

PLAYING MAS':
THE CONSTRUCTION AND
DECONSTRUCTION OF NATIONAL IDENTITY IN
THE TRINIDAD CARNIVAL

By

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ABSTRACT

Annually, between the Christian seasons of Christmas and Lent, Trinidadians devote themselves to island-wide Carnival activities. A season in itself, the Carnival period culminates in a two-day street celebration marked by music, dancing and masquerade performances. For many Trinidadians, Carnival is the quintessential expression of Trinidadian-ness. On one level, this thesis is an ethnographic "enactment" of one particular Carnival celebration in the circumscribed space and time of Port of Spain 1992. On another, this study explores the historical, systemic, political and hermeneutical linkages between Trinidad's "national" identity, its culture and its annual Carnival. I argue that Trinidad's Carnival is more properly understood, not as a rite of reversal, but as a performance which constitutes and expresses the Trinidadian Self. For many Trinidadians, Carnival time is not the-world-turned-upside-down, but the-world-turned-right-side-up.

An embedded argument in my thesis is a critique of discourses of identity which assume the oppositional categories of a unified Self over and against a distinctive Other. This distinction is found not only in the specific case of Trinidad's Carnival, but in all analyses of cultural identity, and in the anthropological endeavour itself. I show how the modern Carnival, as the dominant "national" icon of Trinidadian identity, subverts the very ideal of a "national" identity it is meant to create and reinforce.

Based on fourteen months of fieldwork in Trinidad, I present multiple views and experiences of the Trinidad Carnival. These representations are situated within the theoretical frameworks provided by both academic Euro-American anthropology and the multiple discourses honed in Trinidadian rumshops, yards, homes, media depictions and academia. Carnival is examined in order to open up new spaces for the re-articulation of identity and a reconstituted politics of difference.

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This thesis is paradoxically both my own, and not my own. I am its final author, a *bricoleur* who has simply pulled together countless strands of experience, both my own and those shared with me by others, to weave a new performance of Carnival. This text, then, is the result of countless co-producers who contributed inspiration, laughter, ideas, time, support, encouragement, criticism, and finances to its creation.

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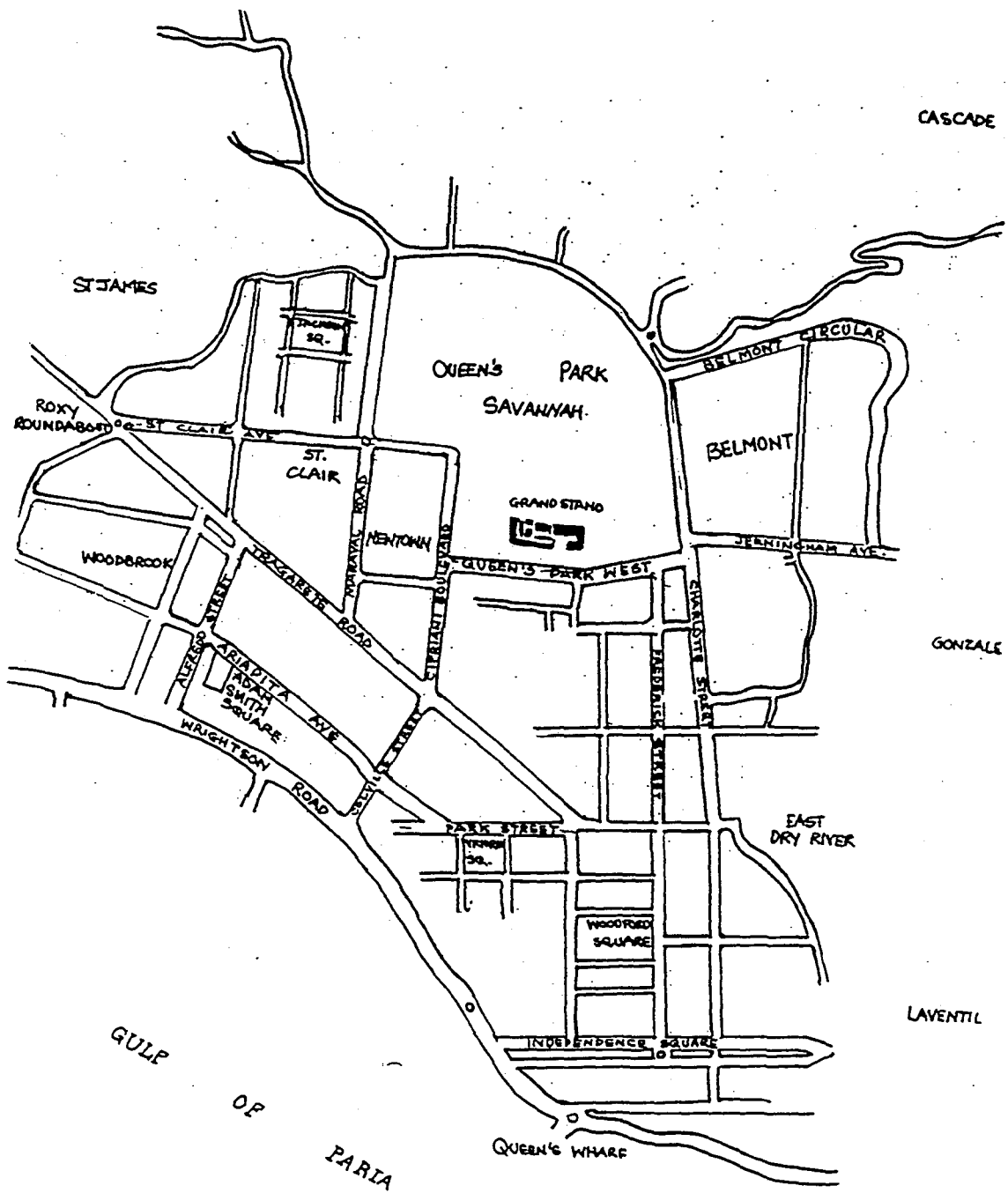
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Port of Spain (Trinidad & Tobago)



Port of Spain

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INTRODUCTION

The Quest

I remember the evening in the early 1970's when the Virgin Mary became a plumed Goddess, St. Joseph a Roman soldier, and Jesus, a Wild Indian. It was Carnival Saturday in Trinidad, and we had gathered at a Catholic Church in a Port of Spain suburb for the evening Mass. The Church was decorated in Carnival paraphernalia - feathers, masks, banners - and the statues wore colourful costumes and headpieces. The priest himself, a "white" Irish expatriate, wore Carnivalized multi-coloured vestments and swayed to the hymns led by an adolescent "folk" choir accompanied by drums and guitars. The final hymn was composed especially for the occasion, new lyrics set to the melody of that year's "hottest" calypso. I can still recall the range of reactions to this daring merger of sacred and profane, ritual and play, local and foreign categories: shock, anger, confusion, bemusement, yet enthusiastic acceptance by the majority. After the Mass, I heard an elderly woman saying approvingly to a companion, "We reach!". This phrase is ambiguously used by Trinidadians, denoting either approval (we have finally arrived at our goal) or disapproval (we have sunk to the lowest). The woman's beaming

face betrayed approval. Carnival had been legitimized in church, and by identification, so, too, had she and all Trinidadians. Conversely, the Catholic Church itself had "reached" as Mary, Joseph and the Sacred Heart, baptized in their Carnival costumes, had now become the quintessential Trinidadians, celebrating mas'(s)¹ in Trinidadian "style".

Disguised statues were considered blasphemous by most Church members, particularly the hierarchy, and as far as I know, this experiment occurred only on that one occasion and in that particular Church. The event was paradigmatic, however, an obvious attempt at "localization" by a foreign-born clergy man at a time when things "foreign and white" were under severe scrutiny. To be properly understood, however, this experiment must be seen in the context of a much wider movement of "indigenization" which was sweeping across the island in the 1960's and 1970's. Indigenization was a powerful critique of the existing social arrangements, perceived as continuing colonial patterns of dominance/oppression in spite of political Independence from Britain, and an attempt at achieving both "real independence" and more equitable arrangements among Trinidadians themselves.

The theoretical quest that underlies this ethnography is to comprehend the linkages between Carnival and Trinidadian identity, and more specifically, to examine the construction, performance and negotiation of the Trinidadian Self in the annual pre-lenten festival². An embedded argument, however, is a critique of discourses of identity which assume the unified Self - distinctive Other categories, not only in the specific case of Trinidad's Carnival, but in all analyses of cultural identity, and in the anthropological

endeavour itself. I will show how the modern Carnival, as the dominant "national" icon of Trinidadian identity, subverts the very ideal of a "national" identity it is meant to create and reinforce.

On another level, my account represents an ethnographic "enactment" of one particular celebration, the Port of Spain Carnival of 1992, by a "native" masquerader-anthropologist. As both a "native" and "anthropologist", my "perverse" identity³, made it impossible for me to assume a comfortable and unproblematized position in the Self - Other categories carved out in traditional anthropological discourse and practice. Casting my ethnography as an "enactment", I intend to underscore the active, negotiated (re)production of knowledge and meaning in text-making. Just as Carnival does not simply "reflect" Trinidadian life, so, too, this text does not pretend to be a realist representation of Carnival. It implicitly critiques the "mirror" and "lamp" metaphors of representation (cf. Kearney 1988:155), problematizing the author's supposed passivity or omniscience.

As a "situated" researcher and author, I am the Trinidadian masquerader, myself both a *bricolage* and *bricoleur*, constituted by multiple, and often contradictory, discourses and material practices, yet bending back to play with and shape a text that is paradoxically, both my own, and not my own. I draw liberally and eclectically on Euro-American anthropological discourses, on theories and narratives honed on Caribbean street corners, yards, homes, rum shops and academia, and finally, on my own lived experience as "native" first, then as "native-anthropologist", on my island home of Trinidad. As

Trinidadians "play mas'" and "make mas'" with boundaries and categories, I intend to "make and play mas'" in this text. I deconstruct, not "to turn everything into *ole mas*"⁴, but in order to open up new spaces for the re-articulation of identity and a reconstituted politics of difference. More than a mirror of Carnival, then, this text IS a Carnival-imitating, affirming, subverting, inverting, concealing, disclosing the very reality that it seeks to explore.

Field-site: Socio-economic Background

Trinidad is the most southerly of the chain of Caribbean islands which form an arc extending from Florida in the north to Venezuela in the south. Roughly eleven miles from the coast of Venezuela, Trinidad is politically linked with Tobago, a smaller island off its northeastern coast. Together, these islands form the nation state of Trinidad and Tobago. In the nineteenth century, Trinidad's economy was overwhelmingly agricultural, with sugar and cocoa accounting for the bulk of the island's exports and revenues. Oil, however, has increasingly dominated the twentieth century economy, accounting for 30% of Trinidad's Gross Domestic Product in 1990 (cf. Statistics at a Glance, Trinidad and Tobago Central Statistical Office). The development of the oil industry has contributed to Trinidad's relative prosperity *vis à vis* the other islands of the English-speaking Caribbean.

Trinidad attracted international media attention both in 1970 and 1990 when social unrest erupted on the island. The demonstrations and army-led attempted coup of 1970

were largely influenced by the symbols and rhetoric of the Black Power movement in the United States. In Trinidad, the movement was fuelled by widespread disillusionment among young urban unemployed "blacks" with the "black/coloured" nationalist Government which, eight years previously, had promised to lead their "black" constituents into a "sovereign nation" of economic prosperity and privilege. In spite of gaining political Independence from Britain in 1962, Trinidad's resources had remained largely concentrated in the hands of pre-Independence "white" elites and foreign companies, a state of affairs which created fodder for the protest movement which quickly enveloped the island (cf. Millette 1974; Ryan 1988). Although decisively quelled, the "Black Power revolution" forced the Government into a more redistributionist stance. The state demanded the dominant role in foreign enterprises, buying 51% of their shares (Ryan 1988:153). The beleaguered government got further help when the OPEC cartel triggered the world-wide oil crisis of 1973. The unexpected oil revenue poured money into state coffers, enabling the government to undertake massive and ambitious modernization programmes. The windfall also made possible the increase of public sector employment and the granting of government subsidies to offset price increases on essential goods and services (Rampersad and Pujadas 1988:561). Political patronage projects and handouts were common, and the increased revenue triggered high levels of consumption among large sectors of the population (Yelvington 1987:11-12).

The high oil prices lasted from late 1973 to 1982. By 1983, falling oil prices on the international market coupled with the decline in local oil production were partly

responsible for a dramatic decrease in public revenue between 1982 and 1983 (Rampersad and Pujadas 1988:561). By 1984, it became clear to Trinidadians that the oil boom was over and that painful fiscal adjustments had to be made. Yet again, the "nationalist" party, in power since 1956, was under intense scrutiny and criticism from the public at large, this time for its "corruption" and economic mis-management of public funds. The rapid decline in economic fortune had an intense emotional impact on the population as many had developed consumption habits and expectations that could no longer be easily satisfied (Yelvington 1987:29).

The "nationalist" party was voted out of office in 1986 by an overwhelming majority (Yelvington 1987:31). The new government, itself made up of several parties which formed one entity to fight the election, had promised to clean up "corruption" and restore economic stability. With a near empty treasury, deflated oil prices, a high public-servant wage bill, increasing dependence on foreign loans and a public grown used to high levels of consumption, the government was forced to introduce austerity measures which especially affected low income groups. These measures, coupled with the party's in-fighting and the new prime minister's "style" of leadership, made the new government unpopular with the large sectors of the population. As a result, a mood of protest and unrest quickly developed throughout the island (cf. Rohlehr 1992b:34-38; Yelvington 1987:32-33). It was this mood that Abu Bakr and his Muslimeen followers tried to co-opt into their coup attempt to overthrow the government in 1990. I was in Trinidad doing preliminary field research when the attempted coup was staged. I returned a year later to

do extended fieldwork and the mood had changed little. Although most Trinidadians did not support Abu Bakr's strategy or Islamic ideology, they were nevertheless sympathetic to his anti-government stance. Many Trinidadians continued to blame the government for their economic plight, placing the party in power under severe, and at times, malign scrutiny (Rohlehr 1992b:34-38). The "nationalist" party was returned to power in December 1991. However, Trinidadians continued to protest and cope with currency devaluation, economic re-structuring, retrenchment, "down-sizing", high employment levels and a huge public debt. These issues formed the background against which I did my fieldwork on the island from September 1991 to August 1992. Subsequent visits suggest that these issues are still high on the "national" agenda.

Linkages: Carnival and the Nation-State

Trinidad and Tobago became an independent "nation-state" in August 1962, when control of political power was transferred from London to Port of Spain. Post-independence nation-building emphasized the need to reduce attention to colour, class and ethnic differences, and stressed instead a common "culture" based on the shared experience of the indignities of colonialism. Richard Fox (1990:67), in his examination of Hindu identity in India, notes that a cultural essentialism underlies the notion that a nation must have a character, and that this character derives from some cultural underpinning. In Trinidad, the new "nation's" cultural identity was conceptualized as having been forged in response to colonial domination. The first prime minister, Dr. Eric

Williams, wrote that there was a "fundamental underlying unity" in Trinidad and Tobago's society based on a collective experience of colonialism:

"...in Trinidad the Negro, the Indian, French and Spaniard, English and Portuguese, Syrian and Lebanese, Chinese and Jew, all have been messed out of the same pot, are all victims of the same subordination, all have been tarred with the same brush of political inferiority. Divergent customs and antipathetic attitudes have all been submerged in the common subordinate status of colonialism". (Williams 1962:280).

Williams' rhetoric assumed the oppositional categories of colonizers/colonized, erasing both the differences within each category and the points of complicity, resistance and negotiation across the dominator/dominated divide. Several five-year development plans (1958-62; 1964-68; 1969-73 and 1982-86) treated national unity as the overriding objective of development, and the creation of a national identity, based on a common "culture", as crucial to this unity. Vidia Naipaul, the Trinidad-born author and novelist of international repute, provides us with some insight into the historical, sociological and ideological background against which Williams' words must be understood. In The Middle Passage, also published in 1962, the year of Trinidad's political "independence", Naipaul wrote:

This talk of culture is comparatively new. It was a concept of some politicians in the forties, and caught on largely because it answered the vague, little-understood dissatisfaction some people were beginning to feel with their lives of fantasy. The promotion of a local culture was the only form of nationalism that could arise in a population divided into mutually exclusive cliques based on race, colour, shade, religion, money. Under pressure any Trinidadian group could break up into its component parts. Nationalism was impossible in Trinidad. In the colonial society everyman had to be for himself; everyman had to grasp whatever dignity and power he was allowed; he owed no loyalty to the island, and scarcely any to his group (Naipaul 1962: 72).

In present-day Trinidad, "cultural" activity refers almost exclusively to the performing and festival arts. The annual Carnival, transformed over time in practice and

meaning, is currently Trinidad's cultural performance *par excellence*, elevated in dominant discourse to the status of the "national festival". Carnival evolved, through a series of transformations, into a twentieth century pre-lenten rite in which all social cliques met and interacted in a common activity, albeit along parallel planes as argued by Johnson (1984). It was, therefore, ideally suited for co-option in the constructing of a "national" seamless Self. A Carnival Sunday editorial of the Trinidad Guardian (March 1, 1992:6), claiming an instrumental role for the newspaper in the development of the modern Carnival, quoted a January 1919 editorial of the then newly established newspaper:

"(The Guardian)...now suggests that the Carnival celebrations in Port of Spain this year and in future should be saved from extinction and disgrace by proper organization and some general recognition (sic) as well as elevate the festival to the importance of a national *Fête*, in the proper conduct of which people of all classes will take a keen pride. In other words let us make the Carnival a credit to Trinidad instead of a mere disorganization of business and traffic by an unruly mob".

Carnival, then, became the ideal vehicle through which, and around which, a "mythopoetic" national metanarrative could be constructed, one that homogenizes various narratives of Trinidadian self-identification, while paradoxically, acknowledging and celebrating difference (cf. Gupta 1992:72; B. Williams 1990). Moreover, Carnival was considered uniquely Trinidadian, the womb which gave birth to steelband music and calypso, two "inventions" of the black, urban lower classes. With the demand for indigenous alternatives to colonial culture, these musical genres were recast as national icons, becoming the nuclei around which a cultural movement, parallel to the political independence movement, could evolve (Stewart 1986:305).

The festival has become a salient symbol in hegemonic discourse on Trinidad's

culture and national ethos, with many urban Trinidadians cultivating a self that is expressive of the Carnival ethos. As the historian, Gordon Lewis, observed:

"For to the degree that Carnival embodied economic values different from those of traditional Protestant capitalism.....Trinidadians could feel that they were capable of enjoying themselves in spendthrift pageantry in ways denied to the "cold" English or the "materialist" Americans and could therefore feed the sense of distinctiveness, of being different from others, which is of the essence of nationalism" (1968:223).

Carnival as the space within which a uniquely Trinidadian Self can be expressed and shaped is not uncontested, however. This "space" sets limits on the kind of Self it is possible to create and generates yearly controversies over what are appropriate and inappropriate expressions of Trinidadian identity.

It is this link between Carnival and Trinidadian identity that I originally set out to explore in my research. My central questions were: what are the cultural particulars that make Trinidad's national identity distinctive? How are these (re)produced in the Carnival? And by whom? Related lines of inquiry were: what makes Carnival such a compelling vehicle and metaphor in the construction of Trinidadian selves? How do individuals or groups resist or negotiate this construction? Is Carnival a dynamic for conservatism or for social change?

Concepts of "Carnival" and "Identity" Reexamined

During my fieldwork, as I confronted the malleability and fuzziness of social life in Trinidad, I came to see that I needed to problematize the concepts of Carnival and identity themselves. Carnival in Trinidad is far too protean to fit neatly into the theoretical

frames we have designed for it as anthropologists (rite of reversal, ritual of resistance, an annual safety valve, a dress rehearsal, bread and circus) or as Trinidadians (Greatest Show on Earth, theatre of the streets, bacchanal). Those who attempt to capture the contests at the heart of the Carnival phenomenon do so in terms of the binary oppositions: elite/popular (Bakhtin 1968), play/ritual (Manning 1983), theatre/bacchanal (Minshall 1993, personal communication) and domination/resistance (Scott 1990), locating these oppositional tendencies in groups polarized by class, ethnicity, colour, and ideology. While helpful, these approaches assume seamless collective identities molded by, and generating, particular discourses and practices inside and outside the Carnival. My data, however, seemed to suggest several intersecting discourses and practices (some more privileged than others) running through the contemporary Trinidad Carnival. These are a set of scenarios (re)produced by individuals and groups, variously positioned in the social structure, which express and constitute identities that are open-ended, protean, multiple and contradictory.

This brings me to the notion of identity itself. It is the recurring concept and central concern in Caribbean critiques of colonial discourse and practice. According to the Martiniquan author, Edouard Glissant, "to declare one's identity is to write the world into existence"(1989:169)⁵. However, the questions "Who am I?" and "What kind of people are we?" articulate the experience of slavery and indentureship in terms of loss of identity and dislocation. The brutality of this experience is best expressed in the comments of Martin Carter, the Guyanese revolutionary poet:

"You can't begin to understand what has been done to us. You can't imagine the real burden of the thing we're carrying. Just to emerge with a freeman's sensibility in this place is to achieve the impossible."

"For the essential meaning of slavery is the loss of self, the loss of identity. And what I mean by this is the loss of those relationships which allow the choices, the loss of those equivalences between inward necessity, and external situations. And I mean the disruption of rhythm, the breaking down of the structure of the personality in which integration is lost and action remains action, removed from any possibility of being transformed into destiny" (Quoted in Rohlehr 1973: 52-53).

Carter's despairing words reflect the on-going concern of Caribbean intellectuals and politicians with the identity question. This theme was especially urgent for the English-speaking colonies in the 1960's, when most of them were negotiating their political independence from Britain. Vidia Naipaul, although quite different politically from Carter, had provoked the ire of his fellow-Trinidadians when he published his infamous words in the year of Independence, "History is built around achievement and creation; and nothing was created in the West Indies" (Naipaul 1962:29). The driving logic of Naipaul's thesis is that nothing was created in the Caribbean; therefore, as Caribbean peoples, we have no history; therefore, we have no Self, I have no self. Although most Trinidadians angrily rejected this nihilistic assessment of Caribbean potential, they nevertheless accepted his emphasis on the importance of a passionate search for a Self, at once individual and collective. In 1979, Derek Walcott, the Caribbean-born Nobel prize winner (1992) for literature wrote:

"I'm just a Red nigger who love the sea / I had a sound colonial education / I have Dutch, nigger and English in me / and either I'm nobody, or I'm a nation" (Walcott 1986 [1979]:346).

The individual self and the collective Self are constructed as constitutive of each other - the experience of inner fragmentation reflective of external social dislocation, and *vice versa*.

For Gordon Lewis, a social historian, a collective Self existed in the Caribbean, but it was "sick": "(The West Indian nationalist's) collective tragedy is that he is, in his cultural self, a schizoid person" (Lewis 1968:393). Walcott, with "grandfathers' roots" in Ashanti and Warwickshire, pathologized his own condition as "schizophrenia" (1970:10), yet opted to accept a "mongrel", "hybrid" identity, swinging between halves of a fractured self in his struggle to overcome the internalized depreciation of the black half (cf. Rohlehr 1973:72-73). Others seek to overcome the loss and fragmentation by constructing selves rooted in African, indigenous or village-folk traditions.

This experience of loss cannot be generalized to the entire population, however, but as Cornell West (1990:103) suggests in the African-American context, it may well be reflective of intellectuals and politicians, who are predominantly middle-class, male, "black" or "coloured", possibly grappling with their sense of double-consciousness. In Trinidad, where Indo-Trinidadians make up about 40.7%⁶ of the population, their identity crisis is cast not as loss, but as a state of being under siege. Interestingly, they celebrate Indian Arrival Day annually on May 31st to mark the beginning of their presence on the island. This date records the arrival, in 1845, of the Fatel Rozack, the first immigrant ship from Calcutta with 225 immigrants aboard (Brereton 1981:101). Emancipation Day, on the other hand, celebrated on the first Monday in August, marks the beginning of the

African presence for Afro-Trinidadians. The former constructs an unbroken continuity with the past, the latter, an erasure followed by a new beginning. However, lost or continuous, resilient or fractured, ancestral or modern, pure or impure, there is an assumed "wholeness" and "distinctiveness" about the notion of identity that goes unexamined in Trinidad. The debate remains at the level of content, but it is inscribed within a colonialist and nationalist discourse of identity, the logic of which continues to produce what is perceived as a pathologized "broken", "schizophrenic", "embattled" or "fragmented" Trinidadian identity.

Discourses of identity assume two oppositional categories within the concept. One is sameness/synonymy, the other, distinctiveness/difference. The Oxford English Dictionary, (Second Edition) Vol. VII (1989) defines "identity" as (1) absolute or essential sameness; oneness; and (2) the condition or fact that a person or thing is itself and not something else. This definition gets converted to the Self and Other distinction which underpins many discussions, in and out of academia, on ethnic, racial, gender and national identities. Traditionally, this oppositional framework has structured the anthropological endeavour itself. It assumes mutually alien categories - a coherent, bounded Self over against its binary opposite, a distinctive Other. In postcolonial contexts, nationalist discourse and practice generally assumes this distinction in order to wrest control from dominating groups and forces. The politics of identity is often a necessary and important strategy used by colonized peoples both for resisting colonial hegemony, and for "imagining" new communities (Anderson 1983).

The construction of a national unified Self is not a neutral act, however. Often, it masks the social inequalities and differences that lie behind cultural integration and its constitution (Fox 1990:12). Further, this Self is generally constructed in relation to the Other, that is, within the parameters set by dominant Eurocentric codes and binarisms. Oppositional self-definitions valorize positive attributes developed under oppression, or simply accept and re-value attributes of Otherness ascribed to the Self by agents of domination. These definitions assume the logic of oppositional Self-Other categories, pigeon-holing identities into narrow and essentialist slots created by those who constructed their Otherness in the first place (cf. Alcoff 1988; Fusco 1988; Giroux 1992:111-146; Keesing 1989; West 1990). Domination, masked and silent, remains firmly in place.

An "insider's" view

My (dis)position as a native anthropologist is an anomaly and needs to be problematized in this dissertation. Anthropology has traditionally been assigned the "savage slot" (Trouillot 1991) in the Western human sciences. This role normally translated into the study of non-"white", "primitive" natives living in pristine isolation on the periphery, and sometimes within the borders, of the "civilized" world. Since it has become politically and intellectually incorrect to talk of savages and primitives - and "they" have disappeared anyway! - anthropologists now traffic in the culturally different or "Other", especially those who are more other than others (Appadurai 1986:357).

Difference is therefore already assumed in the very act of naming a research population: "othering expresses the insight that the Other is never simply given, never just found or encountered, but **made**" (Fabian 1990:755). And otherness is made and contained within the discursive practices of a Self that constructs identity as a unified subject over against an alien Other. Often, in creating the Other, we name and make an oppositional Self:

"It has often been said that the savage or the primitive was the alter ego the West constructed for itself. What has not been emphasized enough is that this Other was a Janus, of whom the savage was only the second face. The first face was the West itself, but the West fancifully constructed as a utopian projection and meant to be, in that imaginary correspondence, the condition of existence of the savage". (Trouillot 1991:28).

In anthropology, the normal state in cross-cultural affairs, therefore, is conceptualized in terms of difference, distinction and distance. And even the most complicated, unequal historical and structural enmeshments between peoples are translated into simple cultural differences (D'Amico-Samuels 1991:75). With difference the focus, the Other runs the risk of being "spectacularized" (Friedman 1987).

Revisionists within anthropology today, sensitive to the ways in which we objectify "informants" in our practice and represent them in our texts, have argued for a more dialogic approach to field research, greater reflexivity in ethnographic writing, and an inclusion of "native voices" in anthropological texts. Marcus and Fisher (1986), for example, seek dialogue with an "Other" culture in order to practice strategies of defamiliarization by "epistemological critique" and "cross cultural juxtaposition" in one's home culture (1986 137-138). The stated goals of their "cultural critique" are:

"to offer worthwhile and interesting critiques of our own society; to enlighten us about other human possibilities, engendering an awareness that we are merely one pattern among many; to make accessible the normally unexamined assumptions by which we operate and through which we encounter members of other cultures" (1986:ix)

Assumed, however, is a "home here" and an "abroad over there" (across the sea or in our backyards), sufficiently alien for "us" to be critiqued by "them". Subtly erased are the seams within the "us" and "them", and the structural enmeshments between Self and Other that both limit and extend dialogic possibilities.

Situated within this discursive practice articulated by Marcus and Fischer, the "normal" task of the anthropologist is to journey from Self to Other and back again. She translates for those back home the experience of difference and the process whereby understanding between alien categories was achieved - native/anthropologist, insider/outsider, cultural participant/theorist. Mediator of binary opposites, the anthropological identity is firmly anchored in the "home" culture, and should the ethnographer collapse Self into the Other, the anthropological project itself - the study of Otherness - is no more. In his critique of current anthropological practice, McGrane argues:

Anthropology's field ethnologist exercises his utmost effort to become a native and herein reveals the paradox at the basis of anthropology: if he succeeds he fails and disappears. As Castaneda's works make manifest, if he becomes a native, if he submits to that absolute laceration that alone gives him access to the "other world" he can no longer be an anthropologist, he can no longer do anthropology, for the tiny pivotal reason that then "anthropology" does not exist. It ceases to be and ceases to be conceivable (Mc Grane 1989:126).

I grew up in my native Trinidad, a child of "Mother" England, a member of the British Empire, a self that was part of millions of other selves that lived on so many pink

patches stretched across the map of the world. Never mind that the ancestors of my maternal Trinidad-born family and friends were of Amerindian, African, Indian, Chinese, French, Spanish, and NOT English descent, that my Maderian-born father bore a "historical grudge" towards the English for stealing Portuguese possessions, nor that my Irish Republican-born teachers, paradoxically our most immediate mediators of "Britishness", told us more yarns about Ireland than about England. Our contact with "the Empire" was largely through the BBC World News (broadcasting "proper", as against our "broken" English), our English language, literature, geography and history lessons, and old Mr. Laughlin, the kindly English police band-master whose back-yard bordered our own and who took the neighborhood kids each year to the St. James Police barracks for the annual police sports. All these anomalies were not so much erased, but recast within a colonial discourse and practice which, while it acknowledged our differences, evaluated them according to British colonial criteria (cf. Gupta 1992:72). Annually on Empire Day (Queen Victoria's birthday) we performed our British-ness, marching in our small school yard to taped military music and saluting the Union Jack displayed on the steps of the Irish-administered Catholic Church. The parade over, we would gather in the School Hall - decentred subjects of a far-flung Empire - to sing lustily, "Land of Hope and Glory", "God Save the Queen" and "Britannia Rules the Waves", "hymns" which affirmed respectively the imperial Promised Land, the divine ordination, and the military might of the British Empire. Whatever resentment I felt - and there was grumbling among the school children of the Empire!- had absolutely nothing to do with our colonial status, but

with having to parade under the hot afternoon sun and perform the militaristic gestures which made us feel acutely self-conscious, especially as we grew older. We never did seem to get our marching feet, saluting arms and "eyes right" quite coordinated, but we tried anyway, some of us deadly serious, others giggling in embarrassment past the flag that was "over many races waving cheerily". All resistance evaporated back in the cool Hall, however, as we sang our anthems and shared in the bounty of the Empire, the yearly treat of buns and sweet drinks.

My childhood left behind, my adolescence was subsequently shared with the developing "nation-state" of Trinidad and Tobago. With the declaration of political Independence in 1962, our islands became a member of the "family of Nations" with its own flag, anthems, and nation-marking devices. The new Prime Minister, Dr. Eric Williams, published his "History of the People of Trinidad & Tobago" in order to

"...provide the people of Trinidad and Tobago with a National History, as they have already been provided a National Anthem, a National Coat of Arms, National Birds, a National Flower and a National Flag" (1962:vii).

More importantly, the collective "national" Self was re-imaged and re-centred in the Caribbean through a powerful political, literary and historical critique of the colonial past, and a contested elaboration and privileging of selected local traditions which had been denigrated and submerged during British rule. A discourse and politics of identity, itself a legacy of the colonial system of thought, structured this search for a new collective Self-definition and Self-valuation. The articulation of an identity, rooted in a common local culture and over against the colonial and neo-colonial dominant Other, was

considered crucial in dismantling the effects, both personal and social, of a disordered and brutal past and the reconstruction of an equitable, self-reliant society.

It was this on-going search for an emancipatory Self-understanding that motivated me to undertake anthropological research at home. I was attracted to anthropology because it seemed to be the only social science that took "cultural difference" seriously. I saw its methodological and analytical tools as useful allies in both dismantling its own past "etic" representations of Trinidad reality, and in uncovering cultural forms which shaped and defined Trinidad's peculiar response to the colonial experience. Further, by studying Other cultures, I sought a comparative understanding of human systems of life and thought.

I, therefore, had joined the ranks of an increasing number of "native" or "indigenous" anthropologists (cf. Abu-Lughod 1991; Altorki and Fawzi El Sohl 1988; Elder 1966; Fahim 1982; Jackson 1987; Kondo 1990; Limon 1991; Nakhleh 1979; Narayan 1989, 1993; Ohnuki-Tierney 1984; Srinivas 1967; Stewart 1989), who were self-consciously taking up the position of Self or "insider", with a presumed privileged access to inside information. The bogey man, lack-of-objectivity, levelled against "natives" studying their own Selves, had become a non-question as I had rejected the scientific ideal of "objectivity" which claims the possibility of a neutral "outside" position from which we can see "truth" more clearly. Every view is a view from somewhere, and the "outsider" view is itself positioned within a much larger complex of historical, political and economic enmeshments (cf. Abu-Lughod 1991:141). Instead, I had reframed the issue

within the concept of reflexivity⁷, claiming for the "native" the possibility of reflexive analysis within her "home culture". If all knowledge is partial and situated (Clifford 1986:7; Haraway 1988:583), with critical knowledge generated through processes of reflexivity, then my search for Self-understanding is valid. Denying this possibility to "natives" assumes monolithic, constraining cultures in which we are all hopelessly entangled.

My anthropological journey, then, was the inverse of the norm. My trip to the field, as a native crossing borders, was not the usual movement to the Other, but a journey back to the Self. This movement was geographical (foreign land to homeland), structural (distance to familiarity), and academic (theoretician to participant). I was not long in the field before I began to experience a rupturing of the distinct categories constructed for "native" and "anthropologist", Self and Other. More and more, I began to use "hyphens" to make sense of my data and of my own identity as anthropologist. I was neither the self of an undifferentiated "native", nor the other of a "non-native" anthropologist. Abu-Lugod (1991:137) uses the term coined by Kirin Narayan, "halfie", to describe this anomaly, but it does not quite capture the complexity of leakage between and within categories. The "native" anthropologist is "not One, not two either" (cf. Minh-ha 1989:94). I was caught at intersections of ethnic, class, and colour difference within the Self, and entanglements (ascribed and felt) between Self and Other.

From the Trinidadian perspective, the category of Otherness, conceived as radical difference, distance or unfamiliarity is particularly troublesome since we are widely

exposed to the technically advanced societies of late capitalism through commodities and media representations. Occupying fundamentally different positions in the global order of things, the Euro-American anthropologist and the "native" experience each other's culture differently. The cultural commodities flowing from the "periphery" to the centres of Western cities can hardly be compared to the flood going the other way. This in no way suggests that "peripheral" people are simply passive consumers of global capitalist products, but this unequal flow of information and goods does shape one's experience of Otherness. Before journeying North, I "knew" Toronto and CIBC (Canadian Imperial Bank of Commerce) and hamburgers in ways few Northerners "knew" about Port of Spain, NCB (National Commercial Bank) and roti (a curry mixture folded in a flat wafer-type bread) before journeying South. The Euro-American Other is generally familiar to "natives", while our Otherness is largely experienced by Euro-Americans as strange and exotic.

On my return to Trinidad, I identified easily with the local milieu. In my field-notes, there were few "humbling-funny" stories on cultural miscues, *faux pas* of etiquette or culture shock. I felt and looked and was "native", and was perceived as such. When questions of "my origins" were posed, they were always framed within the Trinidadian geographical or ethnic context. Carnival, culture and identity are topics widely and hotly debated on the island, and my interest in them was a confirmation of my Trinidadian identity. I was included as a native in the "view from the beach", as local selves observed and analyzed the new "half-naked" Euro-American Others who stepped ashore from

modern day Santa Marias, Pintas and Ninas in search of sun, fun and rum. Networks of family, friends and acquaintances provided a basic infra-structure of support, interest and critique of my work, and strangers often confided "insider" information to me:

"I don't tell everybody this, you know, but you are one of us and I know you will not mis-quote what I tell you. Dat's why I 'fraid those foreign people hanging around with their cameras and ting. They say they not making no money on it, but dat ent really the problem as far as I am concerned. Is how they going to present the ting that could bring plenty trouble" (Sonny)

"You are a lucky lady, you know. I don't usually talk to people so. I am very suspicious of people asking these kind of questions, especially if they come from abroad....But you different. You are really one of us, and is time we start taking we culture seriously" (Ken)

"I embarrassed to tell people this, but I going to talk to you as a Trinidadian because I think you will understand. It really have *jumbie*⁸ in mas', you know. People from America will laugh at me, so I usually say nothing - but I experience *jumbie* here in this mas' camp⁹ at least on two occasions". (Roderick - resides in the U.S. but returns to Trinidad each Carnival to help in mas' making).

Many people with whom I spoke were concerned about being quoted inappropriately. It was precisely because I was local that they presumed I would know that Trinidad is "a small place" and their words, if published, could be traced. Subsequently, I have omitted material as requested and have paraphrased/masked much more. Unless stated otherwise, most names are fictional.

Ironically, on one occasion, I found myself in the role of "native informant" *vis à vis* a researcher from the United States. I was referred to my foreign counterpart by a librarian and introduced as "a local expert" on Trinidadian culture. An interview was scheduled to which he brought tightly focused questions which restricted the possibility of interrogating Otherness on its own terms. His data search resisted my attempts to insert the "ands", "ifs" and "buts" necessary for understanding and theory building. I felt

frustrated, annoyed and anxious about my own research.

More than existential discomfort, this experience raised for me issues regarding the production of anthropological knowledge. The problem had less to do with the attitude and manner of the researcher, which was impeccable, but with the structural model out of which he operated. Traditionally, anthropological knowledge and Trinidadian cocoa production share much in common. Both are gathered in the field, processed and refined in the "mother" country and sent back for consumption by the native population. Frequently, the "native" Other's ethnographic presence goes together with his theoretical absence (Fabian 1990:771), reinforcing the notion that reflexivity is not the prerogative of the native. For a local anthropologist, this model of knowledge production is epistemologically, politically and ethically unacceptable.

My early fieldwork experiences "played mas'" with my anthropologist/native-informant categories, alerting me to "colonial" practices which reduced "informants" to sources of raw data. As McGrane puts it:

"Anthropology's participant observer, the field ethnologist, appears on a concrete level to be engaged in intercourse with the "natives", with the non-European Other. Analytically, this intercourse or dialogue is a fantasy, a mask, covering over and hiding his analytic monologue or masturbation. Analytically, to continue the erotic metaphor, he(sic) never "loses control" (1989:125).

I, therefore, tried to engage in "structured conversations" rather than "interviews", and became increasingly comfortable with the "negotiation of reality" that ensued during discussions. As a co-Self, people assumed that I had an opinion and they wanted to hear it. As an anthropologist-Other, they interviewed me on my discipline, its purpose, and its

benefits. On four occasions, it was "interviewees" who requested that I record and send a copy of our conversation to them, not for "copyright" purposes, but to mull over new insights our sessions may have produced:

"We have to be nourished, we have to have these conversations. At first, I told you I didn't know what I was going to say, but now I am talking more than ever. You see the point? All because you have established a platform, a position from which I can pick up, and therefore, I utter by way of invitation. If you were ridiculous, if you were not open, I couldn't. If you were purely intellectual, you just that. But we're involved in the matter of the spirits, the human spirit lends to the human spirit. You see the point I am making?" (Roy- an artist).

As a Trinidadian, I was acutely aware that informants were disinclined to be used as raw data banks for the minting of theories elsewhere. They were themselves engaged in reflexive theoretical discourse, and included me, as co-native, in that search for Self-definition and valuation. This ethical proximity not only undercut the comfortable notion of the subject/object, theory/action dichotomies in academic knowledge production, but demanded that I take Trinidadian Self-interpretations seriously within my own anthropological discourse.

The category of "native", however, was also problematic. The "authentic" or "true" Trini-Self¹⁰ was itself a hotly contested category, with "natives" caught at intersections of systems of difference. As a "native" anthropologist, I felt and was perceived as "Other" in a variety of contexts, my difference marked by gender, colour, urbanity, class, ethnicity and life abroad. My incursion into anthropology had been fuelled by the desire to explore the subaltern-Other of Trinidad's Self - the traditions and practices that had been erased from hegemonic discourses and practices, and which I felt contained the buried seeds of

a truly indigenous culture. I, therefore, consciously journeyed across borders into the "unfamiliar" male world of stick-fighting and rum shops, went "behind God's back" to the rural districts of Guayaguayare, Mafeking and Paramin¹¹, and hung out with the "bats", "wild Indians", "dragons" and "*jab jabs*" (devils)¹² of Carnival. My "blackness" in North America became unmarked in Port of Spain, "red" in Guayaguayare, "high brown" in Barataria, and "white" in Mayaro where much to my amusement I was asked by a fisherman, "White lady, you want to buy a fish?". An "insider" in Port of Spain, I was an "outsider" in two east coast fishing villages, Mayaro and Guayaguayare, yet I was considered "insider" by each village in relation to the other. Within Port of Spain, I was an "insider" in the St. James area, an "outsider" in the hills of Paramin and the *Burro's Den* (Rum shop) in Belmont. And overall, I was Other by virtue of my association with a Canadian university and my interest in, and questionings of phenomena that Trinidadians considered ordinary and non-eventful. For most, these various and context-dependent identities created no significant barriers to our conversations, but for a few, like the Mayaro man who refused an interview because I was "a woman from outside", it did matter.

As native anthropologist, then, the categories of Self and Other blurred into each other, and I and others (re)acted accordingly. I found difference in the familiar (cf. Stewart 1989:14), commonality in the unfamiliar. There was no seamless native Self of which I was unproblematically a part, nor a distinctive Other beyond its shores or lurking in the shadows of Mayaro or Paramin, against which this Self could be measured. There

is a real danger, both as anthropologist and native, of exotizing and "spectacularizing" difference (Friedman 1987), erasing both the enmeshments of Self with Other and the many differences and inequalities that exist within either category. Brazilian and Hollywood-type masquerades jostle with *jab jabs* on Carnival days, Whitney Houston drifts off the airwaves on Paramin Hill, Mafeking stick-fighters battle under a "Guinness is good for you" sign in front of the *Gay Paree* rum shop. We cannot erase these as "inconsistencies", nor interpret them simply as passive acts of consumption on the part of natives. Naipaul's "mimicry" (1967)¹³ is too simple a concept to describe the inventiveness of local consumers *vis à vis* "foreign" cultural goods (Miller 1987; 1992:165). But even as we celebrate the *bricoleur*, we must recognize the conditions of power and domination under which cross-cultural *bricolage* occurs. The cultural flows between the centre and periphery, the Self and Other are terribly lopsided and unequal (Gupta and Ferguson 1992:19). A deluge from the centre meets no response in kind, a trickle flows back perhaps, but always canned and packaged within clearly defined criteria of a staged Otherness. I went in search of a Self in Trinidad and found a rich, complex and often contradictory Self, a multitude of selves who are selves for different reasons. Self and Other blurred into each other in myriads of ways, through domination, complicity, resistance and negotiation.

Methodology

This study is the result of fourteen months of research done in Trinidad and

Tobago¹⁴. However, the origins of this work lie in many years of observing and actively participating in the Port of Spain Carnival. My first incursion into formal field-work took place in July and August of 1990 when I returned to Trinidad to identify a suitable field-site, to make local contacts and to undertake preliminary research into the relationship between national identity and the Carnival festival. I arrived two weeks before the attempted overthrow of the government by Abu Bakr and his Muslimeem insurgents. Being home at this time not only re-introduced me to local conditions, but demonstrated to me the centrality of identity as it related to nationalist discourse during this crisis.

In September 1991, I returned again to Trinidad for a year of field research. This involved participant observation at the urban Port of Spain Carnival, and the pre-Carnival urban and rural preparations. I visited the Port of Spain calypso tents¹⁵, pan yards¹⁶, and mas' camps across the city, and stick-fighting in Arima and the Mayaro district. Because Carnival involves a series of discrete events and extends over time and place, it was physically impossible for me to participate in the "whole" of Carnival. I had to make choices. However, the re-presentations available to me through the media allowed me a proximity to several performances, often in ways I would not have had, had I been there in person. These "texts" form the basis of the annual public debates surrounding Carnival and provided me with an important source of data.

Interviews were conducted with a wide cross-section of key Carnival participants and non-participants, masquerade producers and performers, as well as National Carnival Commission officials and judges. I also successfully recorded the oral histories of elderly

masqueraders which enabled me to trace the transformations in masking over a sixty year period. Initial contacts were established through personal networks and formal introductions to NCC (National Carnival Commission) personnel. Subsequent interviews arose from NCC contacts and referrals given through the Carnival grapevine. In total, I carried out seventy formal "interviews": of these fifty-one were men and nineteen women, fifty were from Port of Spain while twenty came from outside this area, ten were formally associated with the NCC. Most people willingly engaged in our "structured conversations", a few, however, were extremely anxious about confidentiality, and either refused interview requests or preferred not to be taped. The disparity between the numbers of women and men formally interviewed needs to be explained. The producers and organizers of Carnival remain predominantly male, while its consumers are increasingly female. Further, men were much more willing to give extended taped interviews as "experts" on Carnival, while most women were hesitant to do so.

The views and involvement of women in Carnival however, did not go unrecorded, but were gathered largely through informal conversations. Discussions, which focused on the same questions that structured the formal interviews, usually occurred with persons I met socially and included both dyadic and group interactions. These on-going, informal interviews were, by their very nature, unquantifiable, yet proved to be a rich source for tapping into the ethos of Carnival.

I also conducted archival research at the Ministry of Culture, the public and university libraries and the Office of the National Carnival Commission. This involved

a search in historical and current documents for ethnographic sources and "official" statements on the Carnival. Staff at all of these institutions helped me to locate resource material and to make important contacts for my research.

In February 1993, I returned to Trinidad for participant observation of that year's Carnival. During this visit, I observed the Carnival celebrations, participated in those events that I had not been able to attend the previous year, and collected Carnival 1993 audio-visual and printed material. This visit also enabled me to fill in obvious gaps in my research and to interview some people I had been unable to contact during my previous fieldwork.

The text that has resulted from these experiences, then, is an ethnography of Trinidad's Carnival. But more than this, it is an exploration into Trinidadian self-perception through the yearly pre-Lenten performance. My account focuses on the construction, performance and negotiation of identities within a nationalist project of nation-building. Several discourses and practices intertwine in the Carnival which make it a problematic and highly controversial carrier of meaning and site of identity (re)formation. The chapters that follow attempt to work through several layers of meaning which, in practice, are historically and socially embedded in the Carnival. Because these narratives and practices do not run neatly along parallel planes of class, gender, race, or ethnicity, drawing lines between them is somewhat artificial, and necessarily tenuous. Yet, these domains are distinctive enough, and sufficiently reflected in daily life, to be analytically separated and of heuristic service to Trinidadians struggling to understand our

own social reality, and more generally, to anthropologists interested in identity formation through and within cultural performances.

My dissertation is constructed in two parts. Part I, which itself is divided into five chapters, deals with the "history" of Carnival as both "concept" and "event" in constituting the meaning and practice of the present-day Carnival. My initial plan did not include an extended "historical" section, but the need for such an background became obvious when I began to explore the discourses, practices and controversies of the modern festival. Carnival's "remembered" history is contested history, and is part of the Carnival itself, shaping, and being shaped by, current understandings of the "national" Self.

Part II reflects the modern "drama" of Carnival. The festival is a smorgasbord of events, spread in time and space, through a "season" which begins after Christmas and runs until Ash Wednesday, the beginning of the Christian season of Lent. I focus exclusively on the street performance of Carnival Monday and Tuesday in Port of Spain, "writing out" the numerous activities which take place temporally and spatially outside of this circumscribed space. This section, made up of three chapters, includes historical data and my own "situated" experience. It incorporates observant participation in particular Carnival events and an elaboration of the local narratives which both emerge from and surround the performances. My writing strategy in this section is an attempt to "play mas'" with the structure of traditional ethnography and its implicit oppositional categories. Generally, ethnographic detail is separated from theory, the present from the past, local knowledge from anthropological interpretations, the first-person from the third-

person narrator. I include all these elements in each chapter, not only to disrupt and blur the boundaries, but to demonstrate how all weave together the fabric of cultural reality.

The ninth chapter functions as the conclusion to Carnival, and is a way of bringing my discussion back to the more general question of identity, and Trinidadian identity in particular. I will examine how Carnival extends into the everydayness of Trinidadian life through an ethos, practice and nationalist discourse which links Carnival and Culture in producing a contested Carnivalized "*Trini*" Self. I try to bring together the multiple, contested discourses and practices within and surrounding the contemporary Carnival, and to offer some insights not only on Trinidad's performance, but more generally, on how performances provide culturally constituted frameworks from which people draw to invent and negotiate identity. In our Trinidadian case, Carnival, as festival and metaphor, is a compelling vehicle in the (re) construction of a national Self. Paradoxically, however, it undermines and "plays mas'" with the very concept of identity on which it is built.

PART I

CHAPTER ONE

Carnival In Historical Perspective

To understand how Carnival became the privileged cultural symbol appropriated by nationalists to objectify and unify "the nation" against the foreign Other, it is important that the festival be traced from its inception. In fact, an examination of its particular historical conjunctures could usefully serve to de-essentialize Carnival as a monolithic, a-historical practice whose meaning and function serves either to reinforce the status quo (cf. Eagleton 1981; Gluckman 1963, 1965; Sales 1983; Turner 1969), or symbolically and actually to question or subvert it (cf. Bakhtin 1968; Burke 1978; Da Matta 1984; Gilmore 1987; Le Roy Ladurie 1981; Scott 1990; Scribner 1978).

I found, however, that a historical venture of this sort is fraught with difficulties. First, there is the paucity of documented resource material before the 1940's, with most of the available data coming from newspaper reports, foreign visitors to the island, government documents, and moralistic tracts (Hill 1972:21). The bulk of these reflect the official "public transcript" (cf. Scott 1990:2) of the dominant elite, and more specifically of the male elite, with the behaviour and motives of their subordinated Other mediated through Eurocentric and patriarchal interpretations. Further, it is likely that subordinated

groups were not simply victims of erasure, but were themselves active participants in the art of concealment, "writing out" their opinions and practices from public scrutiny for fear of censure or retaliation. Fortunately, since the 1940's the Carnival trail has become easier to follow with a variety of reports available, augmented by oral history. Also, attempts have been made at representing Carnival's history (Brereton 1979:152-175; Hill 1972; Johnson 1983; Pearse 1988a[1956]; Wood 1968:242-248), with an emphasis on "writing in" the resistance motifs of the "black" subaltern group, and recovering the indigenous traditions which "reflect the national spirit" (Hill 1972:21).

The relative transparency or opacity of the historical record is not my biggest difficulty, however. More problematic is the selecting and constituting of data as part of a Carnival narrative in which the present is linked to beginnings to form a continuity with the past. In Trinidad, this issue is primarily political, not epistemological, given the assumptions of the discourse on identity. Identity is often predicated on inventing or creating *ex nihilo*, giving the "creators" rights of ownership over what is created. Recent studies have explored this link between cultural property and Self, exposing the assumptions that various human inventions are the creation of distinct human groups, and that these embody the Selves that produced them (Clifford 1985; Handler 1988; Trevor-Roper 1983). Descartes' "I think, therefore I am" becomes in modern nationalist discourse, "We create *ex nihilo*, therefore we are".

Gordon Rohlehr, himself a West Indian, shows how this theme informs Naipaul's works, especially his novel, A House for Mr. Biswas:

".....in a novel such as a House for Mr. Biswas possibility is defined in terms of creating or even just acquiring something of one's own - that is, in terms of property and the acquisition of property which is given an almost spiritual dimension....Mr. Biswas starts without (property) and the acquisition of it becomes somewhat of a fetish in his mind, something that will somehow fulfil him so that the achievement of that external thing acquires an almost spiritual significance.....(Naipaul) attempts to measure the political potential of small countries, small people and what he would call the "powerless". He has to find some way of measuring achievement and success, and the only way he can measure them is in terms of political or material power. So that the powerlessness of small places like the West Indies in the political or material sense becomes a symbol of the absence of possibilities and human potential of its peoples" (Rohlehr 1992a:99-100).

Accepting Naipaul's premise, the local "origin" of Trinidad's "national *fête*" becomes of great socio-political significance. Firstly, it testifies to the "creativity", and therefore, the Selfhood of Trinidadians, and secondly, it legitimates, as "true, true Trinis", the group within the greater collectivity which can lay claim to the "creation" of Carnival.

Like Carnival itself, and the national identity it purportedly objectifies, the date of Carnival's origin is contested and has not yet been settled. This, in spite of the PNM (People's National Movement) government's appropriation of the celebration as "the national festival" during its first year of office (1956-1957), and the continued importance of Carnival in nationalist rhetoric. The absence of a reified state-sponsored metanarrative "fixing" the national tradition points less to a lack of governmental will, as argued by Segal (1989:258), than to the impossibility of establishing such a "fixed" tradition. Carnival, as a multiplicity of events and experiences, has several "origins". Different sources (Hill 1972; Johnson 1984; Pearse 1988a[1956]) point to different class, race, and gender-based Carnival practices developing along parallel planes, merging and creating transformations of one another over time, or simply dying because of suppression or changing socio-political environments.

An example of this lack of a "normative" history surfaced during the Carnival of 1983, the two hundred year anniversary of widescale French immigration to Trinidad. Pearse (1988a[1956]:4) and Hill (1972:7), well known local scholars of Carnival, had marked 1783 as the "zero point" in determining the origins of Carnival. According to Hill (1972:7), "the year 1783 marks a development of great consequence in the history of the island and to the institution of Carnival"¹. It was in September of that year that the King of Spain signed an agreement allowing French planters and their slaves from other Caribbean territories to immigrate to Trinidad. The earliest written reports of a Carnival in Trinidad are found in this period of French cultural ascendancy.

The linkage between the coming of the French and Carnival is reported to have prompted an article, "The Evolution of Trinidad Carnival 1783-1981", in the popular People magazine (February 1981) which was used by American and European travel agents to promote 1983 as the bi-centennial year of Carnival (Ric Mentus, Sunday Express February 13, 1983:12). Taking their cue from the widespread belief that 1983 was an anniversary year, two of Trinidad's veteran and popular calypsonians, Lord Kitchener and The Mighty Sparrow, sang calypsoes proclaiming 1983 as the anniversary of Carnival. Significantly, they each commemorated different anniversaries. Kitchener composed two calypsoes, one celebrating "two hundred years of mas'/it go be mas' of class/something wonderful to see". His other calypso commemorated fifty years of *pan* (steelband). In contrast, Sparrow sang of the one hundredth anniversary of Carnival which "all began on that blessed day when massa took the chains away". He simultaneously

locates the origins of Carnival both in 1883, the historical period of rioting which led to the eventual suppression of the "black"-based *Carboulay* Carnival, and to Emancipation when the freed slaves reputedly "took over" the French masquerade.

The confusion about "origins" articulated in the calypso world was simply the expression of the contest for "ownership" of Carnival in Trinidadian society at large, but the calypsoes served as the catalyst for heated debates on the "true" beginning of the Trinidad Carnival. A Trinidad Guardian editorial (February 14, 1983:6) lamented the ignorance about the origins of Carnival, and offered the view of the historian Michael Anthony in an attempt to locate the "historically verifiable" origins of "the national festival". Anthony's date was 1839, the year after full emancipation of the slaves (cf. Trinidad Guardian, February 11, 1983 and February 23, 1983:20)². This made Carnival neither one hundred nor two hundred years old in 1983, but six years short of its 150th anniversary. Anthony's reckoning is based on a sharp discontinuity between "the Trinidad Carnival", and that of the French immigrant plantocracy, "the Carnival in Trinidad", a distinction which creates doubt in the mind of the Guardian editor. The editorial ends, "Perhaps other historians might want to say something about this".

Other historians did. In a letter to the editors of both the Trinidad Guardian (March 23, 1983:3) and Express newspapers (March 30, 1983:7), a group of ten "practicing historians" from the history Department at the St. Augustine campus of the University of the West Indies offered "to dispel some of the uncertainty about Carnival and its history". They came down in favour of 1839 as the date of the Trinidad Carnival's

origins:

Carnival began sometime in the 1780's and was introduced by French immigrants. No precise starting year is known in the present state of research. The first Carnival in which the population as a whole was free to participate was the Carnival of 1839, following the full emancipation of August 1838.

The "authoritative" voices from the University were not accepted as the definitive statement on the matter, however. Debates continued for the entire year largely because the Minister of Sport, Youth and Culture, Marilyn Gordon, had proclaimed the following year, 1984, the 150th anniversary of Carnival. At the presentations of prizes for the 1983 Carnival, Minister Gordon had stated: "Our Government historians have determined that 1984 is the 150th anniversary of Carnival. The CDC (Carnival Development Committee) will be guided accordingly" (The Sun Evening Newspaper January 25, 1984). Carnival's beginning was therefore set in 1834, the year when the Act of Emancipation was promulgated.

