital point to study, but resident responses do not necessarily indicate they feel one way or the other about the degree of authenticity in the village. For example, Fred Martin (Little Freddie King) is quite happy in his unit, and expressed several times over the course of our interview how thankful he is to have a new home in what he considers a safe neighborhood. However, when I asked Mr. Martin about whether the Musicians’ Village seems like an authentic New Orleans community, his reply was a bit surprising:

Yes, it’s the real thing, but it seems like it’s a nice place, and it seems odd, it really don’t seem as New Orleans, it seems different than New Orleans to me. Seems like it’s more not in the city. Seems like maybe like part of Metairie or Kenner [two suburban cities that lie west of New Orleans], the way it’s organized—the way I feel towards it. But it is right is in the middle

⁴⁸ Wardell Quezergue was an arranger, producer, and bandleader. His contributions to New Orleans music and American rhythm and blues are immeasurable. Sadly, Quezergue passed on September 6, 2011.

of the city of New Orleans. But, you see how quiet it is? That's why it seems to give me that Metairie feeling, and that Kenner feeling. ... Because other places, there's lots and lots of noise. And I love it because there's not a lot of noise. You don't even know nobody's home. Certain days, maybe Wednesday or Thursday—that's not every Thursday or Wednesday, maybe once out of a month or twice out of a month, they might have a rehearsal, maybe about an hour. And that's what makes me love it even more. And the people is nice. I love all of them and they love me... (Martin 2010)

Based on the statement above, Mr. Martin is glad for his new community, but his perception of it is perhaps not what the designers intended for a planned artistic neighborhood. The camaraderie he feels towards his musical neighbors stems, from the most part, from familiarity from past, pre-Katrina, acquaintance. When directly asked if the community feels like an authentic New Orleans community, “the real thing,” he replies in the affirmative, but then immediately describes how it is different from other places he has lived in New Orleans. Curiously, the difference he states is a sonic one—sound being the very phenomenon that theoretically has brought the residents together in the first place. As most of the musicians who live in this community have established careers, and many are mature in age, they appear to be satisfied with companionship between their musical peers, and do not feel the need to practice outside (except on rare occasions) or engage in other unique musical New Orleans traditions like second line parades. This musical community is relatively quiet.

Is it enough that musicians are housed in close proximity to each other if no substantial musical events are yet taking place? In the “accidental” musical neighborhoods, music is enjoyed and perpetuated via live, communal musical experiences—in churches, schools, bars, and the streets. Very little of this is occurring in the Musicians' Village or in the surrounding area. Could this type of environment really

sustain musical traditions, as Pate would claim? Can the Musicians' Village create a musical community and foster cultural continuity?

Another concern is the lack of food, as no restaurants or cafes exist in the immediate vicinity of the Village. As a trained anthropologist, radio producer George Ingmire is particularly aware of the importance of foodways in the creation and sustainment of New Orleans culture (see Chapter 4 for more on the three branches of New Orleans culture), and expressed to me this concern during our interview. In the Ellis Center for Music, no food will be allowed, at least in the performance space, according to Edward Mathes. Whether food trucks selling barbecue or yakamein⁴⁹ will be tolerated, and whether the owners of the food trucks will find the area to be a viable business location, remains to be seen. Historically, food has always been an integral part of cultural traditions in New Orleans that include musical performance: food and drink are sold by amateur vendors from pickup trucks at second lines and Mardi Gras Indian events; Kermit Ruffins, known for his barbecue skills in addition to his musical skills, has traditionally grilled every Thursday evening before his performance at Vaughn's; and the attention given to the food booths at the New Orleans Jazz and Historical festival matches that of the music.

⁴⁹ A gastric creation of curious origins, yakamein is a type of beef noodle soup normally found in Black neighborhoods of New Orleans. Served in corner stores and bars, but particularly known as a late-night food truck offering, yakamein is sometimes referred to as "old sober" since it is commonly prescribed by locals as a cure for hangovers. Some allege that the recipe was brought back from Korea by Black Korean War veterans, but it is more likely to be a recipe developed from those of Chinese immigrants. Yakamein features stewed beef over spaghetti in a seasoned beef broth, topped with chopped green onions and a half of a hard-boiled egg.

