

**The Practices of Carnival:  
Community, Culture and Place.**

Submitted by  
**Jonathan Freeman Croose**

to the University of Exeter  
as a thesis for the degree of

*Doctor of Philosophy in Geography*

May 2014

This thesis is available for Library use on the understanding that it is copyright material and that no quotation from the thesis may be published without proper acknowledgement.

I certify that all material in this thesis which is not my own work has been identified and that no material has previously been submitted and approved for the award of a degree by this or any other University.

.....

**Abstract:**

This thesis analyses ethnographic data gathered during participant observation within two vernacular town carnivals in East Devon and Dorset during 2012 and within the professional *Cartwheelin'* and *Battle for the Winds* street performances which were staged as part of the *Maritime Mix* programme of the 2012 Cultural Olympiad at Weymouth. The thesis presents qualitative perspectives with regard to the cultural performance of carnival in the fieldwork area, in order to analyse the 'performativity' of carnival in these contexts: how it enacts and embodies a range of instrumentalities with regard to notions of community, culture and place. The thesis serves to unpack the 'performance efficacy' of carnival within the wider political and cultural landscape of the UK in the early 21st century, revealing the increasing influence of institutional policy on its aesthetics and cultural performance. By way of contrast, the thesis also asserts the value of vernacular carnivalesque street performance as a contestation of hegemonic notions of 'art', 'place' and 'culture'. The ethnographies of both vernacular and professional carnival practice presented in the thesis show how the instrumentalities of carnival are employed as cultural performances and as symbolic constructions of place, power and policy. These ethnographies reveal the contradictory 'efficacy' of carnival: how it functions both as a symbolic expression of a progressive, rhizomatic sense of place and also as a normative performance of vertical symbolic power and place-identity. The thesis offers a cultural geography of carnival as praxis in the south west UK, locating it within specific geographical, historical and socio-cultural contexts which have developed since the late 19<sup>th</sup> century. The thesis also offers a productive contribution to the emerging dialogue between cultural geography and performance studies through its analysis of the performativities of

participants' affective, carnivalesque experience: an analysis which articulates how people ritualise and perform the multiple boundaries between individual and community identities through carnival. Further, the thesis considers the means by which people present and enact particular symbolic representations of place and identity through their carnival performances, both in professional and non-professional contexts. In its conclusion and recommendations, the thesis seeks to frame these ethnographies within a critique of carnival practice which is considered through the contested geographies of the 'creative economy'. It seeks to demonstrate how culture-led processes of policy enactment are increasingly critical influences within carnival and arts development in rural and small-town contexts and within place-based strategies of public engagement. Further, the thesis seeks to consider the effects that this hegemony has on 'vernacular' practices of carnival. The thesis adds a further voice to those cultural geographers who warn about the diminishing public space which is now available to people for spontaneous, 'non-productive' carnival festivity in the context of globalised late capitalism and 'applied' culture. Finally, the thesis offers a proposed remedy: a re-imagination of progressive structures of public engagement through culture; structures which support 'vernacular' practice alongside the instrumentalities of arts-development and public policies of place, in tune with a growing alternative discourse which seeks to 'rethink the cultural economy.'

## **Contents:**

Abstract.	2
Contents.	4
List of illustrations, figures and tables.	10
Abbreviations	14
Acknowledgements.	15
<b>Chapter One: Introduction:</b>	<b>18</b>
1:1 The situated researcher: conceptualising carnival and street procession.	18
1:2 Cultural democracy and the democratisation of culture.	23
1:3 Carnivals & the Jurassic Coast: research contexts and CDA development.	26
1:4 Carnival collaborations: University of Exeter and the Jurassic Coast WHS.	34
1:5 Researching carnival: the aims of this thesis.	36
1.5:1 Research Questions and Objectives	38
1:6 Thesis structure.	42
<b>Chapter Two:</b>	
<b>Carnival, procession and the carnivalesque: contexts and discourses.</b>	<b>49</b>
2:1 What is carnival?	49
2:2 The carnivalesque experience.	51
2:3 Geographies of Processional Culture in the UK	56
2.3:1 UK Processional Culture: A Brief Historiography.	58
2.3:2 Pageants and parades.	64
2:4 Carnivals in the south west UK: gunpowder, charity & the seaside:	69