This statement by the Government did not settle the issue, however. 1834 was simply another date thrown into the melée, with academics, Government and popular historians defining the beginning of "we" Carnival by different criteria and locating it in different groups and times. While the years of Emancipation (from the signing of the Act to full freedom of the slaves four years later) seem to be period of origin favoured by most "letters-to-editor", there are many who would push "beginnings" back much further in time. The historian, Anthony de Verteuil, himself a descendant of the French plantocracy, argues for a much earlier date. "If we accept participation by everyone as the criterion which marks the date of Carnival's origins", he claims, "then we should locate

it in pre-Emancipation times" (Personal communication, Port of Spain, January 3, 1994). Citing an 1831 diary entry by a merchant's clerk in Port of Spain, de Verteuil argues that in the early 1830's, at least, slaves were allowed to take part in the celebration. Therefore, it was the celebration of the whole community, albeit French initiated and controlled (de Verteuil 1984:56-57). Clearly the search for the historical origin of Carnival is not simply academic. Carnival's origin is linked to ownership of cultural property, and ownership of "culture" to the nature of Trinidadian social identity. The 1783 date carves a place for the "white" plantocracy in the construction of the Trinidadian Self, the Emancipation dates do not. The 1834, 1838, 1839 dates put Carnival's beginning at the time of "black" emancipation, and in so doing, erases pre-Emancipation practices as being inauthentically Trinidadian. "We Carnival" began only when all could participate. According to this logic, then, the Trinidadian Self began at this period of "black" ascendancy and is rooted in "blackness", not "whiteness", in freedom, not slavery.

Although the Carnival Development Committee (CDC) had formally proclaimed 1984 the "official" 150th anniversary of the Trinidad Carnival, the festival was not commemorated by the "national community" in any distinctive way³. Segal interprets the Government's inability to fix a widely acceptable date as evidence for absence of a "legitimate authority" that can "historically regiment, and thereby objectify, the Carnival of Trinidad" (Segal 1989:258). But I would argue that Trinidad's Carnival does substantiate "the nation", by popular acclaim rather than official proclamation. And Carnival is objectified simultaneously as one and multiple, selves and others, constructing

"an identity" even as it undermines the concept itself. Carnival - and "the people" it images - are weighted both with the desire for unity and an on-going consciousness of historical relations of power and difference. National authorities may, and often do, pronounce on Carnival matters, and by association, "the people". Rarely, however, do they go uncontested - "Anyone with even a slight acquaintance with Carnival would know that controversy and Carnival, like bake and saltfish⁴ go hand in hand" (Trinidad Guardian, March 4, 1992: 44). The origin of Carnival, therefore, is no exception, and is itself a Carnival.

My incursion into Carnival's history is not a search for origins, nor an attempt to contribute to that particular debate on its own terms. I reject the often unquestioned premise that we are (and are defined) by what we produce *ex nihilo*, and by extension, that the continuance of these "inventions" is the result of "passing on" or "mimicry" uncontaminated by practice. Erasing consumption from the process of Self creation and objectification, "natives" settle for partial, inferior definitions of Self in opposition to the Other-as-producer. Further, such a perspective denies social history and the way cultural products have been appropriated and transformed over time by all groups. My archeology of the past, therefore, is not done to establish "ownership" of the festival based on its origins (a dubious claim anyway). I look for traces of Carnival phenomena (especially the masquerade) from the beginning of Trinidad's recorded history in order to map how the Trinidadian Self was objectified and constituted through the festival itself. Masquerade is privileged because it is the idiom which plays with Self/Other categories most directly.

My historical narrative is constructed in four sections. Casting my history as a "narrative", I seek to make links within Carnival's history and between its several histories. In dividing my narrative, I represent its discontinuities and transformations. Beginnings and endings are always difficult to plot, since they are fuzzy and do not simply exist "back there" in the neat periods we construct for them (cf. Lowenthal 1985). Beginnings are often transformations of former practices, endings the stuff of new beginnings. The submerged practices and discourses of one era become dominant in the next, and *vice versa*.

I have opted to begin with the Amerindian peoples of *Cairi*⁵, an acknowledgement that they were part of Trinidad's impulse to celebration and have always featured as "mythological" ancestors in the performance of the Trinidadian Self. I could have begun elsewhere. Similarly, my divisions could have been differently demarcated, perhaps along separate class/race trajectories. I prefer a narrative which interfaces groups one with another. As constructed, I seem to locate history's engine in the decrees and power of the dominant class: the *Cedula* of Phillip III (1783) brought the French and their masquerade, the British Act of Abolition (1834-1838) created the space for the *Canboulay* Carnival, and the colonial laws forbidding the *Canboulay* made possible the emergence of the modern "national *fête*". This is not my intention, however. The "sections" neither represent enclosed, discontinuous historical periods nor history motored from above. They are meant rather to "write in" dominance within a much broader narrative which includes resistance, complicity, hybridization and negotiation. It is in this historical

"engagement" between several groups, differently positioned in the social structure, that Carnival's history has happened.

CHAPTER TWO

The "Wild" Indian - Spanish Past :

Footsteps In The Sand

Columbus' first encounter with *Cairi* is paradigmatic of the on-going search for Amerindian origins. Upon sighting the island on July 31, 1498, he named it *La Trinité* or Trinidad and set off the following morning to the beach formally to take possession and search for fresh water. Columbus met no inhabitants, but saw only footprints in the sands (Borde 1982a[1876]:26). For the most part, this is all we find in our search among the Amerindian peoples for the origins of Carnival. The footprints of inhabitants are there, but they themselves are shadowy figures, their motivations, their celebrations, their view from the beach unknown, or known only through the gaze of the Other. Columbus assumed that they enjoyed war-dances and songs just like the other indigenes he had already met. So, when they finally revealed themselves, twenty-five islanders in a big canoe, he had his sailors perform popular Spanish dances on the ship's deck accompanied by voices and instruments, in the hope of enticing them to his caravelle. The performance was greeted with a hail of arrows (Borde 1982a[1876]:29). This is the earliest example of the multiplicity of meanings encoded in a single "Carnival" performance.

Pierre-Gustave-Louis Borde, the historian of Trinidad under the Spanish Government, reports the existence of "feasts and dances" among the Amerindians which lasted for several days and nights. Called *bebidas* (drinking bouts) by the Spaniards, these seemed to have occurred frequently throughout the year for several reasons, but cannot be directly linked to the annual Carnival celebrations which came later. Nevertheless, the *bebidas* contained many Carnival elements - celebration, eating, drinking, and dancing to the sound of drum and voices (1982a[1876]:51). Noteworthy are the charged terms such as "orgies", "licentiousness", "vendettas" and "primitive" used by Borde to describe these celebrations, terms to be repeated in the centuries to follow in descriptions of certain features of the Carnival.

A clear link between Carnival and the native Amerindian community, however, was made by Mitto Sampson who spent much of his time in the nineteenth century *jamet* (subaltern)¹ world of Port of Spain recording its stories and legends (Pearse 1988b[1956]:140-163). Sampson recounts the narratives of Surisima the Carib², a famous singer of the mid-nineteenth century, who claimed that *cariso*, the word from which calypso supposedly came, is derived from the Carib *carieto*, an indigenous joyous song. The Africans enriched what they found with "more pep, more vigour, more liveliness and more animation", but they "did not originate it" (cf. Pearse 1988b[1956]:154). In the mid 1850's, a visiting American ornithologist, William Moore, enraged Surisima when he claimed that many of the *carisos* were localized versions of American and English ballads. Surisima and a crowd went to the man's hotel and lampooned him in song until

the police intervened:

Surisima: Moore the monkey from America
 Crowd: Tell me wha' you know about we cariso.

Sampson also reports the existence of processions of Carib descendants led by Surisima from Port of Spain to the hills of El Chiquerro. There an effigy of Caziria, the Carib slave woman, was beaten and burnt after feasting, drinking and the singing of obscene songs. One song remembered was: "Cazi, Cazi, Cazi, Caziria/Dende, dende, dende dariba" (translation unknown). Caziria supposedly betrayed two beautiful Carib sisters to the Spaniards. These sisters, Casaripo and Dioarima, were "miracle singers" whose voices were able to spur warriors on to battle, even in the face of great odds. With the sisters tortured and killed, the Carib forces disintegrated and were easily conquered by the Spaniards:

....when these people sang they actually felt the pain and sorrow experienced by the Caribs when Casaripo and Dioarima were betrayed, and sang with real hate and rancour towards Caziria and just as they finished singing that song they began to belabour the effigy, then burn it. On one occasion Surisima the Carib tried to carry on that ceremony in the city but police "ran" them, and they were all brought to court (Pearse 1988b[1956]:154).

Sampson mentions Jo Jo who "was strong on African slave legend, and gave me calypsoes from Ofuba the Slave and his son Possum" as the source of information on this Carib ceremony. Jo Jo's father had known Surisima personally and had himself taken part in the "burning of Caziria" (Pearse 1988b[1956]:144). The extent to which this procession represented an earlier Carnavalesque-type of ritual, or was simply a Carnivalized version of an earlier "solemn" practice is unknown.

Noteworthy, however, is a snippet of a Port of Spain Gazette editorial published

in 1838, and reported by Pearse, as an example of the elite response to the recent participation of "the lower order of society" in Carnival:

We will not dwell on the disgusting and indecent scenes that were enacted on our streets.....we will not particularly describe the African custom of carrying a stuffed figure of a woman on a pole, which was followed by hundreds of negroes yelling out a savage Guinea song (we regret to say that nine-tenths of these people were Creoles) (Pearse 1988a[1956]:22)

It is impossible to know conclusively if the procession described by both Sampson and the Gazette's editor are one and the same. With only "footsteps in the sand", we can try to hazard informed guesses about the identity of the actors. I suggest, however, that they both report the same event. The descriptions are remarkably similar and the Surisima-event was sufficiently noteworthy - "the police ran them" - to have warranted newspaper attention. This particular type of performance is not reported in subsequent Carnivals, thus suggesting the "one occasion Surisima the Carib tried to carry on that ceremony in the city" (Pearse 1988b[1956]:154). Further, the editor "regret(s) to say that nine-tenths of these people were Creole". This observation could only have been made had the participants been brought to court to answer charges.

The juxtaposing of these two texts is not done to pry Amerindian inputs from the Carnival, thereby indulging in the logic of the "origins" search which I have already rejected. However, it is a good example of the possible lumping by the Gazette of a Carib custom into the category of "African", the distinctive Other of the Euro-centric Self in the emancipation period (1834-1838) of Trinidad's history. But even as the Carib is erased, the African-Creole is marked within the larger African category. By virtue of their Creole-

ness, "different" behaviour seemed to have been expected of the participants in this "performance" Within Otherness, some are obviously more other than others.

The encounter between Columbus and the twenty-five nameless islanders off Point Icacos took place on August 2, 1498. The Amerindian population at that time is estimated at 30,000-40,000 (Besson 1992:2; Brereton 1981:5). When, almost a century after, the Spanish established a permanent settlement at San Josef de Oruna (St. Joseph), the Amerindian population was probably halved to 15,000-20,000 (Brereton 1981:5). Two hundred years later, when the island was taken by the British in 1797, the figure reads 1082³ (Brereton 1981:16). In 1821, it was 956⁴, and at the time of Emancipation (1838) the numbers were reduced to 520 (Wood 1968:43). Today, the category no longer "officially" exists, except for a small "community" in Arima who claim Carib ancestry. This virtual disappearance of Trinidad's Amerindian groups was the result of many factors, which included Spanish raids, the exportation of slave labour to the Greater Antilles and pearl fisheries of Cubagua and Margarita, disease, emigration to the continent, low fertility, oppression, and miscegenation (cf. Borde 1982b[1883]:315; Brereton 1981:5-7).

The Amerindian presence, however, continues in the Carnival masquerades, where Amerindians appear as symbols of the original Trinidadian Self before European conquest and colonization. This Self has many faces and postures, but fundamentally it is the construction of a primal Self pared down to "essentials" - naked, wild, free. Those groups that were Other for the Europeans - the "hostile" Caribs or "noble" Arawaks, have become

conflated into the celebrated Self. As mythological ancestor and symbol of absolute freedom, the Amerindian's place is largely affirmed. As a historical player, however, and as one among several claimants for the origins of calypso (the music of Carnival), the Amerindian's place is contested. Like the date of Carnival's origins, several other groups have been put forward as likely sources: French, Spanish and West African (Warner 1982:7-8). And even though, several scholars (Elder 1966; Hill 1972:56; Rohlehr 1990:17; Warner 1982; Warner-Lewis 1991) have privileged the African as the matrix out of which the calypso developed, Surisima's voice remains part of the unsettled debate about the ownership of "national property" and by extension, the constitution of the Trinidadian Self.

The transformation of Amerindian *Cairi* to Spanish Trinidad was anything but immediate and effective. For decades after Columbus' chance visit in 1498, the island was a source of slaves for other Spanish settlements and a stepping stone for Conquistadors bent on subduing and exploiting the nearby South American continent. Nearly a century was to pass before a permanent settlement of Spaniards was started at San Josef de Oruna (St. Joseph) in 1592. The island, however, did not attract many settlers or material input from the Spanish Crown, and except for some success in the tobacco and cocoa industry, the colony remained impoverished and a frontier outpost of the Spanish colonial empire for the next 185 years. After the failure of the cocoa crop in 1725, the island's male "non-Indian" population had declined to 162, 28 of whom were described as "white" or Spanish (Brereton 1981:4). The Spanish element continued to be depleted as the century

wore on, most Spaniards abandoning San Josef to live in the bush on their small holdings. Only a handful of families remained in the "city" , these holding "elective" *cabildo* (council) posts for life because of the scarcity of white males with "pure" Spanish blood required for the jobs (Brereton 1981:4). The socio-economic conditions at the time, the small Spanish-Amerindian community, and lack of written references to a Carnival have led researchers (Hill 1972:6; Pearse 1988a[1956]:4) to assume that the festival did not exist in the period of Spanish cultural dominance.

Yet the presence of the Spanish *burroquite* (little donkey or jenny) in the early twentieth century Carnival, especially in Spanish-settled areas like Arima, suggests some Spanish influence. It is likely that the *burroquite* was introduced by the inflow of immigrants from Venezuela during the 19th century, but there exists a claim for a Spanish origin among some individuals and sectors of the society:

So in the first Saturnalias of Trinidad, if you want to give Carnival its first name, call it *Burroquite* because it is the Ass or the Horse Carnival that came out of Northern Africa and went to Spain and was assimilated into Spain's Saturnalia, the *Burroquite*. If you want to find the genesis of Carnival, you take the *Burroquite* because it is the *Burroquite* that the Spaniards brought to Trinidad at Carnival...you see the horseman dancing the ass or the horse around, the Burroquite dance? That is the original Carnival!....It was brought to the West with the conquistadors to the Spanish settlements. It is part of the tiny Carnival or Saturnalia which took place in St. Joseph, San Josef de Oruna and in Port of Spain in the 1780's (Personal interview with local historian, May 22, 1992 - Port of Spain).

Why leave the Spanish out of Carnival?....Were the Spanish settlers puritans that they did not, like the peoples of other Roman Catholic countries, as theirs was, engage in merry-making and festivity in the last days and hours of the pre-lenten season, as the Encyclopedia Britannica describes it? (Public Affairs Correspondent, Trinidad Guardian April 20,1983:11).

Although with the arrival (1783) of French and the Africans who were brought as slaves and then Emancipated (1834) it could be said that the Trinidad Carnival had its biggest development, it is also reasonable to assume that the Spanish Catholics would have been

celebrating Carnival since their first settlement (1595)" Paper presented by John Cupid at CDC Regional Sub-Committee Meeting. San Fernando Town Hall, January 29, 1987:1).

Though undocumented in the "official" records, there exist, nevertheless, oral and written narrative(s) of a Spanish origin for Carnival, a declaration largely unheard and ignored because of the relative absence of a dominant "Spanish" voice in contemporary Trinidad to pursue and substantiate this claim⁵.

CHAPTER THREE

The Masquerade

French Cedulants And "The Slave Behind The Door"

Although a "Spanish" controlled island, Trinidad became culturally "French" towards the end of the 18th century. The increasing internal impoverishment of the Spanish colony, and its vulnerability to attacks by pirates and regular navies from other European nations prompted the Bourbon King Charles III to open up the island for agricultural development modelled on the English and French slave colonies. Itself economically too strapped to supply capital, planters and labour, the Madrid administration reluctantly agreed to accept foreign immigration to the island. Closely allied to France in the latter part of the 18th century, the Spanish began to encourage French and other Catholic settlers from nearby islands, especially those recently ceded to Britain, to make their home in Trinidad. Promising land grants, tax incentives and protection, a 1776 decree was formalized. By 1777, French emigration was underway and by 1779, the island had received 523 free settlers and 973 slaves. In 1783, the newly settled French planter, Roume de St. Laurent was in Madrid lobbying for further immigration and concessions. The result was the *Cedula de Poblacion* (Decree of

Population) of 24 November 1783 (Brereton 1981:10-12; Campbell 1992:86-87).

It is important to note here the categories under which immigrants qualified for entry to the island. On the one hand, there were the broad categories of free "men" and slaves. On the other, there were distinctions based on "colour" and ancestral lands. These latter distinctions assumed a correspondence between ancestral territory and "colour". "White" was synonymous with European and "Black" with African, even though many people from both groups had never been on either continent. Further, these opposed groups generally translated into free and slave, creating homologies of African-black-slave and European-white-free. That these skin-colours were sociological in nature rather than descriptive became very evident with the influx of new immigrants later in Trinidad's history. Although from Europe, the "Portuguese" were initially excluded from the "white" category (cf. Brereton 1979:34; 1981:210). So, too, were the "Syrians"¹ and the "Chinese", their "light" pigmentation notwithstanding. Similarly, the indentured labourers from India were never conventionally classified in the "black" category, in spite of their "dark" skin colours (cf. Braithwaite 1973[1953]:227). These groups were classified by their ancestral homelands, and not by the colour scheme first created by the Spaniards in the New World and distilled by the French into a fine art (cf. Campbell 1992:57).

The opposed constructs of "black" and "white" assumed pure "racial" and cultural groups which had lived in isolation from each other in their "homelands". However, there was the recognition by the Spaniards and French that "racial mixing" had been occurring in the New World. First, there were the "mixtures" between Spaniards and Amerindians,

and then between the European and African "races". This latter produced the *gens de couleur* in French "race" discourse, a new category of person, who was regarded as non-white and non-black, non-European and non-African, but who could be either free or slave. This "new" kind was the "mulatto" or "coloured" whose "homeland" was the Caribbean itself. The "coloured" person was never wholly absorbed into the "black" category as in some of the southern states of the United States, but instead formed the intermediate group in a three-tier system of human classification (Campbell 1992:11). In this dissertation, I employ the "colour" and "ancestral culture" categorizations used by European colonizers and appropriated by "locals" in the construction, definition and valuation of the S(s)elf. My usage does not imply an acceptance of an ontological "factuality" to these human groupings. Rather, I view them as classificatory principles which were used to construct and constitute a colonial system which depended on separate and unequal groups to make it work.

Under the *Cedula*, every "white" settler was given approximately 30 acres of land for each member of his family and half as much for every slave he owned. The free "coloureds" (cf. Campbell 1992:61) and free "blacks" (cf. Campbell 1992:76) who emigrated as property-owners with slaves were granted half of the land given to the "whites". To qualify for these generous grants, the emigrant had to be the subject of a friendly nation and Roman Catholic. Those who wished to settle permanently after five years became entitled to all the rights and privileges of Spanish citizenship (Brereton 1981:13-14; Campbell 1992:92;323-333). The effects of the *Cedula* were almost

immediate, as the island's population increased considerably.

Numbers notwithstanding, the most significant changes were in the demographic structure of the population (cf. Brereton 1981:14-15). First, apart from a few Irish and English planters who availed themselves of the attractive incentives, the "white" settlers, were almost exclusively French, from the French or formerly French "ceded" islands². Secondly, even though "coloured" settlers were entitled to only half as much land as "whites", they were nevertheless given land as property and slave owners, with the same rights as "whites" to citizenship after a five year period. The *Cedula*, therefore, legally sanctioned and encouraged free "coloured" settlers, victims of economic hardship and socio-political discrimination elsewhere, to emigrate. The majority of the free "coloureds" and "blacks" were not of the propertied class, but as artisans and small land owners, they provided the specialized skilled labour for plantation development. They came to Trinidad in great numbers, outnumbering "whites" almost two to one, forming a significant *patois*-speaking "middle-class". Thirdly, the *Cedula* turned Trinidad into a plantation economy fuelled by slave labour. By linking the size of land grants to slave ownership, Trinidad saw a sharp rise in its "black" population, mainly creoles brought from neighboring "French" islands. A census taken in mid-1784, the year after the *Cedula*, recorded a population of 335 Spaniards and 384 French; 765 "mixed" Spaniards and 633 French free "coloureds" and "blacks"; 260 "Spanish" slaves and 2027 "French" slaves, and a steadily declining group of Amerindians (Brereton 1981:16).

This trend accelerated as the century wore on, with Trinidad becoming a haven

for "whites" and free "coloureds", fleeing both revolutionary and counter-revolutionary turmoil which engulfed the French, and some of the British islands, after the Revolution in France. By the time the British forces, under Ralph Abercromby, took the island in 1797, the total population had risen to about 17,718, with "whites" numbering 2151, free "coloureds" and "blacks" 4476, slaves 10,009 and Amerindians 1082 (Brereton 1981:16). In the short period of sixteen years, Trinidad's demographic structure had been completely transformed, the Spanish-mestizo-Amerindian yielding to the more numerous French-mulatto-African complex. These new arrivals materially altered the island by setting up plantations and sugar mills in hitherto undeveloped areas. More importantly, they transformed Trinidad's cultural life, laying the foundations of an ethos and practice that was to survive and transcend the transition from Spanish to British rule, some French emigration and new immigrants notwithstanding (Brereton 1981:22-31).

After the Spanish surrender to the British, new kinds of immigrants entered the colony: English merchants, carpet-baggers and planters with their English-speaking slaves; free "coloureds" from the British islands and Venezuela; peons from the Spanish mainland and Africans of diverse status, for example, slaves imported directly from Africa, those "liberated" from slaving vessels after the abolition of the slave trade in 1807, disbanded African soldiers from the West India Regiment, American freed slaves who had served the British forces in Virginia (1812-13); and a few Chinese indentured labourers (Hill 1972,:8; Pearse 1988a[1956]:5). More of the last group arrived after 1853 (Brereton 1981:100).

Pierre MacCallum, a visitor to Trinidad in 1803, commenting on the "white" sector, wrote that "there is not a local spot in the universe that can boast such a medley of inhabitants: English, Scotch, Irish, Welsh, Spaniards, Germans, Swiss, Italians, Americans and French; the latter are the most numerous...." (Cited in Hill 1972:9). This "white" sector was further divided into the British and French cliques, the latter itself subdivided by royalist and Jacobite ideologies (Brereton 1981:23; Hill 1972:9; Pearse (1988a[1956]:9). The much larger sector of free "coloureds" and "blacks" was also a heterogeneous group, differentiated by cultural orientation (French, English or Spanish-speaking), religion (Roman Catholic, Anglican or Methodist), and occupational status (from rural-based propertied elites to urban artisans, traders, domestics and unemployed) (Brereton 1981:24-25; Campbell 1992:64). At the base of the pyramid was more than half of the island's population, the "black" slaves, lumped together in historical narratives as the monolithic Other. But they, too, were as diverse as the "whites" and "coloureds": Caribbean-born "black" or "coloured" creoles from French, Spanish and English colonized islands, and African natives from a variety of ethnic groups or "nations", including the Coromanti, Yoruba, Congo, Igbo, Sobo, Hausa, and Mandingo (Warner-Lewis 1991: 15-24). And outside the social pyramid, the Amerindians continued their peripheralized existence, many of them relegated to "missions", subject to a magistrate and a curate of doctrine, and on the decline as a people (Borde 1982b[1883]:315).

This very diverse group was contained by tough English military governors, and a colonial system and practice which constituted groupings and social status based on the

colours of "white", "coloured", and "black". The "white" was synonymous with European, privileged and civilized, "black" with African, slavery and savage, and "coloured" with anomaly and liminality (cf. Brereton 1979:103). There was a range, however, within the "non-white" categories, (white being the unmarked category) where different colour terms were used to mark the relative proportion of "black and white blood" in a person's genetic constitution. The classification of slaves in the Slave Registry shows a "colour" scale distilled to a fine art. Ordered hierarchically, the range contained nine categories: white, quadroon, mestee, costee, mulatto, cabre, mongrel, sambo, black. We can assume that this colour scale applied to the "free" non-white population as well³ (Campbell 1992:60). Shade differentiation continues in contemporary Trinidad with markers such as "whitish", "red", "light brown", "brown", "high brown", "light black", "black", "black black" and "black till he blue", and plays a significant role in the performance of the native-Self at Carnival time.

Even though the British became the *de facto* Government after 1797, the island continued under Spanish law until 1842 (Brereton 1981:138). More significant, however, was the dominant role the French continued to enjoy in the cultural and economic life of the island. A knowledge of this French-creole-African cultural complex at the heart of this British-administered island is necessary for a clear understanding of Carnival, its meaning, function and transformations over time.

It was during the period of French immigration that the first recorded reference to a Carnival is made. The French are, therefore, credited with introducing the pre-Lenten

European masquerade to the island, "a genteel and coquettish diversion of the Roman Catholic upper classes" with roots in the "orgiastic masquerades of the Roman Bacchanalia and Saturnalia", and even further back in the rowdy sixth-century Athenian Dionysian processions (Wood 1968:8). The 19th century historian, Pierre-Gustave-Louis Borde, himself a Trinidadian of "French creole" descent, represents the early propertied French as a close-knit "aristocracy" living in large wooden houses on their estates. Famous for their hospitality, they created a society whose "tone" was "not only cordial but of a high standard". Their amusements were many and varied,

.....the pleasures of meals at the dining table and picnics were added to those of music and dancing. There followed nothing but concerts and balls. There were lunches and dinners, hunting parties and expeditions on the river, as well as Carnival which lasted from Christmas time until Ash Wednesday. It was nothing but a long period of feasts and pleasures. Naturally all these amusements were held in an atmosphere of general gaiety, and each one made a special effort to display a spirit of amiability. Among the volleys of laughter and intrigue, they exchanged smart sayings and happy sallies and comic stories, which remained the subject of conversation until the next day (Borde 1982[1883]:306).

Borde's narrative is important not so much for the "mirror" it provides on late 18th century French society, or for the "proof" it provides for the French origins of Carnival. Rather, it is a good example of the discourse which constituted French-creole Self-understanding in the British ruled island. Even though the French were successful in transforming the island into a productive plantation economy in a short period, albeit with slave labour, the remembered and privileged stories of this group, are not myths of self-denial, isolation and the stiff upper-lip in a hostile and undeveloped tropical environment, but narratives of "feasts and pleasures", "music and dancing", style, elegance and wit. Carnival, in this discourse, was part of this genteel ambiance, a season which simply

accentuated the French ideal of "good living". By declaring 1983 the bicentenary of mas', the calypsonian Kitchener was tracing the modern Carnival back to the French tradition, since 1783 was the year of the *Cedula de Poblacion* when French immigration to the island began in earnest.

Although the island became officially British in 1797, then, the French plantocracy did not lose its privileged position and continued to set the cultural tone both in the city and country areas. Sharing a "white" Self with the British, the French were careful to close ranks with their European Other against the more numerous free "coloured" and enslaved Others. And the British did the same. However, this strategy did not create a seamless "white" Self, as both French and English parties seemed anxious to preserve and constitute their "cultural" differences and superiority *vis à vis* the other (Campbell 1992:239; Wood 1968:45) For the British and Scots, Christmas and New Year's were the times of merry-making and licence, and in the British islands, this season became the "space" where both masters and slaves separately indulged in their favourite pastimes. Slaves engaged in dancing, feasting, pageantry and costuming, drawing on British and their own masking traditions, often representing the British in a farcical manner (Hill 1972:11; Pearse 1988a[1956]:13). Impossible to be adequately patrolled by elites, this season of "play" often provided the "spaces" where hidden transcripts of anger were declared and plots of rebellion hatched (cf. Scott 1990:223). To forestall the possibility of insurrection, martial law was enforced with all free men required to do militia duty during this period (Pearse 1988a[1956]:13).

The privileging of Christmas by the British seemed to have threatened the special place of Carnival in the "French" calendar, but, in fact, it simply extended the celebratory season from Christmas to Ash Wednesday (Pearse 1988a[1956]:12. The "British" Christmas, at one end of the continuum, expressed and constituted the strict hierarchial nature of the society, while at the other end, the "French" Carnival celebrated inversions, excess, fantasy and playfulness. These were not two moments or temporal spaces, but seemed to have permeated the entire season, with the status system more marked in the militia performances at Christmas, and playful inversions at Carnival (Pearse 1988a[1956]:12-15).

According to Hill (1972:13), the "season" began on Christmas Eve with the firing of guns from the island's forts. A red flag was hoisted, civil law suspended and military law enforced. The militia, comprised of all free men aged fifteen to fifty-five, was on duty and for about two weeks and all business came to a halt. This was a time of military parades and mock maneuvers, an elite-choreographed public performance of audible and visual displays of precedence, rank and power. These performances simultaneously represented the public image of a cohesive Self of freed persons against an enslaved Other, and several distinctive Selves hierarchically arranged in colour-distinct units under "white" officers. Meant to inspire awe and fear in the enslaved audience, the military performances seemed to have been for the benefit of the performers themselves, the Self-portrait of a colonial society based on order and gentility, and masking the domination and cruelty on which it was built.

Christmas balls, parties, fireworks and other amusements formed the back-drop to these military performances, and soon the annual performance of military might became the opening to a season of Carnival gaiety and playfulness rather than a rehearsal for military action (Hill 1972:13). The extent to which these maneuvers inspired awe in the enslaved population is highly debatable. The military was a popular early masquerade, often satirized by subordinate groups. A reporter from the Port of Spain Gazette (14 February 1834) gives an invaluable account of a group of maskers in that year's Carnival:

The Artillery party with their mock Commandant was not badly got up; their Chief, however, was but an indifferent representative of the portly original. The Lieutenant Colonel was also a most sorry figure, but the Adjutant a very bad copy. But we cannot withhold our praise of the two jolly Subs, who were done to the life - the spectacles of one of them was admirable whilst the bold strut of the other was inimitable. We were sorry, however, to observe that the mock detachment was so defective in their wheelings and marchings....The mockery of the best Militia Band that has ever been embodied in the West was in very bad taste, and if intended to ridicule, must have missed its aim (Cited in Hill 1979:14).

Hill suggests that the satirical masquerade most likely did not miss its mark, notwithstanding the reporter's declaration to the contrary. I agree that this performance does reveal a demystifying of the dominant Other by its subordinates.

The lifting of martial law signalled the end of Christmas activities, but celebrations continued in a build-up to Carnival which occurred some weeks later. The pre-Lenten festivities, an important institution for the "French party", were the climax of the social season and were publicly celebrated by the free population. For the "white" elites, celebrations consisted of elaborate costumed balls, house-to-house visiting and street parading on foot or in carriages, as well as music and dancing (Hill 1972:10; Pearse 1988a[1956]:15). Many of the masquerades, which, for example, included Swiss damsels,

French marquises, English noblemen, priests, friars, and spirits (Hill 1972:11) seemed to have been playfully expressive of a Self "imagined" as rooted in European aristocratic traditions. Commentators on this period (cf. Hill 1972:10) frequently remarked on both the elaborateness of the masquerades and the ethos of high-spirited excess that prevailed, two features that continue to exist in the present Carnival.

However, at this period, there were also masquerades of inversion, personae of Otherness, which were at once objects of desire and derision. These disguises allowed carefully patrolled boundaries - sexual, gender, class, colour - to be symbolically transgressed by the elite themselves, not as a means of exploring otherness on its own terms, but in order to fulfill tabooed desires considered the domain of those "other" groups. The inversions, then, were based on the construction of stereotypical Others, the ultimate negations of the "civilized" Self. An example of gender and class inversion was reported to a friend by an English officer who was present at the 1827 Carnival:

A party of ladies, having converted themselves into a party of brigands, assailed me in my quarters and nearly frightened me out of my wits. I was going to cut and run when Ensign_____ who was with me, not knowing the joke, and thinking there were so many devils come to take him before his time, drew his sword (Bayley:1830:214. Cited in Hill 1972:10; Pearse 1988a[1956]:15).

And colour inversions were described by an anonymous correspondent, possibly a retired planter, writing in the Port of Spain Gazette of March 19, 1881 about the origin of the Carnival practice of *Canboulay* or *cannes brulées* (Burning Canes) in the 1820's:

"At the time carnival flourished, the elite of society was masked or disguised. The favourite costume of the ladies was the graceful and costly "*mulatress*" of the period, while gentlemen adopted that of the garden negro, in creole, *nègre jardin*, or black field slave. At carnival time our mothers and grandmothers have even danced the *belair* to the African drum whose sounds did not offend their dainty ears, and our fathers and

grandfathers danced the *bamboula*, the *ghouba*, and the *calinda*..... Sometimes also the *nègre jardin* united in bands would proceed on evenings to the *cannes brulées*. Their splendid march with torches through the town streets imitated what actually took place on the estates when a plantation was on fire. In such cases, labourers on neighbouring estates were conducted there alternately, day and night, to assist in grinding the burned canes before they went sour; thus the *cannes brulées* (Cited in Hill 1972:11; Pearse 1988a[1956]:17).

These inversions obviously provided the opportunity for upper class indulgence in sensuality and "savagery". "White" men became "garden niggers", the embodiment of untamed masculinity, which paradoxically, was also a tamed masculinity because of the *nègre jardin's* subordinate status in the society⁴. "White" women, in the guise of brigands and *mulatresses*, became predators of "white" men. The *mulatress* or free "coloured" woman, "imaged" as immoral, sensual and inferior, was an ambiguous symbol for the "white" plantation community (Campbell 1992:237). Desired and kept as a mistress by "white" males, she was avoided by "white" women, her very existence being a symbolic reproach to the morals of their menfolk and the stability of their family life. Yet her "freedom" must have been envied by some whose lives were condemned to tedious drudgery and a "respectability" based on strict moral and sexual codes. The British Governor Woodford (1813-28), himself a young bachelor, was known to be concerned with the increasing numbers of free "coloureds" on the island. He blamed *mulatresses* for corrupting the sexual life of the society by predatorily luring the sons of "white" families into physical liaisons (Campbell 1992:190). "White" women playing *mulatresses*, and "white" men, *nègre jardins* can be interpreted as a temporary flirting with the "forbidden fruit" of Otherness for diversionary purposes (Johnson 1983:175). This assumes the

Self:distinctive Other dichotomy, with the masquerade serving as a construction of Otherness. Perhaps the masquerade is better interpreted as a mediation between Self and Other, that is, the not-self is excluded in the construction of "white" identity, but allowed in the Carnival as the embodiment and expression of a caricatured Other. The *mulatress* and *nègre jardin* masquerades were "white" constructions of "coloured" women and "black" men, "inventions" that expressed less the reality of these groups than the (un)acknowledged fears, fantasies, desires of the white Self in the guise of an imagined black Other. Stallybrass and White aptly describe this ambivalence towards the "lower strata" (of the body, of society, of literature, of place):

....the "top" attempts to reject and eliminate the "bottom" for reasons of prestige and status, only to discover, not only that it is in some way frequently dependent upon the low-Other...., but also that the top includes that low symbolically, as a primary eroticized constituent of its own fantasy life. The result is a mobile, conflictual fusion of power, fear and desire in the construction of subjectivity: a psychological dependence upon precisely those Others which are being rigorously opposed and excluded at the social level. It is for this reason that what is socially peripheral is so frequently symbolically central....The low-Other is despised and denied at the level of political organization and social being whilst it is instrumentally constitutive of the shared imaginary repertoires of the dominant culture (1986:5-6).

Although Carnival was also an important institution for the free "coloureds" and "blacks", especially French-speaking Catholics, these groups were not part of the "white" masquerade balls and home visiting circuit. Unlike the Christmas parades where all freed men were included in the performance of "solidarity in hierarchy", the pre-Emancipation Carnival seemed to have been celebrated in apartheid fashion with "whites" and "coloureds" confined to their respective social spaces. The "white" elite, British and French, were suspicious of the freed "coloured" after the French and Haitian revolutions,

and saw them as both a political threat and economic challenge in the early decades of the 19th century. Governor Woodford complained they were too rich, too numerous, too insubordinate, too intimately associated with "whites", especially "coloured" women with "white" men, and as predominantly French, too visibly foreign in a colony of foreigners (Campbell 1992:189). Several policies (cf. Campbell 1992:134,174,189; Pearse 1988a[1956]:11) were, therefore, introduced to exclude them from the social and political privileges of the "white" elite, privileges which "coloureds" felt were theirs under Spanish law, as interpreted by the Royal *Cedula* (1783) and Articles of Capitulation (1797) (cf. Campbell 1992:323-337). Bridging "black" and "white" worlds, yet not properly belonging to either, the "coloureds" were structurally subversive, if not so in practice (Campbell 1992:32). With elite and self-drawn boundaries between themselves and their "black" cousins, free "coloureds" found themselves caught between their "white" aspirations and desires, and their social exclusion from the "white" world.

Not much is recorded about the Carnival masquerades of the free "coloureds", even though we do know that this group was not forbidden to mask (Pearse 1988a[1956]:16). We can assume that "coloureds" paralleled the social amusements of their "white" cousins. Evidence of "coloured parties" can be extrapolated from the regulation requiring "coloured" proprietors to obtain the "Fandango licence" if they wished to have a night party. This involved obtaining the permission of the Commandment of the Quarter and the exclusion, under the threat of a \$25 fine, of any slave from the party (Pearse 1988a[1956]:11). Evidently, then, some "mixing" did occur

between free "coloureds" and the "black" enslaved, hence the "official" prohibition against the practice. Further, there is the suggestion that social boundaries between "whites" and free "coloureds" were transgressed on the streets, where unmarked by class, colour and gender, revellers were able to "mix up" and "make mas'" with the social categories under cover of Carnival masquerades and bacchanalia (Pearse 1988a[1956]:19). Yet, this practice must have been fairly limited, given the restrictions to which the coloureds were subjected under the British:

....they were subject to a curfew, and coloured hosts, whatever their class, had to pay a tax of \$16 if they gave a ball. Public assemblies had been forbidden them....(Wood 1968:41)

The dominant image in current narratives about the (non)involvement of the enslaved population during this period is *neg deye potla*, the *patois* expression for "slave behind the door". The most frequently cited sources of this non-participatory image are Ofuba, the slave *chantwell*, who sang of the *neg deye potla*, the non-participant and shadowy onlooker in the annual performance of elite frivolity and inversions (Pearse 1988(1956):17;151) and L.M. Fraser, an ex-chief of Police in 19th century Trinidad. In a 1881 report to the Governor on the History of the Origin of Carnival, Fraser had written:

The Free Persons of Colour were subjected to very stringent regulations and although not forbidden to mask, were yet compelled to keep to themselves and never presumed to join in the amusements of the privileged class. The Indians kept entirely aloof, and the slaves except as onlookers, or by special favour were required to take part, had no share in the Carnival which was confined exclusively to the upper class of the community (Cited in Hill 1972:10; Pearse 1988a [1956]:16).

According to these accounts, then, slave participation, insofar as it occurred, was limited to the role of entertainers for the elite. For example, Pearse mentions Jack Bowell,

a slave famous for his marionette dance, who was called in to dance at Carnival parties (1988a[1956]:17), and Sampson recounts the legend of the French planter Begorrat who frequently adjourned to a cave with guests and favourite slave singers of "Caiso" for entertainment (Pearse 1988b[1956]:147). Gros Jean is said to be the first of these "Caiso" singers, and therefore, the African ancestor and originator of the modern calypso. I should mention, however, that this view of slave non-participation in the "public" pre-Emancipation is not uncontested. De Verteuil (1984:56-57; 1992:200), citing the 1831 and 1832 diary entries of Friedrich Urich, a Port of Spain merchant clerk, argues that there was a regular Carnival of the Street in the late 1820's and early 1830's in which both free and enslaved "blacks" took part, albeit in limited fashion. The latter presumably did so illegally. De Verteuil's "voice" is erased out of the dominant historical narrative, however, largely because of his own more fundamental thesis that slavery in Trinidad was not as horrendous as represented in current interpretations. His "evidence" of slave participation in Carnival is suspect as it is popularly construed as the marshalling of data to prove his argument⁵. Further, his source is contradicted by others, and given the ideological links between identity and cultural property discussed earlier, it is clear why nationalists and some historians would opt for the narrative which draws sharp discontinuities between the pre-and post-Emancipation Carnivals.

We know of slave Carnival practices only as they appear in the patrolled spaces of the elite, however. In this scenario, the "slave" entertainer was the object of a gaze which constituted itself as superior and respectable. However, the relation between slave-

entertainer and elite-audience was turned upside down as well. The *neg deye potla*, often imaged as "gazing up" through door cracks and open-windows on an elite world of magic and merriment, suggests elite-entertainers and slave-audiences. It is a powerful image because the partially opened door or window suggests that the apartheid worlds of "white" master and "black" slave interpenetrated, each group gazing at and gazed upon by the other, albeit through "cracks and chinks" patrolled by the masters. The image is partial, however, erasing from view the world of the slaves. We "see" their world only as it penetrates or is penetrated by the world of the elite. And seeing only "black" faces at windows and doors we assume that the bulk of "blacks" were passive observers at the Carnival celebrations. Officially, they may have been excluded from the "public" celebrations, but it is probable that they did celebrate in their own social spaces outside the intimidating world of colonial power. Many of the enslaved had come from African societies with masking traditions, dances and rituals of reversal. The pre-Lenten season, marked by the carnivalesque spirit of license and loosely patrolled by "distracted" elites, would have been the ideal space for alternative fantasies and Self-expression.

Unfortunately, we only get glimpses into the slave world when its boundaries were penetrated by elites to snuff out "subversive" practices. Evidence for the existence of a separate "black" reversible world surfaced in 1805 when two French planters in Diego Martin heard slaves singing in *patois* a radically reworked version of Catholic eucharistic doctrine and practice:

Pain c'est viande beque, San Domingo!
Vin c'est sang beque, San Domingo!

*Nous va boire sang beque, San Domingo!
 Pain nous mange est viande beque
 Vin nous boire c'est sang beque.*

(The bread is the flesh of the white man, San Domingo!
 The wine is the blood of the white man, San Domingo!
 We will drink the white man's blood, San Domingo!
 The bread we eat is the white man's flesh
 The wine we drink is the white man's blood)
 (Cited in Brereton 1981:48)

Investigations by the colonial authorities revealed a network of inter-related territorial and semi-secret "black" regiments or *convois*. Some of these regiments were African, some Creole, while others were based on a common origin in other "French" islands. Patterned on West African secret societies, they were comprised of kings, queens, princes, dauphins and dauphines, generals, soldiers and judges. Everyone in a *convois* had a title, with kings wearing elaborate imitations of European military dress. Court members were also costumed and treated with pomp and ceremony. Judges meted out punishments and other "officials" presided over ceremonial feasts and communion services. Under torture, slaves "confessed" that an uprising was planned for Christmas Day, with two prominent "white" planters targeted for murder. Four "kings" were hanged and decapitated, and the rest, male and female, were severely punished. Meant to suppress such associations, the harsh punishments simply served to push them further underground (Brereton 1981:48-49). *Convois* and regiments were underground year round organizations, and strictly speaking, not practices specific to the elite-dominated Carnival season. The masquerade and rituals of resistance were carnivalesque, however, and became the dominant feature in the public celebration of post-Emancipation Carnival.

Convois-type organizations were the basis for the *jamet* bands which dominated the Carnival in the second half of the nineteenth century, and I found modern resonances in the organization and performance of certain masquerades in the present-day Carnival.

The French-initiated and dominated masquerade spanned a period of roughly 50 years⁶. It was the extension of the European Carnivals described by Stallybrass and White:

"A sort of refined mimicry (which set) into the salons and ballrooms of Europe in which the imagery, masks and costumes of the popular carnival are being (literally) put on by the aristocracy and the bourgeoisie in order to simultaneously express and conceal their sexual desire and the pleasures of the body" (1986:103).

In Trinidad, the early Carnival seemed to have been characterized by frivolity, sensuality, excess, fantasy, role reversals, and for French "whites" especially, an expression of group solidarity and Self-identity. An exclusive affair, it kept the free "non-white" and enslaved populations on the "outside", constructing a white Self through explicit rejections, denials and projections. It would be a mistake, however, to equate "inside" with participation, and "outside" with observation. As the *convois* regiments described above indicate, parallel free "coloured" and enslaved "black" celebratory worlds existed, with participants also expressing group solidarity, and negotiating their sense of Self *vis à vis* other groups in their social universe.

The analytical recognition of multiple celebratory sites changes the position of the non-elites from that of passive bystanders at an elite performance, to that of active participants in their own segregated domains. We cannot, however, reduce this complexity to a simple pluralistic interpretation of a pre-Emancipation Carnival, developing on three planes and divorced from enmeshments and relations of power (cf. Johnson 1983).

Perhaps it would be more correct to recognize multiple practices and meanings at work in this early Carnival. First, there was the practice of "apartheid", an extension of the norm, where same "colour/class" groups mingled and celebrated their cultural configurations of Carnival within carefully bounded "private" spaces. Inscribed within a hierarchical social system, these parallel celebrations expressed and constituted separate Selves on colour-based classifications, with the white versions privileged and the others devalued, patrolled or publicly silenced.

Secondly, within these bounded "spaces", there was symbolic and actual engagement with the world of the Other. This engagement reflected an often unacknowledged fact, that "whites", free "coloureds/blacks" and "black" slaves were symbiotically bound to each other economically, socially and sexually through relations of power, personal and familial ties, and need. Though unable or unwilling to enter each other's festive Carnival worlds, except on "white" terms, all groups were intensely conscious of the Others, as is powerfully captured in Ofuba's image of *neg deye potla*. Not only did slaves observe the elites through doors, they themselves became windows to the "outside" for the elite. What was socially forbidden became symbolically central in the formation of desire (Stallybrass and White 1986:20), and we see "whites", "coloureds" and "blacks" playing with Otherness in order to (re)define Self, albeit for radically different reasons. "Whites" became "imaginary" *nègre jardins* and *mulatresses* in order to experience those parts of (S)self both denied and rejected in their own construction of Selfhood. Carnival was a process of temporary disconnection from their

constructed "real" world, although an ultimate affirmation of it. Slaves, on the other hand, appropriated nobility to re-constitute a different world, the inverse of the "white" world. This upside down world (or right side up) was the "real" world, the universe as-it-should-be, with "blacks" "on top" metaphorically dining on the "white" man's flesh. Playful reversals, then, were the affirmation of a free and empowered "black" Self in an alternative "real" world. For each group the imagined world, the-world-as-it-should-be, was significantly different. For the "white" elite, it was the privileged world of plantations and trade and commerce in which they lived. The masquerade was both the celebration of this privilege, and the opportunity to temporarily explore a projected Otherness. For the "non-white", free and enslaved, the desired and "real" world was the one constituted in the masquerade. This was especially so for the enslaved "blacks" who envisioned a counter-factual social order, a world-in-reverse. The masquerade and its rituals were not a temporary indulging in Otherness, but the expression of a Self in a free and differently constructed world. Significantly, although each group re-ordered the terms of the binary "high-low", "self-other" opposition, their inversions did not alter the terms themselves.

A third practice in pre-Emancipation Carnival suggests a process which was to become highly significant in the later development of Carnival, namely that of *hybridization*. Bakhtin (1968) relates this concept to the (re)production of the grotesque body (human and social) characterized by "a body in the act of becoming. It is never finished, never completed; it is continually built, created, and builds and creates another body" (1968:317). Brathwaite (1974) distinguishes two processes involved in culture-

contact: creolization as inter-culturation, the fusion of two cultures to produce a new and identifiable "creole" culture, and creolization which is the result of hegemony, the domination of the African by the European. Hybridization shifts the black/white, high/low terms of the system itself, by "mixing" the binary elements into a new configuration. The existence of "coloureds" within the apartheid binary system of "black" and "white" suggests that hybridization was well under way very early in the formation of a plantation society. While "officially" discouraged, the process seems to have been given limited public expression in the three-day Carnival (Sunday to Tuesday) with the "mixing" between "coloureds" and "whites" on the streets under cover of masquerade and general merriment. This "public" performance, while "white" controlled, symbolically represented the desired world of the free "coloureds" - the celebration of "French culture" and republican ideology, where all "free" peoples were equal and mixed and as one. Unlike the Christmas military parades, which literally put "coloureds" in their place, this "mixing" of "free" peoples was the world-as-it-should-be for the coloureds, an ideal for which they fought through petitions and lobbying throughout the pre-emancipation period. Significantly, however, the "black" slaves were written out of this "official" public ritual of equality and hybridization (even though they were "privately" involved in the physical production of the "coloured" hybrids!).

The legal entry of the "black" slaves into the Carnival-of-the-streets after Emancipation marks the emergence of a new phase in the history of the celebration. For some present day observers, like the calypsonian Sparrow, the 1983 Parliamentary

Minister of Culture and the historian Michael Anthony mentioned above, the participation of "blacks" in the Carnival of the streets marks the real beginning of "we" Carnival.

CHAPTER FOUR

Canboulay Carnival : The Freed Slaves And The Emergence Of The *Jamets*

On August 1, 1834, slavery was officially abolished in Trinidad. Full freedom for 20,656 apprentices did not come until August 1, 1838, however, as the Act of Emancipation required a period of apprenticeship for both planters and slaves to adjust to the proposed new order (Brereton 1981:77). The day seemed to have passed without incident and widespread celebrations (Hill 1972:24) At least, the official reports at the time are silent about either type of event. Nearly fifty years later, L.M. Fraser, the British ex-Inspector-Commandant of Police, in a 1881 memorandum to Governor Freeling on the "History of Carnival", wrote of an Emancipation Day celebration with roots in pre-Emancipation plantation practice and Carnival estate celebrations:

In the days of slavery whenever fire broke out upon an Estate, the slaves on the surrounding properties were immediately mustered and marched to the spot, horns and shells were blown to collect them and the gangs were followed by the drivers cracking their whips and urging with cries and blows to their work. After Emancipation the negroes began to represent this scene as a kind of commemoration of the change in their condition, and the procession of the *cannes brulées* used to take place on the night of the 1st of August, the date of their emancipation.....After a time the day was changed and for many years past the Carnival days have been inaugurated by the *cannes brulées* (Cited in Hill 1972:23)

The runaway plantation fires were often assumed to be acts of sabotage, generating great anxiety for planters and hard work for slaves (cf. Carmichael 1969[1883]:301-302). Yet the fires seemed to have also caused a great deal of excitement on the plantations. The burning cane-fields with the crowds, torches and festive atmosphere provided a celebratory paradigm on the estates known as the *cannes brulées*, in *patois* pronounced "*canboulay*", a word that seems to have been conflated with the African Kikongo word "kambule" or "kambula" which means a procession or carnivalesque parade (cf. Warner-Lewis 1991:170, 188). Fraser made no mention of a pre-Emancipation elite celebration, but the anonymous "white" planter cited earlier claimed that originally it was an elite performance of inversion, in which the planter class dressed as *nègre jardins* and *mulatresses* at Carnival time and paraded from estate to estate to the beat of African drums. According to de Verteuil, the *Canboulay* originated from a particular type of *nègre jardin* band, once a favourite of the elites, which was "imitated" by the ex-slaves after Emancipation (de Verteuil 1984:62).

Very little is known about these estate celebrations, however. Whatever the origin of *Canboulay*, whether as elite rite of reversal or the ex-slaves' re-enactment of the "excitement" associated with burning canes, it is clear that its post-Emancipation performance became the commemorative symbol of freedom and Self-expression for the "black" subaltern classes. De Verteuil's "imitation", therefore, is too simple a concept to describe the process through which the ex-slaves appropriated and transformed the original "event", understood either as the actual estate event of extinguishing runaway

fires, or as the elite representation of that event. The written records are also silent on the August 1st *Canboulay* described by Fraser, maybe because it was celebrated exclusively by the ex-slaves in their communities and did not directly impinge on the world of the elite. A Catholic missionary working in the Carenage area several decades after Emancipation described a noisy festival - "*cette fête du diable*" - on 1 August to celebrate Emancipation. It was marked by dancing, drumming and general misbehaviour, but there was no mention of the *Canboulay* procession *per se* (Brereton 1979:157). *Canboulay*, however, was part of the Carnival in the 1840's, and was soon established as its ritual beginning (Hill 1972:24).

Emancipation legally opened up the "white" - free "coloured" street Carnival to all citizens, and the ex-slaves began to participate in great numbers, especially in the urban areas. Emancipation changed not only the "colour" of the Carnival, but its content and ethos as well. The ex-slaves appropriated European-inspired masquerades, added their own African festive and masking traditions, and generated new forms expressive of their recent plantation past (Wood 1968:243). African drums, salt-boxes, and shack-shacks soon shared the streets with the fiddle, the guitar, castanet, tambourine, and eventually, the former became the main instruments of the Carnival (Wood 1968 244-245). Noise levels increased, and celebrations grew more boisterous. This rowdiness reached its peak in the 1870's with the so-called "take-over" of Carnival by the *jamets*. Two features, in particular, were targeted as the distinguishing marks of the *jamet* celebrations: aggression and ribald sexuality (Brereton 1979:169-170). The former was expressed in the stick-fight,

carried out to the accompaniment of drumming and singing; the latter in songs, gestures and masquerades such as the *Pissenlit*, literally translated as "wet the bed" or more generally as "stinker". *Pissenlit* was played by men dressed as women in long transparent night gowns which were decorated with ribbons and lace. Others wore very little clothes, except menstruation cloths stained with "blood" (Crowley 1988[1956]:46-47). Their dance involved sexual horseplay and was often accompanied by lewd songs in *patois* (Brereton 1979: 170).

Carnival, then, became the space where the "black" subaltern classes could express the free Self, the world-in-reverse, the world-as-it-should-be. Involved were two related, but not synonymous strategies of deconstruction and reconstruction which were often combined in the same practice. The given "white"-dominated world was negated through ridicule and caricature, demonization, inversions and exposure of elite pretensions, while an alternative world was re-constituted and celebrated through performances that portrayed a Creole-African Self.

An early example of this deconstruction through laughter was the 1834 Carnival mockery of the militia band already described above. During the 1860's, more performances of this type were documented, adding a distinctly critical edge to the masquerade. Burlesques of contemporary local events, such as court cases and elite squabbles were enacted, and prominent people of the upper classes were lampooned. An unpopular attorney-general was persistently demonized by revellers, appearing caricatured in 1869 in gown and wig with a member of the Legislative Council and pretending to

beat his "lieges" with a cart whip (Wood 1968:246). These enactments and caricatures were obviously protests against the existing state of affairs, but more importantly, they revealed the "truth" that hid behind the "masquerade" of elite daily life. In these performances, the respectable "Others" stood exposed, and their social position was levelled through ridicule and humor.

But the Carnival of this period increasingly expressed the "black" Self rooted in West African festive aesthetics and practices. Among these practices were the rhythmic drumming, the calinda/stickfight complex¹, and the masquerade. They later introduced both new characters and new meanings to the act of masquerading. In the European tradition, masking was understood as a "disguise", a hiding of one's "real" identity, a "pretending" to be another. This playfulness and mimicry were also part of the West African tradition², but there were also the masquerades of the West African "secret societies" which were of another order altogether. Here masking involved the participation in a Self that was greater than one's personal self: "his individuality is hidden, it is destroyed really, it is not just hidden, it is like if you destroy his personal ego and you enforce the society's ego -he becomes just a vessel, in a sense he is a *jumbie* (spirit)" (Funso Aiyejuna, personal communication, St. Augustine, February 18, 1992). The masquerade for the West African, then, was the embodiment of the ancestors or the community or a spirit, requiring abstinence and spiritual preparation on the part of initiates (cf. Cole 1985; Nunley 1987; Warner-Lewis 1991:183). In its performance, the Self was "manifested" and affirmed, but for post-Emancipation ex-slaves this was more

than a continuation of ancestral Selves. The masquerades show the persistence of West African forms and performances in the *Moko Jumbie*, the cow bands and *ju-ju* warriors (cf. Warner-Lewis 1991:180-184), but they are transformed and take on new meanings by virtue of the experience of slavery and the colonialist discourse on "blackness".

A good example of the transformed African masquerade was described by Charles Day³ who witnessed a Carnival in the late 1840's:

The maskers parade the streets in gangs of from ten to twenty, occasionally joining forces in procession. The primitives were negroes, as nearly naked as might be, bedaubed with a black varnish. One of this gang had a long chain and padlock attached to his leg, which chain the others pulled. What this typified, I was unable to learn; but, as the chained one was occasionally thrown down on the ground, and treated with a mock bastinadoing it probably represented slavery. Each masker was armed with a good stout quarterstaff, so that they could overcome one-half more police than themselves, should occasion present itself (Cited in Pearse 1988a[1956]:24).

The chains and bastinadoing suggest a representation of slavery, the construction of the Self rooted in the enslaved past. This is not an upside-down world where "blacks" are masters and "whites" slaves, however. "Blacks" had further blackened already dark skin. Here, "blacks" were appropriating "blackness", and aggressively so. Several researchers have linked the black varnished bodies to West African masking representations of ancestors, underworld spirits and death (cf. Hill 1972:24, Warner-Lewis 1992:182). Warner-Lewis notes that male Ibibio masqueraders smear their bodies with a greasy mixture of palm oil and ground charcoal in the ancestral *ekpo* masquerade to achieve the colour of death. She sees this as the precedent of Trinidad's *jab molassie* (molasses devil) masqueraders who, like the *epko*, wear a g-string or brief (1991:182). A historical link between the "original African ancestor", the 1848 varnished

masqueraders and the *jab molassie* masquerader is made by Hill (1972:24). He cites Lafcadio Hearn's description of the "molasses negro" which Hearn himself had seen during a visit to Martinique in 1888. The masquerader wore "nothing but a cloth about his loins; his whole body and face being smeared with an atrocious mixture of soot and molasses. He is supposed to represent the original African ancestor" (Hearn 1890:210 cited in Hill 1972:24).