In Chapter 1, I introduced the value of authenticity that many locals place on New Orleans cultural practices. Proponents of this idea of a New Orleans essence maintain that “real” New Orleans culture is homegrown, organic, and raw. In fact, I have heard several people, situated in defensive positions regarding New Orleans cultural preservation but not actual musicians or artists themselves, criticizing the Village for reasons that result from it being planned—they similarly criticize the Make it Right Foundation⁵⁰ and its houses not only for looking different from other New Orleans houses, but also because they were initiated by a wealthy outsider. Social anthropologist SherriLynn Colby-Bottel studies authenticity in the traditional New Orleans jazz realm. Her informants express a quest for authenticity as a real “cultural essence,” but view fixed or managed approaches to this authenticity as corporatized and ultimately destructive (2012). For some critics, this same idea applies to projects like the Village; they disbelieve that a managed, planned community could hold a satisfactory degree of authenticity.

Perhaps through this case study, we will see an example of the creation of a *new* sign of authenticity, one that grows through an understanding of extant signs of authenticity that have a solid foundation in New Orleans discourses. The building of authenticity in this case may have a similar final destination as an “accidental bohemian neighborhood,” but uses different methodology in its formation and development of meaning. It begins by using a non-profit model to provide affordable housing. By ensuring that basic needs are met and long-term housing challenges are solved, this

⁵⁰ The Make it Right Foundation was organized and founded by actor Brad Pitt. He vowed to build 150 affordable homes that were also “green” and storm safe. Some locals criticize the homes for their modern, unusual appearance.

model may in fact provide a measure of mental freedom for its inhabitants, allowing them to pursue their art and encourage cultural continuity in a manner that they would ordinarily wish to—with no concessions demanded from other institutions. In differentiation to the empty version of New Orleans represented by Disney World and Disneyland;⁵¹ these are “actual” musicians who have formed their own histories through their individual life experiences, and who are now beginning a new history together.

For example, one noteworthy effect of living in the Musicians’ Village is that of the reification of one’s own identity as a New Orleans musician. Having built her career as a musician in New Orleans for the past nine years, Helen Gillet has experienced an increased sense of self-identity as a musician since she has been living in the Village, through the gaze of visitors who take tours on one of the several chartered bus companies who include the Musicians’ Village in their routes.

I have more of an identity as a musician, because of this village. Right off the bat—musician. Tour busses come by, and no matter what state I might be in, I’ll come outside, there’s a tour bus going on, and they’re pointing at me, saying “musician.” My identity, unless I’m carrying my cello around, or if somebody knows me—a fan or friend or musician or whatever—it’s not obvious that I’m a musician. But now that I live here in my home, it’s a thing. You walk outside, tour bus comes by, and they’re like, “There is an example of a musician.” It’s this funny thing... This idea of Musicians’ Village, and then having it seen this way from the outside world, is one that intrigues me (Gillet 2011).

Such tours help create the Musicians’ Village as an authentic place that supports music making, in part because it labels it as such to outsiders, and because it makes the

⁵¹ The Disneyland Park resort in Southern California features a “New Orleans Square,” complete with wrought-iron balconies and jazz bands, which is meant to replicate the French Quarter. The Walt Disney World resort in Florida boasts a New Orleans-style “Port Orleans Resort – French Quarter,” which has more wrought iron balconies, guest rooms, and a lagoon.

musicians themselves feel self-identified and authentic. Thus, through stability and self-reflexivity, a new measure of authenticity is developing within the community itself.

A New Model?

I now explore viability of the Musicians' Village to serve as an intentional model, through critical frameworks. To reiterate the statement issued by Jim Pate, "Many cities have an 'accidental bohemian' neighborhood. The Musicians' Village provides an intentional model that could preserve, grow, and transmit virtually any cultural tradition of any place." This statement maintains that an intentional model could be used to create musical communities in any tradition, regardless of culture, language, religion, music, etc.