2:4:1	Gunpowder carnivals and the illuminated circuits.	73
2:4:1a:	Fieldwork locations: Demographic information	80
2:4: 2	Charity and seaside carnivals:	82
(i)	'Hospital' parades.	82
(ii)	Parading philanthropy.	83
(iii)	Weymouth Carnival.	87
(iv)	Seaton's seaside carnival.	94
2:5	Resuscitations of cultural performance: the influence of UK alternative theatre post-1960.	98
2:6	Developments in cultural policy: from the fringes to the mainstream.	111
2:7	Conclusions.	127
<b>Chapter Three: A Qualitative Methodology.</b>		133
3:1	Why Qualitative Research?	133
3:1:1	Ethnography and Participant Observation	134
3:1:2:	Attempting Grounded Theory	134
3:2	Access to the field	136
3:2:1	'Professional' Participations	137
3:2:2	'Vernacular' Participations	141
3:3	Research Practices	143
3:3:1	Performance-as-Research	143
3:3:2	Interviewing	144
3:3:3	Programme of Research	145

3:4:	Negotiating 'role' in research	146
3:4:1	Negotiating 'role' in vernacular settings	149
3:4:2	Professional challenges, professional compromises?	150
3:5	Exiting the Field	154
3:6	Practical methods of data recording and inscription.	156
3:7	Processing Fieldnotes:	
	Coding, Data Analysis, Inscription and the 're-construction of reality	157
3:7:1:	From Code to Inscription	159
3:8	Ethics.	163
3:9	Conclusions:	
	Critiquing the method and the offer of the following empirical chapters	165
 <b>Chapter Four:</b>		
<b>The performativity of carnival: affects and emotions; events and stories.</b>		169
4:1	Research questions	169
4:1:1	Carnival as liminality.	170
4:2	Theoretical frameworks:	172
4:2:1	Performativity	172
4:2:2	Affects, events, representations and stories.	173
4:3	Carnival affects:	177
4:3:1	The 'energy' of carnival.	177
4:3:2	Performative transformation.	185
4:3:3	Transgression.	193
4:3:4	' <i>Fun with restrictions</i> ': sanction, permission and structures of control.	199

4:3:5	Carnival and alcohol: sobriety, 'good' drinking and 'bad' drinking.	206
4:3:6	Affects of ritual in carnivalesque street procession.	212
4:3:7	Carnival as 'social drama'.	219
4:4	Conclusions.	229
 <b>Chapter Five: carnival, place and identity.</b>		233
5:1	Research Question	233
5:1:1	Theoretical frameworks.	234
5:2	<i>Battle for the Winds</i> : carnival and the cultural politics of place:	240
5:2:1	Performing the 'identity' of the S-West UK during the 2012 Olympiad.	248
5:2:2	Symbolic geographies of <i>Battle for the Winds</i> .	256
5:3	Place as a contested symbolic construction:	266
5:3:1	'In-place' and 'out-of-place' vocabularies of carnival.	270
5:3:2	The Weymouth Carnival Conflict:	277
5:4	Progressive and carnivalesque notions of place:	282
5:4:1	Seaton Carnival Day:	284
5:5	Conclusions.	295
 <b>Chapter Six: Carnival and the symbolic construction of community.</b>		299
6:1	Research Question	299
6:1:1	The conceptualisation of community.	301
6:2	Boundary, inclusion and exclusion.	306