Significant in this discussion of the African "origins" of this masquerade are two fundamental transformations in meaning and practice that occurred in the local versions. First, the masquerade was used to express and constitute an ancestral "black" identity rooted in the plantation experience of slavery. The varnished "ancestor" now wore a long chain and padlock clearly situating him within the experience of slavery. Further, he was "armed" with the quarterstaff which was apparently used by slaves on estates for protection in cane-cutting operations. These "sticks" were weighted with several meanings, however, serving as instruments in the ritualized *calinda* stick-fights, weapons in combative situations, and protective charms in hostile environments. A local historian explained in an interview: "The molasses devil is part of the plantation experience. He is the ultimate horror of the plantation experience. He is the black man that has fallen into the boiling molasses. That is hell, symbol of the molasses that is boiling, and that is where, *jab molassie*, the molasses devil comes from" (Besson - personal communication, Port of Spain. February 5, 1992). The performance establishes an identity constituted as "black" in the plantation experience, a "jumbie" or "ancestor" from the "underworld" that

appeared at Carnival to re-enact slavery and keep its memory alive.

Secondly, the slave "ancestor" became the *jab molassie*, establishing a clear link between "blackness" and the devil. The re-naming and re-valuing of Egungun, Ogun and other African masquerades as "devils" had already been taking place in Africa with the arrival of European missionaries (Nunley 1987:xv). This interpretation was part of the much wider colonial discourse in which "black" represented the Other of the "white" civilized, enlightened and moral Self. The "black" *jab*, naked except for a g-string, with his long finger nails, enormous red tongue, wire tail, horns and pitchfork became the embodiment of the "white" European construction of the devil.

Among my own family, a "true" story circulates about a newly arrived adult immigrant from China, Charles, who desired to be a Christian. Since he was a friend of my uncle and aunt, they agreed to be his "godparents". Part of the baptism ritual requires that through a series of formalized questions and answers, the candidate announces his belief in God and his intention to reject "the devil". Under interrogation, Charles answered as he had been instructed. The minister, surprised at the confidence and vehemence with which the devil was renounced, deviated from the text to ask:

"Charles, do you know the devil? Have you ever seen him?"

"Yes, Father. On Carnival Monday morning, Father".

Charles was serious. The Minister's lips twitched, but he continued the ceremony. My uncle had to leave the Church to control his laughter, while my aunt reportedly used a handkerchief to stifle her giggles. The story was repeatedly told, and never ceased to

amuse, especially when told by the "godparents", and by Charles himself years later. But Charles' response was not completely inappropriate. Every Carnival he had seen the *jabs* (devils), living representations of what he had learnt about "the devil" with their lascivious, aggressive, dirty and "black" portrayals.

The *jab molassie* was but one of a pantheon of devils and "wild and aggressive" masquerades that became a celebrated part of the post-Emancipation Carnival. Among these masquerades were the *bationiers* (stick-fighters) who had re-appropriated the *nègre jardin* costume worn by elites in former days, and roamed the streets in bands of five to twenty at Carnival seeking "combat" with rival bands (Crowley 1988[1956]:43) These "bands" grew into prominence in the 1860's, and dominated the Carnival until the Government made them illegal in the mid 1880's (Brereton 1979:124-125). Membership was drawn from the urban underclass which had steadily grown since Emancipation. Under a system of indentureship, replacement workers for the freed slaves had been arriving from India since 1845. As these new arrivals moved onto the estates, the older ex-slave population drifted into the villages and towns (Brereton 1979:116). They were joined by new immigrants from the eastern Caribbean, Venezuela, Africa, Madeira, Europe and China. From 1860 to 1880, the population of Port of Spain doubled to 29,468 (Pearse 1988a[1956]:37). Many of the newcomers belonged to an unemployed, poor and "black" underclass who lived in harsh conditions in city barrack-yards⁴, or in small slum settlements on the outskirts of Port of Spain. Dispossessed and displaced, they formed themselves into year round territorial "bands" for singing, dancing and fighting (Brereton

1979:166). These bands became particularly active during the Carnival season. Each band's "chantwell" boasted of his group's prowess and insulted rival bands in call-response songs, and stick-men engaged rival "yard" bands⁵ in ritualized and actual fights (Brereton 1979:169).

During the 1870's, the Carnival was taken over by these *patois*-speaking *jamet* bands, which included both men and women, many of whom used the occasion to show their skill and aggression in *bois* (stick-fighting), their verbal wit, their talent in song, music and dance, their sexual achievements, and a contempt for the "norms" of society (Brereton 1979:169-170; Pearse 1988a[1956]:38-39). There was a world-in-reverse in which the values of "respectability" were openly ridiculed.

The lyrics of a popular song among the Canboulay chantwells and stick-fighters were: "*Djab se yo neg/Me Die se nom-la bla/Bamboula, Bamboula/Bamboula, Bamboula.*" (Trans.- The Devil is a negro/But God is a white man/Bamboula, Bamboula/Bamboula, Bamboula). The "white" God and "black" Devil images suggest an acceptance by "blacks" of the "white" colonialist discourse. In the 1870's, Maxwell Phillip, the "coloured" Solicitor General, wrote in this vein, calling on "blacks" to stop singing a song which defined them negatively. His call was generally ignored (Pearse 1988b[1956]:156). A local historian made the same assessment during an interview:

Another generation before that sang "*Pain c'est viande beque, San Domingo.....*" It shows how in one generation resistance was turned into acceptance of the white man's definition of self as the devil (Bartholomew, personal communication, Port of Spain. May 22, 1992).

Acceptance and self-contempt have certainly been a dimension of the Trinidadian's

response to the dominant ideology of "white" supremacy. But "the Devil is a Negro/God is a white man" is perhaps more properly interpreted as an act of defiance, a rejection of the "white" God and the values of the "white" world, and a celebration of the "white" man's Devil as the source of alternative power, resistance and aggression. Notions of good and evil were subverted in this act of inversion. Michael Taussig (1980) documents a similar process of "devil" appropriation and transformation by African slaves and their descendants in the sugar plantations of western Columbia. In Columbia, the power of the devil was appropriated by male plantation workers to increase their productivity and wages. Significantly, the "magic" in the devil contract was not directed at the plantation elites, but at the sociohistorical system itself. The practice is full of contradiction for the Columbians, however, as it is believed that the individual who makes the contract is likely to die prematurely and in great pain (1980:94).

In Trinidad, the *jamet* Carnival was both a "making mas'" with the social order through inversion and an affirmation of the "lower" Self. Further, in appropriating the "white"-constructed "black" caricature, the *jamets* seemed to have caricatured the caricature, menacingly turning it back on "respectable" society. This process is not the simple expression of a Gramscian "false consciousness" according to which "blacks" passively bought into an ideology and system that oppressed them. The *jamet* identity was appropriated as an oppositional Self, albeit within the parameters of colonial discourse. As such, it was an identity of both resistance and complicity. The majority of "blacks" would not have constructed themselves as *jamets*, nor would they have participated in the

jamet Carnival world. However, most seemed to have taken a vicarious delight in seeing the privileged elite world overturned, exposed and ridiculed by the *jamets* and *jamettes* of Carnival (Brereton 1979:174).

The main source of our knowledge of post-Emancipation Carnival is from elite records, and these show an increasingly hostile attitude to the perceived "take-over" and disruption of the "white" order of things by the "black" lower classes. Already in 1834, the editor of the Port of Spain Gazette was lamenting the degeneration of Carnival:

Nothing can more decidedly mark the great change which has taken place within this colony than the want of spirit, and we might add, deficiency of elegant bustle, which was to be seen during the Carnival week in olden times (Cited in Pearse 1988a[1956]:21).

Four years later a "Scotchman" wrote to the Port of Spain Gazette about the "desecration of the Sabbath" on Carnival and drew a sympathetic response from the newspaper editor:

....we will not dwell on the disgusting and indecent scenes that were enacted in our streets -we will not say how many we saw in a state so nearly approaching nudity as to outrage decency and shock modesty....but we will say at once that the custom of keeping Carnival by allowing the lower order of society to run about the streets in wretched masquerade belongs to other days, and ought to be abolished in our own (Cited in Pearse 1988a[1956]: 22).

The British authorities were swift to react to this actual intrusion of the "real black" Other into their annual symbolic performance of inversion. Becoming a *nègre jardin* temporarily had allowed the "white" and "coloured" elites to "experiment" with the forbidden, to construct a not-Self. To admit the "real" *nègre jardin* into the public performance on an equal basis was another matter altogether, as it challenged the identities and privileged positions of both "whites" and "coloureds". To further complicate

the situation, the British were concerned about the continued "French" cultural influence on the island and began an aggressive policy of "Anglicization" of Trinidad in the 1840s (Brereton 1981:120-22; 138). Carnival, as the public expression of both the "African" and "French" Other, became the target of British laws and policing (Wood 1968:244). These repressive measures, however, served only to constitute Carnival as the site of "native" Self-expression, especially of "black" subaltern resistance and Self-performance.

In Trinidad's history, the post-Emancipation period is perhaps the most amenable to Bakhtin's (1968) analytical framework, which presents two seamless cultural groups locked in a dominant elite/subordinate folk conflictual relationship. The elite dominates through regulations, law enforcement and institutional control, while the folk resists in ritualized play through ridicule, laughter, negation and inversions. Two conclusions are possible in this scenario: first, the system stays in place with dominant elite and subordinate folk groups locked in an eternal struggle for power, or second, systemic and cultural changes occur, with subordinates gaining hegemony over former elites. In nineteenth century Trinidad, while a struggle was engaged for ownership of the Carnival, its resolution was neither the triumph of the "black" subalterns nor the continued contestation between "white" elite and "black" folk. In the Trinidadian situation, Bakhtin's binary framework, while useful, is unable to encompass the British-French struggle within the elite category, the multiplicities within the folk category, and the mediating role of "coloureds" who eventually were able to negotiate a new version of Carnival shaped according to their ideals of hybridization and "decency".

The entry of the "black" subaltern classes into the Carnival then was met with disgust by "whites" and free "coloureds" in general, and with regulations and intense patrolling by the British authorities, in particular. The "white" elites began to withdraw from the Carnival-of-the-streets to their private masked balls in the decade following Emancipation, and their non-public participation was almost complete when, in the late 1860s, the public performance of Carnival was dominated by the *jamets* of the urban underworld (Pearse 1988a[1956]:21;30-41; Wood 1968:243). Elite journalistic censure became more frequent and hostile as the century wore on, with demands for Carnival's abolition especially by Protestants who saw it as both foreign (i.e. French) and Roman Catholic. However, in a symbolically loaded gesture of disassociation, the Roman Catholic Archbishop of Port of Spain himself, in 1868, stopped driving through the city streets to view Carnival as had been his custom, in effect, signalling that Carnival was no longer "officially" Catholic (Wood 1968:247). The Carnivalized Mass of 1976, a little more than a hundred years later, is a telling attempt by one Catholic priest at re-connection, albeit to a Carnival weighted with different meanings.

One of the first measures taken to control the post-Emancipation Carnival was to restrict the three-day street festival to the two days before Ash Wednesday. As a result, from the 1840's onwards, Carnival officially began on Sunday at midnight. Probably, it was during this period that *Canboulay* became part of the Carnival celebrations, with its processions, dances, drum music and torches providing a midnight to dawn overture for the festival (Pearse 1988a[1956]:22). Other measures taken during this period included

several attempts to ban masking altogether (Wood 1968:245). Masking was now transformed from a playful pretense at Otherness by Eurocentric elites to the expression of a defiant Self by subaltern classes. Further, the "black" African and creoles had introduced a radically new understanding of the masquerade into the Carnival, one which combined both a serious engagement with socio-spiritual reality and comic relief by imitation of animals, spirits and well-known people (cf. Warner-Lewis 1991:180-184; Wood 1968:8).

In 1846, the Governor expressly forbade facial masking on the streets because of incendiarism in the city and the possible use of the mask to further engage in such activities (Wood 1968:244-245). He nevertheless limited the ban to the streets, leaving untouched the right of elites to mask in the privacy of their homes and at exclusive balls (Pearse 1988a[1956]:23-24). Street masking continued into the 1850's, however, until Governor Keate again attempted to put it down in 1858 and 1859, this time with combined military and police force. Many arrests were made even though few masks were worn (Wood 1968: 245-246). It seems that wearing a costume was sufficient to warrant arrest. In 1860, a rumour circulated that Keate, generally known for his love of pleasurable pursuits, had planned to ban the Carnival altogether (Wood 1968:246). This generated intense debate between pro and anti-Carnival factions in Trinidadian society, with the pro-Carnival alliance far more popular and broadly based. For the "French" and *patois*-speaking population, the attempt to ban Carnival was interpreted as yet another attempt to eradicate the customs of the original "native" people by an "anglicizing"

foreign intruder. The urban "black" subordinate class saw the proposed ban as an assault on its freedom and Self-expression by an elite "respectable" class. The merchants, too, almost exclusively "white" (Brereton 1979:89), argued in favour of the Carnival since it had become a profitable event for them with their trade in costumes from Europe. Further, Keate's own *bon vivant* life-style did not make him a credible reformer and only added to the anger at his rumoured proposal. Keate backed down and the Carnival continued (Pearse 1988a[1956]:29; Wood 1968:246).

Within the "respectable" classes, there were those who had hoped the Carnival would die a natural death. Nonetheless, they resented the "foreigner" Keate's high-handed approach to local customs and traditions (Wood 1968: 246). But Carnival did not die, and its urban "black" subaltern participants became increasingly combative and defiant. A Government Ordinance of 1868 gave more regulating powers to the police and forbade *Canboulay* participants from carrying their lighted *flambeaux* (torches) (Wood 1968:247). But this failed to stop what was becoming more and more an aggressive *jamet* Carnival, itself a reflection of the worsening situation in the urban slums. The British authorities seemed to have vacillated in their approach to Carnival in the early 1870's, but in 1877, the appointment of a new Inspector-Commandment of Police brought the situation to a head. Captain Baker assumed control almost immediately, using his police force to control the *Canboulay* and its stick fighters. In 1880, he used the 1868 Ordinance to suppress the *Canboulay* altogether, ordering participants to surrender their drums, sticks and torches. They complied. Fearing, however, that this was the beginning of yet another attempt to

suppress Carnival altogether, the Port of Spain bands organized to resist in 1881. The Carnival Sunday night overture became the site not of "ritualized play", but of open combat. When Baker and his police tried to stop the *Canboulay* proceedings, they were met with united resistance. The "battle" ended inconclusively, with many police and band-members injured. Advised by the Port of Spain City Council, which feared widespread rioting, Governor Freeling made a deal with the masqueraders in the Eastern Market: the police would be confined to barracks if the peace was kept. Both sides complied, and Carnival 1881 was celebrated without widespread disturbances (Brereton 1979:171-172; Pearse 1988a[1956]:32-33).

Significantly, the responses of newspaper editors, and the "respectable" classes they spoke for, were similar to those at the time of the masking ban twenty-one years earlier. Baker was condemned and Freeling commended. Although, most editors were disgusted with both the "obscene" and aggressive practices of the *jamet* Carnival and hoped for its demise, they strongly resented British interference by force in a local festival (Brereton 1979:172). It is in this context that the first known reference to Carnival as the only truly "national" festival occurs in a newspaper, The San Fernando Gazette (November 19, 1881) which, significantly, was owned by the "coloured", Samuel Carter, who was for many years a prominent member of the San Fernando Borough Council and the Masonic movement (Brereton 1979: 96;172). This interpretation of Carnival, as a national festival, gained wide currency in the twentieth century, and is the dominant image around which the "modern" Carnival was constructed.

After the events of 1881, the British Governor issued a proclamation authorizing the *Canboulay* festivities, a clear "victory" for the *Canboulay* "forces". However, Carnival was heavily patrolled, with two British warships in the harbour in case of social disturbance. Carnival 1882 passed without incident as the masqueraders seemed determined to keep their festival. But the Carnival of 1883 saw large scale fighting among bands in towns across the island, rumoured to have been instigated by the police⁶ (Brereton 1979:172). These disputes played into the hands of the anti-Carnival faction in the Government. In early 1884, two Ordinances gave the Government the authority to abolish *Canboulay*. This prohibition became effective for the 1884 and subsequent Carnivals. Torch processions were outlawed, assemblies of ten or more persons carrying sticks were illegal, and parading forbidden before six o'clock on Monday morning. The new regulations met with stiff resistance in the southern part of the island, resulting in two deaths and several injuries at the hands of police. In Port of Spain, the regulations were obeyed. Although some skirmishes occurred in the following years, the *Canboulay* was permanently abolished by law and force in 1884 (Brereton 1979:173). Its ritual space was removed, its combative practices prohibited and its "instruments" of celebration were banned. More regulations followed in subsequent years to rid Carnival of elements of the *jamet* Carnival considered "obscene". By 1895, sufficient regulations were in place to ensure the elimination of what the "respectable" groups considered gross obscenity (Brereton 1979:173). However, 1884 can be properly considered another watershed in Carnival's historical development. It marks the beginning of the transformation of the

jamet Carnival into the modern "national *fête*" (Brereton 1979:173; Pearse 1988a[1956]: 34-35).

The stance of the "coloured" population towards Carnival during this period is important because it is actors from within this group that move to centre stage to shape their version of the twentieth century "national *fête*". "Coloured" increasingly came to signify not simply miscegenation, but a middle group moving towards the valorized element in the "white" - "black" binary system. It was not a monolithic group, therefore, and could be crudely divided into two groups: the descendants of the French free "coloureds" who had immigrated under the conditions of the *Cedula*, and the "black" and "coloureds" who had achieved "middle-class" status through education and ability. These latter were considered either "mixed" or "pure"⁷ and were descended from Creole and African ex-slaves, "liberated" African immigrants, Eastern Caribbean ex-slave immigrants, or Venezuelan immigrants of Amerindian-Spanish-African descent (Brereton 1979:86). As a whole, however, this group placed great emphasis on "culture" and education, their "passport" to social status and mobility in a society where "white" continued to signify the positive term. With the right "ancestry" and "physiognomy" denied them, the acquisition of "proper" manners and behaviour became the sought-after goal. Barbara Powrie, a contributor to the seminal work on Carnival in the Caribbean Quarterly has claimed that:

Respectability is the keynote of coloured middle-class existence. The ideal person and form of behaviour is...."white" and life is patterned to conform as closely as possible to all that is felt to be contained within this ideal (Powrie 1988[1956]:94).

Brereton reaches a similar conclusion: "Respectability was a crucial concept in nineteenth-century Trinidad" (1979:211).

"Respectability" features as the binary opposite to "reputation" in both Wilson's (1969; 1973) and Abrahams' (1983) analytical models of West Indian societies. Wilson and Abrahams locate "respectability" in the female-centred and female-dominated world of the home or "yard", and describe it as a value-system derived from the closeness of females to the dominant colonial masters and their Euro-centric world. This gynocentric world emphasized the prestige criteria of marriage and family, seriousness and church attendance, hard work and economizing behaviour, "light" colour and education. It is a response of complicity to domination, one which supports stratification and the privilege of the "white" world. Significantly, women are seen as the bearers and perpetuators of "respectability".

For both Abrahams and Wilson, the opposite of "respectability" is the male-centred, male-dominated culture of the street and "public" places - rum and betting shops, or street corners. This androcentric world is characterized by the counter-values of virility and individuality, joking and boasting, competitiveness and physical strength, play and a rejection of thriftiness and dominant church values. Egalitarian in ethos, the opposite of "respectability" is a resistance-oriented value system which brings the much sought-after "reputation" to men. Wilson describes the complementary interplay between these two systems as "crab antics". Caribbean people were like crabs; some trying to crawl out of a barrel and others pulling them down (Wilson 1973:9, 58).

This model, or parts of it, although highly controversial and criticized (cf. Austin 1983; Barrow 1986; Besson 1988) has been the framework for several studies done on Caribbean societies (eg Burton 1985; Dirks 1972; Manning 1980). The model is attractive because it incorporates in a single paradigm the Caribbean peoples' ambivalent response to colonial domination, involving both complicity and resistance. Wilson (1973) resolves the either/or analytical antinomy by recognizing both responses within the Caribbean. And while he links these responses to variables of class, age, and colour, he sees them primarily as gendered. "Female" respectability maintains the externally imposed status quo, while "male" reputation, internally created, struggles against it.

My own difficulty with the respectability/reputation model is threefold: first, it constructs and essentializes male/female identities as binary opposites. In the second place, it assumes two distinct responses to domination - complicity or resistance, each manifested in "given" kinds of behaviour located in gendered identities. Acquiescence is linked to order, work, commitment to family and education, while resistance is linked to opposite values. The meaning and outcome of behaviour is itself essentialized, with no recognition of how "acquiescent" behavior can be a transformative strategy, and "resistance" a reinforcement of the status quo. Further, the model erases the possibility of multiple, contradictory and negotiated strategies which are context-dependent. In the third place, this model neglects to analyze the colonial discourse and practice in which these value systems are embedded. By claiming certain values for itself, the discourse of Caribbean Eurocentric "whites" often created an Other based on oppositional values. The

extent to which this Other has been appropriated as an indigenous Self (in opposition to the Eurocentric Self), needs to be explored, and not simply taken as an identity that was internally created by "black" subalterns. If the male is thus Self-constituted, we need to recognize the paradoxes of his indigenous and egalitarian counter-ideology and practice: indigenous, yet enmeshed in externally imposed assumptions; egalitarian, yet embedded in a stratified system of gender arrangements.

These two sets of value and behavioral dichotomies have been useful tools for interpreting the historical relationships between elite and subordinates in Trinidad. However, I would prefer to see respectability and reputation as two strategies, among others, that were used to negotiate the stratified order of social relations. One strategy was clearly oriented towards the (re)construction of social order, permanence and a work ethic, while the other was oriented towards deconstruction, temporality, playfulness and chaos. Neither can be permanently located in ethnic, gender or colour categories nor do these strategies perform specific functions of maintenance, resistance or transformation "by their very nature". Further, values and behaviours from both systems are often reconstructed in new, and sometimes contradictory, ways.

Historical analyses of Trinidad's three-tier class/colour social system in the nineteenth century locates "respectability" in Eurocentric "whiteness", and its oppositional "reputation" in Afrocentric "blackness". By definition, "whites" were assumed to be respectable (Brereton 1979:211). "Coloureds", traditionally the biological "hybrids", were constructed not as "mixing" black and white categories, but as maintaining the "white-

black" opposition in their striving for the substitute "whiteness" through respectability.

C.R.L. James captures this striving in an unforgettable image:

My grandfather went to church every Sunday morning at eleven o'clock wearing in the broiling sun a frock-coat, striped trousers and top-hat, with his walking-stick in hand, surrounded by his family, the underwear of the women crackling with starch. Respectability was not an ideal, but an armour (1983[1963]:17-18).

Significantly, James describes respectability as armour, which suggests a vulnerable, different self behind the "mask" and the need to protect that self from exposure.

It was not surprising, then, that this intermediate class of "respectable" and would-be "respectable" non-whites increasingly dissociated themselves from the "black" street Carnival. Hannibal, the "coloured" calypsonian who performed in the latter half of the nineteenth century, articulated his group's attitudes in several calypsos:

Black and black make pure devil /Black and white make half angel.
I ain't black, I ain't white
If it comes to blows or fight
I'll kill the black to save the white
(Mitto Sampson in Pearse 1988b(1956):155)

And in his calypso about Dan the Mulatto who was reputed to have been more cruel than the "white" masters during slavery:

Dan is the devil, the devil is Dan
Brown nigger more bad than Bacra man
But black is the baddest
The baddest in the land
What Dan did to Tasa
Mek whiteman vex
L'annais was bad, bad
Dan worse than all the res'

God you is a white man
I want to know the truth

Who but de devil
 Could mek these niggers brutes (Mitto Sampson in Pearse 1988b[1956]:156).

This unsubtle expression of "black" inferiority by a folk calypsonian was more sophisticatedly articulated in newspaper editorials and articles by the educated "coloured" sector. In the aftermath of the *Canboulay* riots, for example, an editorial in Fair Play, requested that the colonial Government ban the drum dances for the sake of the "respectable coloureds" who were too often tarred with the same brush as the "black scum" who took part in them (Fair Play March 1, 1883 cited in Brereton 1979:104).

The "coloureds'" pursuit of "respectability", whether as armour or ideal was not unambiguous, however. We cannot, therefore, interpret their values and actions simply as complicit responses to colonialism. They were known to be deeply resentful of their "inferior" status in "white" society, and sought "respectability" as a means of confounding "white" stereotypes about savage and cannibalistic "non-white natives" (Brereton 1979:103). Many "coloureds" did this by putting their "blackness" under erasure, but there were those who argued for pride and celebration in the "African heritage" (Brereton 1979:104-108). Most, however, had a strong sense of their intellectual and moral capabilities, and spent their lives trying to prove themselves to "whites", often considered their educational and moral inferiors.

As members and aspirants of the "respectable" class, therefore, many "coloureds" shared in the "white" elite disgust of the *jamet* Carnival. But their resentment of British control and "white" elitism made them highly sensitive to a "foreign" Government's interference in the "local" Carnival. Moreover, for many of this group, Carnival had

remained an important season of sociability, remembered and constructed as the festive site of an earlier period when their rights and status were less overshadowed (Pearse 1988a[1956]:23). Indeed, in many ways, "coloureds" were intimately connected to the "black" world through relatives, sensibilities, worldview, and the physical arrangements of the city where their houses often fronted the barrack-yards of the *jamets* (Brereton 1979:116). There is evidence that "respectable" men did support and participate in the *Canboulay* Carnival and were immortalized in calypso as "Lom Kamisol", *patois* for the "jacket men", who engaged in *Canboulay* activities dressed in their coats which were symbols of their middle-class status. For example, one commentator in the Argos Newspaper (February 15, 1918:7) noted the existence of "the long-time Patois Gang...(who) at night prowled all over the city looking for fights to amuse them". These were "City Fathers (who) used to lay down loose stones upon streets" to facilitate the fighting bands (cf. Rohlehr 1990:26). Caught between two worlds and deeply ambivalent about both, the "coloured" and "black" middle-class brought the same ambivalence to the Carnival. Equally opposed to British "repression" and *jamet* "rowdiness", the middle-class "black" and "coloured" groups became the dominant actors in the shaping of Carnival into their version of a "national" festival.

CHAPTER FIVE

"*Gens De Couleur*" And The National

Fête

The struggle for Carnival between the "white" elites and the "black" *jamets* reached its climax in the *Canboulay* riots of 1881 and 1883. It ended in the 1884 Peace Preservation Act which prohibited drum beating, public torch processions, dance or procession, and any disorderly assembly of ten or more persons armed with sticks or other weapons (Brereton 1979:173). The *Canboulay* performances were therefore effectively abolished, at least, in Port of Spain and in easily "patrolled" areas, through elite-administered laws and force. But the Carnival itself could not be stopped, having become a symbol of "local" creole sensibilities, over and against a "foreign" British administration. The issue in dispute was not the Carnival itself, but the struggle within the "local" Self to express and constitute that Self.

The forcible removal of the "black" *jamets* from centre-stage did not result in a world-turned-upside-down. The "whites" returned to Carnival, but not to dominate it as they had done in pre-Emancipation times. They simply became part of a Carnival that was

increasingly controlled by the "coloured" middle-classes. This third category had been ambiguously situated in the colonialist colour scheme of the nineteenth century. As a group, "coloureds" fit neither of the "natural" binary categories - black/white, Self/Other, dominant/subordinate, free/slave - and as "marginal" and "mixed" they were constructed by both "whites" and "blacks" as "treacherous, fickle, unstable, clever, but lacking in moral worth" (Brereton 1979:103). Their own attitudes towards their "coloured" Self were deeply ambivalent, as they aspired to "white" respectability, but resented their exclusion from that world. "Coloureds" distanced themselves from the "black" world, yet shared its physical space, worldview and sensibilities in music, dance, and masquerade. They progressively became more self-confident as a group, and in the 1890's, began to press for the right to share in the power monopolized for so long by the "white" elites (Brereton 1979:143). "Coloureds" based their right on their adherence to the supposed "European" values of respectability, and their achievements in education and morality (Brereton 1979:103).

"Coloureds" shared, then, much of the "white" abhorrence for the *jamet* Carnival, especially its aggressive spirit and sexual ribaldry. But the Carnival itself was claimed as part of the "creole" tradition against the British "foreign interlopers" (Pearse 1988a[1956]:40). With *Canboulay* effectively stifled in 1884, the purging of other *jamet* elements proceeded apace. *Patois*-speakers were chosen as policemen to patrol the streets in civilian clothes to pick up perpetrators of "obscenities" at Carnival time. Eighty-nine convictions were secured in 1886 (Brereton 1973:173). In 1895, the *pissenlit* was deemed

offensive and made illegal (Brereton 1979:173; Pearse 1988a[1956]:34). Merchants began to sponsor bands to advertise their merchandise, and in the 1890's, Ignacio Bodu, a merchant and Borough Councillor, and well-known "friend of Carnival" began to organize competitions in downtown Port of Spain, offering prizes for the best masquerades in an effort to "lift" the moral tone of the festival (Brereton 1979:174; Hill 1984:26; Rohlehr 1990:26). This patronage had the effect of rechanneling the traditional "band" rivalries and aggression into organized and controlled competitions.

With the Carnival heavily patrolled by the forces of "law and order", the "respectable" classes re-entered the street celebrations. The newspapers of the time note the presence of a "relatively large number" of "respectable people" in the 1885 Carnival, and the participation of ladies in carriages following their bands in the 1890 Carnival (Brereton 1979:174). Calypsoes began to be sung in English, supposedly to be better understood by those "respectable" patrons who did not understand *patois*. Conversely, members of the educated classes also began to sing calypsoes (Elder 1966:112; Hill 1984:25; Rohlehr 1990:57). At the beginning of the twentieth century all classes were participating in the Carnival, by then a celebration that was slowly moving towards the place it holds today (Brereton 1979:174; Pearse 1988a[1956]:41).

The "respectable" middle class did not immediately "takeover" the Carnival in the way that the subaltern groups had done thirty years earlier. The middle-class participants tried to purge and re-make Carnival in their own image (Brereton 1979:175), yet it is clear that Carnival itself became the site of struggle and contest for the festival by the

participating groups. Two struggles, then, must be distinguished: one between the pro-Carnival and anti-Carnival forces within the Trinidadian society, and the other within the pro-Carnivalist faction for ownership of the festival. The second struggle dominates the twentieth century history of Carnival, as the participation of all "colours" in Carnival did not mean the suspension of distinctions in a common celebration. Legislation banning "warfare" and "obscenity" simply opened up the Carnival "space" for all to participate, but participation reflected the class/colour distinctions which pervaded Trinidadian society:

The social classes still kept apart. In the main, one group of revellers playing traditional masquerades would tramp through the streets chanting choruses to the tambour-bamboo¹ and bottle and spoon orchestras. These were the manual workers. Another group of revellers led by their chantwell, and dancing to calypso refrains accompanied by string-band music, were drawn from the coloured middle class. Yet a third group parading in carriages or on flat-bed decorated trucks and dressed as pirates, gypsies or harem damsels came from the high coloured and white merchant and propertied classes..... (Hill 1983:27).

Hill's broad description erases a significant point: that most coloured "respectable" women also participated on lorries and not on the streets (Powrie 1988[1956]:100).

Carnival has been represented as developing along two or three distinct planes in the first half of the twentieth century (Anthony 1989; Hill 1984; Johnson 1983; Stewart 1986). While this notion is a very useful heuristic tool, it is important to note that none of the three celebrations was uninfluenced by the others, and that hybridization was an important process in spite of the continued "differences" within the Carnival (cf. Anthony 1989:65). Significantly, the two major streams have been identified as the "white" Carnival with roots in the pre-Emancipation French masquerade, and the "black" Carnival

rooted in post-Emancipation practices. Both are distinguished from each other in terms of place, participants and style (Anthony 1989; Johnson 1983; Stewart 1986). The "black" Carnival was centered in down-town Port of Spain at a competition organized by the Argos, a newspaper which represented "black" and "coloured" middle-class interests. Its participants were largely the "black" labouring classes, including the *jamets*, who continued to enjoy their own style of celebration in masquerade performances which emphasized competition and aggression in speech and mock combat, if not in actuality. The "yards" continued to be their meeting-places for preparation and practice of Carnival performances. There, the spirit of the *jamet* Carnival was kept alive, surfacing in the *double-entendre* of "smutty" and "protest" calypsos and masquerades, in sporadic group and individual confrontations and in the organized band rivalries which re-emerged with the development of the steelbands after World War II (Brereton 1979:175). It was a masquerade of individuals and bands on foot with intense interaction between masqueraders and spectators. Often the performer-audience divide did not exist.

The site of the "white" carnival was Queen's Park, a two hundred and nineteen acre savannah, at the northern end of Port of Spain around which the costumed "elites" drove in their cars and on their decorated lorries on Carnival Monday and Tuesday. However, the celebration remained largely an indoor affair in the tradition of the pre-Emancipation masquerade balls, social club affairs and house parties. The Princes Building, and later the Grand Stand of the Savannah, became the site of elite Carnival events and contests. It was a Carnival of glitter, pageantry with heated "confetti battles"

between vehicle-borne masqueraders and spectators, the two groups spatially divided into participants "above" and observers "below" (cf. Anthony 1989).

There was, however, another Carnival that is difficult to conceptualize because it cannot be firmly fixed in either of the "sites" or "styles" of celebration mentioned above. The problems with the "black/white" historical analysis of Carnival are several. First, such analysis tends to essentialize and constitute "black" and "white" styles and behaviour within the terms set by the colonialist discourse. So "black" is homologized with aggression, defiance, rowdiness, ribald sexuality, and "white" with stiff-back decorum, politeness, orderly parades and controlled sexuality. Secondly, this model assumes seamless cultural sensitivities in which each group shares, and thirdly, it fails to move the hybridization process to the centre of the analysis.

Historically, the "coloureds" were the group whose very existence had introduced a third term into the neat black/white binary opposites. During the latter half of the nineteenth century, this liminal group was rapidly expanding to include not only those of "mixed race" parentage, but those of other "races" and "blacks" who were upwardly mobile through education and career opportunities (Brereton 1979:86-109). Distanced from the "black" world through education and aspiration, and excluded from the "white" because of skin-colour and social breeding, it was the "coloured" group that was historically positioned to "play mas" with the categories, producing neither a "white" nor a "black" Carnival, but one, like the "middle" class itself which was eclectic, mixed-up, contradictory, ambivalent, multiple, and grotesque.

Carnival was severely restricted during the First World War (Anthony 1989; Hill 1984). Its revival between 1919 and the start of World War II saw increasing participation by the middle classes. Although the Savannah and downtown Port of Spain continued to mark the opposite poles of the celebration, it seems that quite a lot of movement, actual and symbolic was taking place within and between the two geographical locations, significantly constructed as "upper" and "lower" Port of Spain. Anthony observes that a "mingling" had begun in the 1920's with two "coloured" judges from the downtown Carnival presiding at the Savannah, and masqueraders on foot and on vehicles taking part in both competitions (Anthony 1989: 65, 75). String bands were increasingly used to accompany calypsonians in the "tents" and chantwells on the streets, and these Carnival singers were no longer exclusively drawn from the *patois*-speaking subaltern groups (Elder 1966:112; Rohlehr 1990:57).

Between the World Wars, Carnival evolved into a sequence of "acts" (Hill 1972:85) each spatially and temporally dominated by different groups and styles of celebration. The "ritual" opening of Carnival was a "downtown" affair, characterized by inversions, rowdiness, ribald sexuality, and mockery (Hill 1972:87). Masqueraders were borne along by a chorus of voices and a rhythm beaten out on bottles-and-spoon, bamboo, and pieces of iron (cf. Anthony 1989). It was Bakhtin's Carnavalesque moment, *par excellence*, when all of society's "absolutes" were rendered powerless through ridicule and laughter. All social groups participated in this early morning affair, albeit under cover of the masquerade and among their own kind (Powrie 1988(1956):99), so it cannot be

reduced to the *jamet*-controlled time and space of Carnival. *Jamets* undoubtedly participated, but so, too, did other social groups. Bakhtin's (1968) theoretical framework locates the "culture of laughter" in subordinate groups over and against the "seriousness" of elite groups. This assumes a Self-Other distinction based on two oppositional classes. But there are other markers of Otherness located in gender, colour, ethnicity, locality and age. Within Carnival, the parodying of gender, age, ethnic and foreign "Others" often cut across the elite/*jamet* divide, and allowed all groups to take part, "playing mas'" with their own self-identities through inversions, and with Others through parody and ridicule.

*Jouvay*² masqueraders dominated the streets until mid-morning on Carnival Monday. The second "act" followed and could loosely be divided into three scenes which spanned Carnival Monday, with characters from each scene flowing into the other. The *jouvay* bands were replaced by individuals or small groups of masqueraders - bats, clowns, Robbers, minstrels, Wild Indians, *Pierrot Granades*³ - who roamed the streets "performing" for spectators, or searching for similar masqueraders to engage in mock combat (Hill 1972:87). Most of these participants were drawn from the subaltern communities of Port of Spain, with some masquerade performative styles reflective of West African practices (Warner-Lewis 1991;180-184).

The scene changed in the early afternoon with the appearance of "military" masquerade bands (Hill 1972:93), which later shared the streets with the colourful bands in satins and silks. The participants in the former again came mainly from the subaltern classes, while the colourful historical and fantasy bands were comprised of members from

various classes, albeit separated from each other in space and style. Decorated lorries and cars bearing the "respectable" classes, and especially the "respectable" women, were largely concentrated around Queen's Park and its environs, while the "darker" bands-on-foot dominated the downtown celebration (Anthony 1989; Hill 1972; 1984:27-28). From dusk to midnight, the final scene of the Monday "act" was played out as the elite and middle-class masqueraders retired to their homes or private club "jump-up"⁴, and the streets were left once again to the subalterns who followed musicians in a "jump up" around Port of Spain (Stewart 1986:304).

The Carnival Tuesday "act" began at mid-morning with the appearance of the individual and small band masqueraders. These were joined at noon by the larger colourful bands which again appeared before the Carnival judges and spectators lined along the circuit of the Savannah and the streets of Port of Spain (Anthony 1989; Hill 1972:95). It is important to note that the afternoon-to-dusk "acts" of Monday and Tuesday were parades which effectively separated "respectable" classes and subalterns into lorry-borne participants and street spectators. The boundaries between street masqueraders and spectators were often transgressed on the ground (cf. Powrie 1988[1956]:99). The self-enclosed world of the lorry "above" the masses made similar transgressions impossible.

The final "act" of Carnival, "*las' lap*" (literally, last lap) began after dusk on Tuesday and ended at midnight. Non-masqueraders and masqueraders in wholly or half-abandoned costumes would follow music bands along the city streets. Lorries would be abandoned, and under cover of darkness, the social classes would participate in the final

"jump up" of the season. Stewart notes, however, that "such fraternizing was a highly personalized matter; it seldom included expatriate whites and other elites but was mainly an affair of the blacks and mulattos from among the working and middle classes" (1986:304).

The "daylight acts" of Carnival expressed the hierarchized nature of Trinidadian society, the ideals on which it was constructed and functioned. The "white above" and "black below" metaphors were played out in the spatial arrangements and celebratory styles of this Carnival. The "coloureds", who were "mixed" by virtue of miscenegation, education, socialization and aspiration were ambiguously suspended between the two. Their participation on lorries expressed their "white" aspirations and need to be separate from the "black" underclasses. But their exclusion from the elite "white" world and their own creole sensibilities made the street celebrations equally attractive for the "coloureds". Members of the middle-class were, therefore, also found on the streets as musicians, organizers, participants, patrons and judges, mediating between the "jamaet" and "respectable" expressions of Carnival (Stewart 1986:303).

The dawn and dusk "acts", on the other hand, expressed the egalitarian Other of Trinidad's hierarchical Self, the "fusions" (both actual and idealized) that had been occurring in Trinidadian society. But these "acts" were only Other from the point of view of the dominant colonial discourse and the social scientific frameworks generated from that perspective. Assuming hierarchy and order to be the "ordinary" order of things, these "acts" at dawn and dusk are described in hydraulic and therapeutic metaphors (cf.

Brereton 1979:174; Johnson 1983:178-179; Powrie 1988[1956]:95; Wood 1968:8-9), as cyclical and symbolic "explosions" which temporarily released the pressures inherent in the "given" system. In contrast, I argue that they can be more properly understood as the performance of a "private" subjugated S(s)elf made public under cover of emerging or fading light, masquerade, and crowds. Further, the performances did not simply invert the hierarchies, but subverted the notion of hierarchy itself through the processes of relativization and hybridization. The *jouway* dawn exposed the "secrets" that lay behind the veneer of public respectability through portrayals of political and sexual scandals, quack professionals, peep shows, devils and a host of other "night" creatures (cf. Anthony 1989). The "obscene" portrayals of underwear (especially men in women's underwear), stained baby's diapers, bed clothes, and chamber pots further made "public" what was intimate and private, and exposed the common humanity behind the "armour of respectability" (cf. C.L.R. James 1963). This was the "exposure" of the "real" Self, the "bacchanal" and socio-sexual transgressions concealed beneath the mask of everyday order and respectability. And it was a Self simultaneously and ambiguously celebrated, abhorred and denied by the society at large. These "acts" were expressive of an anti-hierarchical, anti-colonial dynamic which sought to level all distinctions: first, in the permissive "mixing" of the social categories, and second, through the exposure of respectable pretensions and the mockery of "respectability" itself on which hierarchy was constructed.

Carnival celebrations were again suspended during World War II (Anthony 1989:167). In 1941, the year before the suspension of Carnival, the Port of Spain Gazette

of Carnival Tuesday (February 25, 1941:2) carried an interesting report on the *jouway* celebrations of the previous day:

The music in the majority of cases was furnished by the biscuit drum and dustbin orchestras, the performances on which instruments.....exhibited a degree of skill and brought forth the rhythm which particularly suited the maskers.... (Cited in Goddard 1991: 37).

When the War ended, these "biscuit drum and dustbin orchestras" had developed into "steel bands" and soon replaced the "bottle and spoon" and "tamboo bamboo" music-makers as the preferred music of the "black" urban revellers. Like the *Canboulay* bands of the previous century, these music-bands were organized territorially, and were comprised mainly of "black" unemployed males of the subaltern classes (Rohlehr 1990:369). The spirit that had produced the *jamet* Carnival had not been broken in the Port of Spain barrack-yards, and once again it manifested itself through the steel-band movement (Brereton 1979:175). The bands became the mechanism for the expression of creativity, territorial bonding and aggression, and often brought their members into direct confrontation with each other and the police on Carnival days. The names given to the bands, such as Casablanca, Invaders, Destination Tokyo, the Fighting Free French or Red Army, show the influence of war films on the imagination of the urban black male (cf. Stewart 1986: 304-305). More significantly, these names demonstrate how war stories were appropriated and transformed into local themes and practices of heroism, reputation, aggression and resistance. The *nègre jardins* of former times fought with sticks. The post-war steelbandmen fought with cutlasses, knives, bottles, and razors.

The post-war Carnival was never completely dominated by subaltern elements,

however. Steelband "clashes" did occur, often resulting in serious injury, but police surveillance, the force of law and the increased visible presence of the "respectable" middle-classes in the Carnival ensured the suppression of the *jamet* ethos (cf. Anthony 1989; Powrie 1988[1956]), and the triumph of the "coloured-nationalist" ideal of hybridization. The law against the wearing of masks was strictly enforced during the Carnivals of 1940 and 1941 (Anthony 1989:168). When the war ended, "middle-class" masks seemed no longer popular or necessary (Anthony 1989:169). This "unmasking" was accompanied by the movement from lorries to the streets (Hill 1984:31; Powrie 1988 [1956]:102). Hybridization, then, occurred within the "space" occupied by the "lower" orders. The Carnival celebrated the "coloureds'" ideal of "mixing", but now within the appropriated space of "blackness".

Both the "unmasking" and "descent" of the middle classes to the streets can only be fully understood in the context of their increasing self-confidence as a class, and their continued exclusion from the corridors of power and status controlled by "white" elites. Since the nineteenth century, members of this "middle" group had formed alliances with either end of the "black"- "white" colour spectrum, depending on the issues and interests involved (Brereton 1979:103-109; Campbell 1992:321). Many of these activists were educated abroad where they had proved themselves intellectually equal to Europeans (cf. Brereton 1979:86-102). In the post World War II period, they had increased the pressure for internal self-government which was articulated as a discourse of nationalism (cf. Brereton 1981:177-198).

Anderson's study, Imagined Communities (1983), is a useful framework for understanding "nationalism" as a generic concept. Noting that modern nationhood is always particular in its concrete manifestations, Anderson suggests that there are a few overarching characteristics which both constitute and express its "universality". In the first place, nations are imagined "because the members of even the smallest nation will never know most of their fellow-members, meet them, or even hear of them, yet in the minds of each lives the image of their communion" (1983:15). Nations also portray themselves as limited "because even the largest of (nations)...has finite, if elastic boundaries, beyond which lie other nations" (1983:16). Finally, nations are imagined as communities "because, regardless of the actual inequality and exploitation that may prevail in each, the nation is conceived as a deep, horizontal comradeship" (1983:16).

In post-war Trinidad, these characteristics were "blue-prints" more than actualities.

Trinidad-born, V.S. Naipaul, described pre-Independence Trinidad thus:

"Everyone was an individual, fighting for his place in the community. Yet there was no community. We were of various races, religions, sets and cliques; and we had somehow found ourselves on the same small island. Nothing bound us together except this common residence. There was no nationalist feeling; there could be none. There was no profound anti-imperialist feeling; indeed, it was only our Britishness, our belonging to the British Empire, which gave us any identity" (1962:43).

Of "Indian" ancestry, Naipaul represents a pluralistic society glued together by the islanders' identification with the British Empire. Assumed in his representation are the "factual" categories of "racial" and cultural difference juxtaposed against the non-existent nationalist ideal of being "bound together" by either "nationalist feeling" or "profound anti-imperialist feeling". Both assumptions underpinned the nascent, but diffuse

"nationalist" movement which, gathering momentum after the second World War, finally became focussed in the People's National Movement (PNM) led by the "coloured" Dr. Eric Williams. Williams, managed to forge a "black/coloured" alliance which won the General elections of 1956 (cf. Brereton 1981:233-249; Stewart 1986: 295-296) Even though Williams' party included some high profile " east Indians" and a few "whites", the PNM was popularly perceived as a "black/coloured" party over and against the external British "Other", and the internal "white" and "east Indian" Others. For the "nationalist" Williams and his Party, self-government required both the imaging of "the nation" as distinct from the British "nation", and the creation of "a deep, horizontal comradeship" within the "nation" itself.

The first requirement demanded that "borders", actual and conceptual, be constructed that distinguished between the "national" Self and the "foreign" Other. However, a great deal of ambiguity existed about where the territorial "boundaries" of the Self ended and the Other began. The negotiations to transfer political power from the British colonial State to West Indian leaders were premised on the idea of a "West Indian nation" comprised of a Federation of ten British colonies (Lewis 1968; Lowenthal 1961). The "boundaries", therefore, originally imaged Trinidadians as "West Indians" belonging to a "nation" that spanned the Caribbean basin. Williams himself used the term "nation" ambiguously to refer both to the "West Indies" and to "Trinidad and Tobago". At a pro-Independence public rally in 1960, Williams declared:

"From today, 22 April 1960, 11am we are a different people.....We are here today as West Indians - the new nation born out of the amalgam of disparate cultures and different racial

stocks. Our demonstration today demonstrates national unity. Let us go forward in national unity, the country of all and for all....Let us march united, resolved to recognize the equality of all West Indians, moral, religious, political and legal, resolved to expunge from the West Indian vocabulary the nomenclature of colonialism - niggers and coolies, chinks and limeys..... Long live self governing Trinidad and Tobago! Long live the Independent West Indies! (22.4.1960 in Williams 1981:315).

A year later, the "nation" of federated territories came apart with the secession of Jamaica, followed by Trinidad in late 1961. With Jamaica's withdrawal, Williams reportedly declared: "One from ten leaves nought"⁵. His decision to leave the Federation was prompted by the fear that Trinidad alone would have to carry the economically "less developed" smaller islands (cf. Williams 1981: 297-300). On August 31, 1962, the "boundaries" were officially drawn around the islands Trinidad and Tobago, effectively creating a "national" Self out of the one "colony" which was itself constructed by the British in 1889. The "nation" was thus "imagined" as a twin-island state beyond whose borders, in the Caribbean itself, the foreign Other was constituted.

The "blue-print" of nation-building also required both the imaging and creation of "a deep, horizontal comradeship" among the population. This was particularly troublesome for the nationalist Government given the historically constituted hierarchial distinctions of colour, race, ethnicity and class on which Trinidad's colonial society was built. The People's National Movement rose to power, and retained it, largely because its predominantly middle-class leadership assumed the existence of different human kinds in its appeal to the "black" vote (cf. Williams 1981:210-216). These social distinctions were clearly manifested during the 1956 elections when the population fissioned into three groups, each backing a political party perceived to be directly linked to their racial,

cultural and social interests. The dominant "white" European - "coloured" Creole - "black" African configuration of the nineteenth century had now been transformed into a broad coloured/black alliance, an "East Indian" faction based on ancestral continuities with India, and an elite alliance which included "whites" and upper-class "coloureds" and Asiatics (Stewart 1986:295). While the PNM leadership clearly appropriated these race/colour distinctions in order to gain political power in the post-colonial era, the new leaders nevertheless realized that "national" construction demanded an erasure, rather than an accentuation of difference. Therefore, side by side with the discourse of a power struggle between "different" race/colour identities was the discourse based on the nationalist ideal of a "horizontal comradeship" (cf. Williams 1962:280).

The nationalist movement, then, clearly required a cultural vehicle that would serve as both image and catalyst in constructing the undifferentiated "national" Self. A new tradition did not have to be "invented". Carnival had existed in popular consciousness, at least since the end of the nineteenth century, as "the national *fête*". Historically, the pre-Lenten celebration had always been symbolically loaded with meanings of both identity and resistance for different groups. It had been constituted as "local" in the successive attempts by the "anglicizing" foreign intruder to suppress it. Carnival was also defined as "local" against the West Indian Others who, as members of the police force, were often employed by the British to control the celebrations (cf. Brereton 1979:127-128). Further, in the twentieth century, it had developed into a festival of mass participation attracting all sectors of Trinidadian society. Expressive of the Creole

"mix-up", Carnival was constituted as the site where "all ah we is one" (all of us are one people). Carnival, therefore, was ideally suited as a vehicle for the nationalist project: firstly, it had been instrumental in defining and constituting "boundaries", albeit cultural ones, between "foreign" and "local". Second, its yearly performance presented the social-Self as "a deep, horizontal comradeship". Finally, Carnival did not simply make it possible to "imagine the nation", it brought "the nation" together, as participants and spectators, in an actual performance of solidarity and identity.

The People's National Movement assumed political control of Trinidad and Tobago in 1956 (Brereton 1956:236). Within a year of coming to power, the PNM government declared its intention to organize Carnival "along national lines" (Trinidad Guardian January 21, 1957). Since 1946, the Port of Spain Carnival was controlled initially by the Carnival Improvement Committee, and then the Carnival Celebrations Committee, groups made of largely of business people and influential citizens (cf. Anthony 1989:186; Rohlehr 1990:403-448). The new government's appointment of the Carnival Development Committee (CDC) effectively neutralized the power of these "private" controlling groups, and Carnival was placed under the immediate control of the Ministry of Finance and the Ministry of Education and Culture (personal communication, ex-CDC official. Port of Spain. December 11, 1991). With this move, Carnival became official "national culture", recognized and organized by the state.

It is important to note that the "take-over" of Carnival by the nationalist government was desired and applauded by huge sections of the population at the time.

Dissatisfaction with the organization of Carnival had been prevalent, especially among calypsonians and masquerade band-leaders who were particularly disgruntled by the small monetary rewards offered as prizes (cf. Rohlehr 1990:448-456). With a "sympathetic" government in power, both calypsonians and masquerade band-leaders threatened to boycott the organized competitions, effectively paving the way for government intervention and eventual control. The pre-Lenten celebration was represented as the configuration of three expressive forms, calypso, steelband, and masquerade, even though other kinds of expressions, for instance, brass and string orchestras, did exist. Calypso and steelband had been developed within Carnival by Trinidadians themselves, and so were ideally suited for co-option as cultural property expressive of a "unique and distinct" national community (cf. Clifford 1985; Handler 1988; Trevor-Roper 1983).

A source of great contention and controversy in the nineteen fifties was the Carnival Queen Competition which was started in 1946 at the Mucurapo Stadium (Anthony 1989:170; Rohlehr 1990:408). Held on Carnival Sunday night at the Queen's Park Savannah, the show was in effect a "beauty competition" with contestants parading in costumes and evening gowns. It was part of the bigger *Dimanche Gras* (Great Sunday) show at which the Calypso King was also crowned. In 1955, the Calypso King had received \$50.00 in prize money, while the Carnival Queen that year won a cash prize of \$7,500.00 and other quite substantial prizes (Anthony 1989:259).

Far more than money was at issue here, however. The Carnival Queen Show was perceived as the last bastion of the exclusive "white" Carnival, and in fact, since the

competition had started, only "white" and "high-coloured" girls had been chosen as winners (Anthony 1989:260; Hill 1984:32). Responsive to the mood of its "black-coloured" constituents, the Government-controlled Carnival Development Committee moved quickly to dissociate itself from the competition. In 1958, the choosing of a Carnival Queen was eliminated from the *Dimanche Gras* Show altogether (Anthony 1989:267). However, it was revived, at another location, by the predominantly "white" Junior Chamber of Commerce in 1959 as a parallel show to the Government sponsored *Dimanche Gras* (Anthony 1989:274). A few years later, this new Jaycees competition was back at the Savannah, but this time shifted to the Carnival Saturday night (Anthony 1989:300). The Carnival Queen continued to be "fair-skinned" and to be the recipient of far more generous prizes than her Carnival counterparts (largely "black") who took part in the Government-sponsored calypso and steelband competitions. By 1966, however, graffiti was scrawled on walls throughout Port of Spain calling for a Queen to reflect the new order of things: "We want a black J.C. Queen" (Anthony 1989:318). The civil unrest popularly described as the Black Power Revolution⁶ erupted in 1970. One year later, a "black" Carnival Queen was chosen for the first time in the competition's history. It was also the last year that the competition was held (Anthony 1989:512). By this time, the Carnival was almost completely under the management of the government-controlled Carnival Development Committee (CDC).

Carnival, therefore, provided the new People's National Movement Government with a medium through which it could accomplish several of its nationalist goals. First

of all, Carnival served as the vehicle around which a patriotic movement could be built. In its quest for local alternatives to colonial culture, the government was able to elaborate on the symbolic significance of calypso and the steelband, two art forms which were produced in the Carnival, itself a symbol of Trinidad's cultural struggle against the anglicizing interlopers. Second, by "taking over" the celebration, the government established the cultural hegemony of the ruling "black/coloured" middle-classes within the social fabric and their right to define the "colour" and behaviour of the authentic "Trinidadian" Self. Finally, Carnival was viewed as an important source of foreign revenue for the newly Independent "nation". The link between Carnival and Tourism had already been made in the colonial period with the establishment of the Tourist and Exhibitions Board in 1939, but this link was appropriated and cemented by the newly elected "nationalist" government. The festival was therefore conceptualized as both "commodity" and "industry" in the government's bid to "sell" Trinidad both on local and foreign markets (Stewart 1986:305; personal communication, ex-CDC official, Port of Spain, December 11, 1991). The Carnival became envisioned more and more as a show, dubbed in both official and popular discourse as "The Greatest Show on Earth" (cf. Trinidad Express Carnival Magazine 1992). One of the first decisions made by the newly elected nationalist government for the 1957 Carnival was the providing of 25,000 seats in temporary stands at the Savannah for "patrons wishing to see the bands pass" (Trinidad Guardian February 23, 1957).

Since the inception of the Carnival Development Committee, the "national *fête*"

has developed into a succession of competitive, staged performances for children and adults spread over several weeks before the beginning of the Lenten season. There are island-wide competitions for masquerades, calypso singing and steel bands which take place in stages. Preliminary competitions begin early in the Carnival season, and by a process of elimination only the winners advance to the semi-final and final stages. Some of the preliminary and semi-final competitions take place at venues outside of Port of Spain. Most of the staged competitions, however, are held at the Queen's Park Savannah in Port of Spain, with the finals judged during the Carnival weekend before huge "live" and television audiences.

The steelband competition culminates at the *Panorama* finals at the Savannah on Carnival Saturday night. In 1992, twelve bands appeared in the Finals, and after a late nine o'clock start, the competition ended at three-thirty on Sunday morning. At the *Dimanche Gras* show on Sunday night, the "Calypso Monarch" and the "Kings" and "Queens" of masquerade bands are chosen from eight finalists in each category. At the 1992 National Calypso Monarch Finals, the winner, the Mighty Sparrow, received a \$75,000 (TT) Mitsubishi Lancer car, a trophy and \$15,000.00 (TT) in cash (Trinidad Guardian February 27, 1992:3), certainly a substantial increase over the \$50.00 won by the Mighty Spoiler in 1955. The children's masquerade band competitions are held on Carnival Saturday. Bands are organized by schools, institutions and individuals, and the children dance along a prescribed route to the Savannah where the bands are judged. The adult band competitions take place during the street celebrations on Carnival Monday and

Tuesday. Winners are given cash payments, and all entrants to the "final" shows are paid appearance fees. The "staging" of Carnival, therefore, now requires an enormous amount of money not only to defray the costs of prize and appearance fees, but also to pay for Carnival site preparation, utilities, services, and the transportation of competitors to the shows. The Government has had to seek corporate sponsorship for several competitions, but has itself had to make substantial contributions to the annual festival. In a statement to the media before the 1992 Carnival, the chairperson of the organizing committee revealed that the Carnival of 1992 would cost \$8 million⁷ to organize, with receipts from shows expected to net \$1 million and the central government able to give only \$5 million in subventions. A shortfall of \$2 million was, therefore, anticipated (Trinidad Guardian February 22, 1992:7).