One criticism that immediately jumps to mind for many New Orleanians, myself included, develops from a distrust of any organization that carries some measure of power and that proposes changes that affect the city on a neighborhood level, and that makes claims to have the authority to decide how culture should be saved or enhanced. Residents of New Orleans are sometimes hesitant to embrace promises of cultural preservation through the construction of the planned environment, in part due to promises that have gone unfulfilled in the past. The perceived ineptitude of city planners and the city government in general has caused many to be wary of proposed urban renewal projects that claim to benefit the community. I am of the opinion that some of the best collections of New Orleans cultural objects, in terms of accessibility, preciousness, and entertainment value, have been assembled by individuals and

displayed in homegrown museums such as the Backstreet Cultural Museum or pseudo-museums such as the Mother-in-Law Lounge and the House of Dance and Feathers. Though wonderful archives exist in more institutionalized formats, the City of New Orleans itself has less interest in cultural preservation when it is not tangible or marketable, or when it concerns the living conditions of poor Black residents. Although the Musicians' Village is a project proposed and completed by a Christian nonprofit organization, some residents seem intimidated by the project's size, and perhaps are reminded of past clearances that the City instituted.

Geographer Michael E. Crutcher, Jr. explains that, as part of twentieth century urban planning projects in New Orleans, ten square blocks of the Tremé neighborhood were demolished to make way for proposed civic and cultural centers—centers that never came to fruition. These projects, culminating in Louis Armstrong Park, were a point of contention at the time of their proposal, and remain so today.

Armstrong Park is the result of a series of failures between 1930 and 1970 to build civic and cultural center projects with easy access to Downtown. As part of the process, the City of New Orleans demolished ten “deteriorating” blocks of the Tremé neighborhood. The project displaced scores of Tremé residents from their homes, making the neighborhood one of countless working-class African American communities across the country to fall victim to twentieth-century urban renewal projects (2010:12).

Crutcher explains that, under the ideology of the Garden City and City Beautiful movements that occurred in the first half of the twentieth century, along with public housing initiatives instituted during that time period, large areas of New Orleans, including a significant portion of the Tremé, underwent slum clearance under the guise of urban renewal. One building was completed—the Municipal Auditorium, which opened in 1929-30. Clearance for the construction of this auditorium, covering one

square block of Tremé, also required the demolition of Globe Hall, a Black dance hall. The civic center and cultural center projects ultimately failed, but the Municipal Auditorium and the Mahalia Jackson Theater of the Performing Arts have been operational at various times. These buildings, as well as Congo Square (see Chapter 2 for more on Congo Square), are contained within Louis Armstrong Park, a park that was designed in part to compensate for the failure of the cultural and civic centers. However, as of 2011, some residents still heavily criticize the park's inaccessibility—it had been closed to the public for great lengths of time due in part to substandard construction work by contractors authorized by former Mayor Ray Nagin, and is perceived as a dangerous, crime-ridden area by residents and tourists alike.⁵² From this one example, we can see that any distrust that New Orleanians—particularly Black New Orleanians—feel towards urban renewal projects is a reasonable response given this historical context.

Even if the built environment of the Musicians' Village proves to be a successful endeavor that is fully accepted by residents and the music community, the question of operations and maintenance remains unclear. Edward Mathes expressed to me some concern regarding the long-term usability of the Ellis Marsalis Center for Music and the rest of the Musicians' Village, stressing the need for a sustainable operations plan to not only keep the facilities in good working order, but to ensure that the Ellis Marsalis Center for Music remains open and accessible to the community. He also believes that the center will be successful as a community center only if the residents take ownership

⁵² My ethnographic research for this chapter concluded in the summer of 2011. The city re-opened Armstrong Park to the public in November 2011.

of it. However, it is not clear to me, or to the residents, whether a management plan even exists at this stage.

In his oft-referenced text, *Housing by People*, architectural theorist John F. C. Turner speaks to the need for architects and planners to incorporate the values of autonomy when designing housing for people—particularly in the case of large-scale housing developments for the poor. He stresses the need for the users themselves to be involved in the construction, and especially the planning and management stages of housing creation. His prescribed model for “locally self-governing or autonomous housing systems” flips existing “centrally administered or heteronomous housing system” models, where regulators, and to a lesser extent, suppliers, control the majority of the afore-mentioned planning, construction, and management stages (Turner 1976).

Elsewhere in this chapter, I referenced opinions from people in the planning stages that indicate that, in order for the community to be successful, it needs to be “owned” and operated by the residents. In the case of the Musicians’ Village, there *were* consultations given by musicians and those interested in musical preservation, though from what I understand, not actual residents of the Musicians’ Village. To complicate the issue, however, is the question of quality and labor of the houses themselves. I have heard some people grumble about two issues: 1) the construction efforts of the houses in the Musicians’ Village did not employ local laborers, which would have helped strengthen the local economy, and 2) there is a question of the quality of the materials

used.⁵³ Is there incongruity between statements that stress the need for residents to take responsibility for and be proud of their community and the perception that the houses were not built by local, paid labor, but were built by volunteers with low grade material?