6:3	Communion, togetherness and attachment.	318
6:4	Communities of practice.	323
6:5	'Community' and 'carnival' as moral values.	331
6:6	Conclusions.	342
<b>Chapter Seven: Towards a Vernacular Creativity:</b>		<b>347</b>
7:1	Research Questions	347
7:1:1	Vignette: Lyme Regis Fossil Festival, 3.5.12 to 7.5.12.	348
7:2	Fieldnote, Westham Community Carnival Club, 14.8.12.	349
7:3	Theoretical frameworks.	350
7:3:1	Vernacular creativity and the creative economy.	353
7:4	The art and non-art of carnival: 'creativity' and 'acceptable' aesthetics.	358
7:5	The vernacular (non?) art of carnival.	371
7:6	Conclusions.	387
<b>Chapter 8: Thesis Conclusions:</b>		<b>393</b>
8:1	Responses to the Research Questions	393
8:2	Contribution to Knowledge	403
8:3	Recommendations	406
8:4	Last words	408
<b>Bibliography</b>		<b>411</b>

<b>Appendix 1:</b>	Data Set (anonymised).	440
<b>Appendix 2:</b>	Weymouth Carnivals: Schedule of resources at Weymouth Library.	448
<b>Appendix 3:</b>	List of research participants (anonymised).	452
<b>Appendix 4:</b>	Copy of Consent Form	457

## List of illustrations, figures and tables.

- Fig 1 Illustration from a late 17<sup>th</sup> / early 18<sup>th</sup> century broadside ballad detailing the Gunpowder Plot and asserting the deliverance of James 1 by divine power.  
Source: EBBA ID: 20990, Magdalene College, Pepys 2.370.  
<http://ebba.english.ucsb.edu/ballad/20990/image> accessed 27.3.13
- Fig 2 Skeleton band members, *Parliament in Flames*. Milton Keynes (1978).  
Photo: Daniel Meadows.  
Source: <http://www.unfinishedhistories.com/history/companies/welfare-state-international/>  
Accessed 26.3.13
- Fig 3 Map of the Dorset and East Devon (Jurassic) Coast World Heritage Site.  
Source: [http://www.jurassicstudycentre.co.uk/webdocs/images/jc\\_map.jpg](http://www.jurassicstudycentre.co.uk/webdocs/images/jc_map.jpg)  
Accessed 27.3.13
- Fig 4 *Moving Tides* procession, 2012.  
Source: [https://en-gb.facebook.com/MovingTides2012?hc\\_location=timeline](https://en-gb.facebook.com/MovingTides2012?hc_location=timeline)  
Accessed 27.3.13
- Fig 5 Battle for the Winds logo, 2012  
Source: <http://www.metoffice.gov.uk/media/image/d/t/512x288-battle-winds-logo.jpg>  
Accessed 27.3.13
- Fig 6 *Cartwheelin'* publicity poster, Activate Performing Arts, 2012.
- Fig 7 *Like a Fish Needs a Bicycle*: Walking entrant, Weymouth Carnival, 2012.
- Fig 8 Frontispiece, Taunton Pageant pamphlet depicting the "presentation of Bible, sword and colours to the Duke of Monmouth by the fair maids of Taunton Deane, June 1685".  
Source: Book of the Taunton Pageant (Taunton 1928), in Woods, 1999: 69.
- Fig 9 Harlequins Carnival Club Float, Bridgwater Carnival, 2013  
Source: <http://duck-in-a-dress.blogspot.co.uk/2013/11/day-5-bonfire-night.html>  
Accessed 31.3.14
- Fig 10 Weymouth Carnival procession 1956. HERBERT COLLECTION 3211.
- Fig 11 Minstrels in blackface, Seaton Carnival, circa 1930. Source: Seaton Museum.
- Fig 12 RNLI float, Seaton Carnival, 1951. Source: Seaton Museum.
- Fig 13 Notting Hill Carnival, 1981.  
Source: <http://www.largeup.com/2012/08/23/throwback-thursdays-vintage-notting-hill-carnival-videos/>  
Accessed 26.3.14
- Fig 14 A reveller confronts a policeman at the 1976 Notting Hill carnival.  
Photograph: Homer Sykes.  
Source: <http://www.theguardian.com/culture/2011/aug/25/importance-notting-hill-carnival-riots>  
Accessed 26.3.14
- Fig 15 Luton Carnival, 2012. Photo by Geoff Collins.  
Source: <http://www.carnivalarts.org.uk>  
Accessed 28.3.14