During an interview at his office, an "official", who had been with the Carnival Development Committee since its inception in 1957, cited several "achievements" of the government-controlled organization over the years. Among these were, (1) the "stabilizing" and organization of the Carnival, (2) the facilitation of Carnival's "main players", for instance, facilitating foreign contracts for steelband players, calypsonians, masquerade band leaders, (3) the "better standard" of Carnival due to the presence of the "stage" which serves as a "showcase" where bandleaders can "show the world what they can do", (4) the provision of security through police collaboration so people could "feel relaxed and play mas' because they feel it is relatively safe", (5) the development of the Junior Carnival where the "youngsters are being trained to take the place of their seniors",

and (6) the preservation through competitions of "traditional" carnival characters who "were running the risk of becoming extinct". The "official" felt that the biggest accomplishment of the Carnival Development Committee was organizing and putting on "the shows", but its failure was the inability to treat the "national festival" as a business venture. The turning of Carnival into a "viable" industry is the primary mandate given to the present organizing Committee by the government.

Significantly, this change in focus came with the change in political administration in 1986. For the first time since it had assumed leadership in 1956, the People's National Movement (PNM) was voted out of office. It was replaced by the National Alliance for Reconstruction (NAR) which not only appointed a new body to organize Carnival, but also changed its name to reflect a new emphasis. The National Carnival Commission (NCC) was mandated to organize the shows, but more importantly, to make them self-supporting without large government subsidies. By an Act of Parliament passed on August 5, 1991, the National Carnival Commission of Trinidad and Tobago became a Statutory Board, distinct from the Ministry of Culture, and is now required to make Carnival "a viable national, cultural and commercial enterprise" (Trinidad Guardian February 22, 1992:7). This new economic agenda informs the policies of the new PNM government which was returned to power in December 1991, and seems to have further tightened the political control of the festival by government "officials".

The late twentieth century Carnival is far from the controlled event the CDC/NCC would like it to be, however. There is no doubt that the near domination of the "national

fête by "staged" performances has introduced constraints and some measure of uniformity into the celebrations. Competitors are required "to adhere to and comply with all the rules as laid down by the National Carnival Commission" (cf. 1991 application form for competition) if they wish to take part in the competition and could be disqualified for any number of reasons, including "lewd, vulgar or obscene behaviour". Yet, year after year, the "rules" are constantly broken as participants resist "official" control and perform alternative ways of being and behaving. The Parade of Bands is often a free-for-all with costumed and non-costumed revellers vying for "dancing room" behind the music trucks on the streets, with some bands not taking part in the competitions at all. Behaviour that the middle-class defines as "vulgar" continues to go unprosecuted as there is a general fuzziness about what constitutes "vulgarity" at Carnival time, and especially among the middle-class themselves. No Carnival competition is without controversy as entrants and their supporters squabble about the decisions of the CDC/NCC appointed judges or the inadequate amounts of prize money. "The judges tief (have cheated) - we want to see the score sheet" is an almost yearly complaint, and it was no different in 1992 when the judges declared "Exodus", the National *Panorama* Champions, and the Mighty Sparrow, the Calypso Monarch. Audiences had favoured "Renegades" in the Steelband competition, and "Sugar Aloes" for the Calypso Monarch. The defeat of these performers in the National Finals generated accusations of patronage and an intense debate in the local newspapers for weeks after Carnival (cf. Trinidad Guardian March 3,1992:4; March 18,1992:8; Express February 23, 1992:14; March 6, 1992:1; March 7,1992:8).

The resistance to (and negotiation of) judgement made by government-appointed NCC "officials" was clearly demonstrated in an incident which occurred during one of my field-work visits to the NCC office in Port of Spain. I had been received very graciously by the secretariat and temporarily assigned a front desk in the office to peruse the "official" records of Carnivals, past and present. On the day in question, an elderly man and his wife came in for the results of his Carnival performance. He had portrayed a Midnight Robber⁸, a traditional individual masquerade which involves the performance of long-winded speeches of threat and doom. He had been "playing Robber" since he was seventeen, and was now in his seventies. John was livid when he saw that his name was not on the list of winners. He quoted lines about justice from the Bible in Robber-style and threatened to put all our names in the media. As he spoke, the two top "officials" of the National Carnival Commission walked into the office. The beleaguered receptionist quietly mentioned that the "big shots" had arrived and that he should lower his voice. For John, the identification of the "big shots" was the signal to advance, not retreat. He shouted after the commissioner, badgering his way into his office. After thirty minutes, John emerged looking satisfied and claimed that "he (the commissioner) gave me kind words and promised to look into the matter". John threatened to be back the following Tuesday for the "mistake" to be rectified, "and if nutting (nothing) is done I am going to make trouble and put everyone name in the newspaper". John then looked at me quizzically, "You new here, right? You a judge?". Unequivocally, I asserted my "visitor" status fearing that I would now become the focus of his wrath. The rest of the office staff

simply ignored his presence and refused to make eye contact with him. Sensing a sympathetic "audience" in me, he again proceeded to complain to me about "dem judges who know nutting about Carnival". He, then, informed me that he had composed the "greatest Robbers speeches" in Carnival and had prepared a special performance this year for the *Viey la Cou*⁹ competition which was well received by the President who was in attendance - "the President and all dem white people like it". This seemed to "impress" no one but me, his wife, and a visitor who had come in on business, so he proceeded to perform his ten minute Robber routine right there in the office. It was a delightful performance, made even funnier, by the incongruity of an uncostumed Robber performing in a city office to an audience who "pretended" he was not there. His "speech" ended, John and his wife departed, again quoting the Bible and threatening "exposure in the papers". To my knowledge, the list of winners was never revised, and John did not receive a prize. But I am certain he is one, among many, who will continue to haunt the offices of the National Carnival Commission office every year with the complaint, "Dem judges know nutting about we Carnival".

However, by far the biggest public controversy over "control" of the 1992 Carnival erupted when the National Carnival Commission, in its attempt to balance its budget, decided to "sell" exclusive rights to the Trinidad Broadcasting Company for print, radio, video and television (local and foreign) coverage of all shows operated under the aegis of the NCC during Carnivals 1992 and 1993. The price tag for these rights was \$2 million TT dollars. In turn, the Trinidad and Tobago Broadcasting Company demanded

accreditation fees from all other media houses wishing to cover the NCC shows. The "selling" of media rights and the charging of "accreditation fees" for coverage of the "national *fête*" became the "battleground" between Government and "the people" about who "owns" the festival. The Media Association of Trinidad and Tobago (MATT) saw it as "an impediment to the Press in exercising its freedom to report on contemporaneous events" (Sunday Guardian February 16, 1992:3), while the Carnival bandleaders and calypsonians argued that since it was they who "made" Carnival, they deserved some of the money from the deal. An irate masquerader, writing in the "letters to the Editor section" of Sunday Express February 16, 1992:8, articulated the views I heard expressed by many people on the TBC-NCC deal:

"Let me express my views on the current fiasco involving the TBC's owning the broadcast rights for Carnival....As a Trinidadian and a mas' player I hereby grant permission to any local photographer to take my photo. When I paid for my costumes the TBC or its parent company McAl had no input in meeting my expenses and so have no right to debar anyone from taking photos. The props and costumes simply do not belong to them! They are the property of the band leaders and the players. Carnival is the people's theatre of the streets and should never be coveted by a narrow interest group whose interest is simply making all the money for themselves. I call on all rightful thinking persons to walk with their cameras for Carnival and to resist strongly any attempt to steal your rights to a festival that is as much yours as any one else".

As the celebration of government-controlled Carnival moves into the twenty-first century, many Trinidadians worry about it being transformed into a grand spectator event "for sale" on the tourist market. The government's determination to turn Carnival into a "business venture" has clearly alarmed many who seem just as determined to retain "ownership" of the "people's festival". The traditions of "resistance" and "negotiation" continue, but so, too, does the will and determination of officialdom to control and shape

the festival for its own ends, whether these be political or economic. The extent to which the mandate given to the new Statutory Board will be a catalyst for change in the Carnival remains to be seen. The prevalent "mood" in 1992 suggests another "struggle" for Carnival is in the making, this time between those who would make it into a "corporate" business venture based on principles of profitability and marketing and those who conceive of it as "a communal activity that needs to be freed up from bureaucratic interference and commercial exploitation" (Caribbean Contact 1984. Vol 11, No. 11. April).

PART II

Prologue

It is time now to turn to the modern "drama" of Carnival, and more specifically, to Carnival 1992. In Part I of this dissertation I have relied on oral and written constructions of the past to explore how and why Carnival is conceptually linked to Trinidadian identity. Historical narratives tend to paint pictures in broad strokes and generalities. The French Masquerade - its costumes, ethos, and style of celebration - continues in the collective memory, captured through the eyes of those who saw and objectified it through their words. So, too, the *jamet* Carnival is part of our present, contained in archives, history texts and the imaginations of dramatists and revivalists. But more than "events" that-happened-back-there, past Carnivals are "events" that have been shaped and reshaped in the telling by subsequent generations of Trinidadians (cf. Handler and Linnekin 1984). In the process of "capturing" these events, multiplicity, complexity and anomaly are reduced in size and scope to fit our scripts and picture-frames. All too frequently the "others" of a particular period are cast in deep shadow.

In my reading of the historical narratives, I sought in vain for the "untidy" situations, the "voices" of the individuals behind the mask, the details that suggest the presence of acting and re-acting human beings, the smells and sounds and feel of Carnival. These were largely erased by social commentators of the day (and historians in

later days) bent on either beating the festival into a particular shape, or in shaping Carnival's story into a script responsive to contemporary agendas and priorities (cf. Linnekin 1992:251). I, too, am about to contribute my own strokes to that shaping as I try to construct the connections between Trinidad's Carnival, its culture and its national Self. But even as I try to capture the festival through the lens of national identity, I seek to release it from the constraints of an identity and nationalist discourse which would bend it into a bounded, marketable expression of a homogeneous, distinctive Self. Carnival may be "captured" in texts, photos, videos, taped recordings, museums, and archives by all kinds of groups for diverse purposes, but it is never really contained or tamed. Carnival is more properly understood as a "verb", not a "noun", an interactive multiplicity rather than an entity. It is this dynamic aspect which makes Carnival an apt representation of Trinidad's "national" Self.

This is the Carnival I try to evoke in Part II of my text. I have written with an eye for the researcher into Carnival in the year 2194. I hope this text will provide not only "facts", trends, and examples of blinkered and dated thinking, but glimpses into the "babel" that was the Port of Spain Carnival of 1992.



CHAPTER SIX

Jouvay : The "Private" Self Exposed

Through the Eyes of a Devil

The morning was cool as I emerged from the darkened house and walked along the Western Main Road for a pre-arranged meeting with friends. Excitement hung in the air and clung to me like electrostatic. The *Moko Jumbie* had come¹. It was *jouvay* morning in Trinidad, and I was on my way to join a devil masquerade band. Popularly explained as a derivative of the French *jour ouvert* (daybreak), the *patois*, *j'ouvert* (pronounced *jouvay*) is the ritual beginning of the two day Carnival of the streets. Hill (1972:86) traces the origins of this term to the folktale of a *soucouyant*, the witch who sheds her skin at midnight before flying off to attack her victim, knowing she must take on her human form before daybreak. Someone sprinkles salt on her skin and so she is unable to recover it. As day approaches, she is exposed and left crying, "*jouvay, jou paka ouvay?*" (daybreak or no daybreak?). Hill (1972:86) cites a report by Hearn (1890:210) of a late nineteenth century *diabliesse* (female devil) masquerade in Martinique where the tallest of the devils walks in front of a group of *diablesses* chanting: "*jou ouve?*" (Is it daybreak yet?) To which they reply: "*Jou pa'nco ouve*".

I looked at my watch - 1 am. At a street corner, a music band was assembling and testing its equipment on a huge flatbed lorry, its name Kalyan proudly displayed on a banner draped over the railings of the trailer. Calypso-*soca* music, generated from amplified drums, electric guitars, saxophones, syntheziers, filled the early morning air, waxing and waning in volume as the wind shifted over the vibrating city. The music seemed to come from everywhere - the hills in the North, residential Woodbrook to the South, un-sleeping St. James in the West and Port of Spain's inner city to the East. I felt situated in a "space" much larger than my eye or ear could contain or discipline.

The Main Road was bustling and noisy with people and traffic going in both directions. People walked both on the side-walks and roadway, some briskly and purposefully, others simply ambling along waiting to join a band on its way to downtown Port of Spain. Groups sat "liming"² on street corner curbs and walls, and a few individuals drifted from side to side, either sleep deprived or drunken casualties of the *Dimanche Gras* show³ or the many *fêtes*⁴ (parties) which are liberally scattered at various venues throughout the city. Most nursed beer in bottles, with the crowd more densely concentrated around temporarily constructed side-walk bars, each bar "broadcasting" music from huge speakers at high decibel levels.

Orange, corn, peanut and sweet drink vendors, lining along the Main Road, did a brisk trade. Play and trade, pleasure and work, festive space and market place: here was a commingling of categories usually kept analytically separate within our modern academic traditions (cf. Stallybrass and White 1986:27-30). More often than not, Carnival

has been represented as the site of *communitas*, a playful domain partitioned off from the rational and economic "real" world. The influential theoretician of Carnival, Bakhtin, himself conceptualized the fair and market as festive space outside of the "serious" world of trade and commerce. As a site of laughter, Carnival was represented as inverting and suspending the hierarchical world of officialdom. Assuming the economic/festive separation inherent in capitalist rationality, Bakhtin simplified the paradoxical enmeshments between the two spheres (1968:255). In Trinidad, this distinction is also assumed in the on-going criticisms of the yearly Carnival. Critics argue that Carnival's irresponsible "play" ethic spills over into the "serious" world of work and hinders productivity. On Carnival Sunday, a Sunday Guardian political columnist reminded his readers that "Ash Wednesday is a non-Carnival day and one on which the population is expected to be back to work, alert and productive. We cannot afford to forget the watchwords of our nation - Discipline, Production and Tolerance - nor can we lose sight of the truism that there is a time to be serious and a time to play "we mas" (March 1, 1992:7). Nonetheless, at the Roxy Roundabout, itself an intersection of roads from St. James, Woodbrook, St. Clair and downtown Port of Spain, I noted a Carnival space both festive and commercial, where work intersected with pleasure, and poorly dressed boys with sacks on their backs competed for the discarded and redeemable beer bottles of revellers.

Except for a tattered-looking clown and a group of a mud-covered bare-back men walking ahead of me, most revellers were non-costumed. Warned beforehand to wear the

oldest of clothes, I was self-consciously dressed in a tattered t-shirt and shorts, the discarded working-clothes of the mechanic next door. At a house a few blocks away, I joined the group who had invited me "to play mas'" with them. They were all Trinidadians, except for two visitors from Ireland. Most were friends, others I met for the first time. The smell of newly brewed coffee and paint was strong in the living room where a dozen of us would-be masqueraders had gathered. The first installment of our \$25.00 (TT) devil paraphernalia - freshly painted wire-tails, red paper-horns, wooden forks and whistles - were distributed. These were collected the previous day from the nearby mas' camp. The rest of our costuming had to be added at a nearby Square. Amid much hilarity, we affixed our appendages, literally entangling tails and locking horns in the process.

Woodbrook was pulsating with sounds and movement as we set off for Adam Smith Square. It was now 1.30 am. There were crowds of people in the dimly lit square; in the distance, it looked and sounded like a market-place. Bodies glistened brown, black and bronze under street lights, shadowy figures smelling of freshly applied paint and cocoa butter. We took our places in line to complete our initiation into the tribe of cocoa-devils. Buckets of dark, thick liquid stood semi-full on the grass before us for anointing, either by oneself or self-appointed "priests". I shuddered at the thought of the messy, cold morning bath. Others obviously had the same misgivings. A female-devil ahead of me requested a few streaks on her face and hands. Another daubed baby-oil on her skin before the ablutions. Some chose to be partially and selectively covered, but most went

for the total transformation which the "high priests" were only too happy to oblige. "Wey you want it?", my anointer asked me as I reached the top of the line. In a spontaneous burst of daring and courage I said, "All over!". "Da's de spirit, man" (that's the spirit, man), and he proceeded to cup the cocoa in his hands and pour it over me. I braced as I felt the cold liquid on my face; it ran down my back and covered my shirt and shorts. Another man smeared my hands, legs and feet and I could see my cream sneakers turn into brown polka dots. In two minutes, my transformation was complete.

I had now crossed the border into Otherness, dirty and unrecognizable, a devil among a thousand other similar creatures. My companions and I stared at each other in mutual amazement. Gutsy laughter seemed to come from everywhere. The words of Ken, the veteran Dragon masquerader, suddenly came alive for me, "Every Dragon man does smile behind he mas'" (Every dragon man smiles behind his mask). Viscerally, I understood this, as our band of a thousand devils set off "*chipping*"⁵ and blowing tiny whistles behind the DJ music-truck which appropriately played "*Jab Jab*" (Devil Devil), the calypso which was judged the popular Road March of 1992⁶. Ahead of us, two devils carried a huge banner affixed to two poles. On it was painted "Horns for So" (lots of horns), an obvious reference to the horn headpieces we all wore, but more subtly evoking the notion of "butting" or "being butt" by an unfaithful spouse or lover. Carnival is generally assumed to be a time of illicit sexual liaisons.

Carnival there is a spirit in the spell
 Bam Bam '92, yuh go meet it
 4 o'clock *j'ouvert* morning

Ready, sweaty and waiting
 The spirit is here, there and everywhere
Moko Jumbie, Jab Jab and clown
 Mama oh, stick fighting in town
 Oh yoh, yoh, yoh, Trinidad and Tobago
 Is party time, party time
 Peace and love, eh no crime
 Neighbour, neighbour, oh the cock start to crow

CHORUS

Ah feeling to wine on something/wine on something
 (Repeat)
 Carnival is bacchanal, oh yoh/wine on something
 Hurry in the bacchanal down so
 Ah feeling to wine on something/wine on something
 (Repeat)
 Ah want to wine, ah feel to wine, ah want to wine/
 wine on something (Repeat)
Jab jab jab jab/ jab jab jab jab
 Oh woa yeh eh ah oh oh

Carnival Monday, uncle Fred with a posey ⁷ on he head
 Drunk, drunk, disorderly like a sailor
 Girls in hot pants and mini
 Looking lovely and sexy
 We jamming until a.m. Ash Wednesday
 Roti and curry on every street
 Welcoming the treat, for I'm sure
 Is the greatest on planet earth
 Carnival, carnival, surround the world
 Spread the word
 You can't make a sentence without a verb (CHORUS)

Behind the devil mas' and mas(s) of devils was the smiling self, the "native", transported through the sensations of sight, pulsating sound, smell, and touch into a world, both familiar and pleasurable. The visceral memory of past Carnivals, plus my physical insertion into that mass of bodies dancing to pounding brass, evoked a sense of a collective Self, a "peoplehood" (Fox 1990:3) of which I felt a part. It was an experience of "re-membering", connecting me both to "the pleasure of memory that is physically

recalled" (Gotfrit 1991:176) and to a community, felt and not simply "imagined" (Anderson 1983). Sensual pleasures are not easily represented in the static, rationalistic language of academic discourse. Yet it is precisely through these intangibles, in the well-being and belonging evoked, that Carnival becomes such a compelling vehicle and metaphor in the construction of the Trinidadian Self.

Paradoxically, it was also an entry into Otherness for me. As "native", I had never entered the world of *jouvay* devils. Growing up in hybrid St. James, I had feared these fierce-looking creatures: bare-backed men smeared with molasses, grease or "blue" who emerged every Carnival with long nails, horns, forks, reddened tongues, and little wiry tails, beating oil tins and blowing whistles to the refrain, "Pay the devil, *jab jab*". The sound of the *jab molassie* (molasses devil) in the distance was enough to strike terror into the hearts of both young and old, and people fled indoors to escape their path. I never left home without a pocket full of pennies on Carnival day. Those pennies were my foil against sudden attack. A penny paid to the troupe would usually make them go away. Over the years, these devils grew fewer and less fierce. Transformed in behaviour and rarely seen patrolling the city in small troupes⁸, "tamed" devils are now found in hordes of hundreds on *jouvay* morning, "dirty" creatures who occasionally "attack" through hugs and rubs, leaving victims covered in a variety of substances - mud, cocoa, paint, grease. For this reason, I had also avoided the devil bands in adulthood, viewing them with some distaste. But on that cool morning, anonymous, playful and unconcerned with my physical appearance, I got some inkling of their attraction.

This, then, was a plunge into the Other of Carnival for me, a native discovering another dimension of (S)self in an experience of the unfamiliar. Further, this cocoa-devil was more than a smiling native; she was also a reflexive devil, an "other" if you will, desperately trying to "discipline" the experience within a discourse on identity which assumed the Self-Other oppositional categories. To what extent was this Trinidad's Other, an inversion of the norm, the interruption of the ordinary by temporary time and space? Or was this in fact a performance of Self, the expression "writ large" of Trinidadian identity, the native's perception of a Self that lives behind the mask of everydayness? As the dancing devils played mas' with Trinidadian reality, my mind began to make mas' with the anthropological categories. A self and a non-self, a self transcending self, multiple selves, I set off on a *jouvay* pilgrimage through the streets of Port of Spain.

Our band wandered slowly through a maze of lighted streets. The crowd continued to grow as we were joined by non-costumed and other masqueraders covered in mud or glistening with black grease. I also spotted the occasional man covered in green branches or dressed in female night wear. One cocoa-devil carried a huge chamber-pot which served as a drinking goblet. To the amusement or disgust of onlookers, he would occasionally pull a thick, long black sausage out of the pot and bite into it. My stomach turned every time he did it, but I stayed close by to see the reactions. Several times a group of teenage males would join the band, wading through the crowd or jumping in the air, aggressively appropriating their space in the band. This clearly annoyed people, some pushing back, others simply moving away. I did the latter. An inebriated young man

"cruised" around the band, targeting every female who was not overtly accompanied by a male partner. He was rebuffed on every occasion, often with great assertiveness, both verbal and physical. With each rebuff, he simply smiled and tried again. I followed him around for awhile, interested in the eventual outcome of his efforts. It ended none too happily for him as an elderly man took him by the throat, and with menacing threats poured a bottle of beer over his head. The man's elderly wife had been his latest target. Ordered out of the band, the young man smiled again and staggered away. Despite these obvious "imperfections" and annoyances for revellers, the pleasures of Carnival were many and undeniable.

As the band moved along, people came out on their porches or at their gates, some still in their night clothes, to see us pass by. A few stood on street corners or the sidewalks along the way. There were a few familiar faces, but I was beyond recognition. Initially, the band headed towards Independence Square in downtown Port of Spain, the centre of *jouvay* activities and competitions. The converging crowds and the specter of immobility for several hours prompted the band organizers to forgo the stage appearance and move towards the Savannah. The popular Queen's Park, a two hundred and nineteen acre savannah at the northern end of Port of Spain (cf. Ottley 1970:38), is the venue for the major Carnival activities, excluding *jouvay*. During the year, it is an open playground for football, cricket, rugby, hockey, jogging, and horse-racing, but at Carnival time it is converted into a "theatre" with the construction of a huge temporary stage raised above the race-track and running parallel to the permanent grandstand. A temporary stand, the

North Stand, is built facing the main stands, with bleachers and concession booths lining the route along which participants pass on their way to the stage. Popularly known as "the big yard"⁹, the Savannah stage provides the platform for revellers, calypsonians, and musicians to perform before the judges, spectators, "the nation" and "the world". The last two audiences are made present through the "eyes" of television cameras mounted along the length of the stage, broadcasting live to the "national community". It is before these cameras that mas' is played most fully and self-consciously, and where Carnival is officially "captured", projected and crafted into an "event" for the nation, the tourist and the world.

The crowds thinned considerably as we crossed Tragarete Road onto the broad Stanmore Avenue leading to the Savannah. The road was clear with lots of room for "jumping up" and "wining down"¹⁰. The majority, however, "chipped" quietly along, occasionally bursting into a "jump up" when the music tempo changed. We passed three bands. One was a small group of blue devils that carried green branches and danced behind a steelband. In contrast, the other two were comprised of huge masses of people following "live" popular orchestras on flatbed lorries. Like ourselves, revellers were smeared in mud and cocoa, but many were non-costumed and had obviously joined the bands to enjoy the live up-beat *soca* music. The Savannah was dark and quiet, except for a few coconut vendors, concession-stall occupants and operators of gambling board-games. There were no spectators, no television cameras, no judges, yet the banner led us towards the Savannah Stage. Ahead of us another *jouvay* band, mere shadows in the dawn

light, was already on stage "performing" their morning rite. We slowed our pace and awaited their departure. The stands and bleachers were empty, save for three men who sat dozing in the grandstand, their brooms lying idly against the chairs. The sun appeared above the northern range of hills in the eastern sky as our band "performed" on the Savannah stage. No one saw our "show", and "performers" seemed not to care. It was close to 7.30 a.m. when we left the Savannah area and headed towards our base in Woodbrook. Around 9 a.m. I knew I had enough. I felt satiated and exhausted, suddenly conscious that I had been on the move for seven hours. The pleasure now was not completely pure, tempered as it was by my aching muscles and tired feet. I left the "tribe" for home, but the band continued, wending its way through the streets of Woodbrook, comprised now of remnants of the original tribe and a much larger group of non-costumed revellers.

Through the Eyes of the Media: The Representation of *Jouvay* as "Event"

In a discussion of Maurice Griaule's work, James Clifford writes of an ethnographic fantasy of documenting a public performance "in the manner of a modern television crew reporting on an American political convention" (1988:70). This is certainly an appropriate fantasy for an ethnographer of Trinidad's Carnival. The *jouvay* festivities take place across the islands' cities and towns, but my participation was necessarily confined to the limited following of one band through the streets of Port of

Spain. Nonetheless, I had access to multiple representations of *jouvay* through the eyes of television crews located on Independence Square in downtown Port of Spain, and newspaper personnel who reported extensively on the event. These sources served not only as "raw data" about "what-was-happening-when-I-was-somewhere-else", but more importantly, as national media representations of the event. These representations multiplied the multiplicity of *jouvay*, and constituted it as "an event" that I might or might not have observed had I been present.

Later that evening, and on subsequent evenings, I looked at replays of the *jouvay* downtown celebrations. The dominant image was one of waves of scantily-clad bodies, male and female, covered in grime and grease, dancing singly or jammed together, hands in the air and obviously having a great deal of fun. The colours were predominantly browns, blues, blacks, greys, the result of mud, cocoa butter, grease and paint smeared over bodies and clothes. There are also a few "pretty" bands costumed in "rainbow" colours, steelbands with thousands of followers dressed in civilian clothes, and "ole mas" masqueraders in tattered clothes, carrying placards which labelled and explained their portrayals. The cameras also "picked out" individuals: the man dressed in a skirt, black fish-net stockings and a bra, a Midnight Robber, minstrels¹¹, but these seem lost in the sea of "mudders" (masqueraders covered in mud) and devils. This image of *jouvay* 1992 is also dominant in a three-minute clip of the celebrations within the much longer documentary, Masquerade¹², aired on Trinidad and Tobago Television (TTT) on the Friday after Carnival.

Photos in the two daily newspapers, The Trinidad Guardian and Express, corroborate the impression of grime and grease. Of the dozens of photos published of *jouvay*, the majority show revellers covered in mud, cocoa or grease. A few *ole' mas'* characters are featured, among them Santa Claus dressed in his traditional red costume and white beard with the placard, "SANTA TURN BEAST. CALYPSONIANS KILLING MEY CAROLS WITH CALYPSOES SO AH COME OUT FOR HIM THIS CARNIVAL"¹³ (Express, March 3, 92:16). Of the eighteen *jouvay* photos printed in the Express souvenir magazine, The Greatest Show on Earth: Trinidad and Tobago Carnival 1992¹⁴, two are of *ole mas'* couples, one of a Robber, one of African warriors, and seven each of devils (blue, black, brown, red) and mud people, both male and female. All of the last group are scantily-clad, with two pages featuring a partially-greased woman in a g-string bikini "wining down" and "rolling back" on male companions. These masqueraders manifest the same kind of carnivalesque nudity and carnality described by Bakhtin (1965:317-319) in his study of Rabelaisian characters, suggesting exposure and mockery of "official" moral codes.

Written media reports also supported these visual images: "Mud, mud and more mud....mud, tar, paint and grease featured prominently in the early morning mas'" (Express March 3, 1992:13), "*j'ouvert*, in keeping with tradition, was dominated by mud, tar, paint and grease" (Express March 3, 1992:16), "This is when the party starts - *j'ouvert* rising like a mud man to welcome the dawn rising over the city's towers" (Express Magazine March 4, 1992:4), "lots of mud and cool of the morning" (Express

March 3, 1992:3). One correspondent was even ecstatic:

There must be a *J'Ouvert* in Heaven. God's reward for all the good souls of this world. Keep the pretty mas', just give me the cool of the early morning, some mud and the company of thousands of other people, paupers and kingmakers alike, suitably attired for the occasionThat's where the mud was, straight from Las Cuevas. It was reputed to dry a silver-grey colour. And that wasn't all. Inside Andrew's house, they were boiling a kettle to pour in the containers. Warm mud. Hey, we reach. And yet another innovation was to rub on Johnson's Baby Oil before applying the mud. It comes off easier later on, they say. One guy put the oil under his arms like deodorant, having not bathed the night before (Miller in Trinidad Express March 3, 1992:2).

Other correspondents reported "tens of thousands of Trinidadians, of all races and classes" pouring into the streets of Port of Spain and three "whitey *jab-jabs*" covered "in clay of a colour never seen in T&T" and who were "obviously tourists, judging by the unrhythmic movement of their pelvic girdles" (Express March 3, 1992:11). They also noted the line of steelbands along Independence Square - Exodus, Phase II, Amoco Renegades, Pan Jammers - turning it into a "winner's row" (Express March 3, 1992:11). Reporter Judy Diptee contrasted the chaos of the revellers with the discipline of the Exodus musicians. Carried on two trucks, Exodus, winners of the 1992 steelband competition, "are sober-looking, dressed in black and white T-shirts", their space a "no-wine" zone. They are represented as literally and metaphorically "far and above the maddening crowd". (Express March 3, 1992:11). This observation was obviously meant to call attention to the colour-behaviour-space reversal in the contemporary carnival. The "progeny" of the black *jamet* stickfighters are now situated above the undisciplined mobs of the "national" street bacchanal.

View from the Town Hall Archives

Carnival Monday and Tuesday are not public holidays in Trinidad and Tobago, even though few people carry on their normal work. *Jouvay* begins with the firing of rockets, an "official" proclamation by the mayor of Port of Spain, and the turning over of the City of Port of Spain to the King and Queen of *Jouvay* who are crowned within the first hours of the celebrations. The chaos notwithstanding, *jouvay* is officially organized by the Downtown Carnival Committee which is under the jurisdiction of the Port of Spain City Council. Further, the city is subject to the General Carnival Regulations made by the President under section 5 of the Public Holidays and Festivals Act, Chapter 19 (See Appendix A). These are promulgated each year and published in both daily newspapers some weeks before Carnival. The Carnival "space", therefore, is circumscribed and hedged around with written laws, and there are lines over which revellers supposedly cannot cross. Most of these are breached in practice, and some (for example, regulations (1)(j) and (k) on lewd, immoral and offensive songs and behaviour in Appendix A) are subject to a variety of interpretations which make it almost impossible to prosecute violators.

The Downtown Carnival Committee, organizers of the Independence Square competition, awards prizes to individual masqueraders, bands of masqueraders and music bands. Masqueraders are awarded 20 points for impact, 25 for creativity and design, 20 for originality or authenticity, 20 for humour, and 15 for presentation and portrayal. Music bands, which include steel, tassa and African drumming, brass and string

orchestras, and DJ's, are judged on interpretation (20), rhythm (30), tone (25), arrangement (25). Different panels of judges are responsible for judging the seven *jouvay* categories: King *J'Ouvert*, Queen *J'Ouvert*, Individuals (male and female), Large Bands (600+), Medium Bands (250+), Small Bands (50+), and Music Bands. Prizes are also awarded to individuals for the Most Topical, Most Humorous, Most Creative, and Most Original costumes.

The "official" booklet provided to the judges of the 1992 *jouvay* lists the names of all the bands and revellers registered for the competition. Listed were two large bands, twelve medium bands and twenty-six in the small band category. Portrayals included both "dirty" and "pretty" masquerades and were a mixture of gypsies, pirates, Zulus, Mexicans, Argentineans, indigenous Americans, devils, prisoners, police and thieves, and *ole mas'* characters. In the large band category, the first and second prizes were awarded to two colourful bands, "Fandango: Dance of the Gypsies" and "Journey into South America", with "Return of D Mud on D Clowns" taking third place. "Columbus Lie", "Old Time Mas'" and "Back to Eden" were awarded the medium band prizes, the first explained by organizers as "(an) attempt to deal with the misinformation and misconceptions that surround that famous or infamous event in 1492, and establishes the fact that these areas were already inhabited by progressive and organized societies" (Trinidad Guardian February 18, 1992:22). Among the small bands, "*Jab jab* gone blue devil", "In the party" and "Stay up Zimbabwe" were judged the winners. The bands, "Columbus Lie" and "Return of D Mud on D Clowns" do not appear on the "official" registration list of

competitors.

Of the fifty-three individuals registered, thirty-five were *ole mas'* characters, five Midnight Robbers, four devils, three historical impersonations, two warriors and one each in the categories of witch, vampire, minstrel and *pierrot granade*. *Ole mas'* characters won all of the individual awards, even though some of them were not "officially" listed in the Registration book of competitors. Philip Montano was crowned King *J'Ouvert* for his portrayal, "Prime Minister Extends Olive Branch", a reference to newly elected Prime Minister Manning's political "peace" overture to Tobago¹⁵. Queen *J'Ouvert* was "Daisy Ent Dead" (Daisy is not Dead) portrayed by Theresa Montano in tribute to a popular *parang*¹⁶ singer who died the year before. Prizes in the most topical, most humorous and most creative categories were awarded to political parody and ridicule - "Prime Minister Float in D Dollar", "Pamela Sick" and "Muriel Jump Ship" respectively. The first referred to a controversial statement by Prime Minister Manning several weeks before that he intended to "float" the TT dollar on the world market. This had led to panic buying of foreign currency, reportedly draining the islands of millions in foreign reserves. "Pamela Sick", played by a man, was the portrayal of Pamela Nicholson, the member of Parliament for Tobago, who though successful in the last general elections, belonged to the NAR (National Alliance for Reconstruction) party which was thoroughly beaten throughout Trinidad. Pamela was particularly unpopular in Trinidad because of remarks she made about Trinidadians (as opposed to Tobagonians) on election night. She was severely criticized by Trinidadians and especially pro-government calypsonians, the latter

"scandalously" singing about her rumoured "bed-wetting". The widespread "joking" about her rumoured illness was condemned in the daily Press (cf. Trinidad Guardian March 11, 1992:8; Express March 9, 1992:1; March 11, 1992:9; March 17, 1992:9), but it was the kind of material that was fair game for *jouvay* satirists. Ms. Nicholson had missed the re-opening of Parliament because of ill-health after her Party's defeat, and the portrayal ostensibly refers to that bout of illness. The masquerade dripped with innuendo, however, and everyone "knew" to what he referred. "Muriel Jump Ship" depicted another female Member of Parliament, this time an outspoken founding member of the victorious PNM (People's National Movement) party, who had made a dramatic appearance behind a cloud of balloons at a NAR (National Alliance for Reconstruction) public rally on the night before the December 1991 elections. Muriel Donawa-Mc Davidson was reportedly disgruntled with the new party leadership and dramatically switched sides the night before the vote.

Thirty-two music bands were registered for the competition. Of these, eighteen were DJs, eleven steelbands, two rhythm bands, and one African drumming troupe. No electronic/brass orchestras were registered, yet I saw many accompanying masquerade bands on the streets. Renegades won the award for best playing steelband at *jouvay*, while St. James Tassa Group and La Rue Pomme Drummers won in the drumming categories. None of these three bands appear of the list of registered music bands.

The view from these "official" Town Hall records of *jouvay* 1992 is significant for several reasons. It reveals (1) the variety and relative numbers of masqueraders and

musicians that took part in the celebration, (2) how these performers are categorized, and (3) the masqueraders that were awarded the top prizes. Missing, however, are the thousands of "undocumented" masqueraders and music-makers who roam the streets as individuals, groups or large bands. Some of these do appear at the downtown competition, even though unregistered on the judges' mark-sheet. Others prefer the unlit Savannah stage, unnoticed and unjudged. Most simply just "chip" along, going nowhere in particular, content in the travelling and the partying. Views of *jouvay*, then, are necessarily partial. Drawing on several sources - media reports, official documentation, reflexive participation - the ethnographer is reduced to representing impressions of an "event" that defies control both in practice and in theory.

A view from the Historical Record

Hill (1972:86) suggests that *jouvay* became the opening "act" of the two day street Carnival in the late nineteenth century. The Carnival Proclamation of 1884 had not only banned the midnight-to-dawn *canboulay* "processions" which inaugurated the Carnival, but it also forbade revellers from street celebrations before 6 a.m. on Carnival Monday. Carnival's opening, therefore, now coincided with dawn, that time of day in Trinidadian folklore, when roaming malevolent nocturnal spirits are exposed and forced to retreat either to the underworld or to their human shapes. The *soucouyant*, *lagahou*¹⁷, *la diablesse*¹⁸, *Papa Bois*¹⁹, phantom, devils and other underworld creatures appeared in the streets at dawn and seem to have been the favoured masquerade of revellers at the time.

An "Old Timer" recalling the early twentieth century Carnival wrote, "it was not strange that these fictitious and legendary characters were parodied and burlesqued by demonstrators, to the amusement of onlookers in the bye-gone days. Hence it was in this context the term "Jour Ouvert" became identified with carnival as it was used then specifically to describe the bands in which revellers depicted those legendary characters" (Quoted in Hill 1972:86).

But the early *jouvay* also brought exposure of another kind. *Dame Lorraine* performances seemed to have replaced the banned Sunday night *canboulay* festivities, and these took place in the "yards" where masquerades were being prepared for the street Carnival. At dawn, both the masked performers in grotesque costumes and their audiences, accompanied by string bands, would spill out into the streets to join the *jouvay* celebrations. The *Dame Lorraine* has been translated as "fashionable lady" (Hill 1972:40) and was a burlesque performance ridiculing the pretensions and dancing eccentricities of the Eurocentric elites. This type of entertainment, once confined to the "private spaces" of estate slaves, became part of the public performance of post-*canboulay* Carnival in the city's tented "yards".

The performers were all masked, with gender inversions a common practice. They were drawn from the underclasses, but disguised "respectable citizens" are also reported to have regularly participated in these parodies (Crowley 1988[1956]:45). The earliest performances (cf. Crowley 1988[1956]:45-46 and Hill 1972:40-41) were comprised of two parts, and accompanied by a small string band which played set tunes for each act.



Dame Lorraine

The midnight performance opened with a grand march of "French aristocrats" in the elegant garb of eighteenth century France. A pompous butler announced the mouth-filling names of each couple as they entered the dancing area. As the "aristocrats" performed a stately dance, a "slave" peered through a window or door in awe at the proceedings. Over time, this first act seemed to have been eliminated altogether as the second part came to dominate the entire performance.

The second act parodied the first. The scene was now a school room. The pompous butler was replaced by a stern *maître l'école* or schoolmaster representing the white European master who taught his servants how to dance "properly". Dressed in mortar board and gown or in a frock coat and top hat, the *maître* carried a long tamarind whip which he used liberally whenever his pupils danced improperly or acted impertinently. The scene began with a roll call as the pupils assembled and their presence recorded by the *maître* in a huge book. The pupils wore *ole mas'*, old ragged clothes in burlesque imitation of the elites. The clothes both revealed and hid very prominent protuberances of the pupils, physical characteristics which accounted for their Rabelaisian *patois* names, such as *Misie Gwo Toti* or *Gwo Lolo* (Mr. Big Penis), *Misie Gwo Koko* (Mr. Big Balls), *Ma Gros Tete* (Madame Big Breast), *Ma Gwo Bunda* (Madame Big Bottom), *Ma Chen Mun* (Miss Frigid)²⁰. These excrescences were constructed from pads, pillows, coconuts, wood carvings and other appropriate materials.

The performance in this act focussed on attempts by the *maître* to teach his often unruly students how to follow the dance steps which he himself executed. The required

dance-steps always emphasized the exaggerated bodily parts of the dancers. This generated a great deal of amusement for the audience, and the laughter was intensified when spectators recognized well-known public figures whom the performers were at pains to imitate. Raymond Quevedo, known in the calypso world as Atilla the Hun²¹ has left us an interesting account of the *Dame Lorraine* tent performance:

The most intriguing aspect of the whole thing is the reaction of the audience, who as a consequence of their intimate knowledge of the foibles, traits and idiosyncracies of the ruling hierarchy are enjoying themselves immensely. The Maître always pretends that the whole show was completely devoid of even the semblance of vulgarity. The style of stepping out was given by the "*Marchez pointay, mes enfants*" (Walk daintily, my children). "*M'sieu Gros Boudin, avancez*" (Big Belly, advance). "*Juin!*" in just the right tone of voice. "*Dancez, mes enfants, dancez. Jamb a jamb mais pas faire pollison. En nous! En nous! Ecoutez! Faire con frere e pis se mais par con nomme eh pis femme*" (Dance, my children, dance. Leg to leg but no vulgarity. Let's get on, let's get on. Listen! Do like brother and sister, but not like man and woman." (Quevedo 1959: 7 cited in Hill 1972:41)

The *Dame Lorraine* performance was discontinued in the years following World War 11. Its tradition, however, continued to produce popular masquerades for the *jouvay* celebrations - big- buttocked, big-bellied, big-breasted characters who "exposed" both the foibles of the elite and, by way of exaggeration, the "erogenous zones" which were hidden and never talked about in "respectable" society. These jostled with other *ole mas'* portrayals of political and sexual scandals, peep shows, and quack professionals. Other popular masquerades included the public exposure of underwear and bed-room dress (cf. Anthony 1989:105, 127). This was often accompanied by the carrying or wearing of "poseys" (chamber pots) on the head. Some of these masquerades dominated *jouvay* at certain periods of its history and continue today only in the pages of history books, the memories of "oldtimers" or staged performances of "long time" Carnival. Some old

traditions are kept alive by a few revellers in the contemporary *jouvay*, and yet others, at one time the preferred masquerade of the few, have become the dominant masquerade of the many.

The contemporary *jouvay* is dominated by "dirty mas'", huge bands of "devils" covered in mud, grease or paint, transformations of the post-Emancipation masquerade described by Charles Day as early as 1852 (cf. Hill 1972:18), and which has persisted in several forms through the nineteenth and twentieth centuries. *Ole mas'* characters still persist, caricaturing and ridiculing the elite, ethnic, racial or gendered others; so, too, the traditional *Dame Lorraine* characters with exaggerated bodily parts. But these fully clothed masqueraders are the "minorities" in the contemporary Carnival. Chamber pots, night clothes, underwear and green branches continue to be preferred by a few, and are sometimes part of the *jouvay* paraphernalia of "mudders" and "devils". The Trinidad Guardian Carnival Magazine (February 24, 1993) carried a photo of a male reveller in a small "devil" band, the quintessential image of the *jouvay bricoleur*. His dark body shone with black grease in the tradition of the *jab molassie*. He was naked, except for his black boots, chamber-pot headgear on which was affixed two horns, and a g-string over which was tied a huge "penis". Beneath the picture was the simple question - "Wishing or boasting?" and an accompanying editorial comment:

It's a good thing they were out in the early morning with those things.....at a time when the vigilant guardians of the public morality were on their coffee/snooze breaks. Nobody knows where they came from or where they disappeared to. But it is rumoured that they were a delegation from the lost tribe of the Tongo Lolo Bingo Boombooms.....They disappeared with a battalion of tourists, clergy, anthropologists, and the Guinness Book of World Records licensing officers (to find out if they had licenses for those things) on their

trail.

The content and form of *jouvay* masquerades may have been transformed over time, but their underlying ethos continues: the iconoclastic deconstruction of social systems of morality, identity and order through masquerades that exaggerate, caricature, expose and ridicule.

The music of *jouvay* has also changed over the century. Formerly, revellers were borne along by a chorus of voices accompanied by either bamboo tamboo bands, iron or bottle-and-spoon orchestras or string bands consisting of guitar, cuatro, mandolin, banjo, violin, flute and shak shak (Rohlehr 1990:41). After World War 11, the dominant sound became that of the newly "invented" steel drums and brass bands on foot. The chorus of voices had all but disappeared; so too, had the pre-war *jouvay* "leggos" (songs), the most popular of which was "*jour ouvert barreyo, pas mettez la main asseyo*"²² (cf. Anthony 1989:60). The *jouvay* "leggo" became known as the "road march", and new tunes were composed yearly by the growing number of popular calypsonians. Steel-bands continue to provide music for contemporary revellers, but the majority are now pulled along on wheeled frames or trucks. Brass bands have grown to include syntheziers and an assortment of other instruments. "Voices" have returned to the celebration in the persons of lead singers, male and female, who are now attached to the brass-string orchestras. Recorded *soca*-calypsoes are also beamed from trucks equipped with amplifiers and manned by popular disc jockeys. This creates the possibility for continuous music for revellers, a feat not possible for "live" music-makers who, from time to time, require short

periods to rest. Minor "sounds" in the contemporary *jouvay* are the rhythms played solely on "African" drums, East Indian tassa drums, and the biscuit-tin drums of some *jab molassie* revellers.

The "temporal space" of *jouvay* has also changed over time. In the post-Emancipation period, the street-Carnival "began" at midnight on Carnival Sunday night (*Dimanche Gras*) with the *canboulay* processions. With these effectively banned by the colonial authorities in 1884, the "opening" of Carnival was transformed into the dawn ritual of *jouvay*. In fact, the celebratory time carved out for Carnival by the French in the pre-emancipation period was gradually reduced by the English colonial authorities during the 19th century (cf. Pearse 1988[1956]:12,22). Significantly, as Trinidad moved from Crown Colony status (cf. Brereton 1981:52; 136-153) through full internal self-government (1961) into political independence from Britain (1962), its government almost immediately began slowly to push back the temporal space of the street Carnival. In 1960, Carnival's opening was set for 5 a.m. on Monday morning (Anthony 1989:280). With the exception of a 6 a.m. "opening" in 1974, a year of simmering political and socio-economic discontent on the island, Carnival began at 5 a.m. until 1976. In 1977, Carnival was declared opened at 4 a.m. (Anthony 1989:388). In 1992, Carnival was ritually opened at 2 a.m. Anthony explains why a decision was taken to start *jouvay* at 4 a.m.:

An early departure in Carnival 1977 - and perhaps the word early is appropriate - was the starting of *Jour Ouvert* at 4 o'clock in the morning, the earliest starting time on record. This was an effort to have *Jour Ouvert* completed by 9 o'clock, to give masqueraders time to prepare for the parade of the costumed bands (1989:388).

If this is the motive for taking back Carnival "space", the strategy has clearly

failed. The last *jouvay* revellers were still on the streets of Port of Spain at 11 a.m. on the Carnival Monday of 1992. The extra hours were claimed by revellers for *jouvay* itself, and not for the parade of costumed bands. In 1987, the calypsonian, Christopher Tambu Herbert, articulated popular sentiments in his calypso, *J'ouvert Man* - "When *jouvay* done, man/Carnival gone through" (When *jouvay* ends, Carnival ends). For him, *jouvay* expressed and constituted the essence of Carnival. Conceived as distinct from the *pretty mas'* spectacle of Monday afternoon and Tuesday, it is considered the real moment of Carnival by many Trinidadians, and now extends for almost nine hours. The "ritual overture" has become an extended event in itself.

Native Hermeneutics

Jouvay is weighted with several meanings for its "native" participants. These meanings range from its socio-cultural significance to its personal, psychological benefits. The early twentieth century *jouvay* chantwells and revellers had sung: "Monday morning bacchanal, and Tuesday morning Carnival/*Jour ouvert barreyo, pas mettez la main asseyo*" (cf. Anthony 1989:16). Interpreted as a "bacchanal", *jouvay* was represented and constituted very early on as "different" from the carnival of Tuesday which, at the time, was largely a colour/class differentiated spectacle of "pretty" and colourful masquerades. Although this dawn celebration is now considered the opening act of the street Carnival, and therefore, one expression of the greater whole that has become "Carnival", it remains for some Trinidadians, not only different in ethos and meaning from the rest of the

celebration, but Carnival's most "authentic" moment.

On the Friday after Carnival, Trinidad and Tobago Television (TTT) aired the documentary, Masquerade, which featured "highlights" of the 1992 Carnival and reflections from both "culture" experts and participants on the recently concluded celebration. In the *jouvay* segment of the programme, two very articulate male participants²³ in a *jouvay* band shared with viewers the meaning of the dawn celebration against a background of revelry, music, grease and mud-covered bodies:

...it is a time of renewal, a time of freshness. It's a magical time when you hear the sound of steel in the distance. I like to think it is a metaphor for a community renewing itself, for a community circling where it lives, circling its village, circling its city as in many African situations, purifying the area you live in....Mud is getting back to the primal, getting back to roots. Sometimes you see guys with mud and you see them with branches, green branches, part of the whole renewal. Now the whole devil thing is very interesting. What used to be the *jab molassie*, "*molassie*" as in coming from molasses, and *jab* the *patois* term for the devil, the French *diable*, right? However, that's a very interesting mas' because originally the white French planters put the molasses on their bodies to imitate blacks, and then the blacks - because nobody is really black - they put on black molasses to imitate the whites imitating the blacks. So, in a sense, that devil mas' is the very first and original mas' (Masquerader #1)

Ole mas' allows us to express ourselves and to make social and political commentaries about things that happened during the year or things that we like to see happen in the coming year. And *jouvay* is the time we get to do that, unlike the rest of the mas' which is prissy and nice, and in some cases, superficial. But the *jouvay* is the heart of the thing (Masquerader #2).

In a similar vein, a Trinidad Guardian columnist reflected on his *jouvay* experience in the Carnival Tuesday edition of the newspaper:

It is....interesting to watch the other people and try to find out what they get from this mud mas'. I have always viewed it with fastidious distaste. But now, on this chilly night heated by hundreds of bodies writhing to pounding bass, I get some inkling of the attractions of this dirty mas'. First, there is the simplicity. The *J'Ouvert* band costumes are always quite simple and more basic than the costumes of the day parade. There is something more genuine in this type of mas'. This genuineness is one key to the attraction of the mud or grease (or now, cocoa butter) mas'. By abandoning, even illusorily, that first tenet of a civilized society, cleanliness, one embraces a very real psychological

freedom (Baldeosingh in Trinidad Guardian February 23,93:13).

Interviews and informal conversations with participants also yielded a variety of personal and socio-cultural meanings and functions of *jouvay* celebrations. Some of the "personal" reasons for *jouvay* participation included:

"It's the beginning of Carnival, and I love that moment when everyone spill out into the street dancing and laughing - a kind of community thing. Seeing so many people showing much comradie to each other is thrilling to me" (Teacher, female, late 30's).

"An opportunity to "free up"; a time when I can be MYSELF without having to worry about how I look and how I behave. I am just "me" - dirty, mucky and I have a ball" (Secretary, female, mid 20's).

"It's just plenty fun - pure and simple" (Home-maker, female, early 40's).

"I'm Trinidadian - what more can I say?" (Oil driller, male, late 40's).

"I can be my most outrageous self at this time, and nobody seems to mind" (Teacher, female, late 40's).

"I like the bacchanal element - you don't have to get into sections and worry about how you looking in your costume, everything and everyone just mix-up. Nobody can play more "social" than you when everybody cover up in mud and grease and old clothes- everybody the same" (Store clerk, female, early 20's).

"To me it is a kind of therapy, perhaps not physical, but a mental kind of therapy - playing dirty devil mas' gives me the opportunity to be more mundane and to really express myself (government employee, male, early 50's).

The importance of the *jouvay* "performance" for the society was articulated largely in hydraulic or renewal terms:

"It is like a renewal of a commitment we make to live in harmony for the rest of the year" (Teacher, female, early 30's).

"The time when we shed all the pretensions and face all the "devils" in the society by playing them" (Roman Catholic priest, male, 40's).

"Allows people to get rid of suppressed emotional feelings" (Hair dresser, male, late 20's).

"It relieves tension in the society - without the chance to do the crazy things we do in *jouvay*, people in Trinidad will go mad" (Tailor, male, late 30's).

"A reminder that every race and creed must be equal"
(Office clerk, female, early 30s).

"Allows all cultures to mingle and become one"
(University student, female, early 20's).

Three months after the 1992 Carnival, I had an extended conversation with Leroy Clarke, a well-known Trinidadian artist and published poet, at his home located on the northern range of hills overlooking the city of Port of Spain. From his living room, we had a panoramic view of the Savannah, the centre "stage" from which Carnival is annually "performed" for spectators, the "nation" and the "world". Except for what looked like miniature cars moving around its periphery, the Savannah now appeared still and hazy, glistening mirage-like in the boiling afternoon sun. The living room itself was a "gallery" of the artist's work with big and small canvases of "abstract" paintings displayed along the walls. Here we sipped cool drinks and "reflected on" the Trinidad Carnival. I quote at length his spontaneous theorizing in response to my question on the significance of "mas' playing" for the Trinidadian society:

You can look at it both ways. Do we put on a mask to return to an original state or do we take off the mask to reveal ourselves?Is it that the journeying towards the mask strips us of a lot of our vanities and in a way makes us kind of placeless, and therefore in that placelessness we are really revealed?.....Now, in the modern mas' playing we note that people are not playing with the mask on their face because they are afraid of sacrificing their everydayness to the mask.....Today everybody plays whatever mas' depending on their economic situation. As long as you can pay for a mas', you put it on. The mas' really has nothing to do with you anymore. But when I was growing up, the whole ritual of mas' playing was collecting the beads, the feathers, going to the *La Basse* (the city dump). You go there and pick up all the animal skeletons, the bones and so on. You know that is the season when the poor goats and the dogs were sacrificed and people could say they sacrificed to a God, alright? People went to the graves, they "mounted" sticks, they "mounted" bags of beads, they "cured" things in grave soil and things like that. These are old traditions; this happened two or three months before Carnival.....These are things that used to happen in mas' playing that don't happen anymore because we are

involved in a big excuse, an ostentatious thing which has nothing to do with your personality. It is your "personing", the moving into your own character....a movement from one point to the other. That's how I see the ritual of mas'. And I have not read that anywhere, this is a feeling that I have. *Jouvay* morning, thank God we still have a *jouvay* morning. *Jouvay* morning is the only *obeah* (witchcraft) hour of the whole Carnival. It is the time when people really come out. They tired, they have been feting for two, three weeks and they come out and they are virtually beaten by that morning. Now think of the ritual flagellation. You're tossed on the ground, you're destroyed symbolically, and you go the ground, and it is from the ground you rise up. Now we scorn the drunken man on the streets, the fellow that has collapsed. He is symbolic of our very collapse, even though we may be standing. The whole ritual suggest collapse, collapse of all that went before, a naked-ing, so that we could come to terms with it and rise again in the Tuesday mas' in a new parade. So you could not be seen on Tuesday with the thing you wore on Monday, and the next year, you will be seen on Monday in the things you wore last year Tuesday. But people don't worry about that anymore. But in "long-time" *jouvay* people wore the Tuesday costumes of the year before. The Grand mas' I play now dies, so they will be left on the streets, and Tuesday will be a newness again....these are the inner meanings of the mas' playing (Clarke, interview on June 10, 1992).

Also to be given "voice" are the hundreds of self-proclaimed *jouvay* fanatics who, when asked about the "whys" and "wherefores" of *jouvay* for them personally and for the society as a whole, simply reply, "I don't know, but it's a must". And there is the most unambiguous answer of all, given to me by a middle-aged woman participant whose only Carnival appearance takes place on *jouvay* morning: "I just love dancing through the streets in the crisp, cool morning breeze."

Jouvay as a Distinct Carnival Performance

As a performative "event", *jouvay* ends at mid-morning on Carnival Monday. However, its ending is as fuzzy as its beginning is abrupt. The *jouvay* tradition of "non-pretty mas'" as well as the *jouvay-esque* ethos of "bacchanal" extends into the entire Carnival. "Dirty mas'" shares the streets and stage with "pretty mas'" on Monday afternoon and Tuesday, and the so-called Carnival "parade" of bands only becomes an

ordered procession of "sectioned" masqueraders when the band approaches the various competition sites in the city. Otherwise, "bacchanal" reigns on the streets with "sections" mixing with other "sections", and the band itself, a blend of masqueraders and non-costumed revellers, united as "one" band only by the driving "hot" rhythm of the *soca* music-makers. In fact, the conceptual separation made by the early *jouvay* chantwells, "Monday morning bacchanal/Tuesday morning Carnival", has been collapsed in dominant Carnival discourse into the simple assertion articulated by the calypsonian "Super Blue" (Austin Lyons) in his 1992 Road March - "Carnival is bacchanal, oh yoh". Conversely, it must also be mentioned that sectioned "pretty mas'" bands have also been appearing in the *jouvay* celebrations. While it may be of heuristic value to analytically separate the various performances of Carnival, it is important to note that the borders between the Carnival "acts" remain fluid and elastic.