Although this chapter examines the interplay between the planning of a musical community and the reflected experiences of the people who live in the community, I cannot resist reiterating the ultimate mechanism of the social construction of space, which is conducted by the people who live in the community themselves. People create places, and those places in turn help define communities of people. Whatever meaning will ultimately be understood regarding the Musicians' Village will be a combination of the intentions and lived experiences of the *people* who designed and inhabit the Village. The anthropological view reminds us to respect the agency of individuals who share in the communal creation and perception of places. Keith Basso states that:

...relationships to places are lived most often in the company of other people, and it is on these communal occasions—when places are sensed *together*—that native views of the physical world become accessible to strangers...places and their meanings are continually woven into the fabric of social life, anchoring it to features of the landscape and blanketing it with layers of significance that few can fail to appreciate (1996:56-57).

Edward Casey also supports this notion, when he states that "...a given place takes on the qualities of its occupants (Casey 1996:27)." See Chapter 4 for more on this point.

I am of the opinion that we have a responsibility to care for our musicians, and I congratulate the Musicians' Village for its groundbreaking efforts. It remains to be seen,

⁵³ In the summer and autumn of 2010, numerous residents had to temporarily move out of their homes while the removal and replacement of "Chinese drywall" took place. "Chinese drywall" is low-grade drywall imported from China that is known to cause health problems in residents, and even causes metals to corrode. The phenomenon of "Chinese drywall" was widespread in post-Katrina housing restoration. After residents of the Musicians' Village complained, NOAHH conducted testing of the houses, and assisted those affected with their temporary relocation and drywall replacement processes.

however, whether a planned musical community can in fact provide for musical continuity, at least in the traditional sense. Resident autonomy and involvement are essential elements in this process, for studies show that top-down approaches to housing design have seldom been successful.

The Musicians' Village is a unique case, incomparable to other planned communities such as high-end gated communities, artist lofts, intentional communities, or living history communities. The Village is the product of a relatively powerful charitable enterprise, which, especially through the eyes of longtime New Orleans residents, might be interpreted as a top-down approach. However, the houses were built in part by the residents themselves, along with volunteers from near and far, and musicians—albeit powerful musicians—were consulted in the process. We must be cognizant that the attitude that fears a top-down approach minimizes the very real need for suitable housing in New Orleans, and does not take into consideration the views of the residents themselves, who in my experiences, greatly appreciate the opportunity for stable, affordable housing, and who find more positive aspects about the Village than negative. The level of efficacy the Village will have in preserving and promoting New Orleans' musical culture ultimately lies in the musicians themselves. We already see evidence of individual musical histories intersecting in this defined geographical boundary, in ways that may prove to have lasting results.

Conclusion

In this chapter, I have analyzed arguments concerning ideological motivations, lived experiences, and indirect criticisms revolving around a planned community designed to house displaced New Orleans musicians. The Musicians' Village was conceived by politically powerful New Orleans musicians, designed by professionals, organized and financed by an established Christian charity, and built through volunteer labor and sweat equity. Despite its good intentions, some critics have made to me off-the-record comments about the quality of the houses' construction materials and the allowance of non-musician homeowners—criticisms that are related to a resistance to top-down solutions and for the perceived inauthenticity inherent in a planned community. I maintain that, despite the probability that the intentions of the designers and planners will not precisely match with the lived experiences of its residents, the Musicians' Village remains a viable and affordable housing opportunity for New Orleans musicians. The path that the community formation will take in the future depends primarily on the agency of the residents. The community will grow—not because of, nor in spite of—but regardless of the intentions behind the project's design.



Fig. 32: Map of the Musicians' Village. Image courtesy of New Orleans Habitat Musicians' Village (used with permission).



Fig. 33: The Ellis Marsalis Center for Music, as of June 5, 2011. Photo by the author.



Fig. 34: The Musicians' Village is located in the Upper Ninth Ward. Map data © 2012 Google.



Fig. 35: Little Freddie King outside his home in the Musicians' Village. Photo by the author, July 24, 2010.