- Fig 16 *Big Heads*, Frome Carnival, 2011.  
Source: <http://www.homeinfrome.org.uk/#/big-heads-carnival-2011/4569450790>  
Accessed 28.3.14
- Fig 17 *Why Cheap Art? Manifesto*, Bread and Puppet Theatre  
Source: <http://breadandpuppet.org/wp-content/uploads/2012/05/why-cheap-art-manifesto.-001.jpg>  
Accessed 28.3.14.
- Fig 18 *The Skeleton, the Pilot and the Rainbow Fish*, Welfare State: Lyme Park Festival, 1981.  
Photo: Ged Murray.  
Source: <http://www.unfinishedhistories.com/history/companies/welfare-state-international/>
- Fig 19 *Storyweir*, Proboscis. Site specific artwork, Jurassic Coast, 2012.  
Photo: Pete Millson  
Source: <http://www.bridport-arts.com/2012/09/exploratory-laboratory-exhibition-brings-art-science-jurassic-coast-gallery/>  
Accessed 31.3.14
- Fig 20 *The Sultan's Elephant*, by Royale De Luxe, London, 7.5.06. (Reuters/Stephen Hird)  
Source: [http://cdn.theatlantic.com/static/infocus/royaldeluxe050912/r37\\_RTR1D5TT.jpg](http://cdn.theatlantic.com/static/infocus/royaldeluxe050912/r37_RTR1D5TT.jpg)  
Accessed 31.3.14
- Fig 21 Performance-as-research. The author (foreground) participating with the *Cartwheelin* BFTW crew, Weymouth, July 2012
- Fig 22 Making session at Westham Community Carnival Club, June 2012.
- Fig 23 Participants in fancy dress. Chickerell Carnival Club Float, Weymouth Carnival, 2012
- Fig 24 *Dragon Boat* Float, Seaton Carnival, 2012.
- Fig 25 'Martha' transformed. Weymouth Carnival, 2012.
- Fig 26 'Martha' transformed. Weymouth Carnival, 2012.
- Fig 27 UNISON NHS Float, Weymouth Carnival, 2012.
- Fig 28 Police arrest following a fight outside a bar, Weymouth Carnival, 2012.
- Fig 29 Torch-wading ritual, *Battle for the Winds*, Weymouth, 2012.
- Fig 30 Bridgwater Carnival Squibbers at *Battle for the Winds*, Weymouth 2012  
Source: <http://press.artscouncil.org.uk/Press-Releases/2012-people-wade-into-the-sea-to-mark-the-start-of-London-2012-sailing-events-6af.aspx>  
Accessed 31.3.14
- Fig 31 Team GB Sailors lead the procession at Weymouth Carnival, 2012  
Source: <http://www.parkedge.co.uk/archives/553/team-gb-sailors-at-weymouth-carnival-14>  
Accessed 31.3.14
- Fig 32 *Cartwheelin'* at Lyme Regis, *Battle for the Winds*, 2012. Photo: Maisie Hill.
- Fig 33 Walking to the procession. Westham CC members, Weymouth Carnival, 2012.
- Fig 34 Doldrum, *Battle for the Winds* character 'made' from Jurassic Coast stone.  
Photo by Jim Wileman  
Source: <http://aub.ac.uk/courses/ba/ba-costume-with-performance-design/staff-research/>  
Accessed 1.04.14
- Fig 35 *Battle for the Winds* torch waders. Photo by Penny Piddock  
Source: <http://www.cirquebijou.co.uk/assets/images/projects/Battle%20for%20the%20Winds/Fire%20Torch%20Wade%20-%20photo%20Penny%20Piddock.jpg>