Nevertheless, having underlined the fluidity in practice between the Carnival performances, it is accurate to assert that in local perception and practice *jouvay* is marked as "different" in ethos and content from the rest of the celebrations. It is the time of "old and dirty mas'" - the quintessential expression of "bacchanal". For many Trinidadians, it is the privileged moment of Carnival. With competitions clustered in the downtown core of Port of Spain, the *jouvay* "stage" is spatially located "down"-town, the traditional space of the "non-white" celebrations. Unlike the "colourful" spectacle of "sectioned" and thematically-ordered "parade of bands" which are showcased "up"-town at the Savannah during the days of Carnival, *jouvay* appears chaotic, disorderly and

"uncolourful".

The World of Trinidadian "Colour"

In Trinidad, "colour" describes far more than the phenomenon of light differentiating objects around us. Historically and socially, the concept is heavily weighted with meanings of status, hierarchy and power. Basically, there are two colour spectrums in Trinidad (Segal 1989:356). On the one hand, there is the skin-colour spectrum of social differentiation. This ranges from different shades of "black", including "blue-blacks", passing through various hues of "brown", to degrees of "white". Blacks, browns and whites are the colours of hierarchy and social "reality". On the other hand, there are the colours of the rainbow - reds, yellows, oranges, greens, blues, purples - the "bright" colours stereotypically associated with the dress, ambiance, flamboyance of the "tropical Caribbean". They carry connotations of playfulness and fantasy. These are the colours of "pretty mas'", the spectrum referred to when describing Carnival as "colour". Playful and light, this latter spectrum is in sharp contrast to the "serious", everyday "natural" colours of hierarchial social reality.

Significantly, "a rainbow people" has become, in recent times, a popular descriptive metaphor of Trinidad's social composition. I first heard the term used by South Africa's Archbishop Desmond Tutu during a visit to the island in the early 1980's to describe what he perceived as the harmonious and equal relations between the "races" in Trinidad. The metaphor was reportedly introduced by him on that occasion, and was

later appropriated by Trinidadians themselves to describe their reality²⁴. "A rainbow people" certainly became very popular during, and after, the 1986 general elections when the National Alliance for Reconstruction (NAR) challenged and convincingly beat the People's National Movement (PNM), the party that had negotiated political independence from Britain 30 years previously and had been in power ever since. Despite its overwhelming middle-class "coloured" leadership and value-system, the People's National Movement had a large appeal to the "black" constituency through its rhetoric and patronage system. It was, therefore, perceived as the vehicle of a "black"-creole hegemony. The National Alliance for Reconstruction, on the other hand, was an amalgam of different opposition parties whose constituents were largely divided along intersecting race/class/cultural lines. They, therefore, brought "multiculturalism" to the fore of national discourse, underwriting the notion of distinct separate identities within the "nation", all entitled for an equal political, economic and cultural space "in the sun". "One Love" was supposed to be the "glue" that would hold it all together. Not surprisingly, the rainbow with its very distinct colours lying side by side was appropriated as the metaphor in envisioning the "new social order".

Two years later, the "glue" lost its adhesiveness. The National Alliance for Reconstruction divided into warring factions, eventually resulting in the expulsion of prominent Indian members of the ex-United Labour Front (ULF), popularly perceived as representative of the East Indian population. Members of the expelled faction formed a new Party, the United National Congress (UNC), to fight the 1991 General Elections

which took place during my time of field-work. "Race" frequently cropped up in private conversations and among people at political rallies. A popular slogan among United National Congress supporters was "Our time has come", translated by many to mean, "The Indians time for power has come". A well-known Indian UNC candidate, himself an ex-PNM Member of Parliament, generated public controversy by proclaiming from a political platform, "It is time for an Indian Prime Minister". Interpreted as a "racial" remark by many non-Indians, it made newspaper headlines, spawned numerous "letters to the editor", and provided a popular conversation piece for the general population (cf. Express December 12, 1991:2; December 13, 1991:8). The calypsonian, Cro Cro, known to be a staunch PNM supporter, made a scathing attack on the Member of Parliament, Sham Mohammed, in "Racial Integration", one of his calypsoes for the 1992 Carnival season. One of the solutions Cro Cro suggested to the racial problem was hybridization, the creation of *dooglas*, the pejorative Hindi word for half-castes²⁵. He would "romance their Indian women" and create a set of baby *doogla* Cro Cros. Cro Cro was wildly applauded the night I heard him sing this calypso in a calypso "tent". He was chosen to appear as a finalist on Carnival Sunday night in the national calypso competition which was broadcast "live" nationwide from the Savannah. Some members of the Indian community reacted with anger, again spawning debate and charges of "racism" (cf. Express March 3, 1992:2).

The elections two months before had resolved the struggle in favour of the People's National Movement which won twenty-one of the thirty-six parliamentary seats.

The United National Congress candidates won all the seats in the predominantly Indian areas of central and south Trinidad, and remained in opposition with thirteen seats. In 1986, the National Alliance for Reconstruction had won thirty-three places in Parliament; in 1991, only two of its members were returned to Parliament. Both were from Tobago (cf. Trinidad Guardian December 17, 1991). The rhetoric and results of the elections led to the popular perception of a Trinidad again fissioned along ancestral "race/ethnic" lines, and governed by the PNM black/coloured middle-class alliance. The calypsonian, Chalkdust, articulated this perception in his 1992 calypso, "Trinidad ain't change":

"Your party POPPG ²⁶, is now NAR completely,
DLP²⁷ change dey name to UNC,
Trinidad ain't change, the country just re-arrange".

While still widely used in the media and among the populace to describe Trinidad's social composition and identity²⁸, the rainbow metaphor remains for many either an aspiration or a fantasy.

I want to underline the specific "feature" of the rainbow that made it an easily appropriated symbol for Trinidad's national identity. The rainbow's distinct colours splashed side by side across the sky were perceived as analogous to the "colours" and ethnic "kinds" in the population. Historically, these "kinds" were hierarchized. The rainbow, therefore, not only symbolized perceived "real" differences, but the desire for equality. Further, among some sections of the Indian population and other "colour" minorities it articulated the desire to be included in the definition of "Trinidadian". The fear of being "written out" of the national cultural-"colour" scheme has been on-going for

these groups since Independence. This concern was especially acute during and after the "Black Power" attempt of 1970 when "black" was perceived to have displaced "white" as the dominant "colour" in the construction of an "authentic" national identity. The poet, Derek Walcott, self-described as a *shabine*, a derogatory word for the black/white mixture which produces "red", articulated the dilemma of many when the power shifted:

"I had no nation now but the imagination
 After the white man, the niggers didn't want me
 when the power swing to their side.
 The first chain my hands and apologize, "History".
 the next said I wasn't black enough for their pride"
 (Walcott 1986[1979]:350)

Consequently, the "rainbow" imaged an equal place for all, and especially for those groups, like the Indians, which were perceived, and perceived themselves as "outside" the conventional white-brown-black colour scheme, their skin-pigmentation notwithstanding.

Very significant, however, is the use of one semantic field of "pretty colours" to envision and speak of the other historically-laden and "real" field of blacks, whites and browns. The use of power-neutral "colours" to discuss the very sensitive issue of "national" identity puts the issue in the realm of the "imaginary" and what "ought to be". Victor Turner has suggested that cultures, like verbs, have at least two "moods", the indicative and the subjunctive, which in any particular situation are intermingled. In the indicative mood, a culture "presents itself as consisting of acts, states, occurrences that are factual, in terms of the cultural definition of factuality. Every culture has a theory that certain "things" actually happen, are "really true", that "have been" or "are".....ONE

culture's truth may be another's fantasy" (Turner 1986:41). The subjunctive mood, on the other hand, "expresses supposition, desire, hypothesis, possibility". It is the difference between the world of "what is" and the worlds of "what might be", "ought to be", "what we would like it to be" (Turner 1986:41). In Trinidad, these moods are hopelessly entangled, but the distinction is of some heuristic value in conceptualizing the difference between the two semantic fields of "colour". The skin-colour range of blacks, browns, and whites is understood as "serious business" and "fact". These could properly be placed under the sign of indicativity. The "pretty colours", on the other hand, expressive of "playfulness", "imagination" and "gaiety", could therefore be understood as expressing the subjunctive. It could be argued, then, that the rainbow metaphor does not name "reality", and so "non-represents" the relations of power that exist between the "true" colours. Further, it constitutes distinct groups as "fact", masking both how the "colours" were historically constituted, and how they have merged and bled into each other over time.

The "rainbow" has assumed metaphorical significance only within the last decade of Trinidad's history. It does surface and celebrate, however, a pluralistic conception of Trinidad's social composition that has run like a long, deep current in Trinidadians' Self-understanding and in social science interpretations of Caribbean societies (cf. Austin 1983; Herskovits 1969; Lowenthal 1972; Mintz 1974; M.G. Smith 1965). In 1960, Klass had articulated this pluralistic interpretation in an anthropological study of a rural East Indian village where he found that "among rural Hindu East Indians the Creolized individual is

rare to the point of nonexistence; traits and values deriving from India take precedence over those deriving from the non-Indian environment" (1973[1960]:293). This statement provoked the famous response from the nationalist Prime Minister, Dr. Eric Williams, that there could be no motherland other than Trinidad, "no Mother Africa" and "no Mother India". And while Williams did not mention Klass by name, it was clear to whom he referred when he wrote:

A foreign student, with all the impetuosity of youth rushing in where angels fear to tread, may talk glibly of an Indian village in Trinidad not being West Indian, and predict that the Indian will never be assimilated....The fact of the matter is, however, that in Trinidad, the Negro, the Indian, French and Spaniard, English and Portuguese, Syrian and Lebanese, Chinese and Jew, all have been messed out of the same pot, are all victims of the same subordination, all have been tarred with the same brush of political inferiority (Williams 1962:280).

Williams, the nationalist, was obviously more partial to Daniel Crowley's "assimilationist" model of Trinidadian society (Crowley 1973[1960]). Interestingly, however, in the above passage, Williams did categorize Trinidadians according to ancestral homelands (except the "negro"!), but reduced power differences among the groups to a shared victimhood *vis à vis* the "foreign" colonizer.

Another equally dominant metaphor of Trinidadian identity, has been that of *callaloo*. A *callaloo* is a popular local dish which consists of *dasheen* leaves, ochroes, coconut milk, pepper, crab, salted meat and seasonings all blended together to produce a thick, dark green-black soup or sauce. Except for the crab and meat, the original ingredients are all unrecognizable in the mixture and reduced to a new brew in taste, texture and colour. Trinidadians of multiple "racial" ancestries are often self-described,

and described, as a *callaloo*; so, too, is Trinidad's socio-cultural composition described in this fashion. For Carnival 1984, the controversial masquerade-producer and artist, Peter Minshall²⁹, designed and assembled a mas' band of 2,500 masqueraders entitled *Callaloo* which was based on a story he had himself written, *Callaloo an' the Crab*. The title character, *Callaloo*, is described as

a man who brings a message of peace and harmony among men. He is colourless. He has no race, yet he is of all races, a disarming confusion of origin and identity. He takes his name from a traditional Caribbean dish composed of many different ingredients mixed together to make a nourishing and harmonious whole (Riverside Studios and Commonwealth Institute Leaflet, Hammersmith, England. (16 - 24 August 1986:2).

In the same vein, Minshall wrote "home" from Barcelona where he had gone to co-produce the opening ceremony of the 1992 25th Olympic Games:

Five hundred years ago, Barcelona discovered us. Now they have found us again, a culture that lives in song and dance and costume, ever parading, here today, gone tomorrow, ephemeral as we ourselves are, an island people of the street and stadium, whose lives are moments of performance...We were barter for large countries. From bits and pieces cast up on our shores, from scraps of other cultures, the leftovers of Europe, Africa, Asia, we gradually created an identity of our own. We made the steelband, the calypso and the mas' (*Trinidad Guardian* July 25, 1992:1).

John Cupid, a well-known Trinidadian folklorist and "culture" expert-activist, echoed similar sentiments on Trinidad's cultural identity as a new and distinct configuration shaped out of the many "races": "it is the triumph of miscegenation, a process that has been happening even before the arrival of Columbus" (personal communication, Oct. 12, 1991). The *callaloo* metaphor, therefore, represents and constitutes the Trinidadian and her/his culture as a dynamic, permissive, protean, new and unique entity created (and being created), out of many disparate fragments and ingredients. This is the continuation of the *gens de couleur* Self rooted in Trinidad's

colonial past; then, a "mixture" of "black-white", now, a *callaloo* of many more ingredients. Significantly, the *callaloo* is very dark green, almost black, making it possible to use the colour itself as a symbol which mirrors and embodies Trinidad's "real" colour scheme.

The making of the *callaloo* is the local metaphorical expression of the processes of "creolization" (Brathwaite 1974), "re-invented cultures" (Clifford 1988:15), "interference" and "inter-reference" (Fischer 1986: 219, 232), and "interculture" (Wagner 1980). The *callaloo* metaphor shifts the focus from pluralistic representations of Trinidad's social identity to the "blurrings" across the boundaries. More importantly, it re-values the "bits and pieces cast up on our shores" referred to by Minshall above, recasting passive "victims" of the colonial enterprise into active agents who continually "reinvent" new cultures and identities. The "hands" that determine the kinds, amount and conditions under which ingredients were (and are) placed into the *callaloo* are put under erasure; so, too, is the "swizzle-stick" with which the brew is stirred. The *callaloo* metaphor celebrates the "mixtures" and "fusions" that have been taking place in Trinidad's society over time. It non-represents, however, the many systems of difference that exist among Trinidadians, and the power relations that work to keep those systems in place.

The "rainbow" and "*callaloo*" are metaphorically expressive of the two dominant metanarratives that underlie discourses of Trinidad's national Self. While both represent the existence of "sameness" and "difference" within the society, they figure - ground them differently. The "rainbow" does not preclude a distinctive national identity, it simply

pluralizes it. It assumes unalterable, multiple, race/colour identities as on-going "fact", and "grounds" these against the more contingent, fragile construction of "national" identity (cf. Segal 1989:274). The *callaloo*, on the other hand, assumes a *de facto* historical "mixture" of "races", "cultures" and "colours" that has produced a new cultural identity. This is not a fixed homogeneous Self, however, but one in the continual process of becoming and "consuming" new material into itself. Differences exist as "ancestral survivals" from the past or from external influences, but these are considered negative or positive depending on their proclivity to "mix in" and add to the "sweetness" of the already existing national *purée*. Each metanarrative undermines the other's claim to represent and express "the whole truth" about the Trinidadian Self, and therefore, both are relevant in analyzing the performances of the national Self at Carnival.

I have shown how "colour" is weighted with meanings of status, power and identity in Trinidad. It is, therefore, a key idiom through which Trinidadians "perform" and express themselves in Carnival. "Carnival is colour", popular in advertisements by film and fabric companies, became a highly controversial slogan when Peter Minshall produced his *Danse Macabre* (Dance of death) for the 1980 Monday and Tuesday "parade" of bands. The masquerade was a portrayal of the darker side of humanity and the triumph of folly. To portray humanity's darker side, Minshall used "dull" colours which, although appropriate for *jouvay*, were considered highly inappropriate for the Monday and Tuesday parade of bands. Minshall's purpose was to freeze the dance of celebration and shock people into reflection:

(Danse Macabre) attempts to make a powerful statement in the belief that mas', as street theatre, can communicate meaningfully at an emotional level. Man dances on the brink of disaster. *Danse Macabre* is his primal scream (Minshall, cited in Daily Express Magazine: The Greatest Show on Earth. Trinidad Carnival. Minshall: the Man and His Mas' 1991:59).

In a sea of brown costumes, his 2,000-odd masqueraders had taken to the streets of Port of Spain, dancing to the popular brass band Charlie's Roots and three other music sections. Minshall's use of brown, and in later years, whites, greys and blacks brought howls of protest from various sections of the community, including other band producers, who argued that these "drab" colours were not in keeping with the "spirit" of Carnival. The judges of the Carnival Development Committee concurred with Minshall's critics, consistently refusing to give his "un-colourful" bands top honours in the competition for "Band of the Year". Justifying their decision to place *Danse Macabre* sixth in the competition, the judges reportedly said it was *ole mas'* and belonged to the *jouvay* of a decade before (Jacobs 1991: 20). Minshall felt that by stripping away the "pretty colours", lamé and frills, the masquerade was left "naked" and its meaning or lack of meaning exposed:

Lamé would defeat the purpose of what I am trying to say; anyway, I am sick of lamé, life is not lamé.....I want people to stop and think. If I can get people to feel moved after seeing the band, I would have achieved my purpose (Minshall, cited in Daily Express Magazine: The Greatest Show on Earth. Trinidad Carnival. Minshall the Man and His Mas' 1991:62).

This was not simply an argument about what "colours" were appropriate to the different "acts" of Carnival, but a debate on the ability of the masquerade to represent "reality". For Minshall, "pretty mas'" with its sequins and glitter was incapable of expressing his vision of "reality", the struggle between good and evil, the powerless and

the powerful, with often the victory of the latter over the former. "Pretty" colours were, therefore escapist, and not the colours of "life". His critics, on the other hand, charged that Minshall's "vision" was too tragic. Some argued that "pretty mas'" was "spiritually" appropriate as it affirmed "love, not destruction" as the basis of life (cf. Jacob 1991:22). Others asserted that "colour" was expressive of fun and gaiety, the much needed therapeutic break from the unrelenting "darkness" of reality. The argument was ultimately about the nature (and colour!) of "reality" and "fantasy".

However, these performative "colours" are not simple mirrors which "re-present" Trinidad's "indicative" or "subjunctive" moods, social reality or fantasy. They are, properly speaking, "reflexive" rather than "reflective", playfully used by masqueraders to invert, subvert, conceal, re-construct, dis-colour, re-colour, magnify and minimize their perceived social reality (cf. Turner 1986:42).

Performative reflexivity is a condition in which a socio-cultural group, or its most perceptive members acting representatively, turn, bend or reflect back upon themselves, upon the relations, actions, symbols, meanings, codes, roles, statuses, social structures, ethical and legal rules, and other sociocultural components that make up their public "selves". Performative reflexivity, too, is not mere reflex, a quick, automatic or habitual response to some stimulus. It is highly contrived, artificial, of culture not nature, a deliberate and voluntary work of art (Turner 1986:24).

Minshall's use of white-brown-black, for example, did not reflect the colonialist values of the social "colour" hierarchy, neither were the value of the "colours" inverted. Rather, he undermined the hierarchized meaning of black, brown and white altogether, by playfully arranging and re-arranging their signification in different masquerade bands, undercutting the "natural" link between "colour" and status, "colour" and specified human

kinds (Segal 1989:361).

JOUVAY - The Unmasking of the "Real" Self

As opposed to the Parade of the Bands, the dominant "colours" of *jouvay* are those of "reality", suggesting a performance "under the sign of indicativity" (Turner 1986:41). This perception of the "dawn rite" of Carnival is evident in some of the Trinidadian "voices" already quoted: "it is the heart of the thing", "a time for freshness and renewal", "getting back to the primal", "genuine", "a naked-ing", "I can be myself". The words used suggest the "exposure" of the primal, and therefore, most "authentic" Trinidadian S(s)elf in contrast to the "superficial" Self loaded down with the baggage of colonial history and social expectations. Underpinning these expressions are the assumptions of nationalist ideology outlined by Handler in his discussion of "authenticity":

In the ideology of possessive individualism, the existence of a national collectivity depends upon the "possession" of an authentic culture.....and an authentic culture is one original to its possessors, one which exists only with them: in other words, an independently existing entity, asserting itself (to borrow Cassirer's words) against all other cultures (1986:2).

Our band's trek to the Savannah on *jouvay* morning to "perform" on an unlit stage before empty stands suggests a community celebrating its Self. The "show" metaphor, as in "the Greatest Show on Earth", appropriated by Trinidadians to proudly advertise their Carnival to the world, is hardly an apt description for the hordes of revellers covered in mud, cocoa, mud and old clothes dancing through the darkened streets of Port of Spain. There is no self-conscious projection among participants of a "pretty" Self for wider

audiences to see and applaud, and even those who assume a *jouvay* "show", by wearing costumes with message-bearing placards, do so for "audiences" familiar with local social and political events. Television cameras beam the event "live" from Independence Square in downtown Port of Spain, but unlike "the Parade of Bands" shown during the day, this performance offers little to audiences by way of variety, "colour", or presentation. *Jouvay* footage is sometimes ruthlessly edited out of video film intended to showcase Trinidad's Carnival abroad.

During my field work, I met a non-resident Trinidadian who was working on a Carnival video-tape to bring back to friends in the United States. *Jouvay* was entirely omitted, even though the film-maker was one of its own most ardent participants, seeing it as the privileged space for "the annual immersion in my culture". Her justification for its erasure: "There is nothing much to see, except a lot of messy people having a lot of fun. Could be boring to look at, especially as it seems to be the same thing over and over again. And besides, some of my friends wouldn't understand what all this muck and chaos is about - they might get the wrong impression about us, like we primitive or something".

Jouvay, then, is generally perceived not as a "show" put on for Others, but a making "manifest" of the "real" inner Trinidadian Self. I use the word "manifest" deliberately because it was the preferred word used by a number of my interviewees to describe the nature of symbolic representation. "Manifestation" or "to make manifest" implies the ontological existence of a "real" internal world which is made public through various concrete expressions. During a forty-five minute conversation with an ex-

government official in the Ministry of Culture, I noted she used the word "manifestation" fourteen times to describe cultural phenomena. Assumed was an *a priori* "culture" which was concretized in material form. In the context of a discussion on the popularity of "foreign" art forms in Trinidad, she advised: "that's why I say you always have to look beneath the surface to get at the reality because some of these cultural manifestations are only the crust, and only contain vestiges of the truth" (Jane, September 28, 1991). Yet another striking example of this word usage was provided by a veteran Dragon masquerader: "This is serious business. When you play dragon, you become a dragon, you is that on that day...you see the mas' manifested in you....anything you play on Carnival Day becomes manifested through you" (Ken, February 18, 1992). Again, assumed is the reality of the "dragon" world which breaks into our social world through the mas'. *Jouvay*, then, provides the freedom and space for the unmasking of this "really real" *Trini* Self.

Through an analysis of colour, types of masquerade and celebratory style I argue that *jouvay* expresses and constitutes Trinidad's "primal" identity as a *callaloo* in which "pure" colours of hierarchy are reduced to a "mess" of colour, historically constructed human kinds to a primal "humanity", and an ordered social universe to a "bacchanal".

The "Colour" of Jouvay

The Self "exposed" at *jouvay* presents itself as "what is". The masquerade's colour scheme itself is loaded with meanings of social hierarchy and status, thus marking it as

"serious", not "fantasy". I want to underline, however, that these colours are not employed to "reflect" the social reality of skin-colour, but to express and constitute a new reality, the primal "true, true *Trini Self*" existing beneath the accoutrements of European colonial history and structure. Playing mas' with skin colour and identity is done in several ways. Firstly, revellers lighten, darken, cover or change skin colour at will, thus relativizing "colour" as a fixed and reified marker of distinct human kinds. Such actions imply another homogeneous "reality" beneath it all. Secondly, brown mud and paint are put on supposedly "brown" bodies, while black, blue and an assortment of "dark" paints and grease are rubbed on so-called "black" bodies. This radically undermines the notion that "skins" are actually produced in "blacks", "whites", and "browns". The comment, previously cited, made by the *jouway* reveller to TV audiences is surely pertinent here: "...(*the jab molassie*) is a very interesting mas' because originally the white French planters put the molasses on their bodies to imitate blacks, and then the blacks - BECAUSE NOBODY IS REALLY BLACK (my emphasis) - put on black molasses to imitate the whites imitating the blacks" (Masquerade - Trinidad and Tobago Television (TTT) documentary March 6, 1992). Finally, the colours "bleed" into each other, with both individuals and bands reduced to a chaotic mixture of the "dark" colours, a veritable *callaloo*. "White" is erased altogether, suggesting not a "rite of reversal" with the colour hierarchy re-arranged, but a playful subversion of "hierarchy" itself. The traditional colour of privilege and status is lost in the new colour scheme, and all "skins" reduced to a primal blue-black/brown "common humanity" in the mud-cocoa-paint-grease "bacchanal".

The Masquerades of *Jouvay*

Jouvay revellers show a marked preference for masquerades which express the "primal". Concepts of primality are often those which have been generated in past anthropological and colonialist discourse about the "native-Other" as wild, naked, sensual and free. Appropriated and re-valued by Trinidadians, "natives" become the privileged medium through which revellers express the "authentic" Self, unshackled from the "burdens" of history and oppressive social divisions and expectations. At *jouvay*, the streets are populated by Amerindians, African warriors and "devils" of all kinds. The "dirty devil" can be considered "primal" both historically and sociologically. It was one of the earliest masquerades in the post-Emancipation carnival, and its costuming and behaviour is ideally suited for the portrayal of the "freed-up" native Self. The mud revellers also suggest primality. Smearred in mud, "mudders" reject the "normal" requirements of human "civilization", re-valuing and "playing mas'" with "dirt", the elemental substance. This masquerade expresses an "original" Self which exists beneath the layers of so-called cultural achievements and hierarchial social divisions. The complexity of social life is reduced to simplicity, its historically constituted human kinds to a common humanity. Frequently, these "aborigines" are scantily clad, exposing a common physicality beneath the daily "mask" of social differentiation. The daring "exposure" of individual bodies parallels the unmasking of the "native" social body, this latter being the antithesis of the "civilized" and hierarchically ordered public Self.

Ole mas' portrayals of events, personages, gendered bodies, and "domestic" rituals

also suggest the same impulse to reveal the Self that lies behind the public facade, albeit through the use of old garments, rags, masks, padding, ladies' lingerie and night wear. Masqueraders use bodily coverings and exaggerated body parts - not mud, paint and grease - to "play mas'" with public proprieties and social appearances. Some *ole mas'* portrayals do affirm the existing state of social affairs or simply comment on them, for example, "Prime Minister Extend Olive Branch" and "Prime Minister float in D Dollar". Others, however, continue the tradition of humorously subverting the "serious" world of privilege and power by "exposing the truth" that lies beneath the "armour of respectability" (cf. C.R.L. James (1983[1963]:18). Franklyn Collins' 1992 *jouvay* portrayal of "Pamela Sick" is an example of this type of "exposure". Here the masquerader reduces the Member of Parliament to a "common humanity" by calling attention to her rumoured physical frailty. It should be noted that not all illnesses would provoke this Carnavalesque response. The widespread "gossip" that the Government Minister was unable to control her bodily evacuative functions made her open game for *jouvay* satirists obsessed with the "material bodily lower stratum" (cf. Bakhtin (1984 [1965]).

Jouvay's Ethos

Performative "style" has also been one of the features which has distinguished *jouvay* celebrations from the rest of the Carnival. Early *jouvay* chantwells had sung, "Monday morning Bacchanal, Tuesday morning Carnival" (Anthony 1989:16). For many, *jouvay* continues to be the quintessential expression of "Trinidad bacchanal". The term

"bacchanal", derived from the ancient Roman festival of the god, Bacchus, generally connotes images of orgiastic celebrations, frenzied dancing, drunken carousing and feasting. It does not seem surprising, then, that the word is used to describe the annual pre-Lenten Carnival. For Trinidadians, however, it carries far wider and more complex meanings with ambiguous moral overtones. It could be a positive, negative or amoral assessment of persons, situations or events depending on context and perspective (cf. Miller 1992:170-176).

A Trinidad and Tobago dictionary, *Côté ce Côté là*³⁰ (Mendes 1976:7), describes "bacchanal" as "Any large, noisy do (event). Scandal. Heavy quarreling. Big Party. Confusion". Basically, this definition suggests a way of being and behaving that eschews order, control and restraint. "Bacchanal" is the playful principle of deconstruction and chaos, the antithesis of hierarchically constructed systems of social order. Although Trinidadians are very ambivalent about its value, their usage of the term suggests that it is expressive of the "true nature" of their social Self. More often than not, Trinidadians describe themselves and their island's social life in terms of bacchanal: "We like we bacchanal too bad", "We full a' bacchanal", "We like too much bacchanal", "We are a bacchanal people". Often this is a proud assertion and indicator of Trinidad's "sweetness". Sometimes it is an entirely negative comment on the state of Trinidad's social life and ethos.

One connotation of bacchanal is "scandal". Often both words are used synonymously to describe the exposure of private deviation from public moral norms,

especially in the areas of sexuality and politics. In his 1992 calypso, Both of Them, the calypsonian, Mighty Sparrow, used both terms, scandal and bacchanal, interchangeably to describe a "moral" dilemma which he takes to another senior calypsonian, Kitchener, for advice. Sparrow is in love with Betty Lou, but Mary, (Betty Lou's sister) also wants "loving" from him. He is reluctant, but Mary assures him "the other ain't bound to know". She is, therefore, seeking a clandestine affair. Sparrow, a self-proclaimed "womanizer" in the calypso world, responds tongue-in-cheek to the "harassment":

"Just because I ain't like them scandal
 They have your pardner *tootoolbey* (confused; in a daze)
 Kitchener like all dem bacchanal
 So ah call Kitchie on the phone one day
 This is what the old man say" (Chorus)

David Rudder's 1988 calypso Bacchanal Woman also shows the synonymous linkage between the concepts of scandal and bacchanal: "Bacchanal woman, sweet scandal where she walks". Bacchanal as "scandal" connotes more than surreptitiously breaking the social norms. It also occurs when the behaviour is exposed. The revealed "bacchanal" also causes "bacchanal" (scandal).

For many, there is moral value in "causing scandal" as it publicly reveals the "truth" - the bacchanal - behind the mask of daily social life. Rudder's adjective sweet is commonly used to qualify "scandal" and suggests pleasure not only in the breaking of social rules, but also in unmasking the "bacchanal" that is a fundamental part of all social being. In the early 1980's, a period of intense popular debate about social disintegration and suspected "cover-ups" of questionable political deals, Sparrow sang his Prophet of

Doom (1983) calypso, proclaiming, "Questionable deals made in haste/Continue to grow and grow/Blatant refusals have replaced/The people's right to know". The desire and right to know has spawned a thriving weekly newspaper industry in the "bacchanalian" tradition, generically dubbed the "scandal papers" by the populace at large. These newspapers are self-proclaimed exposers of "bacchanal" ("the truth") and depend heavily on gossip, innuendo, rumours, and *mauvais langue* (ill-speaking) for their information. The names of these newspapers are also instructive: "the Bomb", "the Blast", "the Punch", "the Heat". They suggest demolition methods for blowing "the truth" into the open. Many Trinidadians read the weeklies to find out what is happening beneath the "facade" of social life. They believe that the "real" bacchanal goes un-reported or under-reported in the daily press which is perceived to be controlled by the "elites" and constrained by their views of social rectitude. "Bacchanal", then, evokes the notion of "truth", the exposure of the "real" through scandal. In this sense, it carries positive moral connotations, and is a powerful weapon in disarming and reducing the pretensions of "respectable" public figures.

The exposure of scandal is not simply an "intellectualist" or "moralistic" pursuit of truth, however. It is rooted in an aesthetic of ridicule and satirical humour to which Trinidadians respond with great pleasure. And therein, depending on perspective, lie the negative implications of "bacchanal". "Scandals" are enjoyed with voyeuristic delight, and are often "created" to indulge Trinidadians' need to know and "cut people down to size". It can be also argued that the perpetrators of "scandals" themselves create the need to

know by either representing gossip, rumours, hints and hunches as the "hidden" truth of social being or embellishing known "facts" with bacchanalian elements. "Bacchanal", then, is also understood to be the deliberate cause (and effect) of character assassination, conflicts, bitter arguments and *commess* (confusion associated with slander, gossip, *mauvais langue*, and wheeling and dealing).

The *patois* word, *commess* (from the French *commerage*) gives us the second clear connotation of the term "bacchanal", albeit a negative one. Bacchanal as *commess* can refer to situations, people and behaviour characterized by in-fighting and disruptive confusion. Thus confusion-makers (bacchanal people) can create a lot of dissension and strife (bacchanal situations) through gossip, slander, *mauvais langue* and loud and aggressive quarrelling (bacchanalian behaviour). Historically, this type of bacchanal has been part of the cluster of traits associated with the subaltern or *jamet* classes, but now the traits have been "exposed" and found to exist everywhere, especially among the "higher" classes. Not surprisingly, parliamentary sessions are often disparagingly dubbed "bacchanals".

Bacchanalian "confusion" need not be *commess*, however. In common usage, "bacchanal" as confusion or chaos is also heavily weighted with positive connotations. It is the subversive quality that undermines carefully constructed social systems of order and turns them upside down, inside out or simply reduces them to a common substratum. Trinidad is made "sweet" because of this quality - social and ethnic divisions are erased and life not taken too seriously. The delight in, and tolerance for "dis-order" is most

clearly expressed through an aesthetic which celebrates an improvisatorial "style" over and against exact "performances", whether these are social norms (in dress, speech, walk, for example) musical scores or scripted plays.

Perhaps the word that best captures this aesthetic is *ramajay*. According to Johnson (Sunday Express Magazine June 7, 1992:2), *Ramajay* is the English version of the *patois wamaje*, itself derived from the French *ramager* which means to warble, chirp or prattle. The *patois, wamaje*, was used by birdkeepers to describe their birds' most inspired whistling. The word carries connotations of display, showing off, playing to the gallery, "spontaneously improvised trills and riffs". To "ramajay" in musical performance, then, is greatly appreciated by Trinidadians and refers to stylistic improvisations by musicians on "given" musical scores.

During my fieldwork, I attended a popular religious festival which involved the beating of goat-skin drums to accompany floats in a procession along the public roads. Tradition required that five rounds of different "hands" (rhythms) be played consecutively by male drummers to represent and evoke the very solemn religious emotions associated with the festival. All day the drummers beat out the "fixed" traditional rhythms. However, as one group neared its "yard" at dusk, the drums went silent. Some drums changed hands, with three taken over by young women. Then, a *ramajay* session began which combined calypso rhythms with "traditional" Indian *tassa* "hands". The crowd following the drummers responded with smiles and obvious delight. Some moved to the rhythm. A bystander remarked approvingly, "This is real bacchanal". An hour later, back at the

"yard", one of the festival organizers used the same words to disapprove of the "break away"³¹ musical session that had concluded the procession. "Bacchanal", as used by the latter, was derisory.

It is not surprising, then, that big public events characterized by noisy crowds, loud music, and "dis-order" are called "bacchanals", especially if the event contains an element of dramatic surprise which causes some measure of confusion. Promoters of public *fêtes* (parties) often advertise these event in bacchanalian images, some examples being "*Soca Bacchanal at Soca Village*", "*Soca explosion*", "*Break away*", "*Come break down de place*", "*Commess at St. John's Hall tonight*", "*Jump like yuh Crazy*" (cf. Appendix D(i)). It should be noted that not all *fêtes*, thus described, turn out to be "bacchanals" in practice, but they are considered the models of, and models for, the "bacchanal" ethos.

Carnival is Trinidad's greatest *fête* of the year, and therefore, the ultimate expression of "bacchanal". But it is *jouvay*, the dawn celebration, which best explores, represents and constitutes "bacchanal" as a positive force and social ideal. *Jouvay* masqueraders revel in the "scandal" that exposes "truth" and reduces all people, no matter how they may be categorized socially, to a common corporeality. The colours of status are played with, denied, and mingled to unmask a Self that is native, egalitarian, and primal. "Confusion" is celebrated as the energy which produces social harmony and creativity, and the "space" through which the "real" Self can be expressed. Jouvay is an a-moral, neuter time for many Trinidadians, a return to psychic, social and temporal

"beginnings". A performance of Trinidad's "origin myth", *jouvay* expresses and constitutes a protean Self that is a fascinating mixture of subjunctive and indicative moods, identity and non-identity, complicity with and resistance to the colonialist past. Assumed is the colonialist discourse of the "native-Other" -wild, sensual, non-white - but now appropriated and celebrated as the Self which "plays mas'" with systems of moral and civic order and historical categories of identity. This is not simply an annual flirting with Otherness which marked the former "white" elite masquerades. Nor is *jouvay* simply the periodic "safety valve" which permits a pressured population to ritualize and express its frustrations in a contained space (cf. Brereton 1979:174; Johnson 1983: 178-179; Powrie 1988[1956]:95; Wood 1968:8-9). The contemporary dawn celebration uses imagination and masquerade to unmask the "world-as-it-is" for Trinidadians, the "real" world hidden beneath social systems of order. But in another sense, it is also the "world-as-it-ought-to-be", making the indicative and subjunctive moods hopelessly entangled in the Trinidadian's perception of Self. In his winning Road March of 1993, the calypsonian Super Blue, proclaims Carnival, "Bacchanal Time", and urges that "the party cya' done. No!" (The party cannot end). The ethos of *jouvay* is extended through to every day. The chorus asserts:

"Sunday - bacchanal
Monday - bacchanal
Tuesday - bacchanal
Wednesday - bacchanal
Thursday - bacchanal
Friday - bacchanal
Saturday - bacchanal
Everyday, everyday - bacchanal"

"Bacchanal time" is privileged time "'cause ah tell dem on dis plantation we run things tonight", and it gives revellers "freedom to express weself without fright (that's what we want!)". Certainly, these sentiments show a conscious linking of the hidden and powerless Self of the plantations to the now-exposed Self which claims the right to express "weself" without fear. *Jouvay's* bacchanalia, therefore, creates the "space" where this Self can be expressed. More than that, its yearly performance focuses the principle of "bacchanalia", constituting it as a powerful metaphor, albeit contested, in the constructing of the Trinidadian Self.

CHAPTER SEVEN

The Self Projected : "The Greatest Show On Earth"

From Devil To Rab¹

The transition from dawn bacchanal to daylight spectacle, from "dirty mas'" to "pretty mas'" was a difficult one for me. My seven hour "*chipping*" *jouvay* odyssey had taken its toll, transforming the operation of walking into a venture requiring extraordinary effort. Getting home, therefore, was a chore, as my leg muscles, anesthetized by the driving *soca*-rhythm, painfully adjusted to the demands of "ordinary" movement again. Luckily, there are series of home-made "cures" available in Trinidad for tired "Carnival feet". I willingly submitted to these, which included foot massages, the soaking of feet in buckets of water mixed with Epsom salts, and the rubbing of the juice of freshly picked limes on the sore muscles.

Then, there was the more problematic issue of the cocoa. A shower that morning could only be described as an experience of "cleansing", but in spite of vigorous scrubbing, patches of stubborn "cocoa" refused to budge. It was then that I realized that

the "cocoa" must have been mixed with an oil-based paint. For the entire Carnival, the lingering smell of cocoa seemed to ooze from my pores. Finally, there was the matter of sleep, an extended period of which I had not had since Friday night. I had "scheduled" a rest for myself between *jouvay* and the afternoon "act" of Monday. I had not, however, included in my plans the loud musical and verbal sounds which drifted in from the streets through the open windows. The outside din, reverberated with my own racing thoughts and tired limbs, allowing only a few fitful periods of sleep.

At midday, however, I was wide awake and felt ready for the second Carnival "performance" of the day. Trinidadians use the metaphor of the "jumbie" or "spirit" to explain the ability of Carnival participants to keep going in spite of physical limitations and tiredness. Expressions such as "when the Carnival spirit takes me, I can't help myself", "*pan* (steelband music) is meh *jumbie*", "the *jumbie* reach (has arrived)" suggest the submission of human subjects to an overpowering force, being or excitement which both seizes and helps them to transcend the ordinary. I must have been under the *jumbie's* spell as I headed off again to meet a car pool which had been arranged to get my group to the *Rabs Immortelle* mas' camp in Belmont, a working-class district in the Northern part of the city.

The hordes of "mudders" and "devils" had disappeared from the streets. Instead, the Main road was now the scene of individuals and groups, dressed in "minimal" brightly coloured costumes, on their way to the many mas' camps scattered throughout the city. A small band of thirty masqueraders from a nearby mas' camp had already begun its

Monday afternoon trek behind a lorry-borne "live" orchestra. A banner identified it as "Bacchanal with Surf and Things". Accordingly, the band members, some of them foreign visitors², were all costumed in colourful beach wear comprising of a variety of swim suits, beach wraps, cycling shorts, bikinis with wrap skirts, sailor tops, straw hats, sun glasses and umbrellas. This was the Carnival of "pretty mas'", with revellers adorned in "rainbow" colours projecting an image of the Trinidadian Self or the tourist found in local lore and tourist brochures: that of happy-go-lucky Trinidadians or tourist visitors who spend most of their time frolicking on the beach.

An analysis of the daylight "acts" of Carnival is especially significant as it reveals how the "national" Self is perceived and constructed *vis à vis* the "foreign" Other. According to the logic of nationalist discourse and practice, nations are bounded, distinct collectivities which exist over and against other entities (Anderson 1983:16; Handler 1988:6). Trinidad's government and media self-consciously represent Carnival to the rest of the world as the quintessential expression of Trinidad's "culture". Like "nations", "culture" is also understood as that entity which collectivities share in common and which distinguishes them from one another. Carnival, then, is conceptualized as the embodiment of Trinidad's "culture", and "culture" the embodiment of the national Self.

The presence of "foreign" audiences in the persons of media representatives and tourists at Carnival time serves to ratify Carnival as both the authentic show-case of Trinidadian "culture" and an object of ultimate value for Trinidadians themselves. The "daylight" Parade of Bands is projected by the Government-controlled National Carnival

Commission, local media and other producers of Carnival as "the Greatest Show on Earth". By definition, therefore, it is conceptualized as competing with the other "shows" on earth. This "show" is not the private Self of *jouvay* which strips away pretensions to expose (and rejoice in!) the "dirty linen" and skeletons in the "national" closet, but a self-conscious cultural production aimed at projecting a "pretty" and unique Self both to the nation itself and the world at large. A good example of the "spectacularization" of Carnival was presented in the Trinidad Guardian a month before the 1992 street "parade". Describing Carnival as "the Greatest Show on Earth", the Guardian's editor eulogized:

"Carnival in Trinidad is a unique and exciting spectacle, a festival of costume, music and dance which serves as no other national event to display the talent and effervescence of our multi-ethnic society. Let us amaze the rest of the world with it" (February 1, 1992:8).

Two assumptions underlie attempts to shape Carnival into a display of Trinidad's "culture" to the world: first, that a bounded cultural totality exists in Carnival which is expressive of a Trinidadian Self, and second, that this Self exists over and against distinctive foreign Others. Since political independence, the ever-increasing Government control of Carnival, and especially the Parade of Bands, has led some researchers and commentators to conclude that Carnival has been captured by the middle-class controlled State in the service of a "national" identity crafted in its own "pretty" and superficial image and likeness (cf. Crowley 1984:222; Johnson 1984:196; Stewart 1986:313). The arguments of these observers suggest that Carnival is not fully expressive of Trinidad's Self, that there exist oppositional and alternative themes which remain unexpressed in the "national" cultural production. I concur that Carnival is presently being crafted in

hegemonic discourse and practice as an "objectification" of Trinidad's "national" Self. My data suggests, however, that the festival itself is the site for multiple performances of the Self, some more muted than others, that undermine the consensual notions of "culture" and "national identity" proposed by social scientists and nationalists alike (cf. Handler 1988:13). The naming of the daylight "acts" of Carnival as the "Parade of Bands" is a case in point. The concept of "parade" conjures up images of participants and spectators, symbolic representations of social order and hierarchy, structure and performances which ratify and confirm hegemonic ideals and practices (cf. Farber 1983: 44; Turner 1986:49). Trinidad's masquerade performances become parade-like only as bands prepare to perform at several competition sites set up around the city. Otherwise, bands wander around the city in diverse directions, non-structured and with no clear lines of demarcation between spectators and participants.

Segal (1989:237) has argued that Trinidad's Carnival does not substantiate Trinidad's national existence, because it is "incomplete" as a symbol to objectify "the nation". I agree, insofar that Carnival as an "event" resists being captured for the "nationalist" project. Multiple selves are performed on the streets, with hegemonic and counter-hegemonic, "local" and "foreign" discourses and practices hopelessly entangled. The "Greatest Show on Earth" is produced and counter-produced as a multiple "event" by myriads of peoples differently situated in Trinidad's social structure: National Carnival Commissioners, producers, directors, spectators, participants, travel agents, technicians, musicians, foreign and local media personnel, and advertising agencies (cf. MacCannell

1976:24). Trinidadians are annually inserted into this cultural performance of Self, themselves producers and products of their "production". Paradoxically, Carnival does substantiate, represent, and constitute the "national" Self, not as the undifferentiated whole and bounded entity wished for by nationalists, but as a "bacchanal" of ethnic kinds, voices and practices simultaneously being differentiated and mixed into the "national" stew. In this chapter, then, I explore the state-controlled production of Trinidad's Self in "the Greatest Show on Earth", and the counter-productions and practices which project and constitute a "national" Self that is multiple, contradictory and consumeristic³.

My own costume on Carnival Monday afternoon was not in the "pretty" genre of "Bacchanal with Surf and Things". In fact, it was not a costume at all. I was dressed in red shorts and a white t-shirt on which was printed "RABS immortelle- from RABS to RICHES '92". My dress was the transformation of an older Carnival practice in which masqueraders saved their new and colourful costumes for Tuesday, and wore bits of old costumes or "ordinary" wear for the Monday celebration. *Rabs* organizers see themselves as continuing this tradition. I had questioned one of the band organizers about this practice of producing a "dressing down" version of the band on Monday, and a "dressing up" on Tuesday. He explained,

Well, it comes from our experience with the steelbands. In the hey-day of the steelbands, we used to play a cheap mas' on Monday and something else on Tuesday. Here in Belmont we had a lot of steelbands, and at one time we had at least six steelbands in the area. So on Carnival Monday we play mas' in one thing, and on Tuesday something else.....So when we started to bring out our own band, we decided that we going back to playing one thing on Monday and another on Tuesday. What we tried to do, however, is to incorporate in some way the theme of Tuesday in our band on Monday, but that is mainly for the sake of the competition (Ted, interview at mas' camp on October 15, 1991)

We arrived at our mas' camp in Belmont at one o'clock in the afternoon as instructed. Other band members were milling around in front of the camp. Some sat on curbs, others stood under shop awnings and a few of us took refuge in a tiny family store which sold everything from pop and chips to handkerchiefs and hats. Outside, the musicians from the "Projection Brass Band" were tuning up their instruments from the lorry, but there was no evidence that departure was imminent. A co-occupant of the store intimated that the late *jouvay* was the probable cause of the delay, but no one seemed to mind as groups and individuals appropriated little spaces for themselves along Norfolk Street to chat or simply to doze in the hot midday sun. Many, like ourselves, were still recovering from *jouvay*. A pub at a nearby corner did a thriving business.

At two o'clock, the orchestra broke into the calypsonian Crazy's controversial musical contribution for Carnival 1992, *Penelope*. Much bile and ink had been spilt on the "morality" of its lyrics during the entire Carnival season, with some radio and *fête* disc-jockeys erasing it from their musical repertoires. Crazy's lyrics were a strong statement against the sexual harassment of women at parties, but the defiant words he put into the mouth of the woman in the calypso chorus brought both howls of protest and statements of support from the population at large (cf. Trinidad Guardian February 4, 1992:1; March 7, 1992:8; March 8, 1992:12):

verse 1

Mr. Peter come in the *fête*
 Looking for somebody to rope
 But like woman was hard to get

Until he bounce up with Penelope
 And in front everybody
 He was trying to jam she
 She turn and she ask he
 Why you harassing me

CHORUS

She say, if you can't get a woman - take a man
 It's the only solution - take a man
 If you feeling for somebody in the party
 Why don't you take a man.

De-contextualized from the rest of the calypso, the chorus lines could easily be interpreted as Crazy's promotion of homosexuality, and it was thus interpreted by many of his detractors. Here on the streets of Belmont, however, the calypso's lyrical "meanings" were transcended as revellers submitted to the mood and feeling of its "hot" rhythm. Yet, even as the music brought us together as one band, we were viscerally situated in a space weighted with multiple meanings and contradictory practices.

The slow movement of the lorry from the curb signalled to the dispersed and lethargic band members that the *fête* had begun. Within seconds, a transformed crowd of about two hundred revellers had gathered around the lorry, itself preceded by two revellers carrying a banner which identified the names of the band organizers, the music band and the band's masquerade presentation. I noticed that about seventy-five percent of the revellers were women.

The "Family" of *Rabs Immortelle*

The *Rabs Immortelle* mas' band is run by a committee of male friends, many originally from Belmont, but now no longer exclusively living in that area. During a few

extended visits to the mas' camp cum tailor shop on Norfolk Street, I was informally introduced to the group's history and "philosophy" by a committee member, as he himself worked on costumes for the 1992 Carnival. Ted traced the roots of the group to the 1960's when the school boys of the Belmont area got together to form two sports' teams, the "Rascals" for the older fellows, and the "Bunters", the younger team. After graduating from school, both groups decided to merge into one group under the new name of *Rabs*, a local term used synonymously with "rascals" or "ragamuffins". In 1981, *Rabs* commemorated their 20th year of group association by adding "immortelle" to their name. When pressed about the significance of the addition, Ted replied, "*Immortelle* comes from the immortelle tree we have here in Trinidad, it means *Rabs* could never die". *Rabs* got involved in Carnival in the early years of the group's existence. They participated as organizers of "sections" in the bigger Port of Spain masquerade bands which were produced by popular band-leaders such as Harold Saldenah and Peter Minshall.

In 1982, however, *Rabs Immortelle* decided to produce its own mas' band, and had done so every year since then. Their 1992 *From Rabs to Riches*, was a nine section presentation of the evolution of the band, with each section representing costumes taken from each year of their band's Carnival participation. Ted intimated that the original idea behind *Rabs to Riches* was satiric, a play on notions of rich and poor, especially as applied to the "industrial" and "third world" countries: "The industrial countries are the rich countries, the third world countries are poor - the rabs. Yet for their survival dem so-called rich countries have to depend on the third world countries for raw material, brains

and labour, so who really rich and who really poor, eh?". A committee discussion, however, dropped the idea of a satire -"it was too much effort, or too much whatever" - which led to the application of the theme to their own success in producing bands over the decade.

Rabs Immortelle represents its masquerade band as a "family" or "community". Committee members consciously set out to project and create an "alternative" in contrast to the big bands of present-day Carnival. "If you don't feel like losing yourself in the melée and confusion of a big band, then try a medium band like *Rabs immortelle*" (Trinidad Express 25.2.92: 41). While most bands in the "big band" category comprise 1000 to 4000 members, *Rabs* has about 350 at most. Its motto for Carnival 1992 was "Play mas', not competition", again underlining the image of a close-knit group of people who "play mas'" together for the "fun of it", and not for "competition". Ted stressed that producing the masquerade was not the business venture it had become for other bands. Costumes were put together largely by friends, family and community volunteers which made it possible to sell costumes at a relatively inexpensive price. In 1992, *Rabs* charged a nominal fee of \$300.00 (TT)⁴ to "play mas'" with their group. This fee covered the cost of the Monday t-shirt, Tuesday costume, music, and a Tuesday lunch. This figure is considerably lower than that charged by the "big" masquerade bands whose prices were in the \$400.00 - \$1,000.00 (TT) range for the 1992 costumes. Further, "big" bands do not serve lunch to their members. A great portion of the band's incoming revenue is paid to the music-makers. The Brass Band and DJ cost *Rabs* a total of \$30,000.00 (TT) for both

days of Carnival (Ted, interview on October 15, 1991). This is considerably less, however, than the prices charged by the bigger and well-known orchestras that play for the "big" masquerade bands.

Rabs represents itself not only as "a community", but for "the community". Even though most of the band membership comes from outside the Belmont area, *Rabs* identifies itself with Belmont and projects itself as a grass-root "community service club". Profits made from Carnival and other activities are ear-marked for community projects, like the organizing of sports for youth of the area. Again, Ted contrasted this profit-sharing practice to the "business" approach of many bands where the profits remain with the band organizers.

The core committee of *Rabs Immortelle* are all men. Ted was unapologetic when I questioned him about the male-female ratio in his group. Smiling mischievously, he simply responded: "We is a male chauvinist group". Asked to elaborate on the reasons for the all-male composition, he replied:

That's how we started off and that's just the way it evolved. And we never really encouraged it otherwise. But then again, if we have anything to do, we obviously check out the ladies, and they do it, no problem with us. They don't get any horrors from us. When it comes to things like decision-making and thing, that is done exclusively by us. But the wives sew for us at Carnival time and help us here in the camp.....But remember, long time women wasn't too much involved with Carnival. In the steelband days, bands used to have 4,000 to 5,000 playing with them, and the male-female ratio was about 70:30....As a school boy I get "licks" (a beating) by my grandmother for standing and watching in a steelband yard even though most of the little fellas in the yard were in school with me. To be involved in mas' and calypso and steelband, you was an outcast, and too many women weren't around in that steelband time (Interview on October 15, 1991).

Although the band is male-produced and designed, the majority of its membership

are women. According to Ted, their band is "actually about eighty percent female". No hard figures were available, but his perception seemed to be accurate based on my own observations on Carnival days. This skewed ratio raises the issue of "security" for the band organizers, the assumption being that "women-unaccompanied-by-men" are fair game for "cruising" or predatory males who may join the band. The Committee, therefore, assumed the role of policing the band in order to protect the *Rabs* "family" from unwanted or unpleasant harassment: "People have a right to express themselves and have fun without other people bothering them" (Ted). Only on two occasions did I observe the need for "policing" on Carnival days, however: in one incident, an intoxicated male intruder was gently directed to the side-walk by a Committee member; and in the other, a young male was swarmed by three Committee members after he annoyed revellers by aggressively appropriating band "space" with wild leaping antics.

My reasons for "playing mas'" with *Rabs Immortelle* were several. The "anthropologist" in me was attracted to the "Other" in Carnival, the relatively "small" band from working-class Belmont which self-consciously constructed itself as an "alternative" to the big, pre-dominantly middle-class bands which originate on the western side of the Savannah. In their own way, the participants and producers of the *Rabs* band were resisting the hegemonic discourse and practices of the modern Carnival spectacle, while negotiating a place within it. The practice of different "costumes" for Monday and Tuesday, the provision of a meal, and the conceptualizing of the band as "family" and "community" based on non-profit and "fun" relationships were clear attempts to create a

more "authentic" version of the Trinidadian Self rooted in a selective representation of a more communal and working-class past (cf. Handler and Linnekin 1984; Linnekin 1992:251). Secondly, there was the more pragmatic issue of accessibility. The producers of the more "prestigious" masquerade bands are very "busy" people, widely sought after for interviews by local and foreign media. Interviews, when granted to me, were constrained by time and also by a sense that the interviewees were already over-questioned and over-exposed. In the *Rabs* mas' camp, the pace was leisurely, conversations not structured by time, and one committee member at least, was delighted with the opportunity to tell his story. This easy accessibility and the pre-Carnival relationship built up with the group added to its attraction. Thirdly, while the "big" bands offered more professional music and elaborate costumes, their prices were very high. *Rabs'* relatively lower price suited my pocket. Finally, I knew people who had participated in *Rabs* presentations for several years. They both assured me of a "good time", and provided me with the necessary companionship for "playing mas'" on Carnival days.

Playing Mas' with *Rabs*

Leaving the mas' camp on Carnival Monday afternoon, the banner pointed us towards the heart of Belmont. Bands normally leave the suburbs and peripheral districts of Port of Spain and head towards the Queen's Park Savannah or the city's inner core. We moved instead in the opposite direction, a symbolic gesture of bringing the band into

the core of the community from which it came, and with which it still identified. Ted had explained that this practice gave house-bound residents an opportunity to actually see some "real mas'", a privilege now denied them because of the absence of Carnival activity in Belmont. The absence of "passing" bands on the streets of Belmont is a result, not only of the centralization of Carnival in the core areas of the city, but also of the physical inability of its narrow streets, most of them lanes, to contain the masses of people and huge music lorries which now make up a single Carnival band. St. James, for instance, although a district on the western periphery of the city, attracts a fair number of Carnival bands because of its relatively wider streets and open spaces to "play mas'". Belmont, on the other hand, is built on a much smaller scale, against the northern range of hills, and even our relatively small band had trouble maneuvering the lanes. As we danced along, electric and telephone wires had to be lifted out of the way of the music-lorry by a man with a forked wooden pole who sat on the roof of the covered vehicle⁵. In one instance, a parked car was physically lifted off the street to the sidewalk by revellers, so that the music lorry could turn into a side lane.

Belmont residents living along a one-mile stretch on the Belmont Circular Road were clearly delighted to see our band. People stood on their porches and on the sidewalk, dancing to the music and waving to an occasional friend in the band. Many of the spectators were elderly or adults with young children. Our trek through Belmont lasted about an hour, and then we headed towards the Savannah stage, about two miles away. The roads were clear, with few "spectators" on the sidewalks. Food and drink vendors

lined the outer perimeter of the Savannah, the "lucky" ones in temporarily Government-constructed concession booths, the others selling from portable carts, trays or self-constructed stands. Individual vendors were also positioned along the unpaved and dusty "track"⁶ that led to the stage within the Savannah. Because of cholera cases in nearby Venezuela which created a "scare" that led to calls from certain sectors of the society to cancel Carnival, some vendors displayed signs reassuring potential customers of cleanliness and the use of boiled water. And again, there were the omnipresent beer-bottle collectors, predominantly young boys and men carrying sacks, who fought with each other and sometimes with revellers for the much coveted "empties".

The stage was clear as we approached, and our "performance" before the judges lasted about twenty minutes. About 25% or less of the seats in the Grand and North Stands were occupied, but the cameras were there beaming us "live" to "the nation". Again, the lack of a huge "live" audience did not seem to dampen the spirit of the revellers. Band members immediately became more animated and lively on entering the stage, with some groups lingering before the television cameras to be "projected" back home to friends and family. I noticed a group of about five young women and a man who, on becoming aware of a TV camera close by, "wined" on each other, and then in a line. It was a "dance routine" that was to be performed by this particular group of revellers several times during the two days of Carnival, and it was almost certain to occur whenever they were "on show" either at competitions or before "movie" cameras.