Chapter 7: Conclusion

Introduction

The following remarks conclude my dissertation. After summarizing my findings by chapter, I analyze several major approaches to agency in existing spatial and structural discourses. I provide a summary of my theoretical findings of space, music, and agency, and I explain my assertion that music acts as a *spatial enabler* in New Orleans. First, a short review of the previous chapters.

In the introductory chapter (Chapter 1), I related how I was initially attracted to studying place and music in New Orleans; I was drawn by the ways in which people in New Orleans manipulate their environments to suit their needs for healing, self-expression, celebration, and community reification. In short, I was fascinated by the agency of individuals and communities to socially construct space, establish and develop place attachment, or create places out of spaces—depending on one’s choice of terminology. In Chapter 2, I provided a historical and contextual backdrop of New Orleans, to give the reader a sense of the complex wellspring from which the city’s particular cultural traditions have developed. Chapter 3 explored the phenomenon of “place attachment,” with the second line parading tradition, together with North Claiborne Avenue, serving as a case study to illustrate how New Orleanians and brass band musicians reify places through musical practices. The focus of Chapter 4 was on music and memory, and the ways in which people associated with the Ernie K-Doe Mother-in-Law Lounge have fixed memories in space with music. In Chapter 5, I explored the exercising of people’s rights to public space through musical performances,

taking the second line parading tradition as a particular case study. Lastly, in Chapter 6 I reported on the Musicians' Village, a Habitat for Humanity housing project that was intended to provide housing for musicians, and in turn, continuity of culture. Here I was interested in the experiences of individuals living in the village, and how these experiences may or may not differ from the intention behind the planning of the space.

The common thread in all of my case studies is agency. Each ethnographic chapter provides an example of culturally invested people in New Orleans controlling, manipulating, socially constructing, or otherwise altering the physical environment. I also relate people's reactions to, and ways they are affected by, the physical environment. I approach music and space from the point of view of the user, seeking to discover the ways in which people experience space with music despite existing structures that may aim to constrict or otherwise prescribe people's movements and uses of space.

Perhaps this approach was attractive to me because New Orleans as a city has a very "underdog" mentality, with "do-it-yourself" values. The phrase "The City that Care Forgot," wording of indeterminable origins that the tourism industry has employed at times, was presumably intended in its initial use to portray New Orleans as a care-free haven from the complexities of modern-day life. But it is also understood locally as a double entendre whose second meaning ironically suggests that the rest of the nation's citizens, or governmental authority figures, do not care about the wellbeing of the city's residents. It is not surprising to me that a large share of the flood recovery efforts after Hurricane Katrina came from individual residents who rescued their trapped neighbors with their privately-owned boats, and grassroots relief organizations quickly established by community members who did not wait for larger, more bureaucratic organizations to

approach the city. Many New Orleanians are used to operating on their own, and are accustomed to doing so while remaining under the radar of law enforcement officials or in rebellion to structures that might more fully affect behavior in other places. In regular, day-to-day life, they park on the neutral ground, make art out of found debris, and “mispronounce” street names with pride. Individuals in New Orleans, in other words, often act as agents who intentionally circumscribe structures. In the following section, I will summarize a general movement towards the study of the agent in sociological and anthropological spatial discourses, and a more pointed look at agency-structure theorists.

A review of Space and Agency

As I explained in Chapter 1, early sociologists working with urban space studied the ways in which city planners designed and organized cities. Planners proposed city designs that supported the lifestyle of a worker in the industrial revolution, and they imagined utopian solutions to the ills of the new urban lifestyle. Later sociological and anthropological studies critiqued the ways in which the built form strived to control the actions and movements of people—marginalized peoples in particular—through soft or overt violence. Neither avenue of study, however, considered agency as a topic of discourse or studied the power of individual and group practices to any significant degree. Residents of cities were therefore approached almost like they were pawns in an urban system—a system to which they were completely subjugated. Setha Low is the first social anthropologist working with space, that I am aware of, who stated that

people's agency was being underestimated, and that the ways in which people use and experience space may not fall in line with the larger structures of the design and production of the space. On scholars who study the power structures of city planners and dominant classes, she states, "They fail...to account either for the agency of the individual actor or for the details of how spatial structures influence human behavior and, conversely, how behavior influences the experience, utilization, and allocation of space" (Low 2005:113). She criticizes others who write on architecture and domination for not addressing the lived experiences of individuals or for how individuals and groups make sense of architectural forms of social control.