Accessed 1.04.14

- Fig 36 Plesiosaur puppet, *Moving Tides*, 2012.  
Photo by Alan Rogers  
Source: <https://www.facebook.com/MovingTides2012/photos/pb.341707872506503.-2207520000.1396339766./528762710467684/?type=3&theater>  
Accessed 1.04.14
- Fig 37 'Rosie Blower' - Dorset Wind Champion, *Battle for the Winds*, Weymouth, 2012.
- Fig 38 Arrival of Doldrum, with help from the Royal Navy.  
*Battle for the Winds*, Weymouth, 2012.  
Source: <http://www.cirquebijou.co.uk/assets/images/News%20Stories/Arrival%20of%20Doldrum%20-%20Royal%20Navy%20-%20news.jpg>  
Accessed 1.4.14
- Fig 39 *The Good Ship Kernocopia*, *Battle for the Winds*, Weymouth, 2012.
- Fig 40 *The Severn Bore*, Gloucestershire Wind Vessel, *Battle for the Winds*, Weymouth, 2012.  
Source: <http://somerseartworksblog.blogspot.co.uk/2012/07/battle-for-winds-in-weymouth.html>  
Accessed 1.4.14
- Fig 41 *Vera*, Bristol / West of England Wind Vessel, *Battle for the Winds*, Weymouth, 2012.  
Source: <http://somerseartworksblog.blogspot.co.uk/2012/07/battle-for-winds-in-weymouth.html>  
Accessed 1.4.14
- Fig 42 'Devon' procession, Exeter, *Battle for the Winds*, 2012.  
Source: <http://southdevontextiles.files.wordpress.com/2012/05/high-st1.jpg>  
Accessed 1.4.14
- Fig 43 Devon Wind Vessel, *Battle for the Winds*, 2012. Photo by Clive Chilvers  
Source: <http://www.demotix.com/photo/1226467/forkbeard-fantasys-battle-wind-parade-exeter-torch-relay>  
Accessed 1.4.14
- Fig 44 Somerset Wind Vessel, *Battle for the Winds*, Weymouth, 2012.  
Source: <http://somerseartworksblog.blogspot.co.uk/2012/07/battle-for-winds-in-weymouth.html>  
Accessed 1.4.14
- Fig 45 Swindon / Wiltshire Wind Gatherers, *Battle for the Winds*, Weymouth, 2012.  
Source: <http://i1.ytimg.com/vi/lwbZVXqMRzk/maxresdefault.jpg>  
Accessed 1.4.14
- Fig 46 *Swantasia*, Dawlish CC, Seaton Carnival, 2012.  
Photo: Somerset and Wessex Carnival Photographs.  
Source: <http://carnivalphotos.zenfolio.com/>  
Accessed 1.4.14
- Fig 47 Seaton's *Year of the Dragon* carnival float, under construction, 2012.
- Fig 48 Before the procession. Street hawkers at Seaton Carnival, 2012.
- Fig 49 Majorettes at Seaton Carnival, 2012.
- Fig 50 Walking Participants at Seaton Carnival, 2012.  
Photo: Somerset and Wessex Carnival Photographs.  
Source: <http://carnivalphotos.zenfolio.com/>  
Accessed 1.4.14
- Fig 51 *Bump In The Night*, Seaton Carnival, 2012.  
Photo: Somerset and Wessex Carnival Photographs.  
Source: <http://carnivalphotos.zenfolio.com/>  
Accessed 1.4.14

- Fig 52 *Lion King*, Seaton Carnival, 2012.  
Photo: Somerset and Wessex Carnival Photographs.  
Source: <http://carnivalphotos.zenfolio.com/>  
Accessed 1.4.14
- Fig 53 *Supermarket Prices Have Turned Our Milk Sour*, Seaton Carnival, 2012.  
Photo: Somerset and Wessex Carnival Photographs.  
Source: <http://carnivalphotos.zenfolio.com/>  
Accessed 1.4.14
- Fig 54 *The Indian Connection*, Seaton Carnival, 2012.  
Photo: Somerset and Wessex Carnival Photographs.  
Source: <http://carnivalphotos.zenfolio.com/>  
Accessed 1.4.14
- Fig 55 Walking Participants at Seaton Carnival, 2012.  
Photos: Somerset and Wessex Carnival Photographs.
- Fig 56 Seaton Carnival Week Crabbing Competition winners, 2012
- Fig 57 The Committee, Seaton Carnival, 2012.
- Fig 58 *Cartwheelin'* at Lyme Regis, *Battle for the Winds*, 2012. Photo: Maisie Hill.
- Fig 59 Making session at Westham Community Carnival Club, 2012.
- Fig 60 *Jungle Flower*, Westham Community Carnival Club, 2012.
- Fig 61 Making butterflies. Westham Community Carnival Club, 2012.
- Fig 62 Making session at Westham Community Carnival Club, 2012.
- Fig 63 'Mark' as Indiana Jones. Westham Community Carnival Club, 2012.
- Fig 64 Dressing the lorry. Westham Community Carnival Club, 2012.
- Fig 65 Making session at Westham Community Carnival Club, 2012.
- Fig 60 *Butterfly*, Westham Community Carnival Club, 2012.