After the Savannah, the band made its way "downtown" to the competition at

Independence Square. Again, the city streets were relatively clear, and we moved freely until we approached the core of the city. Two big colourful bands were ahead of us and crowds of spectators were thicker on Independence Square and Frederick street, the main street of the city. Nonetheless, we were able to move, albeit slowly, until it was our turn to "perform" before the "downtown" judges and the spectators in temporarily constructed stands on Independence Square. The "stage" on Independence Square is the street, and "performance" here simply meant dancing past the judges' enclosure. Lack of a grand stage and "national" television audiences did not encourage the "lingering" associated with Savannah performances, and soon we were headed out of the city's core to competitions in Victoria and Adam Smith Squares in the southwestern suburbs of the city. Along Frederick street we were cut off by a band of "soldiers", mostly male, dressed in army "fatigues" following a DJ on a small truck. They moved aggressively along a street which intersected with Frederick and did not stop, even though our entire band had not cleared the intersection. They ploughed through the tail-end of our band, leaving some *Rabs* members visibly upset and angry. The "soldiers" moved past as quickly as they came, however. Re-grouped, our band then continued its happy trek along the relatively uncluttered streets of Port of Spain.

At six-thirty in the evening, my companions and I decided we had enough. Except for the mid-morning break, we had been on the move since two o'clock in the morning. Once again, the transition from "*chipping*" to "walking" was painful. Our physical discomfort was made even worse by the realization that we had no means of vehicular

transportation to get home, two miles away. Among Trinidadians, the obvious solution to this problem is to find another band going in the direction of home. We did. On Tragarete Road, a huge mas' band with about 3,000 or more members, costumed and non-costumed, was slowly moving towards St. James accompanied by three big music orchestras. Both the crowd and tempo were upbeat, and I could feel exhaustion evaporating as the music and revellers literally "carried" us home. That night I stayed at home to review the day's "event" that had been taped from the television. From the Main Road, I could hear *soca* music and the "*chipping*" of feet from the passing bands as they moved to and from St. James. At eleven o'clock, when I finally got to bed, it was to the strains of Nat and Natalie Cole's, "Unforgettable", played by a steelband moving slowly down the Main Road. But I was wide awake again at three o'clock in the morning. A band was coming up our street, its DJ blaring Crazy's "The party cyar done" (The party cannot end). From the darkened porch, I viewed the passing band of colourful clowns and non-costumed revellers. Yet another "act" of Carnival was being performed even as I slept.

Carnival Tuesday morning came all too quickly. The sound of voices, traffic and movement on the streets outside made sleep very difficult after seven o'clock. Fighting both tired muscles and an attack of sinusitis, I put on my "new" costume for the Tuesday masquerade. My costume consisted of four separate pieces of green, yellow and red material, cut in the shape of "flames". One piece served as a wrap, the other a drape for the shoulders, with two smaller bits for knee bands. A headpiece and a staff, depicting

yellow and red flames, completed the outfit. I belonged to the *Canboulay* section of the band, and my costume was a representation of the cane-fires, the *cannes brulées*. At nine o'clock, the Main road was already busy with colourful masqueraders on their way to meet their respective bands. Most costumes in the present-day Carnival fall into the creative or fantasy category, so it was difficult to know what individual costumes portrayed outside the context of their bands. My companions were themselves costumed and ready for another day of "mas' playing". Packed into a small pick-up truck, we were driven by a friend to the mas' camp in Belmont.

Belmont was filled with masqueraders. *Rabs* revellers, about one hundred more than the previous day, milled around the mas' camp on Norfolk Street creating a sea of bright colours. Even though the costumes had been mass produced by volunteers and paid workers in mas' camps, homes and factories, I noticed that most masqueraders had adjusted their costumes, creating their own personal designs. Some costumes were cut down to smaller proportions, others had pieces added to them. Miller (1987) has argued that consumption, as much as production, can be interpreted as a process through which people objectify and create themselves in the expressivist tradition. Here, individual masqueraders had appropriated the ready-made product of someone else's imagination, shaping and reconstituting it in the process. A few streets away, another band of about 800 masqueraders, Legends of the Sea, was gathering at its mas' camp. Our music band was having difficulty with its electrical sound system, and so yet again our "departure" was delayed by almost an hour. Tuesday's revellers seemed annoyed, however, and

clearly showed displeasure by grumbling both to organizers and to each other. The late start, however, gave me the opportunity to observe Jason Griffith's Legends of the Sea on its way to the Savannah.

Jason Griffith from Belmont is perhaps the only band leader in Port of Spain who has been consistently producing bands with a "sailor" motif over the years. I had interviewed him at his home cum mas' camp some months before Carnival, when he had shown me head-pieces already in the making. Griffith had been involved in mas' making since 1946. In 1949, he organized his own small group of masqueraders, and about twenty years later started to produce his own mas' bands on a much larger scale. "I was born a sailor, I will die a sailor", Griffith confessed. "Sailor" was the favorite masquerade of young men in the mid-twentieth century, and was particularly popular with the early steelbands who brought out "sailor" bands numbering two thousand revelers or more. The trend towards playing "Yankee Sailors" reportedly began in 1907 when Trinidad hosted the United States Atlantic Fleet for the first time (Hill 1972:94). Subsequent visits to the island by U.S. sailors, especially during World War II, and their permanent presence at the Chaguaramas Base, provided further models for imitation and transformation.

"Sailor bands" were predominantly male and had metamorphosed over time into several kinds (Crowley 1988[1956]:53-63). "Sailors Ashore" wore the traditional white uniforms of the U.S. Navy, with their white sailor hats worn jauntily at the back of the head or pulled down over the eyes. Perhaps the most popular kind of "sailor" masques were those known as "bad behaviour" sailors, an imitation of the "bad behaviour" of

American sailors ashore in Port of Spain. The "sailor" masquerade provided a vehicle for the caricature of the foreign Other. But more than that, the "sailor" was the appropriated medium for the expression of the non-respectable, iconoclastic Self traditionally associated with the *jamet* classes, especially "black" urban males. "Sailors" usually smoked "pipes" and carried an assortment of souvenirs identified in the popular mind with sailors, for instance, cardboard dice or bits of feminine lingerie, sometimes stained with "blood", a variation of the *pissenlit* masquerade which was banned at the end of the nineteenth century. Sailor costumes were uniformly white, although some sailor suits were suggestively embellished with lipstick smudges on various parts of the costume. By the end of Carnival Tuesday, however, many costumes were transformed into muddy and dirty whites as "sailors" rolled on the streets and in "canals" as part of the image of the "bad behaviour" drunken sailors. Some "sailors" imitated drunkenness, others became very drunk as part of their portrayal. The portrayal of "bad behaviour" also included leering at women or throwing talcum powder or flour on other masqueraders and spectators, until the practice was made illegal because of the danger to the eyes. "Bad behaviour" sailors had special "performance routines". The "sailor dance" mimicked drunkenness as individual sailors staggered from right to left, sometimes pirouetting, somersaulting and tumbling on the streets. Together, a line of about eight or more would walk abreast of each other with arms stretched across each others' shoulders. The line moved a few steps to the left, then a few to the right in a performance of "drunkenness" called "rocking the ship". Sometimes this performance included the entire band, with alternate lines moving

in opposite directions, and "sailors" whistling or singing U.S. Navy songs such as "Anchors Aweigh" to the accompanying music of the steelband (Crowley 1988 [1956]:56).

A variation of these "sailor" bands emerged after World War II. Known as "fancy sailor" bands, their costumes were still the basic U.S. naval uniform, but the original white naval dress was transformed into something new. Again, the process seems to have been that of appropriation and reconstitution through colourful embellishments of ribbons, braiding, rosettes, medallions, sequins, rhinestones, paintings and insignia attached to various parts of the uniforms. Huge colourful headpieces in the likeness of birds, animals, plants, insects, mechanical models and historical themes were also added, making the "fancy sailor" simultaneously a generic type and an individual, a consumer and producer, a figure of fantasy and reality.

Griffith's bands are in the tradition of the "fancy sailor". However, he eschews the use of "giant" headpieces which he sees as detrimental to the sailor's performance. In the early 1950's, the molded headgear of some "fancy sailors" grew in size and weight which severely curtailed the lively movements associated with sailors. Griffith recounted gathering a small group of about six mobile "fancy sailors" who went downtown to "make style" (show off) on the burden-toting "sailors". At that time, masquerades were still performed between individuals and groups, with each competing for superiority in performance over the others. An individual with his followers, or a small group, would roam the city seeking out like masqueraders. A challenge would be made, then each group

or individual would try to out-perform the other, either in dance, speech or action. The characteristic performance of the "fancy sailor" was dance. The routine involved sticking out the abdomen and buttocks, and making loose circles with the legs. The shoulders would be hunched, and backward and forward movements made with the head. Little hops were made to move forward, with the masquerader sometimes landing on the inside edges of his feet. Meanwhile, with his hands, the "sailor" would pantomime different activities such as driving a car, flying a kite or making love (Crowley 1988 [1956]:60).

As I watched Griffith's band pass by on Carnival Tuesday morning, I observed continuities with the "sailor" tradition in the masquerade of the revellers. Most of the costumes were constructed around the basic sailor uniform - sailor-type tunics and bell-bottom trousers. There were small sections of powder-covered, pipe-smoking "sailors" in white uniforms, decorated white-gloved "officers", and the "firemen" or stokers who were also part of the traditional "sailor bands". More numerous, however, were the sections of "fancy sailors" whose small headpieces depicted a variety of creatures related to "legends of the sea".

However, the discontinuities with past traditions of similar masquerading were sharp. I noticed there was no performance of the "sailor dance" by the band members, a fact that had been lamented by Griffith himself during our interview several months earlier. According to Griffith, most of his band members do not know how to perform the dance, nor are they interested in doing so. He had hoped to start classes to pass on the "art", but was pessimistic about people coming out to practice. In earlier years,

masqueraders practiced their routines before Carnival, a notion which now seems diametrically opposed to the concept of Carnival as the spontaneous and free expression of the Self. I also observed that even though the sailor motif in costuming was evident, the basic whites and dark colours of "military" uniforms had changed. The band now included sections of multi-coloured sailor outfits, as well as costumes that bore no resemblance to the traditional "sailors" at all. Griffith had earlier explained that he had changed the concept of the band in the early 1980's to attract more people. Band numbers were dwindling as "young" masqueraders were gravitating to the "historical" bands, and no longer seemed interested in playing "sailors". "Historical" bands portray events or epochs from modern or ancient history which may be factual, legendary or literary. Griffith, therefore, decided to incorporate "historical themes" in his "fancy sailor" band to make his band more colourful. He did so by including masquerades of famous navigators and the peoples they met on their "voyages" to real and legendary places. The 1992 portrayal, Legends of the Sea, was inspired by the quincentennial anniversary of Columbus' voyages to the Caribbean. Griffith complained, however, that the judges do not recognize the "historical" dimension of his portrayal, and continue to see his band simply as a "fancy sailor band".

Perhaps, the core of his band shares this perception as well. Many "older" masqueraders play in Griffith's band because of its "sailor" tradition. This pattern of participation encourages a popular perception that Griffith's band is a "geriatric band", a label that makes Griffith angry and defensive. "Just as no one has recognized the

incorporation of history ten years ago", he argued, "so, too, people don't see that my band is made up of people of all ages". But his band, in fact, does attract not only the older masquerader, but the "black" male masquerader. While most present bands are predominantly female, this band of "fancy sailors" has an almost even distribution of males and females. Griffith estimated that the men - women ratio was roughly 60:40. Even though the gap in proportional representation has narrowed significantly from former days, the continued presence of relatively larger numbers of men in this band suggests that the "sailor" masquerade embodies, for some older males at least, the male Self in a way that more recent masquerades do not.

Our band, three hundred revellers celebrating from Rabs to Riches, finally moved off at ten o'clock behind Griffith's band. Significantly, our route on Tuesday did not take us into Belmont; instead, our banner led us straight to the Savannah stage about two miles away. The road was relatively clear of both traffic and spectators and we had a pleasurable and comfortable "jump up" *en route*. In the distance, I could "see" the *soca* music hovering over the Savannah in clouds of dust, as bands unsettled the earth as they "tracked" their way to the stage. One of my companions remarked excitedly, "De Savannah on fire already!". And it was. As we approached the lone entrance to "the track" along the eastern perimeter of the Savannah, I could see that it was jammed with both spectators and participants. Bands were stretched all along "the track" and into Frederick Street, with which the track is continuous. Masqueraders flowed into each other's bands, sharing temporal "parade" space with spectators and non-masqueraders and creating a

virtual mess of colour and kinds. The air itself was saturated with calypso and *soca* rhythms, with each music band creating its own territory of sound, yet contributing to the much greater cacophony of indistinguishable sounds. Our band and Griffith's were approaching from the east, and needed to filter into the line-up. A bottleneck had been created and we were stuck at ten-thirty in the morning, a mere half hour after leaving our mas' camp in Belmont. Policemen on horse-back tried valiantly to keep the "track" entrance free of spectators, but the "contest" between mounted police-men, people and masqueraders was on-going, and sometimes acrimonious.

Our music band continued to play, but no one danced. Faces in our band showed a variety of emotions. Some people fumed, some resignedly stood or sat on the sidewalks, while others gathered in small groups to eat, drink and "socialize". Although *Rabs* organizers had constructed their band as an alternative to the hegemonic Carnival discourse and practice, they, nevertheless, waited more than three hours to appear on the "national" stage for competitions. The heat and glare of the sun were unrelenting, so my own group of Carnival companions sought out a coconut-vendor and retired under a tree in a nearby park to drink coconut-water. Always the anthropologist, however, I decided to walk around for the purpose of "observing", or as one of friends mischievously translated, I was off "to *maco* the scene". *Maco* is a local term for a person who spies or minds other people's business, usually for the purpose of gossip and scandal. I suppose my constant desire to know and see what was going on made the translation fairly, if not completely, accurate.

A colourful band of about 3,000 masqueraders, Westward to Cipangu, was squeezing itself onto the track from Frederick Street in a narrow file. The crowd of spectators at the Savannah's entrance was about ten deep, so I decided to walk down through the bands on Frederick Street for a better view. The crowds were dense, but I was able to observe a dozen or more bands of different sizes and kinds resignedly awaiting their turn to appear on stage before "the nation". Sandwiched between two big bands was a small group of "dragons" and "imps", The Legions of the Red Dragon, who were unaccompanied by a music band⁷. The "King" of the band was dressed in gold and red lamé robes, with golden wings and a huge molded mask of a white "Lucifer" pushed up over his head. The "Queen" was costumed in gold and black. Huge gold wings were carried on her back, and six five foot long trumpets were mounted at the front of her costume. The King and Queen were "escorted" by some adults in an assortment of "devil" costumes and by about seven small red and gold "imps" with wings. They all stood there, perspiring in the sweltering sun and looking bored. The children, in particular, looked miserable.

The immobile dragon band immediately evoked for me the title of the Earl Lovelace's novel published in 1979, The Dragon Can't Dance. Although Lovelace used the image metaphorically, it is an apt description of the fate of the modern "dragon" masquerader. The original "dragon" masquerade was a dance performance. "Dragons" and their troupes roamed the streets performing elaborate rituals, especially dance routines known as "the fight of the Beast" and the "ballet" of the "Crossing of the Water"

(Procope 1988[1956]:193). There are very few "dragon" masqueraders left who know and perform these routines on the streets of Port of Spain. I was able to interview three of them, all men over sixty, who lived in the economically "poorer" areas of the city. They complained about being "squeezed out" of the Carnival by the big bands and the organizers of the National Carnival Commission competitions. I suspected that "big" in our conversations referred not only to the size of the band, but to the people who produced and played in them. One "dragon" masquerader related an incident that had occurred the previous year:

The people in these big bands misbehave. They have no regard for small bands and look to run through it. I had an encounter with a big, well-known band last year. They bring their band's banner right up to the children's wings and hook them up. They give us no room at all. I asked them to leave a little space between us so that our band won't hook up the banner when the wind take it....They start to misbehave and carry on just because we small...This kind of behaviour ent nice. But being as they are a large band they think they could get away from it (Boodoo- Interview at work-place on January 30, 1992).

And another had complained:

All them big people killing mas'. The small man don't get a chance to do his dance - they does hustle you off the stage to give them big bands a chance. You get no encouragement at all. Our dragon performance does take about 20 minutes - that's too much time they say. Soon as you get on stage you have to move off, but them big bands does stay two and three hours. They does call dragon "ole mas'", but this is not "ole mas'", but "old time" mas' (Ken- Interview in pub on February 2, 1992).

In the line-up to get on stage, the Dragon band, like thousands of other masqueraders that morning, found it impossible to dance.

I returned to my own band an hour later. It had just begun to slowly filter onto the track behind the "sailors". At least, we were on the home stretch, but the trek which had taken us thirty minutes the day before, now took us two hours and thirty minutes.

Ahead of us there was a very large band, and eight other bands in the small and medium categories. I decided to sit out the wait and "observe" from under a large tree on the periphery of the Savannah. The midday sun was unrelenting and many masqueraders sought out shade wherever it could be found. Around two o'clock, our band approached the stage. Calls came from the music lorry to "get in yuh section". Names of sections were called out and people re-grouped accordingly, with non-costumed followers removing themselves to the edge of the band. What, until then, had been a motley group of dis-organized and scattered masqueraders was now transformed into a band "ordered" into sections of similar costumes.

Dancing to the tune of Penelope, section after section crossed the stage in a wild burst of energy and enthusiasm. Caged for more than three hours, *Rabs* "performed" for the spectator-filled Stands and the T.V. cameras, *chipping*, jumping, prancing, wining and gyrating. Our *Canboulay* section was the first to cross the stage. Officials stood at intervals signalling with both hands that we should move on. Most revellers lingered on stage, however, some merging into on-coming sections, others circling back to begin their stage "performance" all over again. Masqueraders had waited hours for this moment and were not about to relinquish the spot- light too quickly. Nonetheless, we were ushered off the stage after fifteen minutes, with some revellers stubbornly resisting the officials' effort to clear the area for the next band. One masquerader grumbled to a companion: "We spend all this time waiting to get on stage and all they want to do is hustle you off. I ent moving nowhere".

Kicking up a cloud of dust, our band made its way out of the Savannah to the Grey Street park for lunch. We sat under trees and on benches as boxed lunches and drinks were served to *Rabs* masqueraders. Exhausted more from the heat and the immobility than from movement, my own group of companions discussed plans for the rest of the evening. Two opted to return home, while the rest decided to continue with the expectation of getting the opportunity to "really play mas'". *Rab* organizers, however, decided to head for the other competitions. Access to the Victoria Square competition was easy, but as we paraded before the judges, the amplifiers on our music lorry blew and the music suddenly stopped. Frustrated, our group left *Rabs* and joined another band heading in the direction of home. But this was not the unmitigated disaster it seemed at first. Much of the Carnival activity had shifted to St. James and its environs. Many bands, attracted to the district's relatively wide and uncluttered streets, were making their way there after enduring hours of immobility at the Savannah and in the city's inner core. I, therefore, was afforded the unexpected opportunity to observe a number of masquerade bands from the side-walk as spectator, and not participant. Exchanging my *Canboulay* staff for a camera, I quickly made my way out to the streets again, intent on "capturing" some of the action on film. It was 5 o'clock in the evening.

The *Rab* Observes

At the Roxy Roundabout, four roads meet and filter into the Main Road running through St. James. On two of these "tributaries" I found bands slowly making their way

West to the roundabout. At the roundabout itself, masqueraders from a very large colourful band Cruisin' were relaxing along curbs and at a nearby Park. Most of the costumes were "brief", and the revellers, costumed and non-costumed, appeared to be predominantly young adults, especially women. Three "silent" music lorries stood at intervals along the road, the musicians resting after hours of non-stop music. Music continued from a fourth truck, however, supplied by a DJ who played taped *soca* music. Cruisin' was one of the many bands that portrayed the theme of "sea-voyaging", a choice inspired by the 500th anniversary in 1992 of Columbus' journey westward.

While most bands portrayed the "peoples and cultures" encountered by Columbus, Cruisin' inverted the voyage. The ship leaves Trinidad and Tobago, "where Carnival is celebrated"⁸, and takes its explorers to other ports of the world where different "cultures" and festivals are encountered. The point of departure is radically re-centred in the Caribbean and the new "voyage of discovery" reconceptualized as a leisurely "cruise". The "cruise" conjures up images of fun and pleasure, a radical alternative to the original voyage interpreted either as "glorious achievement" or "genocide" in the dominant representations of the Columbus "event". The Trinidadian is recast as a fun-lover and pleasure-"discoverer" who "cruises", not to prove theories, plunder riches or destroy peoples, but to celebrate the many festivals around the world. Significantly, the organizing Committee of this band is called "Fun Lovers" who chose to boycott the Savannah competition because of the hours spent waiting to appear on stage. Although their costumes were expensive, the band attracted about 2,000 masqueraders, many of whom

cited the freedom "to play mas'" all day as the major source of attraction.

At the far end of St. Clair avenue, I encountered the band Wildness. A band of 600 registered masqueraders, it had now grown to three times that number as non-costumed revellers joined masqueraders in the post-competition "jump-up" around the city with the popular music band "Taxi". The costumes were extremely colourful, a mixture of purples, greens, reds and golds, but many of the headpieces and standards had been abandoned as masqueraders "freed-up" for the evening "jump-up". "Wildness" was one of the several new bands formed for Carnival 1992, and is the name of both the production Committee itself and its Carnival portrayal. This band was also inspired by the quincentennial anniversary of Columbus' voyage, but according to its artistic creator, "I did not want to really pay tribute to Columbus. I chose to examine the pre-Columban era and at the same time do something light and playful" (Sunday Guardian Magazine, February 9, 1992:5).

I had visited this band's mas' camp several times before Carnival. The camp, a converted family home, was nestled behind tropical palm trees in the residential middle-class district of Woodbrook. A huge banner secured to two trees identified the house as a mas' camp. Inside, the former living-room was converted into an "art gallery", with the sketches and prices of individual costumes hanging on the walls. Each drawing represented one of the twelve very colourful sections of the band. The room itself was decorated with green shrubs and bamboo, with collections of Amerindian pottery and stone artifacts displayed on tables at its centre. Information and maps related to

Trinidad's pre-historic peoples were also posted on a notice board. Several "volunteers" were always on hand to answer questions and sign-up revellers who wished join the band. During one visit to the camp, I had an extended conversation with one of the band's organizers who gave me a "handout" explaining the "meaning" of the band's portrayal and sections. This handout was given to all band members, the media, and visitors to the mas' camp (cf. Appendix B).

I followed Wildness to the Main Road. The Tokyo steelband from inner city Port of Spain was slowly making its way to the Tuesday night steelband competition at the Roxy-Harvard Roundabout. This competition was started within the last decade to entice steelbands back on the streets of Port of Spain, especially on Carnival Monday and Tuesday nights. The musicians were uncostumed and were accompanied by about one hundred people who "chipped" along with the band. The contrasts in tempo, movement, crowd size, and volume levels between Wildness and the smaller steelband were stark. Just ahead of Tokyo, another big band "motored" by a DJ and a popular orchestra, was moving westward to St. James. It provided the "transportation" I needed to get back home. Passion for Fashion was another newly organized band for the 1992 Carnival. One of its organizers had explained that it was formed in response to the annual congestion at the Savannah. Its producers called themselves "No Savannah Limited", and refused to appear at the Savannah competition. As the final curtain of dusk descended on the Tuesday spectacle, I made my way home in the company of hundreds of dancing revellers. The colourful spectacle had ended. The Carnival continued, however, in

different ways and spaces.

The Carnival of the National Carnival Commission

The National Carnival Commission (NCC) requires that all bands and groups be registered for the Monday and Tuesday "Parade of Bands" competitions. Band organizers must submit details about their bands, along with a signed registration form stating their willingness to appear at the "appropriate competitions", and to follow the rules of the NCC and the instructions of the "Stage Manager or Stage Director or other authorized National Carnival Commission Officials at the various competitions". Disqualification is threatened if a band organizer fails to comply with the rules of the Commission or the instructions of "Stage" personnel. Bands are given fees for "appearing" at competitions, and for 1992, the amounts quoted to me by a NCC "official" were: (a) Large bands - \$500.00 per day; (b) Medium bands - \$350.00, plus \$150.00 (bonus) per day; (c) Small bands - \$250.00, plus \$300.00 (bonus) per day. The two figures quoted for the "small" and "medium" categories are an attempt to balance "fairness" with "lack of discrimination" (Interview with National Carnival Commission official, December 11, 1991). Although Carnival competitions are held throughout Trinidad, those in Port of Spain are considered the "national" competitions and are opened to all bands or groups on the island. Most entries, however, are from Port of Spain and its environs. Masquerade bands of 601 members or over are judged in the large category, 251 to 600 in the medium category, and 25 to 250 in the small category. Twenty-five masqueraders and under are

categorized as a group. Band organizers are required to register the size and numbers in their bands. Five penalty points are deducted if numbers registered for a band do not reflect the actual size of the band on stage. Masquerade band or group portrayals are also classified in different categories and judged accordingly. These categories include history, creative, creative topical, fantasy, original, fancy sailors, military forces, fancy Indians, authentic Indians, robbers, devils and demons and minstrels. The criteria for judging both bands and groups are visual impact (30 points), creativity/authenticity (40 points), presentation (20 points) and mas' on the move (10 points).

Bands compete for the most prestigious award, Band of the Year, on Carnival Tuesday. Two lesser awards, named after George Bailey and Harold Saldanha, two deceased veteran masquerade innovators of the Independence era, are also bestowed at the competition on Tuesday only. The Band of the Year and George Bailey Awards are given to bands in each size category, while the Harold Saldanha Award is given to the most colourful Band of the Tuesday Carnival regardless of size. The criteria used for judging the Most Colourful Band are impact (30 points), balance of colour (40 points) and relation of colour to theme (30 points).

Bands are judged at four venues in the city, with the main stage at the Queen's Park Savannah, and others at Independence, Victoria and Adam Smith Squares in downtown Port of Spain and its suburbs. The multiplicity of venues was an attempt both to avoid the annual "bottle-necking" of bands along the Independence Square-Savannah route and to spread Carnival throughout the city. My experience at the Savannah on

Tuesday shows that a "bottle-neck" still exists. However, most "veteran" masqueraders claim that the situation has improved slightly as bands no longer have to wait six hours to get on the Savannah stage.

To entice bands to move around the city, qualification for Band of the Year has been made dependent on a band's appearance at the Queen's Park Savannah, Independence Square and one other venue. To qualify for the Bailey and Saldenha awards, bands must appear at all four venues. Initially, these requirements were "written in" to lure bands into new Carnival "spaces". Now, the requirements seems to be the "carrot" to keep most bands appearing at the Savannah, even though organizers and participants grumble about the congestion each year. A recent phenomenon has been the appearance of some bands at all other venues, except the Savannah. Organizers and participants cite the desire to play mas' "on the move" as the reason for the boycott. Critics of this practice argue that it hurts the bands themselves, since they are immediately excluded as contenders for the prestigious awards and the recognition that comes from being on "national" television. One Carnival official admitted, however, that it could be potentially more harmful for the "Carnival show" itself, especially if Savannah "boycotts" become a trend (Interview with National Carnival Commission official, December 11, 1991). The Monday and Tuesday Parade of Bands is organized and marketed as "a Show". Without "performers", there can be no "spectacle". And band organizers know this. "No-shows" are a potentially powerful force, therefore, in pushing the Carnival Commission to find a solution that would satisfy both the need to

"commoditize" and showcase "the national *fête*", and the needs of participants to "play mas'".

"Officially" Registered Bands

Sixty-two bands and groups were registered with the National Carnival Commission (NCC) for the 1992 "national" competitions. Forty-seven of these were registered to appear on both Carnival days, eight to appear on Monday, and seven on Tuesday only. Ten classified themselves as large bands with membership in the thousands, nineteen as medium bands, eighteen as small and fifteen as groups. The self-categorization by band organizers placed most of the portrayals in the creative, creative topical, and fantasy categories, but there were also a number of historical, military, sailor, warrior, devil and Indian bands⁹. These categories serve to organize the masquerades for the purpose of judging them at the competitions. Many bands, however, are often a mixture of "kinds" and could easily be slotted into a number of categories.

An illustration of this playing with, and between, categories was the representation of the "Columbus-event" by seven bands in the 1992 Carnival spectacle. Only three of these classified their bands as "History" - Columbus 1492-1992, Westward to Cipangu and Long Before Columbus. The producers of Columbus 1492-1992, for example, described their band as an attempt to "authentically" portray the story of Columbus from the history books. Their aim was to portray the court, culture, people and sailors of "Old Spain", as well as the Caribs and the Arawaks "who were as naked as the day they were

born, but for Carnival sake, we have to put them into a flesh coloured, tan or chocolate body costume to represent the Caribs and the Arawaks" (Alana - interview at mas' camp October 29, 1991). Also represented, however, were the Aztecs, Mayans, Incas and Toltecs, peoples whom Columbus had never met "historically". This inclusion was justified as the "creative license" required to bring out a "good" Carnival Band. Westward to Cipangu was also registered in the "historical" category. However, this band sought to portray the "discovery" of the Caribbean without Columbus: "I wanted to create a band that signifies the beauty of the Caribbean and what Columbus encountered. But I did not want to pay any sort of tribute to that man. Westward to Cipangu allows me to do that" (Afong in Sunday Guardian Magazine February 9, 1992:5). The band's twelve sections represent the "natural beauty" of the cities and people that Columbus met and left behind, and these include *j'ouvert*, the scarlet ibis, the rain forest and the masquerade. Both bands could easily be classified in the "creative" category (cf. Appendix C).

Long before Columbus, on the other hand, celebrated the "history" that pre-existed Columbus. The band portrayed no "narrative" in its costuming. Instead, the pre-Columbian peoples were represented as a mass of undifferentiated Amerindians dressed and painted in "dark" colours. Both costuming and presentation suggested a band more appropriately classified as a *jouvay*-type "Amerindian" band.

Two bands, Legends of the Sea and Fleets In - From Columbus to Caricom¹⁰, also inspired by the Columbus saga, were registered as "sailors". Jason Griffith, although concerned with the portrayal of "history" in his band, categorized his Legends of the Sea

as "Old fashioned Sea Bees". The band could be as appropriately classed as "creative" since both the band's presentation and costuming were transformations of the traditional sailor masquerade and the "historical" Columbus-event. Similarly, the Trinidad All Stars Steel Orchestra, Fleets In - From Columbus to Caricom transformed the historical "event" into "a tribute to all the great sailors" who have navigated the Caribbean Sea. Included are the "great" Carib and Arawak "sailors", considered the forerunners of the "French, English, Dutch, African, Indian and other nations" who were part of the "sea saga" in the Caribbean. The concept of the band crosses over the "sailor", "Amerindian", "historical" and "creative" boundaries.

Only two bands marking the Columbus-"event" registered themselves as "creative". Wildness reconstructed the "historical" event as a myth of "man's inherent nature" and the source of Trinidad's miscegenation and cultural "mishmash". This band could be considered "creative" both in its construction of "history" as myth and event, and in its representation of creativity itself, recast in the idiom of a pre-Columbian "wildness". As such, it spans several categories and could easily fit into all of them. The other Columbus-inspired band in the "creative" category was Barcelona Port of Spain. Linking Barcelona, sea-port of Spain and Port of Spain, Trinidad, the costumes were variations of traditional "Spanish" dress, in recognition of the first European nation to "discover" Trinidad and bring its "culture". The band was far more than a celebration of Spanish "roots", however. Peter Minshall, the band's chief designer and producer, had that year been contracted by the Barcelona-based production committee, *Ovideo Bassat Sport*

(OBS) to design and direct the first sequence for the opening of the 1992 Barcelona Olympic Games. Minshall had been hired because of his work in the Carnival masquerade. The choice of the masquerade for the international "stage" was interpreted by Minshall himself as a new "discovery", with Trinidad's "culture" making an inverted Columbus-journey. The Barcelona to Port of Spain link was thus conceived dialectically, and the domination-by-force of the first "discovery" glossed over as cultural "exchange". Again, the categories blurred as band producers held up "magical" mirrors on reality (Turner 1986:42).

Columbus and the "National" Self

Issues of cultural and social identity were central in all the representations of the Columbus-event. In Long Before Columbus, Columbus is conceived as the interloper who intrudes into a pre-existing indigenous culture to destroy it. The portrayal images an Amerindian "native" Self pre-dating Columbus, and surviving him. Columbus is erased altogether. Columbus 1492-1992, Wildness, Westward to Cipangu and From Columbus to Caricom also represent the original "native" people, but they are conceived quite differently *vis à vis* Columbus and the present Self. In Columbus 1492-1992, the Caribs and the Arawaks were "as naked as the day they were born" and for "Carnival's sake" had to be put into dark body costumes. A staple of traditional Eurocentric history books, the construction here is of a "naked", culture-less Self that was "clothed" when Columbus brought the culture of "Old Spain" to Trinidad. Similarly, the "primal" Self in Wildness

is also conceptualized as "natural", but the "wild" is interpreted not as a "blank slate", but as potential, life, passion, creativity and harmony. Columbus' "discovery" intruded onto this "natural state", with destructive consequences for the native Amerindians. The "original" peoples no longer exist historically, but the chaos unleashed by Columbus set the stage for the recapitulation of that past mythological time and the emergence of a new "native" Self, the result of the chaotic mixture of "races" and cultures. The creator of Westward to Cipangu, acknowledging the human destruction wrought by the encounter, does not want to "pay any kind of tribute to that man". The band celebrates "what Columbus encountered" and this is largely conceived as the "natural beauty of the Caribbean". The human and cultural Self is also celebrated, but it is imaged as several, the result of the encounter projected back and existing side by side with the Caribs and Arawaks. The pre-Columbian peoples "exist" in the present construction of a multiple Self, while the post-Columbian peoples were part of "the treasure far greater than gold" that Columbus "found" by "following that elusive route". Fleets in - From Columbus to Caricom represents all the great sailors of the Caribbean, envisioned as multiple "kinds" from the Caribbean of the past (Caribs and Arawaks) and present (Barbados, Jamaica), as well as from Europe and other nations. The Trinidad identity is represented as the embodiment of that "great sea saga", but also as distinct from them all.

The assumption of a distinct Trinidad Self over and against the Spanish Other is clearly evident in the Barcelona Port of Spain. The Self here, however, is not constructed as pre-existing in an "indigenous" identity, but as the Self-creation out of many cultures,

including the Spanish. The reverse journey to Barcelona by Peter Minshall re-centred the creative impulse in the Caribbean and represented, through the band, the existence of a unique and separate Self in the international community. In this cursory analysis of just seven bands, the multiplicity of "national" identity constructions are clearly evident.

The level of conscious appropriation of band "meanings" by individual masqueraders is difficult to determine, however. When questioned about reasons for choosing particular bands, would-be masqueraders always cited friends, music, costumes, price, tradition, or a good time, never the "meaning" or "message" of the band. Often, masqueraders did not know what its "meaning" was, suggesting that "pretty" costumes were simply vehicles which enabled revellers to experience the "style", the "feel" and the "ambiance" of the Trinidadian Self (cf. MacCannell 1976:21). The exceptions were some masqueraders who considered themselves part of Minshall's "tribe". Peter Minshall conceives of the masquerade as "theatre", and Carnival as a "theatre of the streets". Consequently, his bands are highly self-conscious "performances" which make "statements" of social, political or existential significance. Many in the "artistic community" are attracted to his band, and a few band members whom I interviewed listed "its meaning" as one of the main reasons for the band's attraction. Since the communication of a "message" is the essential component of Minshall's mas', he presents masqueraders and the public with a printed "explanation" of the band's thematic content and symbolism. Although many fellow band-producers and designers have criticized Minshall's approach as excessively intellectual, they have nevertheless followed his lead

in producing handouts which explain the "meaning" of their band. An example of such an explanation are the leaflets produced by Wildness and Westward to Cipangu (cf. Appendices B and C).

My analysis of the Columbus-inspired bands, therefore, is based on these handouts, as well as on the television constructed performances and commentaries, "explanations" given in the print media, NCC registration forms, and on interviews with producers and designers themselves. These sources, therefore, represent the views of the artist/designer of the band, and not of the individual masqueraders who participate in a band. Yet, it can be argued that the construction of several Trinidadian Selves by band producers/designers does reflect and shape the wider on-going debate on "national" identity, either through "stimulus diffusion" or "reactive opposition" (Kottak 1990:165). Individuals are viscerally situated within these different identity scenarios at Carnival, performing and negotiating a Self that is open-ended, protean, multiple, and contradictory. At jouvay, the Self is reduced to a common primal and earthy "native-ancestor" constructed over and against the "erased" intrusive colonizers. Long Before Columbus expressed this Self. The masquerade bands of Carnival Monday and Tuesday, however, did not erase the "encounter between worlds", nor the "differences" produced by it. Producers playfully engaged with the "encounter", presenting a smorgasbord of possible Selves, albeit within the parameters of a hegemonic nationalist discourse. The "show" did not project a "national" monolithic and bounded Self on parade; instead, Trinidadians saw and participated in multiple and contradictory performances of a Self, which

simultaneously erased, consumed and constituted the Other as both "local" and "foreign". Paradoxically, the nationalist and social scientific concepts of "nation" and "culture" were radically undermined, even as a "national culture" was being celebrated.

Most of the producers and designers of the big award-winning masquerade bands are themselves middle-class hybrids, the cultural or physical progeny of multiple "ancestral kinds" thrown together in the unequal "encounter". Caught at the intersections of ethnic, class and colour differences, several constructed a new distinct S(s)self emerging (or already evolved) out of this Columbus-induced Babel or "bacchanal". Others represented the continuation of distinct, but equal ancestral Selves into the present formation of a national "rainbow" identity. These representations interacted and intersected in the Carnival, reproducing scenarios which reinforced, critiqued, and reconstructed the dominant identity discourses of the society at large.

Typology of Masquerades

Fifteen masquerade "groups" were registered with the National Carnival Commission in the categories of Bats, Fancy and Authentic Indians, Minstrels, Midnight Robbers and Dragons and Demons. Groups differ from bands in size, male-female ratios, and performative styles. Further, most group masqueraders come from low socio-economic districts within, and on the north eastern periphery, of Port of Spain. This background contrasts with that of the large band mas' camps, the majority of which are located in the middle-class western suburbs of Port of Spain. Some large bands comprise

three thousand masqueraders or more, the majority of whom are women. Conversely, the typical group has a dozen members or less, the majority of whom are men¹¹.

The characters and style of contemporary group masqueraders were once popular forms and dominated the Carnival in the early twentieth century. Predominantly "underworld" characters or the anti-heroes of Euro-American culture, these early masqueraders used two different aesthetics to represent "fierceness". The dirty devils, painted Amerindians, and cows in dried banana leaves or brown sugar sacks struck terror through their dark, dirty and dismal appearances. In contrast, the Fancy Indians, Midnight Robbers and colourful Dragons, although equally "fierce", created a different visual effect with their colourful, ostentatious, elaborate costumes. The spectator's impulse in the first case was to flee; in the second, it was to stand, stare and wonder at the spectacle. The characters had a "timeless", almost mythological quality, and were instantly recognizable. A Dragon, for instance, was a Dragon no matter where he appeared. Spectators saw the masquerade, not the masquerader whose body and face were completely covered. Individuals made and designed their own unique costumes which were seen as expressions of the "inner self". A veteran Dragon-masquerader, now in his late sixties and current leader of a Dragon troupe, described his mas'-making to me:

Q: Where do the ideas for your costume come from?

K: I tell you something, eh, I cannot draw. I cannot draw a man's face. But I will lie down and see everything. I will see the colours, I will see the proportions, I will see the size of the band. I will see everything. And then, I make it. You see, I can't, I don't draw my mas', my mas' is always here (pointing to his head). I don't draw my mas', I can't draw. But I see what I want to see. I visualize and see the things. I just see it and I think it.....I see the colours, I will see how people dance it. I will see everything because when I start to see that mas', I does study mas' real, real hard...I can't draw, but I does see it

and then make it (Ken, interview in pub February 2, 1992).

Ken's dragon costume, like most costumes of the "fancy" genre, was elaborate and involved much intricate work. The basic design remained the same year after year, and in spite of embellishments, was recognizable as a Dragon. Masquerades of this genre were not simply costumes; they were "performances" which involved both practice and improvisation. Again I quote Ken directly on his masquerade as "performance":

K: Under your mas', you see yourself displaying, you seeing the movements in the mas'....you seeing the movements before you make it, before you make them steps, you seeing already (Chuckles). You have to understand it, you have to make this step...and you concentrating on more steps, more movements all the time.

Q: So its not just a set of planned, fixed movements that you do, you are creating it as you go on.

C: Yes, you create it, but then you have to create it the proper way. You have to learn the basic steps and then build on it. There is a proper way - you have to learn to dance dragon. You just can't dance dragon any old way.

Dragons danced, Minstrels sang, Robbers and Pierrots talked, and Amerindians, Warriors and Devils "attacked", most of them in a menacing mode.

The contemporary group masquerades are considered "survivals" of a former age and called "ole time" or "long time" mas'. Their characters and costuming remain basically the same as in previous eras, but their performative styles have become "passive" and less fierce. Amerindians and Devils no longer "attack" each other or spectators, nor do Dragons and Midnight Robbers have sufficient time to perform on the "national" stage. Their numbers get smaller each year as "veterans" retire or die. The National Carnival Commission has officially expressed concern about the demise of the "ole time" masquerade, representing it as expressions of a pre-modern and more authentic

Self and therefore, as "cultural property" to be preserved. Significantly, these masqueraders are predominantly male, and their fierce styles of performance ideally suited for co-option as nationalist "tradition" in the constitution of a Self over and against the foreign Other (cf. Handler and Linnekin 1984; Hobsbawm and Ranger 1983; Linnekin 1992). Special competitions and street appearances are, therefore, arranged each Carnival season to encourage and revive these older masking traditions.

Two Sundays before the street Carnival, the National Carnival Commission co-organizes a competition called *Viey la Cou*, an attempt to revive and reconstruct the *vieille cour* or "old yard". Many of these "yards" dotted Port of Spain before the 1940's, and were centres of pre-Carnival preparations and performances by the urban lower classes. An organizer of the 1992 event explained the event's purpose as follows:

The street now belongs to the Poisons and Barbarosas (Big bands). It would be hard to take this mas' back on the streets again. But at least *Viey la Cou* serves to preserve it in a kind of museum setting so it would never die completely (cited in Living - Sunday Express February 23, 1992:14).

Viey la Cou is an all day affair which features music, dancing, "long time" masquerade and calypso competitions. Local arts and crafts are offered for sale; so, too, are various foods. A newspaper article promoting the event provided a list of food that would be available. All the items mentioned were those locally constructed as "real" Trinidadian food. Significantly, the producers of the event advised, "hot dogs and hamburgers are not encouraged on the premises" (Living - Sunday Express February 23, 1992:15). *Viey la Cou*, then, is more than entertainment, competition or a salute to the past. Rather, the event is constructed as a celebration of a "purer" and more "authentic"

Trinidadian Self which existed in the past, a Self from which "hot dogs and hamburgers", symbols of American hegemony, are excluded (cf. Handler 1988:15).

Many of the older masqueraders I interviewed were not optimistic about the future of their mas' as a "living art". They felt the "externals", like the costume motifs would be "preserved", but not the "authentic" spirit and style of the performance. While much of their criticism was aimed at the National Carnival Commission for having "squeezed" them out of the Carnival, their harshest criticism was directed at the "younger generation" which was perceived to be uninterested in learning their language, dance and art. Again, in the words of an old veteran masquerader:

They don't give you time, they don't give you time on the stage, they don't appreciate the small fellahs mas'. They don't appreciate the small fellahs, that's why this mas' is dying out. Men like Wild Indian, that's a mas' that is dying out, Dragon, that dying out too. The youths and them - they don't want this mas' again. All they want to play is a day on the beach, everybody in a leotard, wining up and thing, and they feel good. So them ent want to portray nothing, but that isn't for me.....No more performance! Long ago when you meet two Wild Indian bands, one coming up, the other going down, they have to stop and talk to each other in their own language. Midnight Robber bands the same thing. When two Dragon bands meet is "war" (Ken, interview on February 2, 1992).

"Ole time mas'" is considered one genre, albeit a subordinate and dying tradition, in the modern Carnival. It is popularly contrasted with two other genres: the "historical" and the "fantasy, creative, or abstract" masquerades. All three - traditional, historical and contemporary - are used to categorize both the masquerades of the present Carnival and the historical development of the masquerade itself (cf. Hill 1972:84-99). The period before the 1930's is considered the era of the "ole time mas'", the 1930's to 1960's the heyday of the "historical bands", and the present the period of the abstract, creative and fantasy masquerade. However, just as individual bands span categories in the

contemporary Carnival, masquerades also defy periodization with various "kinds" existing side by side, albeit in dominant or subordinate positions, at different times.

The portrayal of "historical" personages and characters was always part of the Carnival since the time of the French masquerade. However, "historical mas'" appeared as an official masquerade genre in the late 1920's when it was added to the masquerade categories for the Carnival competitions (Hill 1972:95). Its growth in popularity paralleled the economic, political, and cultural movements in the island which culminated in political Independence from Britain in 1962. As in other colonized societies, "history" was considered an important weapon in both the unmasking of the unjust colonial state of affairs and the reconstructing of an alternative "indigenous" or "national" Self (cf. Guha 1989; Keesing 1989; Neumann 1989; Prakash 1990). The first Chief Minister of the island, Dr. Eric Williams, was himself an Oxford-educated historian, who wrote in the foreword to his History of the People of Trinidad and Tobago:

....it would be an unfortunate handicap in the field of international relations and a great mistake in respect of affairs and domestic relations, if Trinidad and Tobago were to enter a career of Independence without a history of its own, without some adequate and informed knowledge of its past (1962, vii).

"History" was thus conceived of as a force in generating Self-knowledge and in the constructing of the "national" Self. With Carnival already weighted with "nationalistic" sentiments and attracting more participants, many of whom were able to afford elaborate costumes, the historical masquerade reached its heyday in the 1950's and 1960's (Hill 1972:97).

This new development led to radical changes in the conceptualization and practice

of the masquerade itself. Dragons, Midnight Robbers and Amerindians are mythical figures which transcend particular historical periods. One Dragon masquerader described the Dragon as "one person or being that manifests itself differently in different masquerades, for example, (it is) is the same "man" who is the Beast, the Dragon, Lucifer, Death, the gentleman Devil¹², the Bookman¹³, Satan" (Ken, interview on February 18, 1992). He is timeless, revealing himself in different cultures, forms and epochs. Historical portrayals, however, sought to represent particular heroic periods and personages. This type of portrayal initially involved appropriating the histories of past "civilizations" into the national narrative, especially the histories of African, European and Asian "ancestors". The history of the Self became popular in the years following political Independence from Britain.

For mas' producers, historical representation was envisaged as requiring both the accurate and detailed reproduction of the dress of the period and the portrayal of "time". The first goal involved in-depth research and study of history books, artistic impressions and movies in order to depict the past as "authentically" as possible. Designers assumed that the past existed back in time and could be made present through "research" and portrayal. The masquerade was understood as "reflecting" the past, and not as constituting it. Representing "historical" periods and themes also meant that costuming had to move from the individual to the collective, from focussed performance in a circumscribed place to sequential movement over an extended temporal space. The increasing numbers of Carnival participants in the mid-twentieth century allowed band producers to "mobilize"

masses of different "kinds" of people to create this kind of movement. Harold Saldenha is credited with having introduced "sections" in Carnival masquerade bands (Hill:1972:97). The Band of the Year award, introduced in 1955, was won by Saldenha's band, Imperial Rome (Anthony, 1989:502; Hill 1972:97). His band was divided into a sequence of different groups of maskers, each group with its own distinctive "kind" of costumes. Both the sequence of sections and the mass of participants took time to unfold. The "meaning" of an individual costume then depended on its context in the band. Unlike the Dragon or the Wild Indian who was a recognizable individual in his own right, Saldenha's gladiator was a part of one group which was itself part of a greater whole. For the Dragon, the impact of the masquerade depended on the performer's ability to elaborate and improvise on his costume and dance steps. The individual masquerader was hidden, but a specific Dragon stood revealed. In "historical mas'", individual faces were exposed, but the masses became the masquerade which concealed the "specific" in favour of generic "centurions" or "vestal virgins". The impact of the "historical" band was visual, and depended on the arrangement and movement of different "sections" to "narrate" its story. This moved "colour" to the forefront in masquerade design, a development that has become increasingly important in current masquerade portrayals.

The third type of masquerade, considered the dominant genre of the present Carnival, developed further some of the trends initiated by the "historical" bands, and moved beyond them. Perhaps, it would be more correct to talk about genres, rather than a contemporary "genre". Several labels have been attached to the present day masquerade,

notably fantasy, abstract, creative or creative topical. Several features, however, make it possible to speak of "contemporary" masquerade as a distinct trend over and against "ole time" or "historical" masquerade, understood as both genre and historical era.

The new trend slowly emerged in the later 1960's and predominates today. It parallels and reflects Trinidad's post-colonial era, a time marked by economic flux, cynicism and disillusionment with the political process and "nationalist" project, social discontent and "racial" tensions, "identity" ambiguity, global links through mass communication and frequent travel, and an increasingly urban and "middle-class" life-style and sensibilities. Perhaps, the most marked feature of the "genres" of this era is the reliance on the imagination, not "given" historical records, to represent both past and present "reality".

Kearney (1988:15) states that, in the history of Western thought, the human ability to "imagine" something has been understood in two ways: first, as a representational ability which mirrors "images" of a pre-existing reality, or second, as a creative faculty which produces "images" which claim originality in their own right. It can be argued that this distinction describes the difference between the contemporary masquerade(s) and the older "historical" genre. The aesthetic of "historical mas'", for instance, was conceived of as the ability of a band to represent the past "authentically". Contemporary mas' designers and producers are no longer preoccupied with the past *per se*, or with its "authentic" portrayal. This trend could be situated within the global "post-modernist turn", which is not only deeply suspicious of the representations of the past in the "standard"

history books, but also questions the use of past traditions to envision the future.

According to Appadurai, there is a global shift in the functioning of the imagination itself:

The image, the imagined, the imaginary - these are all terms which direct us to something critical and new in global cultural processes; **the imagination as a social practice**. No longer mere fantasy (opium for the masses whose real work is elsewhere), no longer simple escape (from a world defined principally by more concrete purposes and structures), no longer elite pastime (thus not relevant to the lives of ordinary people), and no longer mere contemplation (irrelevant to new forms of desire and subjectivity), the imagination has become an organized field of social practices, a form of work (both in the sense of labor and its culturally organized practice) and a form of negotiation between sites of agency ("individuals") and globally defined fields of possibility.....The imagination is now central to all forms of agency, is itself a social fact, and is the key component of the new global order (1990:5).

Trinidad's present-day masquerade practices are particularly good examples of this shift to the imagination in the new global order. Contemporary masquerade producers use the imagination, not to indulge in "mental gymnastics" or escape into a world of fantasy, but to imagine Trinidadians as new colour, class and ethnic configurations and to explore new ideas and ways of being. Paradoxically, the search for novelty is contained within a powerful nationalist metanarrative which urges that everyone is, or ought to be, coming together in a modern moral "national" consensus (cf. MacCannell 1976:34). This "modern" privileging of the imagination is "serious business" for most Trinidadians. In fact, the imagination does not easily fit into the "play" category we have so neatly carved out for it in our social science distinctions between play and work, seriousness and playfulness, ritual and play. Just as slaves and *jamets* used Carnival spaces of "play" to imagine and produce, albeit ritually, "serious" alternatives to their normative world, so, too, modern producers of Carnival use imagination as serious "labour" to create the "style", "essence", "feel" and the "ambiance" of the Trinidadian Self (cf. MacCannell

1976:21). Unlike the earlier "play" forms of Carnival, which were essentially ephemeral, the modern imaginary forms and content are transformed into "culture" and sold as commodity to the nation and to the world. This imaginative production of "culture" has become a "serious" economic enterprise in its own right, both feeding into the State's project for national development and the modern industrial world's demand for difference, spectacle and "authentic" experience. In and through Carnival, masquerade producers use imagination to conjure up diverse portrayals of history, things, people, events and abstract ideas. These "topics" are not ends in themselves, but triggers with which masquerade producers play and labour in their attempts both to evoke the "pure experience" of Trinidadian-ness, and sell it to the modern "touristic" class who "systematically scavenges the earth for new experiences to be woven into a collective, touristic version of other peoples and places" (MacCannel 1976:13).

Berkeley's Titanic swept the 1992 Carnival competitions, winning first place in the Creative Topical category, as well as the prestigious 1992 Band of the Year and George Bailey prizes in the large category. The Titanic also won the Harold Saldanha Award for the Most Colourful band of the Carnival. This band of about three thousand members¹⁴ is an example of the dominant trend in modern day masquerade. In a four-page explanatory note, Berkeley introduced his band to masqueraders and media as follows:

Eighty years ago, one of the world's greatest Luxury Ocean Liners "(The unsinkable) TITANIC" created world history when she met her disaster and sank at Easter time in the year 1912.

What is the mystique of the TITANIC?

Is it the sheer immensity of the disaster - the largest ship in the world proclaimed

unsinkable, going down on her maiden voyage? It is the element of Greek tragedy that runs through the story - if only she had heeded warnings, if only there had been enough lifeboats. **IF ONLY - IF ONLY** - the irresistible reminder that "Pride Goeth Before a Fall".

The Titanic is a perfect example of something we can relate to: the progression of almost any tragedy in our lives, from initial disbelief to growing uneasiness, to total awareness. **The presentation was not designed to celebrate the disaster, but more to commemorate the spectacle and grandeur of the world's greatest floating palace and our negligence in heeding warnings. (my emphasis)**

Sailor bands have always found pride of place in the Trinidad Carnival and the TITANIC is certainly a sailor band with a difference.

The following is all now history but the legend of the TITANIC lives on (Wayne Berkeley -Carnival 1992. Band hand-out).

Berkeley then goes on to "narrate" the legend of the Titanic in twenty-three masquerade sections, with each section representing a portion of the narrative. He explains, for example, the "meaning" of the first band section, "CHAMPAGNE", as follows:

April 5th - Good Friday: The TITANIC is "dressed" in a panoply of flags and pennants for a salute to the people of Southampton. CHAMPAGNE - explodes on the bow of the ship and the celebration begins. 100 effervescent ladies sparkle and dance at the completion of the Floating Palace. Dressed in black and gold they carry enormous champagne glasses.

I wish to draw attention to two points in Berkeley's "explanation". Firstly, Berkeley is not interested in authentically representing the disaster of the Titanic. His intention is to "commemorate the spectacle and grandeur" of the "floating palace". The legend of the Titanic simply provides the spring-board from which he can create a colourful Carnival spectacle. In fact, the last section of the band, "NEW YORK - NEW YORK", celebrates the dream and desire of its passengers, and not the reality of what actually happened: the ship's failure to arrive at this destination. Secondly, the narrative encodes a "serious" message for "us" as Trinidadians - the fall of the "invincible" and the need to heed warnings. Unlike the interpretation of the Titanic-event found in some North

American "black" communities (Scott 1990:42), Berkeley's "passengers" are not constructed as the wealthy and powerful "white" Other, but as the "carefree" Trinidadian Self. This masquerade band was not a representation of poetic justice wrought on "white" folk, but a colourful portrayal of the possible dangers that lie in wait for an unsuspecting "nation of *fêters*". The warning is directed at the "national" Self, unmarked by categories of "black" and "white". "Rainbow" colours encode both the spectacle of the "floating palace" and the "pride" which eventually sent the Titanic to its watery grave. Significantly, the band both playfully celebrates and critiques the lavish, carefree excesses of the Titanic passengers, symbols of the masqueraders themselves.

In recreating the Titanic-event, Berkeley radically transformed the tradition of the sailor band in the Trinidad Carnival. To "understand" the band, spectators had to read or hear the explanatory "script" provided to the judges and media for the specific purpose of interpreting the band's "meaning". Meanings are no longer simply encoded in the masquerade of individuals or groups, or in the aesthetic of an "authentic" representation of the past. A Dragon, for example, is instantly recognized as *a* Dragon by his costuming and performance no matter where he is. On meeting one of Berkeley's "sailors", however, one cannot determine who he or she "represents" outside of the context of the band. The masquerader could belong to one of several sections of "sailors", differently situated in the unfolding of the narrative. Further, he or she does not resemble a "real" sailor of any kind. Unlike the "authentic" depictions of historical bands, today's "sailor" is likely to be dressed in red and white stripes, and her/his costume used to evoke an abstract concept

such as "Anchor's Aweigh". Next Carnival, the same costuming could be used to represent "Explorers in outer space" or "Venetian romance". My own 1992 costume which depicted the burning canes of the *Canboulay* could easily be used to represent "Fire Eaters" or "*Soufrière*" (volcano) in another Carnival presentation.