Low's incorporation of agency into anthropological discourses on space may have been novel. However, the more general relationship between agency and structures has been a significant one in anthropology, philosophy, and sociology, and some of the key writers in these disciplines are also studied by ethnomusicologists. Major theorists include Anthony Giddens (1984), Margaret Archer (1988), Pierre Bourdieu (1977, 1990), and Michel de Certeau (1984). These post-modern, post-structuralist writers are generally reactive to previous theories that gave the majority of weight to the structures of society, and they assume these structures to be the most significant determining factors in the outcome of people's actions, cultural practices, and ways of being.

Anthony Giddens rejects theories that favor extreme ends of the structure-agent dialectic, whether they begin with the agent, such as symbolic interactionism, or begin with society or societal structures, as does structural functionalism (Ritzer and Goodman 1983:379). His structuration theory instead focuses on recurrent social practices. "The basic domain of the study of social sciences, according to the theory of structuration, is neither the experience of the individual actor, nor the existence of any

form of social totality, but social practices ordered across time and space” (Giddens 1984:2). According to Giddens, agency and structure have a relationship of duality and dialectical interplay, and people engage in practices that produce consciousness and structure.

Pierre Bourdieu similarly found the “opposition between individual and society” to be misleading. He too critiqued extreme approaches, which he saw as separated between two camps: the objectivists, who include structuralists and structuralist Marxists, and the subjectivists, who include existentialists, phenomenologists, interactionists, and ethnomethodologists. In response, Bourdieu formed his structural theory around the idea of practice, “which he saw was the outcome of the dialectical relationship between structure and agency” (Ritzer and Goodman 1983:387). He still gave great weight, however, to structures, in stating that people’s perception and construction of the social world is still animated and constrained by structures (Ritzer and Goodman 1983:390). He termed *habitus* as a common sense way of being that operates in a dialectical relationship to external conditions, and as a mediating principle between individual practice and objective structures (Turino 1990:400). The *habitus* is therefore “structured structures predisposed to function as structuring structures” (Bourdieu 1977:72). Practice theory in particular has been readily adopted by ethnomusicologists, who, since the 1980s and perhaps following the advice of Charles Seeger to expand ethnography past linguocentric methods (Turino 1990:399), have taken an anti-sciencing approach in favor of one of process.

Michel de Certeau tempered the power of structures and questioned Bourdieu’s tendency to equate actions to unconscious behavior. De Certeau’s idea of tactics, as a course of action in people’s everyday lives, is a useful way of looking at people’s actions

as everyday ways of dealing with structures. Tactics are the “noninstitutionalized resources of the weak, depending on timing and not power” (Turino 1990:402). Strategies, in opposition, are “institution, place, and power based courses of action” (Turino 1990:402). De Certeau states,

Although they remain dependent upon the possibilities offered by circumstances, these transverse *tactics* do not obey the law of the place, for they are not defined or identified by it. In this respect, they are not any more localizable than the technocratic (and scriptural) *strategies* that seek to create places in conformity with abstract models. But what distinguishes them at the same time concerns the *types of operations* and the role of spaces: strategies are able to produce, tabulate, and impose these spaces, when those operations take place, whereas tactics can only use, manipulate, and divert these spaces (1984:29-30).

He offers several “ways of operating” as examples of tactical actions: ways of walking, reading, producing, and speaking. Since tactics are actions formulated in response to structures, they do not escape the social structures of the system in which they operate.

We see that theorists working with the practice-structure (or agency-structure) dialectic tend to find places on the agency-structure continuum at which they feel comfortable. These frameworks are useful, but in practice, I find that the balance between agency and structure will differ in every context, and that people’s ways of acting or dealing with structures are dependent on the will, nature, culture, and character of individuals and groups. Mediating notions such as *habitus* are helpful in explaining people’s actions, but they seem to infer that individuals are static. In reality, some actions are conscious decisions, some unconscious. Some create or reinforce structures, and some side-step structures entirely. What I intend to summarize and explain in the next section is that music is a particularly powerful vehicle in New Orleans through which to practice actions that may be charted anywhere on the agency-structure continuum. My case studies, however, highlight examples of agency from the

perspective of individual actors and groups of actors, who are often socially and spatially marginalized in some way.