With "meaning" encoded in the collective visual spectacle, rather than in the "active" performance of the Dragon or the "authentic" portrayal of past characters, the blending and sequential arrangement of "colours" is of great importance. Band sections are conceived of in terms of colour rather than characterization, with the whole band greater than the sum of its individual parts. The mass has now become the masquerade, with the individual contributing her "pretty" speck of colour to the larger impressionistic canvas. Consequently, contemporary masqueraders are largely "consumers", not "producers" of their individual masquerades. Masqueraders can "play" a variety of "things", "people", "ideas", "places", "nature" and "cultures" with no distinctions in costuming made between the portrayals of humans, inanimate objects or abstract ideas. What impresses judges and spectators is not so much humanistic representations or the "script" *per se*, but the ability of designers and masqueraders to translate "script" or "idea" into a colourful, kaleidoscopic spectacle. The "meaning" of the band is largely in the colourful image and impression it projects. The valued ability in masquerade design is that which creates and produce new images out of the old, or new images which lay claim to originality in their own right. This contemporary aesthetic is unabashedly the celebration of creativity, imagination and fantasy at the levels of both production and

consumption. Even as designers and band producers "manufacture" masquerades and their meanings for mass consumption by masqueraders, many individuals transform and re-create their costumes through the use of sequins, braids, beads, feathers and cloth. I knew several masqueraders who, on receiving the same bathing-suit type outfit, immediately set about individualizing their costumes with embellishments of all kinds. It is a gross simplification, then, to separate the acts of production and consumption in the Trinidad Carnival. Individual actors often "make mas'" with the masquerade even as they consume it, imaginatively producing and negotiating their own masquerades and meanings, albeit within the parameters set by the more powerful producers and directors of the spectacle. As such, Carnival is the site, not of a monolithic, ordered, bounded "nation" on parade, but the space where multiple performances of the Trinidadian Self are projected, contested, and negotiated in the context of a powerful metanarrative of "national identity" which, paradoxically, serves to constitute the national Self as multiple and contradictory, a virtual "bacchanal".



CHAPTER EIGHT

The Gendering Of Carnival

Transformations Of The National Self

King Carnival

In the classical tradition of Europe, Carnival is typically represented as male in contrast to the spirit of Lent which is depicted as a thin, old woman (cf. Scott 1990:173). Carnival is personified as a fat, gluttonous eater and drinker, symbol of hedonistic excess. Similarly, in Trinidad, Carnival is often referred to as "King Carnival" or the "Merry Monarch" in both official and popular discourse. However, while Trinidad's "king" shares maleness with his European counterpart, his masculinity is fundamentally different. In dominant historical narratives, Carnival is represented, not as the fat King who indulged in orgiastic excesses, but as a lean and mean usurper who wrests control of the city from the foreign and/or respectable Others. Significantly, the remembered heroes of Carnival are the stick-fighters, midnight robbers, dragons, devils, wild Indians, sailors, *pierrrot granades*, steelband men, calypsonians and *ole mas'* iconoclasts.

All these performers were predominantly men and are celebrated for the themes

of resistance which their performances seemed to portray (cf. Crowley 1983:223; Hill 1972:49; Johnson 1983:186; Pearse 1988[1956]:40). Carnival was, in fact, numerically dominated by men whose style of performance was often marked by ritualized (and sometimes actual) aggressive, competitive and iconoclastic behaviour. The nineteenth century stick-fighters and early twentieth century steelbandmen engaged each other in actual and ritualized "combat", sometimes directing their aggression at those who policed the island for the colonial government. Similarly, boasting and aggressive verbal sparring were an integral part of the speech acts of many masqueraders, with performers physically "attacking" each other if appropriate responses were not made in kind (Larrie, wild Indian masquerader, interview on May 13, 1992). Spectators, too, were frequently assailed by fierce-looking masqueraders, while the norms of society itself came under attack in *ole mas'* portrayals which subverted and inverted the canons of respectability. Since overt aggression and conflict are often unproblematically linked to the concept of resistance both in social science and popular discourses¹, it is easy to understand why these practices were so naturally co-opted into a nationalist narrative concerned with issues of dominance and subjugation.

Like most nationalists, the architects of Trinidad's nationhood were men who had assumed the premises of an identity discourse which pitted the indigenous Self against the elite and foreign Other (cf. Fox 1990; Heng and Devan 1992; Katrak 1992; Layoun 1992). The logic of this discourse reduced all oppositions within the Carnival into "resistance" against dominant elites, privileging the behaviour typically associated with

male "resistance" practices. In present day popular discourse, these aggressive and iconoclastic practices are defined as "hard". The linkage between the concept of "hardness" and nationalist values is not peculiar to Trinidad, and is one easily made, given the requirements of national construction. Nations are, by definition, bounded entities which requires the constructing and policing of borders. "Soft" borders are easily penetrable while "hard" borders maintain the integrity of the Self-Other distinction. Furthermore, nation building is often seen to require "hard values", as Heng and Devan point out in their study of Singaporean nationalism:

Prime Minister Lee has often reiterated his conviction that the industrial prominence of East Asian societies over the relatively less developed economies of the Indian subcontinent and Malay archipelago is rooted in the "hard" values of the former over the "soft" cultures of the latter, unapologetically proffering, in simultaneous praise and contempt, figures of phallogocentric toughness and gynocentric laxity that are scarcely disguised. Indians, moreover, Lee confidently proclaims are "naturally contentious"; like women they are loquacious and theatrical, too indulgent and irresponsible ("soft") to be capable of the social discipline of "hard" Confucian cultures which renders East Asian societies increasingly potent as political powers to challenge the West (1992:352).

In Trinidad, the "nation" was gendered from its very inception. Dr. Eric Williams, Trinidad and Tobago's first Prime Minister and chief architect of Independence, conceived of the "nation" as a Mother. In his History of the People of Trinidad and Tobago which he dedicated to "all those who have gone before in the struggle for independence and against colonialism", Williams wrote:

A nation, like an individual, can have only one Mother. The only Mother we recognize is Mother Trinidad and Tobago, and Mother cannot discriminate between her children. All must be equal in her eyes. And no possible interference can be tolerated by any country outside in our family relations and domestic quarrels, no matter what it has contributed to the population that is today the people of Trinidad and Tobago (Williams 1962:281).

Yet paradoxically, the narrative of nationalism in Trinidad is largely about men giving birth to the nation through struggle and the "hard" values of "resistance". Carnival as symbol of the "nation", then, has largely been conceptualized as male. As privileged site of male oppositional and reputation-making practices, Carnival is narrated as the male "womb" in which the real Self was nurtured and from which the "nation" was born.

Woman's role, then, is perceived not as creating the "nation", but as sustaining that which has been created and continues to be created by men. She is the sustainer of the culture and the *status quo*: "they work, they come home, stay home, care for the family, they are the sustainers of our culture and our civilization" (Ritchie, local philosopher July 20, 1992). Represented historically as the passive conduits and sustainers of colonial "respectable" culture (cf. Wilson 1973), women's role is paradoxically reduced to caring for and sustaining the masculine projects both of colonial dominance and indigenous resistance.

Women in Carnival

Women have always been part of the street Carnival, albeit in smaller numbers than men. Crowley records the existence of *jamet* bands in the nineteenth and early twentieth centuries which were comprised of both women and men (Crowley 1988[1956]:47). The *jamettes* wore beautiful dresses, with skirts draped over embroidered, starched petticoats and caught up into their belts. On their heads, they wore headties over which were placed either hats decorated with flowers and feathers or men's fedoras

decorated with croton leaves. Always masked, the *jamettes*' most shocking behaviour was their habit of throwing open their bodices and exposing their breasts. Crowley suggests that the *jamettes* were "matadors" or retired prostitutes gone respectable, hence the need for masking. It is also possible that they were prostitutes aping prostitutes who had gone respectable. Names of individual women *chantwells* and stickfighters have also been passed on in the oral and written traditions of the *jamet* Carnival (Brereton 1979:167-169; Pearse 1988[1956]:157-163). But while these *jamettes* are celebrated as part of the wider "male" resistance enterprise of aggression and sexual ribaldry against the elite Other, there exists a deep ambivalence about them as women, especially as it relates to their "sexual" behaviour. In present day Trinidad, the word *jamet* no longer exists in popular usage to denote the un-gendered subaltern or "underworld" classes. Its feminized version, *jamette*, continues in the popular vocabulary, however, and is part of a whole constellation of words used to describe women whose being or behaviour is judged to be morally loose, sexually promiscuous, crude or noisily quarrelsome. Celebrated within the "male" resistance mythologies of Carnival, the *jamette* is nevertheless an object of scorn and derision when decontextualized from the colonialist, class struggle and situated in the context of gender and social relations within the "national" Self.

A privileged source revealing the "male" attitude towards women is the calypso, a musical form which developed in the context of stick-fighting and Carnival, and whose lyrics are widely known, sung and debated in the society at large. J.D. Elder claims that *carisoes* (from which calypsoes were in part derived) were originally female banter songs

sung in the intervals between stick-fights, but taken over by men after the 1884 Peace Preservation Ordinance (1966:91,110). Whatever the origins of calypso, it was firmly in the hands of men by the turn of the twentieth century (Rohlehr 1990:213), and continues to be dominated by their "voices". Before the 1960's, few women ventured onto a calypso stage, and of the 120 calypsonians singing in tents for the 1992 Carnival season, 100 of them were men (Trinidad Express March 10, 1992:21). While Rohlehr warns against taking calypsoes as simple descriptions of social reality, he nevertheless concedes that calypsonians bring into focus many of the issues and attitudes that prevail in Trinidadian society (Rohlehr 1990:216).

In his analysis of over three hundred calypsoes recorded between 1937 and 1940, Rohlehr shows how the relationship between men and women was cast as a virtual gender war by male calypsonians (1990:213-277). Earlier work by other researchers, R.L. Austin (1976), J.D. Elder (1968), and K. Warner (1982) draws the same conclusion about the representation of the male-female relationship in calypsoes. Against a background of poor economic and social conditions, male calypsonians, who were predominantly from the low income groups, represented their women as generally avaricious, crafty, promiscuous and unfaithful (Rohlehr 1990:216-251). While the aggressive and transient sexual relationships of men are represented in heroic terms - the "resistor" to domination, the "sweet man" or "saga boy" in sexual exploits - similar behaviour among females is cast in a less flattering light. Within the domestic situation, the assertive woman who fights with the traditional stick-fighter's weapons of "big-stick, bottle and stone" is depicted as a violent virago:

Talk about a woman bad like a crab
 Your heart and soul all she would grab
 Cut out your pocket and leave you to groan
 Beat you with big stick, bottle and stone
 (Caresser 1938 Madame Khan. Cited in Rohlehr 1990:271).

There is, however, another image of woman that is celebrated in calypsoes, especially in the pre-1970's. She is the ideal woman constructed through a constellation of ideas which link marriage, family, child-rearing, home, yard and respectability. She epitomizes the "softness" associated with care-giving. This is the image that researchers and local social commentators attribute to the British colonial value-system which was based on Victorian middle-class ideals (cf. Huggins 1992:12; Johnson 1983:178; Powrie 1988[1956]:96; Rohlehr 1990:223). In this image, the categories of "mother" and "woman" overlap in substantial ways². The calypsonian, Pretender, sermonized in his Mother's Love (1937): "The zenith of a woman's ambition in life/should be to be a loving mother and wife/for thus they were by nature intended", while Atilla expressed the desired norms for women in No Comparison (1938): "all the old-fashioned girl asked of life/was to be a help-mate, mother and wife' (Rohlehr 1990:223, 225).

It was the "mother" figure, however, that evoked total admiration from the male calypsonian. Caresser spelt out the role and meaning of motherhood in his Warning to Men, Women and Children about their Parents (1937):

"A good mother always does things constructive
 To help her children is her objective
 No matter how poor she happens to be
 Her duty she'll perform assiduously
 Without the shadow of a single doubt
 They'll feed you, clothe you and remain without
 Send you to school to be educated

So that in days to come you'll be respected"
(Cited in Rohlehr (1990:225).

In practice though, the glorified role of woman-as-mother was often mired in contradiction and conflict. Honoured as "mother" in the abstract, the woman was nevertheless devalued as "wife". Rohlehr notes that 68% of the marriageable women of Atilla's day had not achieved his norm of woman as help-mate and wife (1990:223). Further, most of the calypsonians who glorified the ideal of the nuclear family also sang more calypsoes about the burdens of marriage, the joys of bachelorhood and the infidelity of wives and women in general (Rohlehr 1990:223). "Mother" was often the woman who singlehandedly raised her children in the absence of fathers. Praised for her sacrifice as "mother", the woman as sexual being was avoided as "wife", yet her sexuality was represented as immorality if she transgressed the often unattainable ideals of a monogamous marriage and "respectability".

This brings us back, then, to the enigmatic figure of the "woman" in the "hard" practices of Carnivals past. Insofar as she shared in the iconoclastic project of her male counterparts against the elite and/or foreign Other, she is valued in the narratives of resistance. Yet, in the context of social relationships within Trinidadian society as a whole, her aggressive and overt sexuality are denigrated by both males and females of all classes as not being properly feminine. The "bacchanal" woman is censored in a way that the "bacchanal" man is not. A case in point was the controversy generated by David Rudder's 1992 calypso, De Long Time Band, in which he celebrates the resistance

practices of "long time" (past) Carnivals. In his calypso, Rudder uses past Carnival characters to conjure up the motif of resistance. A *jamette*, Enid, is cast as heroine who uses her "bottom" to break up the Carnival. While the male characters use their music, their rage and their boasts of past physical exploits to express their "hardness", Enid uses her body and sexuality to declare her defiance:

Enid bawl out like she insane/Lord I never thought my time would come again
 When we *jamettes* used to rule these people town/the hoity toits used to run when we
 around
 She forget she was cooking fus' she amazed/this looking like a band from my *jamette*
 days
 She pull up she dress and she cock she mouth/and start to work up she belly inside out
 People really try to cool she down/they even send for she man.
 They say he strong
 He was an Indian from Belmont they call Caruth/He really try to cool she down for truth
 She fling him off, not for hell she wouldn't listen/Then she start to wine like she never
 christened
 Like she body made from blood and bacchanal/and that bottom come to mash up the
 Carnival.

Rudder's admiration for the "bacchanal" behaviour of the *jamette* woman was censored by Ras Shorty I, himself a calypsonian who, in recent years, has had a religious conversion after a career of singing *risqué* calypsoes. Shorty approved of Rudder's lyrics "until it got to the part about the woman working she belly inside out and pointing her backside in the direction of Port of Spain" (Shorty's interview with Debbie Jacobs, Sunday Express Living Magazine February, 23, 1992:2). Rudder represents all the members of the band as "cocking their bottoms in the direction of town". Significantly, it is only the woman's behaviour that draws Ras Shorty's censorship.

Because of the association of "woman" with propriety and domesticity, "respectable" women did not openly participate in the street Carnival before the Second

World War (Powrie 1988[1956]:91). These women were "respectable" by virtue of their skin colour or achievement through marriage, education or appropriate "feminine" behaviour. Insofar as they participated in the Carnival, it was on decorated lorries or under cover of the masquerade. Powrie writes:

Before the war, Carnival was a gay, colourful, free-for-all. The middle-class joined in the spirited *jour ouvert* celebrations, and obscenity commonly distinguished the Old Mas' costume. The women wore masks - mainly of a yashmak style, the upper part of the concealing cloth being a domino. They "jumped up" and entered wholeheartedly into the street revelries and band parades at night when chances of recognition were at a minimum. Few parents would consent to their daughters being "interfered" with by male revelers, especially those from lower class bands. It is a common Carnival custom for men to "interfere" with the women - this interference being little more than a touching or pinching of the more outstanding parts of the female body. It is felt to be akin to rape. Those girls who did join bands did not parade the streets on foot. Lorries were used for that purpose, and the lorries would circle the Savannah, bearing their jumping, singing groups of girls and musicians - men of the middle-class might also join the girls on the lorries. The men themselves did not hide their identities with masks, or only a small proportion did so (1988[1956]:99-100).

After the war, masks and lorries were abandoned and "respectable" women descended to the streets. At first, they clustered in groups in the middle or at the head of the bands (Powrie 1988[1956]:102), until eventually, they ended up being more numerous than men in the present Carnival bands.

The Contemporary "Female Festival"

The media representations of the 1992 Carnival are very instructive. They construct an "event" that not only notes the presence of women, but depicts them in images which suggest women's power and dominance over men. The Carnival is gendered in a way not previously done in past representations. Men were always the

unmarked category, with differentiations and dominance within the celebration marked in terms of class, skin colour, performative styles and masquerades (cf. Anthony 1989; Hill 1973; Pearse 1988[1956]). Differential proportions of men and women were rarely noted, with women subsumed into the class and colour categories of their male counterparts. In 1992, however, gender was foregrounded as Trinidad's daily newspapers reported the news to the "nation":

Massive turnout of women masqueraders, outnumbering the men by ten to one (Trinidad Guardian March 3, 1992:1).

Blaze of colour. Women by the thousands. WOMEN, COLOUR, MUSIC and brilliant weather were the major ingredients that went to lay the groundwork for Carnival 1992 which ended in a blaze of glory yesterday (Trinidad Guardian March 4, 1992:1).

Yesterday women were again in charge of the Carnival, as far as the masquerade was concerned (Trinidad Express March 3, 1992:1).

Women were the dominant force Carnival Monday, appearing in all shapes and sizes, white women, red women, brown women, all having a ball and letting it all hang out, the looks on their faces expressing pure delight (Trinidad Express March 3, 1992:9).

On Ash Wednesday, the Trinidad Guardian Carnival Magazine carried a section on women entitled, "Show me your motion....and the men?":

Women. Trinidad women, Tall, thin, chunky, big-leg, high bottom, sweet woman, wearing costumes that fit in an envelope. Female bodies dingolaying (dancing) down the street. Shaking. Gyrating. Arms flung in the air....In band after band, clusters of women dance with each other circling the odd man in the group or in the fringes. For many, it is a *lime*, feting with friends, choosing a band with a section that catches your fancy. Following the music....hot and hard, Charlie's Roots, Atlantik, Taxi....the bass, the horns; or a band leader....Neville Hinds, Berkeley, Minhsall, Poison, Savage Barbarossa. Playing mas' in the barest of costumes, they say because it is Carnival and they are comfortable with their bodies. Gym enthusiasts with their toned, hard bodies flaunting them. At ease in their skins. Celebrating their femaleness in coquettish, sensual fabrics and designs. Cool for the day-long jump in the sun. The body free to jam dem up. Men love it. Not confused by the madonna/whore complex, revelling in the sheer physical beauty of their womenfolk freed up and playing their mas'....Women, the expedient, the practical, have always banded together, almost naturally at Carnival....So that in the bands, the one woman gyrating, undulating, oscillating, rotating solo, is quite rare. More frequently there will be a circle, a line, a sisterhood, unless she's with a man (March 4, 1992:52-53).

Supporting these written accounts, the newspapers published pictures of women masqueraders, most of them photographed individually or in groups wearing bikini-like costumes. The cover page of the Carnival Tuesday Express (March 3, 1992), for example, carried six pictures of Carnival Monday activity. Four of these were of individual women, one of a group of three women, and the other a broad shot of both women and men in a masquerade band. Similarly, of the fifty-three photos in the Parade of Bands section of the Express Carnival Souvenir Magazine (1992), forty-one are exclusively of women, six are of women dancing with a man or being carried on a man's shoulders, and six are wide shots of both men and women in several Carnival masquerade bands. None are of men alone. Footage of Trinidad and Tobago television's coverage of the Parade of Bands also conveys the impression that women are the main participants in the Carnival spectacle. Camera lenses, controlled mostly by men, continually zoom in on the women of a band, and especially on the "wining", scantily-clad women.

Interviews with band producers and my own observations on Carnival day do corroborate the media representations of female numerical predominance in the masquerade. However, these media representations cannot be taken as simple unmediated reflections of the carnival "event". Men do participate in the Monday and Tuesday masquerade, albeit in smaller numbers than women. Further, men predominate in the domains of calypso and music bands, and are the leaders and designers of most of the masquerade bands. Also, many men participate in the street celebrations without costume. Much of this male participation is erased in media representations as eyes and lenses are

focussed mainly on the colourful spectacle, and especially on the "spectacle" of women, unaccompanied by male-escorts, performing on the streets and stages of Port of Spain. The popular perception, then, fed largely by the media, is that Carnival is dominated by women, and therefore, "a female thing".

The almost exclusive focus on the woman reveller is not simply a matter of noting her appearance in the annual event, however. She is highlighted both because of who "she" is, and because of her perceived transformation of the "national" festival, itself a gendered symbol of the Trinidad Self. Women from the "respectable" colours and classes, exposing gym-toned bodies in "envelope" costumes, and "wining" alone, in a line, or with each other get attention because they simultaneously fit and break the stereotype of the female *jamette* Other. They are eminently newsworthy, therefore, and their images fill the pages of the nation's newspapers and television screens. Not all women who take part in Carnival are represented in these images, but because these are the images which best project Trinidadian beauty and "sweetness", they are the ones that are privileged in the largely male-controlled Carnival and media.

Dubbing Carnival "a female festival", then, refers to far more than a simple increase in women revellers. The producers of Carnival, concerned with projecting a Self that is distinctively Other, have been concerned with packaging a Self that would sell internationally to those who scavenge the earth in search of new experiences (cf MacCannel 1976:13). With the "masculine" values of rationalism, competition and work appropriated by industrialized nations, the Trinidadian Self is represented as sweet,

sensual, playful, and beautiful. In Trinidad, these are the distinctive attributes of femininity. The female masquerader, therefore, unapologetic in her self-exposure, sensual in her performance, and beautiful in appearance, has become the quintessential metaphor of Carnival, and by extension, of the "national" Self. Included in the image of Carnival's feminization is a host of other qualities stereotypically attributed to "femaleness": prissiness, frivolity, passivity, consumerism and softness. But herein lies the dilemma for Trinidad's nation-builders. Carnival, interpreted as site of resistance and cradle of indigenous culture, is typically represented as male. The woman-as-mother, while co-opted as symbol of the nation, is non-represented in that creative process. Her role is that of maintaining, not producing "local culture" largely understood as steelband, calypso and mas' making. Idealized women have always been confined to separate "private" spaces, traditionally conceived of as agents of the respectable culture against which their menfolk struggled. With femininity effectively written out of the script, Carnival, and by extension, "national" culture is easily represented as the expression of the masculine Self. Yet paradoxically, the new born "culture" is not male, but female. The logic of Self construction in the international world order requires packaged differences among nations. With the "hard" values already "spoken for" by northern cultures, Carnival producers have been elaborating on images found in popular discourse, both local and foreign, about the sensual and playful Other of the tropics (cf. Parker 1991:7-29). Consequently, the Trinidadian woman is co-opted and projected as the image of the sensual Other.

Motherhood and sensuality are oppositional concepts in Trinidadian gender

discourse, however. One suggests respectability, religiosity, sacrifice and permanent commitment, the other, playfulness, promiscuity, fickleness and transience. However, both images are feminine, and have been used by the male architects of the Self to imagine and constitute the nation, albeit for different purposes: the shadowy "mother" quietly nurturing her producer-sons, the "sensual beauty" embodying their creative cultural endeavours. Yet it is far too simplistic to interpret women's increased involvement in Carnival as simply the creation of men. While I concede that the Carnival "event" is still largely constructed and directed by men, it is clear that women are not simply performing the feminine roles ascribed to them by the society at large. Just as an older generation of men inverted and subverted the norms of a colonial society, modern women are playing mas' with the nationalist narrative which reduces women either to shadowy subordinates or to the "pretty" products of the male enterprise. In the modern Carnival, notions of femininity and masculinity are deconstructed and reconstructed; so, too, are concepts of "softness" and "hardness". Not unexpectedly, King Carnival's sex change is the topic of much discussion and debate in the society at large.

The Carnival "Gone Soft"

The present day Carnival is frequently conceptualized as the transformation of a former, more authentic Carnival which is represented as male. David Rudder, a calypsonian noted for his calypsoes which celebrate "black" cultural roots and resistance motifs, complained in his 1992 calypso, De Long Time Band:

Enough is enough! shout Little Man,
 As he pull out his ancient tenor pan,
 The Carnival gone soft and that is a fact,
 So I going in town and bring it back.

To make Carnival "hard" again, Rudder invoked the image of the "long time" Carnival masqueraders and revellers who, following "little man" in a Carnival band, "cock" various parts of their anatomy in the air - for example, their buttocks and mouths - in order to rescue Carnival from its present "softness". The word "cock" carries with it connotations of maleness in Trinidad. As a noun, it describes the adult male of the domestic fowl, the penis (usually considered a vulgar usage), and men with a certain swagger or arrogance. As a verb, "to cock" is expressive of proud defiance and lack of decorum, and could be used to describe the behaviour of both women and men. It is, however, a profoundly "male" attribute and Rudder uses it metaphorically to wrest the Carnival from the "hoity toits" (middle-classes) who presently control it. The contest between "little man" and the "hoity toits", between Carnivals past and present is, therefore, cast as a contest between hardness and softness, resistance and complicity, maleness and femaleness.

The pacification or "softening" of Carnival has also been the target of criticism levelled at the modern festival by several commentators. Papers by a local newspaper columnist, Kim Johnson (1983), and anthropologists Daniel Crowley (1983) and John Stewart (1986) attribute recent developments in Carnival to its appropriation as official "national" culture by the middle-classes who have defused its potential for resistance. The authors, all men, assume a more authentic version in the past against which the modern Carnival must be measured. What is interesting, however, is the way the shift is

conceived of in terms of gender.

For Johnson, "the ethos of capitalism has shifted, at least for the middle-class (and to a lesser extent for the working class as well) from one of production-and-work to one of consumption-and-fun, and many middle-class women find themselves as bearers of this ideology, having broken away from the repressive Victorianism of the 1930's" (1983:199). Not only is Carnival "a women's festival, or a festival of women" (Johnson 1983:199), women are held directly responsible for the spread of the "debased" and "bankrupt" middle-class ethos. Johnson typically slots "woman" into the role reserved for her in traditional gender analyses of Caribbean societies: the "soft" border between the resisting Self and the dominant Other, the consumer and bearer of Eurocentric value systems because of her supposed closer association with the "master" class during slavery (cf. Wilson 1973). This theme of female promiscuity and complicity with the dominant "massa" or foreign Other has been further perpetuated through calypsoes of the "Rum and Coca Cola" type which represent both mother and daughter "working for the Yankee dollar" during and after World War II when American servicemen were stationed on the island.

The anthropologist, Daniel Crowley, was one of the first group of scholars to publish an academic study on Carnival in the mid-1950's. His "Traditional Masques of Carnival" (1956) attempts both to document the masquerades of the Trinidad Carnival and to uncover the origins of particular masking traditions. Invited back to Trinidad in the early 1980's to participate in a Seminar on Carnival, Crowley was critical of the new

shape and ethos of Carnival (1983:221-225). Claiming that Carnival is "always a festival of reversal", Crowley pleaded that it not be turned into a "goody, goody national festival, a showcase for the world". For him, Carnival is best persecuted if it is to remain authentic (1983:221). He diagnosed the current Carnival as "sick" because it no longer had any "guts" to it, it was too "nicey-nice". Again, for Crowley, the lack of "guts", Rudder's "softness", is directly linked to the predominance of women:

One of the reasons why young men are probably not out there in the streets anymore as they were thirty years ago, is that there is no challenge in the streets - the reason why the carnival is in the possession of women and children. It's that the fun has gone out of it, there is no swashbuckling challenge for young men. There is no way to make the kind of points young men feel strongly about. In contrast, Brazilian Carnivals are about 85 percent young men from the ages of fifteen to twenty-five. 85 percent! That's a lot (Crowley 1983:223).

This view is not peculiar to Johnson and Crowley. During my field-work, I heard variations of this perspective, both in the media and in conversations, and mostly from men who were either veteran masqueraders or who saw the festival as the privileged space of "black" resistance. Carnival has been "softened" and neutralized, the effect and/or cause of the predominance of women revellers. The "soft and sensual" Queen has usurped the throne of the "lean and mean" King.

The Usurpation of the Carnival Throne

The entry of women onto the Carnival stage could be considered dramatic in two ways. First, women outnumber men in the masquerade bands, and no longer depend on men to protect them from unwanted "interference" from predatory males. Women form

groups to "play mas'" together, often leaving their male partners who play in another section of the band or stay at home to care for children (cf. Trinidad Express February 29, 1992:23). Second, at Carnival time, women no longer behave in accordance with the tenets of "respectability" expected of them from society at large. Particularly shocking for both male and female Trinidadians is the behaviour of women, considered "respectable" by virtue of colour, class or professional standing, who "wine" and gyrate on the streets and Savannah stage in skimpy costumes. Not all women "wine and jam" or wear revealing costumes, but this is the image that is projected in the media, paradoxically both to express moral outrage at the "fall of Carnival" through its association with debased womenfolk, and to sell Carnival on the tourist market as "the Greatest Show on earth".

Women are not unaware of the impact of their performance on the nation. Pre- and post-Carnival television and radio talk-shows continuously analyze this "new phenomenon"³, while newspaper columns and letters-to-the-editor are full of admonitions and advice to women masqueraders at Carnival time. A "Clean Carnival Person", in a letter to both "my dear ladies" and "TV cameramen" in the Trinidad Guardian (February 28, 1992:8), beseeched the former to respect themselves and act as "good role models for children in particular or budding young ladies coming up". The cameramen were asked not "to focus your cameras on vulgarity as you know children are your main viewers". Another Guardian columnist, herself an ex-Senator and advocate of women's rights complained:

The gyrating women masqueraders, clad in costumes which are akin to Pampers, have not only short-changed themselves and demonstrated that they are without self-esteem, but

have eroded much of the respect which women's organizations and individuals are advocating and demanding for women. After freely providing their bodies as "the thing" upon which the men as well as women could "wine upon"....many of these women would pretend to be alarmed, and indignant, if one of the male workers or the boss touched them on the nape of the neck, or any such place (March 24, 1992:9).

The Catholic News, in a catechetical lesson for students, approved of Carnival, but disapproved of its excesses. Among the excesses named are "the ever-increasing skimpiness of the designs for women" and "the shameless wining of our womenfolk before the TV cameras" (February 23, 1992:12).

For many, especially men, the most disturbing thing about the woman in contemporary Carnival is that her performance is not overtly directed at the male. Wining with, on, or for men, while considered "vulgar" and "obscene", is still within the range of possibility for the "Trini" woman. After all, *jamettes* are still the shadow side of the idealized "wife-mother" complex. However, women, dressed in so-called "provocative" costumes and wining alone, or on other women, or on "anything", are anomalies who not only introduce a new category of "woman", but subvert the male-female dynamic on which older images were built.

A fundamental assumption underpinning the traditional male-female relationship is the belief that a female's dress and behaviour is part of an elaborate invitational "mating ritual". At Carnival, however, many women do not seem interested in inviting or seducing men, nor do they seem to care with whom or on whom they wine. Narratives among women abound about men who misread women's behaviour at Carnival and ended up being verbally and physically abused for "trespassing". In one incident, about which

I heard several versions, a scantily-clad woman masquerader had wined and gyrated for the benefit of a male tourist with a camcorder. When her performance ended, he had tried to "interfere"⁴ with her. The women story-tellers then gleefully recounted how the female protagonist verbally abused him and broke up his camera. By radically disconnecting the concept of "woman" from the conventional male-female dynamic, the "Carnival woman" both undermines the traditional images of women as "mother/wife" or *jamette*, and proposes new terms on which the female/male relationship should be built, if at all.

That men (and women) find the auto-eroticism of women's behaviour in contemporary Carnival alarming is evident from newspaper comments on the issue. Male interpretations hint darkly of rampant lesbianism, or more broadly, of the spread of individualism in society at large (Earl Lovelace, personal communication January 13, 1992). One newspaper columnist, a male university lecturer, declared:

.....if the girl in front of me wants to wine like a ball of twine, I am the straight man, the piece of stick from which the twine wines and unwinds. From the centre of the storm, as it were, I now look at the "gyre/girl" gyrating out there. She is not dancing for me. She is not dancing for that handsome buster who has been eyeing her all night. She is not even dancing for herself. She is alone and mechanical. She doesn't think she is being sexy. I don't think she is being sexy. She is not sexy. Sexy is the furthest thing from her mind (Ken Ramchand, Trinidad Guardian August 27, 1992:7).

Another man, a well-known Trinidad Guardian columnist, tongue-in-cheek called for another Carnival day designated "Mainly for Men" to give males a chance to play their mas':

You see women dominate the Carnival days of Monday and Tuesday when hordes of their species really come out to play. A man's day will ease the frustrations of the males being overwhelmingly outnumbered and outwined by thousands of waist-swinging women (George Harvey in Trinidad Guardian March 7, 1992:9).

Clearly, then, the phenomenon of the modern female masquerader, whether construed as compliant, frivolous, lesbian, individualistic or the cause and effect of moral and social decay, is considered very problematic by some influential sectors and individuals in Trinidadian society. The controversies that the yearly appearance of women in Carnival generates suggest that the issue is multi-layered. These controversies involve questions about appropriate female behaviour, the nature of the male-female relationship, the construction of womanhood, and ultimately, about women's role in the nation and the representation of the national Self.

Playing Mas' with Gender

I suggest that far from being "domesticated" as argued by Crowley and others, Carnival remains as much the site of iconoclastic practices as it was for the male (and female) masqueraders of old. Granted, the Self-Other configuration has changed, and so, too, has the idiom of resistance. But oppositional themes do persist. The swashbuckling males have been replaced by swashbuckling females whose "rebellion" is not against the "white" colonial regime and its elite cohorts (a contest that is largely over), but against the male control of the definition, behaviour and expectations of "woman" in the national community. Further, sexuality has replaced aggression as the idiom of defiance (cf. Miller 1991). The female body has become the vehicle, the mass of females (not the costume) has become the masquerade. The open flaunting and display of the sensual female form is as provocative and subversive of the *status quo* as the hordes of male maskers who

dominated the streets of former Carnivals, armed with their sticks, beating their drums and singing their "battle" songs. Many of these men had appropriated the caricature of the "black" male constructed in colonial discourse - savage, aggressive, wild, lascivious - and used this image in a menacing way to fight back. Caricaturing the caricature has always been part of the masquerade and calypso traditions in Carnival. The *jab jab* with his blackened body and the *Congo Man* who cooked and ate two "white" women in Africa in Sparrow's calypso⁵ are but two examples of this tradition in the Trinidad Carnival. Women, unmasked and exposed, are now employing the same strategy. Shadowy figures in the "male" Carnivals of the past, women are "singing back" in calypsoes⁶, "wining back" in public spaces and stepping out of male fantasies and pin-ups to tease and provoke their "creators". Their behaviour is not primarily about sexuality, if it is about that at all, but about self-assertion, self-expression, defiance and absolute freedom (cf. Miller 1991) in the context of the so-called "gender war", one side of which has been so well documented by male calypsonians.

Despite this analysis, my women interviewees did not interpret their behaviour in oppositional terms, however. Nor was sexuality high on their agenda as a reason for playing mas'. More often than not, my inquiries about their participation were met with incomprehension, a sure sign that, for these women, the answer was quite self-evident. When pressed, however, almost all described the Carnival experience in terms of freedom, pleasure and self-expression. Samples of the typical responses I got to my question were:

It's a must. I love the music and it's a chance to get together with friends (teacher 40+years old).

For the pleasure of enjoying the music and the infectious sense of camaraderie (secretary 20+).

For sheer enjoyment. I love music and dancing. It's like a non-stop party on the move (teacher 20+).

A chance to be myself. During the year I can't walk down the street with a beer bottle in my hand - people would talk, especially customers who come to the bank. Carnival time is my time to free up (bank official 40+).

For total enjoyment and to help me cope with living the rest of the year. My time to free up (homemaker 20+).

I am a *Trini* - what do you expect? There is no other time like Carnival for me - this is my time to get on "bad" (salesclerk 30+).

Carnival is experienced as pleasurable because it affords the woman space to be herself, especially that part of the self historically subjected to social regulation and upon which her worth as a person depended. I refer here to a woman's sexuality and to her body in which it is grounded. In theory and practice, "pleasure" was never considered the proper attribute of the woman as "mother". A source of pleasure and nurturing for others, she was denied pleasure for herself. Sacrificial care-giving, so valorized in the image of the "strong" woman of Caribbean literature and folk narratives, was assumed to be the "zenith of a woman's ambition in life" (cf. Pretender's 1937 calypso, Mother's Love). Her public indulgence in "pleasurable" pursuits, then, and especially those located in the body - movement, dance, dress (or lack of it), and sensuality - can best be interpreted as an act of rebellion against the social codes and practices which define and constrain her life during the year. For women, Carnival is the expression of, and achievement of, freedom. Women literally become "out of control", playing mas', if only temporarily, with the role assigned to them in the national scheme of things.

There are several ways in which the women of Carnival transgress and disrupt the norms of society, especially as these relate to gendered identities and relationships. By appropriating for themselves the male public space historically represented as the womb from which "indigenous culture" was conceived and nurtured (cf. Stewart 1986:305), Carnival women subvert the notion of a gendered division of space and social behaviour which has been the framework through which Caribbean societies have been understood and constructed. Their "take-over" of the street blurs the line between rude and serious (Abrahams 1983), inside and outside (Miller 1991) and street and yard (Wilson 1973), and forces their inclusion in the performance of the "national" script. But not only is public space re-gendered, so, too, is behaviour. The "rudeness" associated with men is co-opted by women, and transformed into an idiom of sensuality. Pleasure is achieved, not simply through the practice of dancing, movement and masquerade, but from the thrill of "breaking the rules" and "getting on bad", or what Leslie Grotfit calls "the pleasure located in naughtiness" (1991:180). Further, women dancing alone or in groups, in a Carnival space historically dominated by men and heterosexual couples, defy the social norm which requires the presence of men both to pleasure and protect women in public spaces. In a society where males have traditionally believed in their own remarkable powers of seduction (Rohlehr 1990:226), scantily clothed women, assertively defending themselves against the unwanted attention of predatory males, can surely be interpreted as an act of "resistance" or "hardness". This certainly is the image of the Carnival woman that David Rudder paints in another of his 1992 calypsoes, Carnival Ooman which he

sings "for the sistren":

I hear he raise he hand again and he lash (hit) you
 This time, you send he tail straight to casualty
 Then you put on your jeans and went Panorama
 You see how Carnival could make woman strong

CHORUS

Now you're a Carnival Woman
 Can't stop the baby, can't stop the girl
 Carnival Woman freest of women in all the world
 I hear how you fling it, you cock it, you throw it, you jam it
 Then you wheel and tumble down
 But woman its yours
 Then you jam a man against the wall
 And you start to give him pound
 The crowd bawl, "Advantage"
 That's a Carnival Woman
 man, you're dealing with a Carnival Woman
 And the rest of the women telling she,
 "Make him pay, Sister make him pay. Turn him, twist him,
 give him pepper".
 I hear you push your head in Charlie's Roots speaker
 If your waist could talk, girl it woulda cry
 Then you nearly killed your poor supervisor
 But next morning in work, uh huh, the whole office lie

CHORUS

I hear you leave him home to mind all the children
 Now in the *fête* you explode a young boy's mind
 You wine on the boy and make him hot like a pepper
 And when the smoke start to come out he ears
 You say, "That's fine. Go home now."
 Play with all you Carnival Woman.

It must be acknowledged, however, that women's oppositional behaviour is inscribed within an ideological and festival space that is largely controlled and defined by men. The Government organizers of the "national *fête*", the costume designers, the band producers, the music makers, and the calypsonians are predominantly male which suggests, on the surface, that women are the uncritical consumers of a male-produced Carnival, including its ethos and practice of scandal, confusion, bacchanal and sexual

ribaldry. Stereotypes of "sensuous" femininity and "macho" masculinity are reproduced in the costume design, and calypso lyrics continue, in part, to trivialize, caricature and ridicule women. More often than not, the amplified soca "voice" that orders women revellers to "bump and grind" is that of a male singer. Women are, therefore, caught at intersections of consent and resistance, self-expression and reaction, pleasure and guilt, agency and passivity, manipulation and active appropriation, commoditization and rebellion. Women's oppositional practices, embedded in the logic of an identity discourse which posits a Self-Other dichotomy, assume the definition of a Self that is defined over and against the male-Other. Granted, the "object" of male desire and dominance is transformed into a "subject", who rebelliously uses her sensuality to provoke and tease. Nevertheless, as "female", women are positioned within a set of practices and discourses that are both male-defined and dominated. "Woman" remains a contradictory and paradoxical figure, therefore, negotiating spaces between compromise and rebellion, sociality and bacchanal, yard and street, "mother" and "*jamette*". As "female", the Carnival radically undermines the notion of a bounded, monolithic and impenetrable "hardness" on which national identities are supposedly built.

CHAPTER NINE

CONCLUSION

Las' Lap : Carnival As Culture - Culture As Carnival

Memories of Carnivals Past

"*Las' lap*" (lit. last lap) refers to the final phase of Carnival, a winding down for weary revellers rather than an ecstatic climax. As an adolescent, I remember it as a time of sadness, a time of "mourning" for the passing of Carnival. I would stay on the streets of St. James until the last *pan* (steel drum) was pushed into the nearby pan yard at midnight. Then, I would amble home (often with a limp), torn between the anticipation of rest and the desire to freeze the all-too-fleeting moment of Carnival. It was with great interest, then, that I recently read of the entry in the 1832 diary of Friedrich Urich, a merchant clerk in Port of Spain:

Tuesday March 6th.a crowd of our coloured acquaintances and our negroes (slaves) had organized a funeral procession to mark the end of Carnival (Cited in de Verteuil 1984:57)¹.

Although Carnival was no longer "performed" as a funeral procession in my childhood years, *las' lap* was recognizable as a distinct phase of Carnival. Revellers generally exuded a mood of quiet soberness, shuffling along the city streets behind their favourite steelbands in the cool dark of night. *Jouvay* was the dawn ritual of exposure, *las' lap* the night ritual of closure. *Jouvay* bristled with the excitement of anticipation. *Las' lap* sagged with the bathos of satiation.

I remember Lent following Carnival, asceticism the indulgence of "the flesh". For many Christians, "taking ashes" on Ash Wednesday only made sense in the light of Carnival. The Carnival-Lent relationship was inverted, with "penance" the price to be paid for having "indulged" in Carnival activities. Carnival was the prior "reality", Lent its consequence, not *vice versa* as taught in "official" Christian dogma. In the pre-Independence years, calypsoes were not aired on the radio during the forty day Lenten season, and school children "cut Lent" (made a pact) with their peers to ensure that no one "broke Lent" by singing these "unholy" songs. *Fêtes* were rare during this period, the only exception being St. Joseph's Day (March 19th) when people took a break from the penitential regimen by singing calypsoes and indulging in festive pursuits. The discontinuity between Carnival and Lent was as stark as it was abrupt.

Las' Lap 1992.

Although I was tired after my intense participation in the two day street festival, I was determined to take part in its last rites. It somehow seemed a necessary part of the

"letting go" of the entire experience. Again, as a "native" I experienced the sadness of old, but as an "anthropologist" I felt the anticipation of moving on to the next phase of my research - the collating, processing, constructing of what I had so intensely experienced. For me as a "native-anthropologist", both the excitement of anticipation and the sadness of closure were hopelessly intertwined.

At nine o'clock in the evening, I left the house for *las' lap*. The Main Road in St. James was overflowing with uncostumed pedestrians walking in both directions. Music bands were nowhere to be seen or heard. I headed East towards the Roxy-Harvard roundabout, the site of the *las' lap* steelband competition. Many people filled the streets and sidewalks, in the expectation that steelbands would converge on the area for the competition. It was a "spectator" crowd, with people standing around, talking, drinking and "liming" in small groups. Again, side-walk food vendors and bars plied their trade and did a brisk business.

A little music band of eight males, playing old rusty steel drums hung around their necks, soon appeared and slowly made its way to the competition area. A DJ on a large lorry, its speakers blasting a *soca* tune, followed them, moving quickly and aggressively towards St. James. In tow, was a large crowd of uncostumed teenagers and young adults who jumped and pranced to the up-beat music. They mowed through the crowd, descending like a tidal wave on the small group of music makers who escaped to safety on the side-walk. Another steelband, already performing in the judges' enclosure, was forced to stop as the "noise" of the DJ intruded into its performance space. The volume

of the DJ swallowed every other sound, manifesting yet another instance of the many "clashes" within the present day Carnival. In this case, the contest was one cast in terms of big-sophisticated-modern as opposed to small-simple-traditional. Although the Carnival continues to provide space for the expression of many oppositional themes and their mixtures, it is quite obvious that this particular "contest" is lopsided. The small traditional "dragon" troupe struggles for space in the Tuesday spectacle and finds it severely restricted. The small steelband group with its unsophisticated rusty drums has lost its place altogether in the glare of television lights that beams from the Savannah. In the darkness of *las' lap*, however, it dared to emerge, but even there, its existence appeared tenuous.

The lorry disappeared into the night as quickly as it came, and the "last rites" were mercifully left to the steelbands. I joined Phase II, a popular steelband from Woodbrook, which was slowly making its way westward into St. James. A crowd of about eight hundred revellers "chipped" along behind them to a "*soca*" tune. The pace was slow and leisurely, evoking memories for me of *las' laps* of times past. Lights were strung across the Main Road, along which runs shops, pubs, fast-food restaurants and vendors did a thriving trade. Half way down the Main Road, the music stopped. It was now ten thirty and time for the final trek home. We all helped the pannists turn the frames on which the drums were carried. Retracing our steps, we followed the band eastward along the Main Road. When the music resumed, its "mood" had changed. The new tune sounded like a mixture of religious hymn melodies. Later, I learned that it was a tune composed by a

band member in tribute to three recently deceased members of Phase II.

At the Harvard Club roundabout, another steelband was preparing to perform before the judges. Our band fell silent and waited its turn. The drums of Laventille Sound Specialists, a band from the urban working-class area which claims the "invention" of the steelpan, were mounted on a huge flatbed trailer attached to a truck. The pannists, dressed in bright yellow shirts, waited for the removal of a belligerent and intoxicated band member who insisted on playing his drum. After a minor scuffle, he was removed and replaced by another drummer. Bystanders treated the fracas as a "performance" in and of itself, participating with advice, comments, laughter and expressions of fear.

On cue, the pannists began to beat out the well known Stephen Adams hymn, the Holy City, in an up-beat calypso tempo. Here was a merger of categories we often keep distinct in our social science discourse: sacred and profane, serious and playful, solemnity and fun. Those categories were meaningless here. The reactions of the crowd were varied. Most applauded, some danced, many stood still and listened. A few lustily sang out the chorus, "Jerusalem, Jerusalem, Lift up your gates and sing!/Hosanna in the highest/Hosanna to your King". A woman standing behind me remarked to her immediate "audience": "This is real heaven. We reach Jerusalem tonight". Phase II then played their own "hymn" before the judges. The silent crowd listened attentively. It was twenty minutes to midnight as the band moved away from the roundabout. My companions wanted to leave, but I prevailed on them to continue. We helped push the pans along the final stretch of road to the pan yard as the pannists continued to play their haunting

melody. At five minutes to twelve, we arrived at the yard's entrance. The music hovered like a bubble in the dim street light, slowly drifting over unlit and tightly shuttered houses. Many people had already gone to bed. In the dark street below, revellers continued to dance, sucking every note of the dying Carnival into their tired bodies. At midnight, we pushed the frames into the yard. The bubble burst and the dancing stopped. It was Ash Wednesday.

"Carnival Lasts Forever"

Several days after performing the "last rites" for Carnival, I was invited to attend a victory celebration in the panyard of the 1992 Panorama champions, Exodus. It was planned for the second weekend after Carnival. The night's activities began with thanksgiving prayers led by a Roman Catholic clergyman, which were followed by both DJ music and "live" entertainment by some of the "stars" of Carnival. The ambiance inside and outside the pan yard was not unlike that at the *fêtes* of the just concluded Carnival -huge crowds; food vendors selling corn soup, boiled ears of corns, peanuts, souse (pickled pig trotters); a well-patronized bar, and music at high decibel levels. The crowd, however, was far more "passive" in spite of the constant exhortations of the Charlie's Roots' lead singer: "Forget Ash Wednesday - this is "we culture", so leh we jam and wine and mash up the place". This was one of many Carnival-related celebrations and performances I attended that took place in the weeks traditionally framed for "fasting and abstinence". Advertisements of *fêtes*, depicted as "Carnival *lagniappes*", appeared in

the daily newspapers (cf. Trinidad Express March 7, 1992:5), and the mass media as a whole were continuously filled with "re-runs" as well as documentary, pictorial and literary *post mortems* of the "national *Fête*".

The Trinidad Guardian Carnival Magazine (March 4, 1992:62) concluded its representation of the 1992 Carnival "event" with the caption, "Carnival - the beginning". The unnamed author of the article declares: "Carnival gone. Bacchanal stay. Yes, the curtain is down on yet another Carnival in Trinidad and Tobago. But it's never the end of the mas'." Carnival is depicted as the first "act" of the year, the beginning of a series of Carnival "events" extending temporally "on these shores", and spatially to other islands and continents where Trinidadian mas' producers, calypsonians and musicians travel as "exporters" of Carnival. In this construction, *las' lap* is not the "final rites" of a temporary eruption of Otherness in "ordinary" time and space, but a "comma" in the continuous expression of a Self which is simply intensified at Carnival time. To put it in the words of an elderly male veteran of Carnival:

It's the colonial masters and dem that tell we people that Carnival bad and full of devil worship, and that we must put on ashes to repent when we done play mas' and sing calypso. But now all that change. We could sing we calypso during Lent and right through the year - even some of the priest playing mas' now. That's a good thing because all dem old traditions is we culture (Ken, interview on February 2, 1992)

For the 1992 Carnival, the local distributors of Kodak cameras and film ran advertisements in Trinidad's newspapers for their products with the caption, "Carnival Lasts Forever" (cf. Appendix D(ii)). For Trinidadians, this caption expresses far more than the possibility of capturing lasting images of Carnival on film. Rather, "Carnival Lasts

Forever" is an assertion both of what "is" and what "should be", a testimony to the endurance of a "people's culture" against the alien Other, and a commitment to ensure that "*Trini* culture" does endure in time and space forever.

Carnival as "Culture"

I have shown how, historically and ideologically, Carnival has become both site and symbol of the Trinidadian "national" Self. In practice, Carnival was the space where oppositional themes were expressed, and projections of alternative Selves played out in music, songs, dance and masquerade. Theoretically, Carnival was amenable to appropriation by nationalists as both the cultural site of "resistance" to the foreign Other, and the coming together of disparate groups to form a "unique" culture. Underpinning this transformation of the annual festival into an objectified piece of Trinidadian "culture" are the assumptions of the nationalist project, and the social science discourse which feeds it (Handler 1988:14; Sullivan 1983:297-319). In this discourse, "culture" is objectified as a "thing" which can be analyzed, preserved, revitalized and consumed. Further, it is endowed with the "essence" of the people who "invented" and "embody" it. These are processes which Handler calls "cultural objectification" (cf. 1988:15), and following Macpherson (1962) and Dumont (1977), "possessive individualism" (Handler 1988:51). Abu-Lughod (1991:143), arguing against the traditional concept of "culture", shows how it has become an essential tool in the making of the Other. I suggest that in some discourses of nationalism and ethnicity, culture has also become the essential tool in the

construction of the Self.

As an annual festival, Trinidad Carnival was essentially an ephemeral phenomenon. Its temporal space was brief, its masquerades disposable, its performances fleeting. To the extent that it was an expression of Self, Carnival was a Self that was imagined, played with, interactive, and in the process of becoming. The verb "play" has traditionally defined the relationship of Trinidadians to their masquerade, suggesting that Carnival is more properly represented as a verb rather than a noun. The logic of nationalist discourse demands, however, that "culture", insofar as it is employed to define Trinidadian identity, must necessarily be conceptualized as a noun. It is that which both distinguishes the Trinidad and Tobago "nation" from other "nations", and embodies the "content" of the "nation's" essence. The conceptual metamorphosis of Carnival into "*Trini* culture", then, entailed a transformation, in theory and practice, from Carnival as verb to Carnival as noun, from ephemerality to permanence, from performance to show.

This metamorphosis of Carnival is clearly evident in the many ways nationalists treat Carnival as an "object" to be preserved as "cultural property", sold as "commodity" or exchanged as "gift". Assumed in all instances is the notion that Carnival is expressive of Trinidad's "unique" collective Self. Strategies of "perpetuation" are evident in both the proposals and efforts to ensure Carnival's continuation in time and space through "revivals", expansions, object preservations and formal instruction of the young. Often, the drive to "preserve" is the result of a perceived threat to the "native" Self by the "cultural" invasion of the more powerful "foreign" Other. Handler calls this drive "a

negative vision" (1988:5). Perhaps it would be more accurate to call it a vision of protest or opposition, since the desire to resist "domination" could hardly be dubbed "negative".

An example of "revivalism" is contained in an unpublished Paper presented to a Carnival Development (CDC) sub-Committee in 1987. This document calls for the "revival of regional Carnival" since it is perceived to contain "important aspects" of the nation's heritage which are being "lost in the power and glory of the Carnival celebrations in Port of Spain during recent times... these features and the people who are preserving and conserving them are still very much alive and well in some of the towns and villages of our Republic" (Cupid 1987:3). At stake, for the Committee, was the survival of Trinidadian "culture" understood as "folk" and existing in "village" Trinidad. Currently, money is made available to town and village Committees and Councils by the National Carnival Commission (NCC) for the "staging" of Carnival throughout the island, but interviews with several village organizers in the Mayaro/Guayaguayare district indicate that these local performances are often a deliberate attempt at re-creating and sustaining traditions that are fast becoming extinct in these rural communities.

Other strategies of deliberate "perpetuation" involve attempts to "extend" Carnival in time, and "capture" it in space. A 1983 Government-sponsored report recommended that Carnival be considered an "on-going activity", a measure necessary to combat the exposure of Trinidad's youth to a "surfeit of foreign matter" at the expense of their "own traditional background" (Bacchus 1983:86). A "festival city" was proposed that would be the "site" for conserving, developing and managing the various art-forms of the "nation".

Carnival is privileged, with a second Carnival recommended for the August to September period, to create "a new peak season" to celebrate "national resources" and "to assist in the enhancement of the Tourist Sector" (Bacchus 1983a:70). Although both proposals have yet to be implemented, they remain "active" ideas on the drawing board for future development of the Carnival. Efforts at "saving" the material "culture" of Carnival have already begun, however, with a Historical Collection of Carnival Kings and Queens mounted at the National Museum in Port of Spain. Significantly, the collection was started in 1962, the year of political Independence from Britain (Trinidad Guardian March 17, 1992:12).

Perhaps the policy and practice which best shows an understanding of Carnival as Trinidadian "culture" is the incorporation of Carnival-related arts and subject matter into the formal educational system, site of social and cultural reproduction. Students learn to play the "pan" in some schools, and take part in inter-school Junior Panorama competitions organized during the Carnival season. Many schools produce school-bands for the Children's Parade of Bands which, in 1992, took place on Carnival Saturday, and intra-school competitions in calypso and masquerade are staged within schools during the season. Carnival is taught in some schools as part of the Social Studies program, with the festival weighted with meanings of "indigenous" culture as opposed to the cultures of the more powerful "foreign" Others. At a 1983 Seminar on Carnival, a representative from the Ministry of Education argued:

If we introduce the content of Carnival to the formal school system, we can be using it to teach a number of things. For example, the whole question of our history. What exactly

do people through calypso over the ages, through mas' over the ages, reveal about our history, and reveal more importantly about our psyche? What does it reveal about our sociological development? (Harvey 1983:230).

Carnival is also increasingly objectified as "commodity". Advertized as "what we do best" (Trinidad Express February 24, 1992:7), Carnival as "culture" is imaged as a "thing", for sale both at home and abroad (Trinidad Guardian Carnival Souvenir February 16, 1993:6). Market metaphors abound in "official" Carnival discourse. Local patrons, emigrants and foreigners are the "targeted consumers", and Carnival the unique "packaged product". Rights to cover the NCC shows are "sold" to media houses, boxes of seats to Corporations, and "franchises" for handling parking and other services at Savannah shows are "sold" to corporations and individual "entrepreneurs".

It is the "foreign market", however, that is seen as the most lucrative in generating business for the twin-island State. "Selling" Carnival abroad involves three strategies: first, promoting the festival in the North American and European travel markets to attract tourists to Trinidad; secondly, broadcasting highlights of the "events" on foreign cable networks on a pay-per-view basis; and thirdly, "exporting" Carnival into new "markets". The 1983 report commissioned by the Ministry of Culture targeted Trinidadian emigrants in metropolitan countries as the main conduits for the importation of "foreign" revenue and the exportation of Carnival "technology" to the host countries:

The obvious market is the "enclaves" of immigrants from Trinidad and Tobago in the metropolitan diaspora. These large immigrant centres in Brooklyn, Toronto, London etc. contain not merely the genetic code of their original culture, but the culture itself. These people are the embodiment of the essence of Carnival (Bacchus 1983b:142).

In fact, Trinidadian emigrants have re-created their Carnival in metropolitan cities

where they have settled in large numbers. Further, Trinidad-type Carnivals have been appropriated by other Caribbean islands, in large part as "tourist attractions". This has created a demand for Trinidadian masquerade "experts" and music. For instance, D'Midas Associates, a group known for its production of elaborate Carnival bands, now produces mas' all year round. After the 1992 Carnival, members of the group were booked to contribute to Carnivals in Jamaica, St. Thomas in the Virgin Islands, Oakland, San Jose, Toronto and Boston, all scheduled to take place at different times throughout the year (Sunday Guardian Magazine June 7, 1992:5). For many mas' producers, calypsonians and musicians, then, the Trinidad Carnival is simply the beginning of a year long production. An "official" of the National Carnival Commission articulated his organization's policy very explicitly during a lengthy interview in his office:

More and more, we are looking at Carnival playing a major economic role in the economic life of our country, and from that we will get everything else. We are looking not only at exporting or transmitting the shows "live", but at setting up factories here that would be able to service other Carnivals in terms of costumes and music...We feel our artists here will be able to compete in any part of the world in terms of costumes which we produce here (National Carnival Commission "official", Port of Spain. December 11,1992).

This policy corroborates Appadurai's theory in which he argues that "the imagination has become an organized field of social practices, a form of work (both in the sense of labour and its culturally organized practice) and a form of negotiation between sites of agency ("individuals") and globally defined fields of possibility" (Appadurai 1990:5).