Summary of Music and the Social Construction of Space in New Orleans

Music is an especially powerful medium for agency in New Orleans, for it is an ingrained language of communication. Throughout New Orleans' history, music has enabled people to socially construct space. Whether using gospel music to help create a community space in a local church, claiming a street corner as a musical territory for busking, or practicing for Carnival season parades by marching on downtrodden streets, people use music in ways that help them understand their city experience and use space in meaningful ways.

My ethnographic case studies explore agency and music in the present era. However, we may also find examples of the efficacy of music in enabling individual and group agency in historical occurrences. In Chapter 2, I introduced Congo Square as a place where enslaved Africans gathered on Sundays for music, dancing, and for the buying and selling of goods. Congo Square is also an interesting case study to test theories of agency and structure. As an area delineated by people in power, the geographical area of the square itself was a structure. Within it, participants created and practiced their own structures in terms of customs, traditions, dance styles performed in ring shout formation, and a changing canon of musical performance. Using de Certeau's terminology, the provision of space and the allowance for expressive practices was a strategic decision on the part of the slave owners, to allow enough autonomy to reduce

the risk of a slave uprising. The musical customs practiced by enslaved Africans and other marginalized people of color were tactical uses of the space. These practices not only celebrated the various cultures of their homelands, but they were also exercises in the power of group performance and they helped inform a common element of *habitus* in the practitioners. These structuring structures and structured structures—to paraphrase Bourdieu—were created through the power of cultural practice, and allowed for through the tactical qualities of music.

In late nineteenth and early twentieth century New Orleans, jazz, as an active musical tradition and way of life, was an opportunity to test racial structures through music. Charles Hersch (2007) argues that jazz subverted racial segregation, “musically enacting and abetting Plessy’s assault on white purity. At a time when racial boundaries in America were rigidifying, jazz arose out of and encouraged racial boundary crossings by creating racially mixed identities of musicians and listeners” (2007:5). He later states,

Jazz was a means for those who were marginalized to have their voices heard, but it was shaped by those who fought against the music, resisting the racial impurity that it represented. This book describes jazz’s formative years (roughly 1890-1915) in a way that pays attention to both the possibilities for individuals to negotiate their racial identities and the constraints on racial boundary crossings (2007:9).

Hersch describes the constraints enacted by state legislation and imposed, at times, by local law enforcement. Throughout the text, he provides evidence of individuals and groups finding ways to soften these constraining structures through musical practices. Hersch mostly describes this phenomenon of racial contestation by analyzing the social construction of racial or ethnic identity, and by relating ways that musicians thinned racial boundaries through musical developments such as “blackening” European

musical styles or adjusting their musical performance to the racial makeup of the audience. However, musicians, audience members, and club owners also contested intended racial delineations spatially; choosing to practice and experience jazz in racially mixed clubs was in itself a significant exercise of agency, one that could bring severe consequences.

Boundaries of race and space continued to be challenged in the age of rhythm and blues. In Chapter 2, I described the practice of racial intermixing in the Dew Drop Inn; in this club, patrons and performers alike challenged the racial apartheid on a regular basis. Yet, the dialectic becomes even more intricate in the Dew Drop Inn situation, for law enforcement and city officials largely ignored Jim Crow laws, and even patronized the Dew Drop Inn until the occasional raid became necessary to re-establish structures of power and control. Such officials were therefore caught in tangles of agency and structure, playing both the part of the tactical audience member and the strategic authority figure.

These are historical examples of individuals and groups acting as agents in the negotiation of racial space. The use of music in contesting racial space is of course a present-day phenomenon as well; I illustrate this point in Chapter 5 as I analyze the negotiation of space through the second line parading tradition.

Actions of musical agency can occur in many forms, however. One of the benefits of ethnographic research is that it uncovers a broader range of personal experiences than history often describes. In this dissertation, I have shown how the following musical-spatial experiences occurred through the actions of agents:

1. Place attachment regardless of the intended uses of the physical form
2. The fixing of memories in space

3. The subversion of structures of violence by using “hidden transcripts,” the quiet contestation against bodily control, and the exercise of rights to space through frequent practice
4. The creation and growth of a music community, both in tandem with and despite the design’s intention

The above case studies indicate that agency can be individual and intimate, or collective and cultural. The first two examples generally describe personal or intimate experiences with space, but this need not necessarily be the case. For example, we see that place attachment can occur at the community level with the fixing of shared memories into space. The second two examples may be more likely to occur in communal settings, but again, they may also occur as individual experiences. Individual actions can reflect personal experiences and non-normative opinions regarding public space and community. Furthermore, the four examples I list above are neither distinct nor exclusive. There are other myriad ways in which people use space musically in New Orleans, including for personal expression and to celebrate cultural identity. I propose that music helps people socially construct space because it enables a special sort of agency, the intricacies of which I will outline in the following section.

Music as a Spatial Enabler

The intersection of space and music in New Orleans is experienced as a complex interplay of agency and structure, where musical structures enable spatial actions to proceed, while musical practices are enacted both in tandem with and in disregard to spatial structures. For example, agency is found in structural spaces as well as in marginalized groups. Too, structures do not need to be large, institutionally based

forces, but are also found and recreated in locations of the individual or of marginalized groups.

In this dissertation, I do not give full attention to the structures that both enable and confine music. I do not wish, however, to diminish these structures with this omission. Musical structures are absolutely essential to the making of music, and of the making sense of music, in New Orleans and elsewhere. Structures of the music itself (scales, rhythms, instrumentation), systems of musical education (high school marching band instruction, lessons), social codes (bandleader authority, the trading of solos), commerce (marketing, the sharing of pay), social organization (networking, the musicians' union), as well as the myriad spatial structures outlined in this dissertation, are but a few social structures that relate to music. My case studies, however, have approached agency as something that is exercised by the musician, cultural participant, or concerned cultural consumer, as a reaction to or in spite of societal structures.

Together, the afore-mentioned scholars have indicated the complexity in locating structures and agency, which in effect makes it nearly impossible to determine where structures end and agency begins. The many ways in which people in New Orleans are both subjected to the built environment and engineer creative ways to socially construct space with music give credence to the various spatial theories previously presented and simultaneously refute any singular explanation. Individual and communal experiences are just too complex for one single theory that lays claim to the relationship between agency and structures.

The one overarching and summarizing statement that I feel comfortable making is that music is a *spatial enabler*, particularly in musical places such as New Orleans. Music has several properties that allow individuals and groups to use, experience, and

socially construct space in a dynamic way. I summarize these properties in the following three points:

1. Music accesses the nexus of memory and emotion
2. Music operates in a greater cultural context
3. Music is a tool for variable expression

My first point, that music exists at the nexus of memory and emotion, speaks to the raw, affective qualities of music, and to its availability for people to use in personal expression. In connecting memory and emotion, music provides a direct and nostalgic path to space. This phenomenon can take the form of individual and communal experiences. Because of its unique positioning at the nexus of memory and emotion, music is a powerful vehicle for spatial actions: it can be a facilitator for place attachment; a tool to fix memories into space; and a means for growing community when people have memories in common.

Secondly, music operates in a greater cultural context. Because music is so ingrained in New Orleans culture, it is a “given” method for expression, for the social construction of space, and for spatial negotiation. Put alternatively, music “speaks the language” of many New Orleanians. Because it is such a part of the cultural context of New Orleans, music serves as a local dialect through which agents may act out their spatial intentions. Through this process, music also serves as a means for growing community as bounded and defined by the built form.

Lastly, the ability of music to represent a variety of human emotions allows people to use music to navigate the (sometimes) thin line between subversion and celebration. Music allows for “hidden transcripts” (Scott 1990) to be expressed under the guise of celebration, and it acts as a vehicle for the exercising of rights to public

space. It allows for large groups of marginalized people to gather in public and exercise their fundamental rights to space, without providing justification for physical violence or forceful control on behalf of the entities of power. In so doing, music maintains the delicate balance—or tension—between a suffocating system of control and the need for agency that many New Orleanians successfully navigate on a regular basis.

By connecting memory and emotion, residing in a greater cultural context, and expressing variable emotions, music serves as a tool for people to test the boundaries of existing spaces and to create places through affective experiences. Through musical practices, New Orleanians can actively shape the places around them to suit their needs for healing, expression, celebration, and reification. These musical-spatial practices never cease to amaze me; I believe that the musical experiences of musicians and community members in New Orleans can teach us much about agency, music, and space.

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