The "selling" of Carnival is more than the marketing of a festival, however. As part of the world-wide trafficking in "exotic" cultures, Carnival is projected and marketed

as the embodiment of Trinidad's "culture", the objectification of the Self. Through viewing or participating in Carnival, the tourist is supposed to gain entry into Trinidad's "uniqueness" and "ambiance", represented as distinct from the stratified, rationalized, labour-oriented "hard" worlds of the foreign Other (cf. MacCannell 1976:21; 35). Conversely, emigrants carry their Trinidadian "essence" with them, embodying it in new Carnivals wherever they locate, or replenishing it at the original, annual festival.

That Carnival embodies Self is evident in the way its components are used as "gifts" in international exchanges. The hiring of Peter Minshall, Trinidad's preeminent mas' artist, as part of the team responsible for the opening ceremonies of the 1992 Summer Games in Barcelona is a case in point. Minshall's opening four-minute segment was represented by Minshall himself as Trinidad's "hola" (hello) to all the world, an expression of "what we do so well" (Daily Express August 17, 1992:2), a new discovery of "a culture that lives in song and dance and costume" (Trinidad Guardian July 26, 1992:22). The anticipated performance generated more excitement than did the participation of Trinidad's athletes at the Games, and most of the population gathered around television sets to see Minshall's "gift" from Trinidad and Tobago to the world - "calypso puppets" transformed into "gigantes olympicos" dancing across the Olympic stadium floor. I had gathered with a group of friends on the evening of Saturday 25th July to view the Olympic opening ceremony. At 8 o'clock, television screens across "the nation" flickered with thousands of fuzzy dots and lines. When a picture finally appeared, Minshall's Hola had already been performed. Further, no mention was made in the credits

of him or of the islands from which the mas' came. The glitch in transmission, plus the failure of American NBC commentators to acknowledge the "ownership" of Trinidad's contribution, was met by outpourings of distress and outrage in the media and by the population at large (eg. Daily Express July 28, 1992:8). The intensity of these protests suggests that far more than "missing a show" was involved. The mas' was an embodiment of Self presented as unique "gift" to the world. Its "erasure" from local TV screens and co-option into the undifferentiated spectacle by American commentators was perceived as an affront to the Self itself, a denial that "exchange" had taken place. Significantly, American and European inputs were duly noted during the event, and in later international news reports. Trinidad's erasure was recognized as a telling commentary on the nature of global hegemonic processes.

The steel drum and calypso are also part of international "exchanges". For instance, Pope John Paul II was offered a steel drum, costume headpiece and specially composed calypso during his visit to Trinidad in February 1985. According to the Trinidad Guardian (February 5, 1985:1), the nature of the "gifts" demonstrated that the Pope would be received by the "nation" as a whole, and not merely by the Catholics of Trinidad and Tobago. According to this logic, "Carnival" represents Trinidadian "culture", and "culture" the "nation's" essence. Carnival, therefore, expresses the "essence" of the Trinidadian social being.

Culture as Carnival

I have shown the logic and process through which the Carnival has been transformed from festival to the embodiment of Trinidadian "culture", a "culture" projected largely as playful, sensual, harmonious, and "feminine". For the Trinidadian, however, his/her "culture" is itself a "Carnival", or more specifically, a "bacchanal", the paradigm through which the "culture" is constituted. With the onset of political independence, the playful and deconstructive impulse of former Carnivals became the valorized "culture" of the new "nation". Culture itself was officially carnivalized, with the pre-Lenten Carnival season seen as the crystallization of Trinidad's "unique" cultural values, rather than their inversion. "Bacchanal" is perceived as lurking beneath the appearances of all social life, manifesting itself in positive and negative ways through the many scandals, controversies, and public events that occur throughout the year. More accurately, social occurrences and events are turned into and consumed as "bacchanals", simultaneously constituting and reproducing the carnivalization of Trinidadian "culture". The most positive image of "bacchanal" is the *fête*, the symbol and practice of the uniqueness and "sweetness" of Trinidadian "culture".

Instances of the "carnivalizing" of cultural practices are especially evident in the performance of public rituals. Political election rallies are Carnival-like "events" with flags, specially composed calypsos, music, dancing, and political speeches which employ all the "tools" of the calypsonian and Robber masquerader -*picong* (to tease or heckle), ridicule, scandal, exaggerated boasts and threats. So, too, are protest demonstrations.

Nicole Duke, reporting on the 1992 Labour Day celebrations in the Trinidad Guardian (June 27, 1992:9) wrote:

People *chipping* through the streets to the beat of the *tassa* (Indian drums), the bottle-and-spoon and the iron, created a scene reminiscent of *J'Ouvert* morning. This was not the scene I expected. I soon realized it was another demonstration of the Trini's inherent ability to "Carnivalize" any occasion.

Popular religious festivals and rituals also tend to be Carnival-like in ethos and performance. Christmas, traditionally marked by the singing of carols and *parang* (religious songs with "Spanish" lyrics and rhythms), now generates *soca parang*, a genre which mixes traditional Christmas rhythms with Carnival *soca* music, and substitutes themes found in calypso (sexual *double entendre*, *fêting*, bacchanal, excessive drinking) for religious content. The title of a recent Christmas music album produced by Crosby's of St. James, Christmas Bacchanal, reveals this tendency.

Another example of the Carnival-impulse within the domain of religion is the popular enactment of *Hosay*², an Islamic commemoration or festival (depending on one's point of view) inspired by the murders of Hussain and Hassan, the grandsons of the Prophet Muhammad (cf. Chelkowski 1979). Brought to Trinidad from India by Islamic indentured labourers in the nineteenth century, the tradition has been continuous in St. James where certain families annually reproduce the rituals and *tajyahs* (representations of the tomb of Hussain) for the occasion. The *tajyahs* are pulled in procession along the streets of St. James accompanied by the beating of *tassa* drums. In most parts of the Shi'a Islamic world, the death of Imam Hussain is celebrated silently with prayer and fasting. In some places, the event is dramatized, with participants whipping themselves until blood

is drawn (cf. Chelkowski 1979; Riggio 1988). In Trinidad, devotees pray and fast for ten days prior to the procession, share food with visitors, beat drums, and construct *tajyahs* at a great financial cost. On the streets of St. James, however, the *Hosay*-event opens up a "space" which is spontaneously turned into a Carnival-like affair by the population at large. The "site" itself is prepared by the businessmen of the area, with colourful lights strung across the Main Road, well stocked bars and restaurants, and blaring calypso music to entice patrons inside pubs and rum shops. People flock to the area from all over the city to see the *tajyahs* and hear the drums. For many, it is the occasion to socialize, drink, dance and have a good "lime". For these "spectator-participants", *Hosay* is a festive time, the "Indian" carnival, yet another occasion to *fête*. This perception is not new, although *Hosay* has admittedly taken on "national" and more "bacchanalian" proportions in recent years. As far back as 1939, the calypsonian Executor had referred to the event as "that gala Indian *fête*" in his calypso My Indian Girl Love (cf. Constance 1991:7; Rohlehr 1990:252). In recent years, *Hosay* devotees, under pressure from the dominant Anjuman Sunnat-ul-Jamaat Association, have been insisting that their performance is a commemoration, not a festival. "Official" Islam in Trinidad has increasingly been dissociating itself from the "event", dubbing it a "bacchanal" and urging the Government to put an end to the "immoral" practices in the name of Islam (Daily Express July 9, 1992:22; Interview with Imam M. on July 4, 1992). For the producers, devotees and participants, however, *Hosay* is there to stay. According to one devotee, its ethos marks it as peculiarly "Trinidadian":

I read about *Hosay* in other parts of the world and its militancy - how they say you have to encourage young children to fight and kill for Islam. Our way here in Trinidad is the better way, everybody respecting each other in togetherness and unity, with all kinds of different people involved. It's the time when family and friends and neighbours get together and live good - is we Trinidadian thing, them fanatics can't stop that (Ali, interview on July 3, 1992).

Trinidad's "way", then, is represented as togetherness, harmony, tolerance and the intermingling of peoples and traditions. Many Trinidadians declare that this makes Trinidad "sweet", with the "ability to *fête*" the cause and effect of this "sweetness" (cf. Stewart 1986:297-298). A newspaper columnist, calling Trinidadians' ability to party "the art of *fête*", asserts that "Trinidadians live for it - hell, we live it!...it is the quintessence of our popular culture" (Sunday Guardian Magazine January 19, 1992:9). During, and after the curfew which was imposed at the time of the 1990 attempted coup by Muslim insurgents, dusk to dawn *fêtes* were held to ease the tension and "restore normality" to the island³. The facility to turn any situation into "a *fête*" is perceived as participating in the re-creation and endorsement of the Trinidadian "way". *Fête* and bacchanal are weighted with similar meanings, and often used interchangeably. And the biggest *fête* and bacchanal of all is the Carnival, model of and for Trinidadian "culture".

Carnival: Representation and Non-representation of Trinidadian Identity

Thus far, I have shown the processes - historical, sociological, and hermeneutical - through which Carnival became the objectification of Trinidad's "culture", and Trinidad's "culture" the expression and embodiment of Trinidad's "national" Self. "Culture", according to the nationalist "identity" discourse and the social science presuppositions

which legitimize it, is that entity which collectivities share in common and which distinguishes them one from another. In Trinidadian popular discourse, "we culture" is the source of unity and the nation's unique "essence". It must be emphasized, however, that the meanings and linkages between "Carnival", "culture" and "national identity" are contested terrain within society at large. All Trinidadians are not subjects of their Carnival in the same way. There are those who, for religious, moral, and ethnic reasons, do not participate in Carnival at all. These people stay in their homes or withdraw to beaches or "religious" camps for the duration of the celebrations. Their "active" and deliberate withdrawal is based on a range of counter-interpretations which include "worship of the devil and of the flesh" (Clive, 50 year old professional and recent convert to evangelical Christianity), "an escapist frenzy" (Joan, 60 year old educator and government official of the Independence era), "an expression of "black" culture" (Jai, 45 year old activist and defender of "Indian culture"), "too sensual and immoral" (Peter, 30 year old Rastafarian "gardener"). The vast majority of Trinidadians do not "withdraw", however, but their levels of participation vary significantly. At one extreme, are the "passive" participants at home, viewing the celebrations on television maybe, but not too heavily invested in it. At the other, are the "full" participants, *fêting*, working or viewing the "event" from the streets. For some, it represents the crystallization of the Trinidadian "way"; for others, an opportunity for economic survival; but perhaps, for the vast majority, it is the chance to "free-up" from what is often described as the "hustle" or "grind" of ordinary life. For these, Carnival represents what "should be", not what "is".

In practice, then, Carnival does not "last forever" for all Trinidadians, in spite of Kodak's claim. On Ash Wednesday 1992, thousands of Christian "penitents" bowed their heads for ashes, and Port of Spain reverted to its daily life. In the downtown core of the city, "left-overs" of the Carnival - the bleachers, bits of costume, an abandoned steelband frame, brightly clothed tourists, calypso music played by side-walk vendors, shop windows still decorated with Carnival displays - still lingered on. However, the daily "hustle" had returned to the city. Taxi-drivers "hustled" each other for passengers, conservatively dressed office-workers "hustled" to work, side-walk vendors "hustled" to make a living, and vagrants "hustled" for food from passersby or trash cans. From an alley way, the strains of "Just a closer walk with God" came from a portable tape-recorder belonging to a peddler who sold cassette recordings of "Lenten" hymns. Two doorways down another side-walk "vendor" peddled his recorded calypso tapes. Super Blue's *Jab Jab* pierced the air.

The "sweetness" associated with Carnival and the essence of Trinidadian identity is not universally valued or experienced by Trinidadians, either. Weighted with connotations of openness, tolerance, playfulness, permissiveness and relativity, "sweetness", like the concept of bacchanal, drips with ambiguity. There are those who, for religious, moral, ethnic and economic reasons, assess its ethos and practice negatively. For these people, life is not one grand "glorious *fête*", and they continually resist what they consider to be the "carnivalizing of the nation". Of those who cast "sweetness" in a benign light, there are those who consider it lost, a quality of the "long time days" when

Trinidadians reportedly lived in harmony and openness; others see it as highly desirable, but elusive, in a society they characterize as competitive and "full of pressure" to survive. The "national *fête*", and its extensions throughout the year, are seen not only as ways of relieving the pressure (cf. Brereton 1983, Freilich 1970, Woods 1968), but the way life should be, the world turned right side up. Still others, see Trinidad's "sweetness" as present reality, a "given" that is lived in spite of the "pressures" of contemporary life - economic hardships, crime, labour unrest, ethnic polarizations, and an attempted coup. Carnival is an annual affirmation of this "sweetness", and it is also its cause.

The objectification of Carnival as Trinidad's "culture" - and by extension, its "national Self" - hides as much as it reveals. The nationalist project of "nation building" demands that "nations" be imagined and experienced as continuous, homogeneous and bounded (cf. Anderson 1983, Handler 1988:8). According to this logic, then, Carnival, is constructed, both in elite and popular discourse, as the privileged vehicle of past "indigenous" traditions, the cause and effect of "the nation's" unity, and the source of the island's cultural uniqueness. Captured as cultural property, commodity, and symbol, Carnival is made to represent the Trinidadian Self, conceived of as an undifferentiated "entity". What this discourse erases is the real differences within the nation as a whole, as well as the varied perceptions about Carnival held by individual Trinidadians, and especially Tobagonians, for whom Carnival is not similarly weighted. Further, the discourses on Carnival and national identity write out the historical entanglements between the colonizers and colonized that produced Carnival's "indigenous" traditions.

These entanglements continue to be glossed over as government bureaucrats and entrepreneurs actively shape a "native" Carnival Self for sale on foreign markets. One suspects that the supply is increasingly being "packaged" to meet the demand for "exotica" and "difference" sought for in North American and European markets. In chapter eight, I have shown how this particular global Self-Other dynamic is both structured and gendered. Thus captured and contained, Carnival certainly non-represents Trinidadian reality.

Yet, at a more fundamental level, Carnival does represent the Trinidadian Self in its complexity, diversity and fluidity. Carnival, like the "culture" which spawned it, and which it in turn spawns, can more accurately be understood as a "verb". My historical analysis has shown that Carnival is not an a-historical practice, a fixed and immutable "event" whose meaning and function have remained the same through time. As its performance has changed, so too, has its significance. Conversely, Carnival's wider social meanings have often shaped the style and content of its performance. Within the Carnival itself, Carnival has meant different things to different individual and groups. Never monolithic, the festival has opened a "space" for the expression of several Selves *vis à vis* several Others. The multiple representations of the "Columbus-event" in the 1992 Carnival provide a case in point. So, too, is the smorgasbord of acts, performances and masquerades which comprise the present-day festival. Annually, Trinidadians are situated within these several intersecting discourses and practices viscerally experiencing a Self that is multiple, open-ended, contradictory, and mixed-up.

Even those who "withdraw" from the festival can properly be analyzed as "participants" by virtue of their reactive opposition. Few Trinidadians are indifferent to the annual event. The role of the spectator, whether approving or opposed, is almost as important as the event that s/he is viewing or imagining. Often, it is the spectator's interaction and reaction (positive or negative) which defines and shapes the style and content of the performance. Consequently, the vast majority are actors in, and acted upon in their Carnival, an "event" practiced and apprehended not as a monolithic "thing", but as a dynamic and cacophonous field of voices and controversies, a virtual "bacchanal". As a social seismograph, the Carnival registers and interprets the multiple seams in Trinidadian society, simultaneously constituting them as real, yet consuming them into the Self through song, dance and masquerade. More than reified "cultural property", then, the festival itself is an integral part of the process through which Trinidadians define, value, frame, imagine, reproduce and change their reality. These processes are as much "cultural" as is the Carnival which they constitutes as "culture". Because of this, the ethnographic situation of Carnival 1992 will be entirely different in ten years time. As a "verb", expressive of interaction, multiplicity and becoming, Carnival does represent the Trinidadian Self.

Making Mas' With Identity Discourse

Carnival, conceived of and practiced as "verb", significantly undermines hegemonic nationalist discourse and practice. Built on the Self-Other oppositional

distinction, the nationalist project assumes that the building of "a nation" is contingent on continuity, boundedness and homogeneity in diversity. Strategies to "capture" Carnival for this purpose are relentlessly pursued, yet the festival remains elusive, chaotic, and rubbery. Nationalists, economists, politicians and "friends of culture" fret over Trinidadians' apparent lackadaisical stance towards different canned versions of "we culture", often citing this "free and easy" attitude as evidence of an "incomplete" or "weak" collective identity. Yet, many of the island's natives who live on the island or who have moved abroad claim Trinidad as their "home", and consider themselves part of a "unique" collectivity of people who live in that "bounded space". An essential part of that "uniqueness" is imaged as a style of "living good" together, represented in the metaphors of the "*callaloo*" and "rainbow". For many, "living good" involves crossing over, or even the mixing up of ascribed and self-constructed boundaries within the Trinidadian collectivity; for some, it means active respect and appreciation for what lies beyond the boundaries. Both the dominant metaphors of "rainbow" and "*callaloo*" assume "difference" to be at the core of Trinidad's social fabric. Carnival is therefore, a powerful symbol of the Trinidadian Self because it enacts this dynamic of movement, becoming and cross-cutting which occurs within and between multiple selves and others. Paradoxically, then, the Trinidad Carnival expresses and constitutes a Trinidadian "peoplehood", while "making mas'" with the ideology of a common "national" culture on which "national collectivities" are supposed to be built. Further, "culture", conceptualized as a Carnival, also "makes mas'" with cultural theories which traditionally have tended

to objectify cultures and societies as coherent, discrete and bounded. My study suggests that "culture" in Trinidad, and perhaps everywhere, is better imagined as "doing" rather than "being", plastic rather than tightly bounded, protean rather than monolithic, malleable rather than "hard".

EPILOGUE

A Field Worker's Last Rites

The night before I left "the field" in late August 1992, people were again "playing mas'" on the Main street of St. James. A week long celebration of the Caribbean Arts (Carifesta V) had just concluded in Port of Spain, and bands from the Closing Gala ceremony were requested to exit from the Stadium into St. James to give "visitors" from the other islands a taste of Trinidadian hospitality and Carnival. Several music bands (steel, brass and DJs) complied, and St. James "exploded" into a Carnival-type street *fête*, with thousands of revellers dancing in the streets. I had a sense of *déjà vu*, las' lap again in St. James, only this time the crowds were thicker, the rhythm "hotter" and the pace faster. I knew I should have been at home packing for my imminent departure, but I stayed on the streets, performing my "last rites" of field-work and saturating myself in what most Trinidadians say they do best. It was the perfect act of closure for me, a recapitulation of the Carnival-"event" I had been studying all year. At two o'clock in the morning, the police arrived and ordered the last surviving band on the streets to stop the music. The musicians immediately pulled the plug on their music system, which left several thousand disgruntled revellers angry and calling for "one more". The police were

adamant, however, and the party ended. I made my way home, conveniently two city blocks away. The time had finally come to pack my bags.

Like *las' lap*, this was not the end, however, but, for me, the beginning of an attempt to evoke and re-create the moods, feelings, discourses, controversies and perceptions of Carnival on the pages of this text. The Carnival continues, even as it ends - in memories, texts, songs, music - yet never really captured, never really tamed. Peter Minshall describes his island's Self as "a culture that lives in song and dance and costume, ever parading, here today, gone tomorrow, ephemeral as we ourselves are, an island people, of the street and stadium. Our lives are moments of performance. To ourselves we are very real, but to others we are merely tourist attractions" (Sunday Guardian July 26, 1992:22). My own text, too, is part of that performance, not a vehicle that "contains" it, but the "invention" of a native-anthropologist- masquerader celebrating, affirming, inverting, subverting, concealing and critiquing the very reality she tries to unmask.

END NOTES

Introduction

1. Mass refers to the Catholic liturgy of the Eucharist. Mas', similarly pronounced, is derived from the word "masquerade", and is used to denote the masquerade, masquerader or the Trinidad Carnival itself. As used by Trinidadians, "mas'" communicates dynamism and action. A person or costume becomes a "mas'" in moving and performing. Revellers "play mas'" on Carnival days. "Playing mas'" is used metaphorically to describe a playful approach to life in general. "To make mas'" or "making mas'" carry meanings which include the making of costumes, thoroughly enjoying oneself, or the delight that comes in subverting and undercutting established norms, procedures or institutions.

2. My study is limited to the island of Trinidad, even though two islands make-up the nation-state of Trinidad and Tobago. Both islands were united by the British in 1889 with a single Governor, judiciary and code of law (Brereton 1981:155), and became a nation-state in 1962. They share very different historical trajectories and socio-cultural configurations, however. Carnival is not weighted with the same meanings in Tobago, and Carnival's ethos is often used by islanders themselves to distinguish the inhabitants of Trinidad from Tobago.

3. Sandra Harding (1991:100-115) uses the word "perversity" in feminist studies to describe identities that are contradictory and multiple. These identities are "perverse" because those who hold them choose to become peripheral by willfully refusing to do what the dominant "centre" expects them to do. I use the word in the sense that my identity "perversely" joins two categories held distinct in traditional anthropological wisdom and undermines the "given-ness" of the categories themselves.

4. "*Ole mas'*", abbreviated from "old masquerade", refers to the wearing of rags and old clothing as costumes for Carnival. This practice is generally associated with the start of the two-day street festival at dawn, a time traditionally devoted to inversions, ridicule and parody of the Others. To "turn everything into ole mas'" or the more passive, "everything turn old mas'", means that life, plans or situations have been turned upside

down, inside out (old clothes were literally turned inside out), messed up, or relativized.

5. Among the early articulators of the identity question in the French-speaking Caribbean are such names as Aime Cesaire and Leon Damas (co-founders with Leopold Senghor of the Negritude Movement), Franz Fanon and Edouard Glissant. I am grateful to Dr. Gary Warner for providing this information.

6. This figure is taken from Statistics at a Glance 1990, published by the Trinidad and Tobago Central Statistical Office. It is based on figures compiled after the 1980 population census.

7. I use "reflexivity" in the general sense used by interpretive anthropologists, i.e. the ability to bend back on one's reality in order to represent, analyze, critique and shape it. It is not used in the specific way proposed by Watson (1991:79-81), namely, the constituting of reality through our ethnographic accounts. My usage, however, does not exclude Watson's specific meaning.

8. *Jumbie* is a local word for spirit or ghost. *Jumbies* can sometimes cause harm and are generally feared.

9. A mas' camp refers to the location where Carnival costumes are made and displayed, and where registrations are taken from those who wish to participate in a masquerade band.

10. "*Trini*" - an abbreviation of the word "Trinidadian". Trinidadians are self-described as *Trinis*. *Trini* carries overtones of a playful, fun-loving identity.

11. From the dominant urban perspective, remote rural areas are said to be "behind God's back", Trinidad's Other. Guayaguayare and Mafeking are two villages in the sparsely populated south-eastern region of Trinidad where some of the older traditions of Carnival are remembered and practiced. Paramin is a small village nestled high in the north western range of hills where *patois*, a French dialect, is still spoken. Although I am a native of Trinidad, I had never visited Paramin until my research into the *jab molassie* (molasses devil) masquerade lured me to the village where the *jab* tradition is remembered by older villagers and is currently being revived by the younger generation.

12. *Jab* - *patois* word from the French *diable* (devil).

13. In his book, The Mimic Men (1967), Naipaul argued that colonialism had deprived Trinidadians of an inner self which made them susceptible to "foreign" influences. They were not creators, but "mimics" and consumers of "American" goods, ideas and values.

14. I gratefully acknowledge funding for my year's fieldwork in Trinidad and Tobago which was provided by the School of Graduate Studies at McMaster University.

15. A calypso "tent" is the venue for the performance of calypsoes (a genre of song peculiar to Trinidad and other Caribbean islands). New calypsoes are composed each year for Carnival and these are performed during the Carnival season in the weeks preceding the two-day Carnival of the streets. Originally, the calypso-singing venues were literally tents made from bamboo, but in the present-day Carnival, performances are held in concert halls, auditoriums and entertainment centres scattered throughout the city. These concrete buildings continue to be called "tents", however.

16. A "Pan Yard" refers to the location where the steelband rehearsals are held and the steel-drums stored. These sites are generally vacant city lots or "yards" which are partly covered by a large tent-like structure made of wood or corrugated iron. Locally, the steel-drum is referred to as the *pan*.

Chapter One

1. Fourteen years later after the publication of The Trinidad Carnival, Errol Hill gave an interview to William Doyle-Marshall in Toronto which was reported in the Trinidad Guardian (May 19, 1986:17). Hill seemed to have changed his mind about the date of the festival's origin. He is quoted as having said: "I mean the Carnival in Trinidad had been in existence for 100 years, at least since Emancipation".

2. Michael Anthony published his Parade of the Carnivals 1839-1989 in 1989 - "to mark the 150th anniversary of Carnival of the Streets".

3. At a news conference on 26 January 1984, the Carnival Development Committee proclaimed 1984, the 150th anniversary of Carnival. To mark the occasion the Committee named a fourth venue, Adam Smith Square, for the judging of Bands and a new competition for the Masquerade bands (Express January 27, 1984). Many people, however, were not aware of the "historical" significance of the "event", and those that were did not seem to mark it in any special way.

4. A "bake" is a roasted or fried mixture of flour, yeast, salt, water and coconut usually served with salted fish. Locally, it is considered "real" Trinidadian food.

5. *Cairi* (the Land of the Humming Bird) was the original Amerindian name for Trinidad (Borde [1876] 1982a:39).

Chapter Two

1. In the context of the French colonial system, *jamet* (masculine) or *jamette* (feminine) were the *patois* words used to denote those who lived on the "periphery" or "below" polite and respectable society. It referred to the subaltern and lower classes, or more specifically, to characters from the "underworld".
2. History books used in Trinidadian schools state that the island was home to two groups of people when Columbus visited in 1498 - the "fierce and warlike" Caribs (the European representation of "the cannibal") and the gentle and peaceful Arawaks (the European "noble savage"). According to the historical and archeological record, however, the demographic situation was far more complex. Trinidad was reportedly inhabited by some 40,000 Amerindians belonging to several "tribal" groups that spoke dialects belonging to two major Amerindian language families, the Arawakan and Cariban. The *Shebaio* and *Lokono* peoples spoke Arawakan dialects, and the *Yao*, *Nepoio* and *Carinepagoto* spoke Cariban (Besson, 1992:2). In popular lore, however, the Caribs and Arawaks were the two ancestral "tribes" of Trinidad, with a small remnant of the former surviving to the present day.
3. Hill's figure is 1,127 (1972:7).
4. Hill's puts the figure for 1822 at 893 (1972:8).
5. The "Spanish" origins of Trinidad's "culture" is acknowledged and celebrated in the *parang* music at Christmas time.

Chapter Three

1. All individuals with ancestral homelands in Middle-Eastern countries are commonly referred to by Trinidadians as "Syrians".
2. The first wave of "French" immigrants came from the "French" colonized territories of Grenada, Martinique, St. Lucia and Cayenne (Brereton 1981:22).
3. The sexual union between a "white" man and "black" woman produced the mulatto, the best known type of "coloured" person in the Caribbean. Over time the term came to be synonymous with the entire group of "coloureds". A mulatto and a "black"

person had a cabre, and sometimes a "black" child. A cabre woman and a white man could also produce a mulatto. A mulatto woman and a "white" man had mestee offspring, and a mestee and a mulatto, a costee. A cabre and "black" produced "black" offspring, and occasionally a cabre. A "black" person and an Amerindian produced a sambo or a "black" child. A quadroon resulted from the mating between a mestee and a white person (Campbell 1992:60).

4. I am grateful to Dr. W. Rodman for this observation on the "tamed" masculinity of the *nègre jardin*.
5. Personal interview with a historian educated at the University of the West Indies (January 4, 1994, Port of Spain).
6. The "French" Masquerade lasted for about fifty years if one takes 1783 as the zero point and the Emancipation period as the beginning of a new Carnival.

Chapter Four

1. The *Calinda* is perhaps the best known and documented dance in the Antilles and Louisiana of the 19th century. In Trinidad, it became inseparably connected to the stickfight. Locally, it denotes a whole complex of energetic dance, drumming and ritual activity with highly formalized rules, codes, style and coded language (Rohlehr 1990:11-13)
2. The source of this material was Funso Aiyejuna, a native of Southern Nigeria, now resident in Trinidad and teaching at the Creative Arts Department at the University of the West Indies. During an interview (February 18, 1992) at the University, Aiyejuna explained that the senior masquerade is distinct from the junior masquerade in some southern Nigerian masking traditions. The senior masquerade is serious business whereas the junior is playful and mischievous: "the young masqueraders are encouraged to tease spectators, senior masquerades.....it is supposed to be a play, not so with senior masquerades. They are the ancestors and they are sacred".
3. Day's book, Five Years Residence in the West Indies, (2 Vols.) was published in London in 1852.
4. Brereton describes a 19th century barrack-yard using material from an article in the Port of Spain Gazette of September 19, 1885:
The great majority of the urban working class lived in the notorious barrack ranges. They

were situated behind the frontage of each city street, with its respectable stores and houses, and hidden from the passerby. The barrack range consisted of a long shed built against a back wall, facing a strip of yard, often with a similar shed on the other side. The shed was divided into six, eight, ten or more rooms of ten or twelve feet square. The divisions were wooden partitions which usually did not reach the roof. Each room had one door which was closed with a wooden shutter....The only provision for bathing was a single public tap. Washing of clothes was carried on in the yard, with the water and soap suds sinking into the already water-logged soil (1979:116-117).

5. The urban dwellers of several barrack-yards would combine to form a band.
6. The general attitude towards the police throughout the 19th century was one of strong hostility. The ranks of the force were filled with Barbadian immigrants, a group that was resented and mistrusted by Trinidadians. Barbadians began to join the police force in the 1840's and soon became identified with the ruling English colonials and ex-slave owners. Subaltern "creoles" often used *patois*, which most English-speaking Barbadians did not understand, as a weapon against the police. The deep resentment came to a head in the 1880-1884 period in what is now called the *Canboulay* riots (Brereton 1979:127-128).
7. My use of the concepts "pure" and "mixed" reflects its usage in Trinidadian identity discourse and by no means is meant to reify the notion of "race" as an inherited property passed on by both parents (cf. Segal 1988:79).

Chapter Five

1. Faced with a 1883 ban of the African drum, conch shells and horns by colonial authorities (also, cf. Ordinance for the Better Preservation of Peace No. 1 1884. Section 1), the urban "black" subaltern groups turned to alternative percussional forms of instruments - "the stamping tubes". These were produced from pieces of bamboo trunk which varied in length, thickness and diameter. When pounded on the ground or hit against each other, these tubes produced a range of rhythm and tone heard by all members of a Carnival band. This musical alternative was called "tambour-bamboo" (tambour bamboo) or the bamboo drum, and is generally considered the precursor of the steel drum which replaced it in the 1940's (Elder 1969:14; Hill 1984:22; Rohlehr 1990:40).
2. *Patois* form of the French *Jour Ouvert* (Daybreak or Opening of the Day).
3. A popular masquerade of the early twentieth century, and now largely extinct, the *Pierrot Granade* is described by Carr 1988[1956]:196-207) as "the supreme jester" in Trinidad Carnival. A "scholar" who dressed in tatters and rags and delighted in an

exhibition of his "deep learning", the *Pierrot Granade* was a satire on his richly dressed and more learned brother, the *Pierrot*. The *Pierrot Granade* usually carried a whip.

4. A dance movement made on the streets or at *fêtes* by Carnival revellers. The movement is vibrant, with dancers literally jumping off the ground, sometimes with arms extended in the air, to the rhythm of the calypso.

5. I was unable to find the written source or context of this statement. This statement attributed to Williams is part of the oral history which circulates in Trinidad about Trinidad's withdrawal from the Federation.

6. The Black Power Revolution was a part of the "Black Power" movement which swept across North America in the nineteen sixties. In Trinidad and Tobago, it took the form of marches, speeches, and an aborted military coup on the part of Trinidad's army against the "Black/Coloured" government of the People's National Movement. Discontent focussed on the continued "racial" discrimination against "blacks" in the private economic sector, the continued control of the local economy by local "white" and foreign interests, and generally, on the unchanged status of "blacks" in the society despite political Independence from Britain. Even though the "revolution" was decisively quelled, the messages and marches of 1970 were not lost on the government, business people or the populace in general. In response, private firms adjusted hiring policies and the government brought major financial institutions and manufacturing industries under national ownership.

7. Trinidad and Tobago's annual budget for 1992 was projected at \$8.5 billion (TT dollars). The servicing of the external public debt was \$612 million (U.S) per year, approximately 30% of national earnings. The rate of exchange for the TT dollar in early 1992 was approximately \$4.25 for the U.S. dollar (Express January 18, 1992:1). The TT dollar has since been devalued.

8. A very popular masquerade in the first half of the twentieth century, but now considered a "survival" of the "long time" Carnival. The Robber wears an enormous hat with a fringed brim, and a flowing cape on which is painted skulls, crosses and bones. He carries a wooden dagger or gun and assails his victims with long-winded speeches of doom and gloom. He brags about his origins and deeds, and he makes extravagant, but empty, threats and claims. The colloquialism, "Robber-talk", is used outside the Carnival frame to describe the speech of people, especially politicians, who make grandiose claims and threats. "Robber-talkers" are usually not taken seriously.

9. *Patois* for "Old Yard". It is a showcase and competition organized two Sundays before Carnival for traditional Carnival performers (music, calypso, masquerade). *Viey la*

cou is part of the effort to preserve or revive the "ole time" Carnival which is considered to be part of the nation's patrimony. For some Trinidadians, the "long time" masquerades are the embodiment of the real and "authentic" Trinidad Carnival.

Chapter Six

1. Carnival is often described as a "spirit" which possesses revellers and makes them perform extraordinary feats of endurance, for example, carrying large costumes effortlessly, dancing for miles behind music bands, surviving for days and nights without sleep. *Jumbie* is the local term for a ghost or spirit. Warner-Lewis (1991:183) claims that *Moko* is the third of seven grades in the hierarchy of the *Ekoi-Efik* secret society among the Kalabari in Africa. Generally then, in Trinidad, the *Moko Jumbie* referred to the *Moko* spirit which was represented by stilt walkers in colourful costumes. Now extinct as a popular masquerade, the *Moko Jumbie* remains as a metaphor of the spirit which "possesses" the island at Carnival time. Super Blue, in his 1993 calypso, Bacchanal Time, invokes the *Moko Jumbie* to start the Carnival.
2. Hanging out. The local word connotes taking pleasure in non-productive activity. Trinidadians describe themselves as great *limers*, and Carnival is the greatest *lime* of all.
3. The Carnival Sunday night show at the Queen's Park Savannah where winners of both the calypso and King and Queen of the Bands competitions are chosen and crowned.
4. A party characterized by loud music, dancing, socializing, and lots of food and drink. They are held during both day and night. Night *fêtes* usually begin at 9 p.m. and continue until 4 a.m. Public events easily become *fêtes* if music and refreshments are available. Many Trinidadians pride themselves on being the world's greatest *fêters*.
5. A shuffle-like dance with one's bodily weight mostly on the toes. *Chipping* is usually done behind a music band on Carnival days. The word is onomatopoeic and comes from the sound of shuffling shoes "*chipping*" on the paved streets.
6. The Road march is the calypso played most often at the competition sites on both Carnival days.
7. A night utensil (chamber pot) kept under the bed. Also known locally as a *poe*.
8. A few small troupes of devils from Paramin Village in the Northern Range of hills

have recently been appearing in the Port of Spain Carnival, encouraged to do so by the National Carnival Commission in its attempt to revive the "long time" masquerade.

9. An example of the conscious linkage made between the present-day "national" celebrations and the "long time" Carnival barrack-yards in the city which were the sites of subaltern Carnival preparations.

10. *Wining* (from the verb "to wind") is a dance performance based on gyrations of the waist and hips in a side to side or circular movement. *Wining* can be done alone, upon another person or thing, or in a line of dancers. It is a highly controversial dance routine, especially when done by women.

11. Small roving bands of "black" singers and musicians with exaggerated white lips painted around the mouth and red spots of the cheeks. Crowley (1988 [1956]:78) claims that they derive from the minstrel shows that were popular in the United States at the turn of the century. Once popular in the Trinidad Carnival, minstrels are fast becoming extinct in the modern street festival.

12. Produced by Dalton Narine.

13. Attempts to "indigenize" cultural practices have resulted in the composition of Christmas songs with *soca*-calypso rhythms and lyrics reflective of local Christmas celebratory customs, for example, eating, drinking alcohol and having a good time. Santa Claus has been appropriated as "*Soca Santa*" who has abandoned the cold North Pole for warmer climes and a Caribbean life-style, including a Caribbean wife. For some Trinidadians, the intrusion of the Carnival ethos into Christmas is viewed with alarm. The appearance, then, of the Santa Claus masquerader at *jouvay* represents an attempt to usurp the Carnival space for Christmas, in the same way that Carnival is perceived as having usurped the "sacred" space of Christmas.

14. The Ringling Bros. slogan has been appropriated by the local press, Tourist Board and Government officials to describe the Trinidad Carnival.

15. The National Alliance for Reconstruction (NAR) led by the Tobago-born, A.N.R. Robinson was voted out of office in the December 1991 General elections. The only two ministers to retain their parliamentary seats were Robinson and Pamela Nicholson, two parliamentary representatives from Tobago. The election results were perceived in Tobago as a rejection by Trinidadians of the National Alliance for Reconstruction because of its Tobago leadership in the person of Robinson. Widespread talk in Tobago about secession made the new Prime Minister Manning, himself a Trinidadian, anxious to placate the anger and fear of Tobagonians. Through a number of carefully orchestrated post-election

public gestures, Manning had try to make "peace" with the island's Assembly and population.

16. Christmas songs with words and rhythms of Hispanic origin. *Parang* is now claimed as Trinidad's original "indigenous" Christmas music.

17. Also known as *ligahoo* or *loup Garou*, the *lagahoo* is the shape changer in Trinidad's folklore. This figure is usually associated with an old man of a district who is both feared and respected because of his power over nature and ability to change his form into that of an animal. His passage during the night is usually associated with the clank of chains or a coffin (cf. Besson 1989:27).

18. *Patois* word for the devil's bride or devil woman in Trinidadian folk narratives. Pronounced *la jablesse*, she is an attractive woman of the night who seduces male passersby on unlit roads. Her face is usually concealed by a huge hat, but she is recognized, often too late, by a cloven foot which she conceals beneath her draped skirt (cf. Besson 1989:11).

19. A popular folklore character. Known as the Old Man of the High Woods or Master of the Woods, *Papa Bois* is sometimes depicted as a very old hairy man with cloven hoofs and leaves growing out of his beard. Protector of the animals and trees, he appears to hunters, sometimes as a deer, leading them deep into the forest before suddenly assuming his true shape. He would then sternly warn hunters about their hunting habits, often leaving them lost in the woods (cf. Besson 1989:1-3).

20. These *patois* names are untranslated in both Crowley (1956):1988:45) and Hill's (1972:40) texts. My translations were confirmed by two *patois* speakers, independent of each other. Both interviewees were clearly embarrassed when asked to translate the terms.

21. Very few calypsonians sing under their ordinary names. Official names are retained for singers' non-calypso existence, but once in the calypso world, they adopt a sobriquet.

22. No English translation is given in Anthony's text for this *patois* chorus. Although most older, and some younger, Trinidadians knew both the words and melody, they were unable to translate its meaning. My *patois*-speaking interviewees differed in their translations:

Translator #1 (male): "Daybreak come - you're fondling me. Don't put your hand on my ass (bottom)".

Translator #2 (female): "Its daybreak. Stop! Don't put your hand on me".

It is probable that the phrase did carry multiple meanings for *jouvay* participants.

23. Both are involved in the Trinidad theatre world as actors.

24. In this age of globalized concepts, it is likely that Jesse Jackson's "Rainbow Coalition" (first used by Jackson in 1983, and later popularized as his central slogan in his bid for the Democratic presidential nomination) (cf. Landess and Quinn 1985:193) may have also been influential in the development of the rainbow metaphor to describe Trinidad's social reality. It is also probable that Archbishop Tutu may have influenced Jackson. I am grateful both to Drs. Bill Rodman and Ellen Badone for making these connections.

25. In Trinidad, *doogla* has largely lost its pejorative meaning and is the classificatory term for the "genetic mixture" of peoples of "African" and "Indian" descent.

26. Party of Progressive Political Groups which, in the 1956 General elections, was led by the Portuguese creole, Albert Gomes, a former trade union activist who became a government Minister in the pre-1956 administration. His party was identified with the "white" business interests.

27. The Democratic Labour Party was an amalgamation of parties formed in 1957 to fight the first elections of the ill-fated Federation of the West Indies. The leader of the DLP was Badase Sagan Maraj, himself the leader of the former People's Democratic Party (PDP) whose constituents were largely Indians. Because of its leadership, the Democratic Labour Party (DLP) was popularly perceived as the "Indian" party.

28. A glossy magazine published for tourists in 1991 and 1992 by the Trinidad Express Newspapers and Imprint Caribbean Limited was called "Rainbow Country".

29. Peter Minshall, a product of the London School of Art and Design and a Guggenheim Fellow (1982), is a "white" middle-class Trinidadian who has been producing masquerades for Trinidad Carnival bands since 1976. His masquerades have generated a great deal of controversy because Minshall "makes mas'" with the conventions of the masquerade itself. His designs and colours are sometimes stark and of a highly dramatic quality. Minshall views mas' as theatre of the streets and so weights his characters and band sections with "deep" meaning. Often, Minshall mixes ethnic and class insignia in designs and performances, undermining traditional connections between signifier and signified. Critics have argued that Minshall has intellectualized and "theatricalized" the masquerade, removing it from its more bacchanalian tradition of

spontaneity and naivety. In response, Minshall and his followers argue that theatre has always been a fundamental part of Carnival, and that the real problem with the contemporary mas' is not its "theatricalization", but its commercialization and trivialization.

30. *Patois* phrase which is pronounced "Co-tay-see, Co-tay-lah". Mendes translates the phrase as follows: "To quote them, he, she. To spread a rumour. To take an active part in hear-say. Dem-say. Rumour has it....."

31. Local expression for (1) music that is up-beat, (2) dancing which accompanies such music, or (3) "wild" behaviour.

Chapter Seven

1. Local term for a member of the rabble. "*Rab*" is also used as a synonym for a rascal or ragamuffin.
2. Some tourists from Northern countries are easily differentiated from the local population by their fair skin colour and dance movements.
3. Carnival producers consume diverse materials, themes and practices into their productions, shaping them into new forms and for new purposes.
4. Approximately \$70.00 US at that time.
5. An essential task for every band that parades the streets of Port of Spain. In spite of this measure, however, electricity and telephone lines are frequently torn down by music lorries during the two day street festival.
6. The entrance to the Savannah stage is used as a track for horse racing during the year.
7. The "dragon" band is one genre of devil masquerades found in the Trinidad Carnival. According to Procope (1988[1956]:186-196), it was introduced to the 1906 Carnival by Patrick Jones who, inspired by a picture of a Christian exorcism of a devil from a sick person, organized a band of devils in the colour of khaki and slate. In 1909, the colour was changed to red and was called the "Red Dragon band". An illustrated copy of Danté's inferno is supposed to have inspired the addition of more characters the year

later. The band of "Demonites" in 1910 included characters called Beelzebub and the Beast or Dragon. The Beast was originally a *papier maché* model of a dragon which was carried on a pair of poles. In 1911, Satan was added to the retinue from hell. The costume of the Beast or Dragon is made of large fish scales. Jones claims that his costume was influenced by an image of St. Mark and a beast which he saw in a Church. Over time, additional characters were added, including imps who were responsible for controlling the chained Dragon. The original dragon masquerade has been interpreted as a dramatic representation of the Christian devil and his horde who appears on earth before the lenten season in order to test the virtue of Christians. I interviewed three veteran dragon masqueraders during the period of my fieldwork. They cited "tradition", "performance", "satisfaction" and "expertise" as reasons for their masquerade. None of them interpreted their performance as a visitation from hell to test the virtue of Christians.

8. The source of this information was the band registration forms at the National Carnival Commission office.

9. Data obtained from the 1992 registration files at the National Carnival Commission office.

10. Abbreviation for Caribbean Community.

11. Band and group membership figures were obtained from the National Carnival Commission registration files. However, the men/women ratio in bands and groups is based on personal observation, media reports and interviews with band leaders.

12. The traditional wear of a "gentleman devil" is a tailcoat and top hat. He is the apparition of the devil in the form of a "man about town" (Procope 1988[1956]:188). In Haiti, Baron Samedi, a similar figure dressed in top hat and tails, is said to appear when someone is about to die. I am grateful to Dr. Gary Warner for drawing my attention to this Haitian figure.

13. The Bookman carries a huge book in which he records the deeds of human kind. His role in the Dragon band is "to sign off the Beast after he was destroyed. The Bookman makes sure that he (the Beast) is dead and reports his death to Satan" (Ken, interview on February 18, 1992).

14. The National Carnival Commission records put the figure at 2,800 members.

Chapter Eight

1. See Barbalet (1985), Rogers (1975) and Scott (1985) for the discussion on the unproblematic links made between resistance and overt conflictual practices.
2. See Moore (1988:25-30) and Oakley (1979:613-16) for analyses on the linkages between femininity and motherhood in Western society more generally.
3. Women's behaviour in Carnival has always been put under intense scrutiny by the "respectable" classes of Trinidadian society. So, in this sense, the current debate is not really new. The phenomenon could be considered new, however, because of the numbers, behaviour and "kind" of women involved in the modern Carnival.
4. "Interference" carries a range of meaning when used by Trinidadians in this social context. These meanings include touching, pinching or making a pass.
5. The calypso, *Congo Man*, first released by the Mighty Sparrow in 1965, is about a cannibal headhunter who "ate" two "white" women travellers in Africa. The calypso ostensibly refers to cannibalism, but it is full of sexual innuendos. Both feminists and "black" identity groups in Trinidad have objected to the calypso's content, albeit for different reasons. Women are offended because Sparrow seems to be glorifying rape. Some "blacks", on the other hand, criticized Sparrow for perpetuating the stereotype of the "black" male as a savage, lascivious cannibal. I suggest, however, that Sparrow's *Congo Man* is a good example of the carnivalesque appropriation of the stereotype to caricature the caricature. As such, the calypso can be interpreted as a strategy of using the caricature to deconstruct colonialist constructions of the black Other.
6. Examples of popular calypsoes sung by women which explicitly deal with the male-female relationship are Runaway (Singing Francine 1978), Dignity (Singing Sandra 1987) and Woman is Boss (Denyse Plummer 1987) (cf. Ottley 1992).

Chapter Nine

1. Funerals marking the end of Carnival are common in European ethnography. In some traditions, the fat Carnival was put to death, drowned or burned in effigy, by the emaciated figure of Lent (cf. Muchembled 1985:57;147). I am grateful to Dr. Ellen Badone for drawing this European practice to my attention.

2. The word *Hosay* is a local derivation from "Hussain".
3. I was in Trinidad doing preliminary fieldwork for the duration of the Coup crisis and personally witnessed the "partying" by some residents of Port of Spain.

APPENDIX A

The Carnival Regulations 1992, signed by the Secretary to Cabinet, was dated 17th February.

THE CARNIVAL REGULATIONS, 1992

Citation

1. These Regulations may be cited as the Carnival Regulations, 1992.
2. (1) No person shall-
 - (a) appear dressed-
 - (i) in the uniform prescribed for the Police Service, Supplemental, City or Borough Police, Fire Service, Prison Service or any unit of the Defense Force unless the person is a serving member of the Police Service, Supplemental, City or Borough Police, Fire Service, Prison Service or a unit of the Defence Force; or
 - (ii) in any costume which may be mistaken for the uniform prescribed for the Police Service, Supplemental, City or Borough Police, Fire Service, Prison Service or for any unit of the Defence Force;
 - (b) portray or represent or appear wearing any costume which portrays or represents in any manner of a living religion or portray any event in a manner likely to bring into disrepute, ridicule or contempt any religion practiced in Trinidad and Tobago;
 - (c) throw any substance, matter or thing likely to cause damage, injury or discomfort;
 - (d) smear or daub on any other person any substance, matter or thing, or with intent to intimidate or to obtain from that other person any money or valuable thing, attempt or threaten to smear or daub on that other person any substance, matter or thing;
 - (e) have in any public place any exposed flame or any article of an offensive nature;
 - (f) carry any lethal weapon or any article capable of causing damage or injury unless that person is a member of the Police Service, Special Reserve Police, the Supplemental, City or Borough Police, or the Defence Force and is on duty;
 - (g) play in any orchestra on the road unless the name and address of the person and the name of the orchestra are registered in accordance with

regulation 4;

(h) drive any motor vehicle when masked or facially disguised;

(i) travel in any motor vehicle when masked or facially disguised, unless the vehicle is licensed in accordance with regulation 5;

(j) sing or recite any lewd or offensive song;

(k) indulge in behaviour or gestures which are immoral, lewd or offensive;

(l) carry or use in a derogatory manner the flag or Coat of arms of Trinidad and Tobago or of any other country;

(m) have in his possession or carry in any band anything resembling a firearm or ammunition;

(n) carry any explosive or smoke producing substance or anything likely to produce smoke;

(o) drive or display any vehicle disguised as a tank, armoured military vehicle, rocket-launcher, artillery or warship.

Chap.16:01

(2) Section 2 of the Firearms Act applies for the interpretation of such expressions as are referred to in subparagraphs (m), (n) and (o) and are defined in that Act.

Registration of bands

3. (1) The leader of every band of more than fifty persons shall register his band not later than the 24th February, 1992 with the Senior Superintendent or Superintendent of Police in charge of the Police Division in which the leader resides and on registration the Senior Superintendent or Superintendent of Police shall assign a registration number to the band.

(2) The leader of a band shall ensure that his band is identified by a banner on which the name and registration number of the band are inscribed in a conspicuous manner.

(3) The leader of any band of more than fifty persons shall produce the certificate of registration of the band at the request of any member of the Police Service, Special Reserve Police, the Supplemental Police, or City or Borough Police in uniform.

(4) For the purpose of this regulation leader" means the person responsible for the organization of the band.

Registration

4. (1) No orchestra shall play on the road unless its leader has registered the names and addresses of its members with the Senior Superintendent of Police in charge of the Police Division in which the leader resides and on registration the Senior Superintendent or Superintendent of Police shall assign a registration number to the orchestra.

(2) The leader of an orchestra must ensure that his orchestra is identified by a banner on both sides of which the name of the orchestra and the registration number are inscribed in a conspicuous manner.

(3) The leader of an orchestra must produce the certificate of registration for the orchestra at the request of any member of the Police Service, Special Reserve Police, the Supplemental, City or Borough Police in uniform.

Licensing of vehicles

5. (1) A motor vehicle shall not be used to convey the members of any orchestra or any person masked or facially disguised unless a licence has been issued by the Senior Superintendent or Superintendent of Police in charge of the Police Division in which the owner of the motor vehicle resides.

(2) The owner of the motor vehicle shall make an application for a licence not later than the 26th February, 1992 and the application shall contain:

(a) the names and addresses of the persons to be conveyed

(b) the name of the band to which the persons belong; and

(c) the names and addresses of any persons (not more than three in number) who would be driving the motor vehicle during Carnival.

(3) Any member of the Police Service, Special Reserve Police, the Supplemental, City or Borough Police, may stop and search any motor vehicle in which there is any person who is masked or facially disguised or may require any person in the motor vehicle to give his name and address.

Penalty

6. Any person who during the period of Carnival contravenes any of these Regulations is guilty of an offence and is liable on conviction to a fine not exceeding one thousand dollars and to imprisonment for six months.

Duration

7. These regulations apply for the period of Carnival 1992 as declared by Order of the President dated the 12th day of February 1992 issued under section 5 of the Public Holidays and Festivals Act.

APPENDIX B

A COPY OF THE HANDOUT WRITTEN BY THE PRODUCERS OF THE MASQUERADE BAND "WILDNESS" AND PRESENTED TO BAND PARTICIPANTS AND MEDIA AT THEIR WOODBROOK MAS' CAMP.

WILDNESS a pre-columban saga

WILDNESS is Randall J. Tucker's cyclical exploration of man's inherent nature through the mirror of nature herself. Tucker starts with Raging Waters, the great deluge from which all life emerges. Here, too, is the first hint that "wildness" is not what we generally perceive it to be, but rather a spontaneous spilling forth of our individual emotions.

In Getting on Radical Tucker displays man's wildness as the pure untrampled wilderness of man's spiritual essence. Before Columbus' fated voyage, this very old world and the Indians which populated it were much as they had been for thousands of years - both unspoiled, both living harmoniously together. Each day a rapturous discovery of the primal self. These Wild Bloomers and Untamed Plumes, the flora and fauna of Mother earth, are bathed in the cool colours of spring's promise. The sun, symbolized by a splattering of polka dots, nurtures the new and tender life.

Now the sun, beating its fiery reds and pinks, acts as man's intellectual spark. Here the Zany Rays, the Manic Mystics, and Hot Blooded represent ancient man in his highest form. It is a time of illumination and innovation: a time when nature is first enslaved to suit man's needs, a time for ardent pursuits and grand revelation.

Once the seeds of intellect are planted and tended, the Unruly Rulers and the Craize Maize harvesters, dressed in autumn's full palette, reap the rewards as **WILDNESS** takes on a new, less ingenious face. The sun has cultivated the earth's fruits and they are heavy with their ripeness. Man revels in his ability to manipulate nature and has created an artificial abundance through his mastery.

But Mother Nature always keeps life in balance. The Rabble Rousers, the Chieftains on Rampage rejoice in the winter wonderland. The abundance of the harvest is blanketed under the vast nothingness of winter. This is the calm before the emotional maelstrom of

culture clash. The sun's chilly countenance is a faint light guiding man towards the upheaval of his civilization.

The sun now rises as a different civilization dawns with the rediscovery of the "new" world. The Drunken Sailors, the Holy-caustic Hoods and Culture Vultures descend to conquer the land and attempt to save the savages from themselves. But alas, "civilized" man's intellect is more cunning, his weapons more sinister, and his righteousness more arrogant. One man's wildness is another man's cultivation: the sport of bloodletting between disparate cultures has begun.

And so, a metamorphosis has hurled the wildness beating within each of us into a mishmash of cultures. Tucker's WILDNESS then is this melting pot - brimming with the excitement and danger of simmering passions.

One heart races at the sight of the rising sun. Another pounds while plunging over a cliff into the beckoning glimmer of a lagoon. Another soars as mechanical wings lift him towards the angels. These disparate passions as presented in Randall J. Tucker's WILDNESS are our primal birthright - our cultural legacy.

Since man first emerged from the great deluge, his wildness has led him to build majestic empires and destroy dissonant civilizations. To tenderly couple and to blithely pillage. And like Truth, this wildness has no right or wrong.

Tucker's WILDNESS, then, bears witness to the metamorphosis that happens within a cultural mishmash. It is this spiritual essence that links us to our ancient roots, yet propels us toward the fulfillment of our deepest passions and most thrilling triumphs.

APPENDIX C

'CHRISTOPHER COLUMBUS' FIRST VOYAGE

'WESTWARD TO CIPANGU'

On August 3rd 1492, a young explorer and navigator CHRISTOPHER COLUMBUS, sailed west in order to find the East Indies and the island of Cipangu, which almost a century before had been vividly described by Marco Polo.

On the 71st day of that voyage, two hours after midnight, cliffs suddenly appeared, shining in the glow of a blazing moon. Then the cry came 'land!' 'land!'. Columbus then gave thanks that God had guided him safely and named that island - 'SAN SALVADOR'. That landing was only the first of many as we retrace the wanderings of a tortured genius whose relentless pursuit of a mistake, forever altered the course of human history. What he did not realise, was he had just experienced an encounter with the new world, this green paradise whose headland plunged steeply into the sea.

The discovery of the new world launched shiploads of adventurers forcing a new way of life on the inhabitants of the islands. Clearly, the sights Columbus first saw must have left lasting images on his mind. Some of those pictures live on even to this day - thus our story unfolds:

Picture the handsome and gentle ARAWAKS; the warlike CARIBS; the awesome sight of the burning hills from the volcano SOUFRIERE; the rich and lush tropical RAIN FOREST; the flight of the SCARLET IBIS.

Following closely upon the footsteps of Columbus were the Spaniards, who brought with them the brutalities of conquest, which in turn left us a heritage that can be seen in the city of HAVANA; the people of ASHANTI; the INDENTURED CULTURES and a new way of life - the SEA VILLAGE; to be added to our very own J'OUVERT; MASQUERADE and CARIFESTA; and so it may be true to say that after five hundred (500) years CHRISTOPHER COLUMBUS did indeed find a treasure far greater than gold by following that elusive route - WESTWARD TO CIPANGU.

APPENDIX D(I)

NURSES ANNUAL CARNIVAL FETE



Thursday 20th Feb. '92

with
Atlantik (Party Till Yuh Drop)

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APPENDIX D(II)



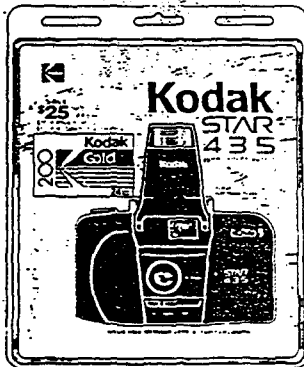
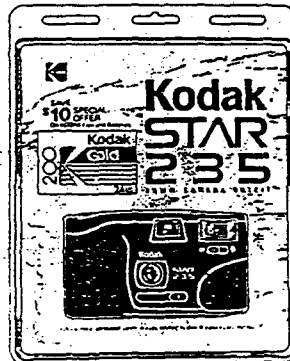
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