## **Abbreviations.**

ACE	Arts Council England
AHRC	Arts and Humanities Research Council
BFTW	<i>Battle for the Winds</i>
CC	Carnival Club
CDA	Collaborative Doctoral Award
DCLG	Department for Communities and Local Government
DCMS	Department for Media, Culture and Sport
HLF	Heritage Lottery Fund
JCAS	Jurassic Coast Arts Strategy
JCAP	Jurassic Coast Arts Programme
LOCOG	London Organising Committee for the Olympic Games
NI 11	National Indicator 11 (DCLG, 2007)
NRT	Non-Representational Theory
UKCCA	UK Centre for Carnival Arts
UNESCO	United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization
WCV	Weymouth Community Volunteers
WHS	World Heritage Site
WSI	Welfare State International
WTC	Weymouth Town Carnival

## **Acknowledgements:**

Fittingly for a thesis about processions, there is a long, colourful line of energetic, creative, supportive people without whom it would not have been possible for me to complete the journey of this PhD, and to whom I owe real debt of thanks. At the head of the procession are my two supervisors, Dr Nicola Thomas and Dr David Harvey, and former Jurassic Coast Arts Co-ordinator Daisy Sutcliffe. In the true spirit of creative Geography, Daisy, Nicola and David took a real chance when they decided to offer this studentship to a 46-year-old street performer and festival showman in a silly hat. Daisy and I spent many hours in discussion over coffee in seaside cafes during the course of this research and I really appreciate the way she opened doors for me into the Jurassic Coast Arts Programme, the arts-development networks of the South West UK and the 2012 Cultural Olympiad. David's meticulous feedback on the developing thesis was invaluable, and his supportive, no-nonsense approach to the development of my academic writing was critical in helping me to integrate ethnographic data with historical and theoretical analysis. Nicola's unfailing support, and her unconditional encouragement of my performance-centred approaches, allowed me to develop a real freedom of enquiry, while her practical deadlines and timely interventions with regard to critical reading and ethnographic practice kept me on course throughout. I could not have wished for a better supervisory team. Thank you. Thanks are also due to Dr Caitlin DeSilvey and to Dr Sam Rose, Jurassic Coast World Heritage Team Leader, for his consistent support and encouragement as a CDA partner in this research.

I would like to thank my PhD colleagues at Exeter for their friendship and support during my research, in particular Rose Ferraby, Phil Johnstone, Katherine Moreton, Colin Norden, Lisa Orme, Fran Rylands, Rebecca Sandover, Zoe Thomas, Patrick Weir, Bouke Wiersma and Tim Wilkinson, with whom I have shared an office. Creative dialogue with such a dynamic mixture of physical and human geographers has been a real pleasure to me, especially after work on a Friday. Thanks to Professor John Wylie and Exeter Geography for administrative support and funding for my presentation at the 2013 conference of the Association of American Geographers in Los Angeles, and, of course, to Dorset County Council and the AHRC for funding this research. I would also like to thank my MA supervisor Professor Baz Kershaw, and to offer

special thanks to John Fox and Sue Gill from Welfare State International, for setting me off on the amazing journey of academic and creative discovery which ultimately led to this PhD.

I reserve my most important debt of thanks to the many participants in this research who gave of their time and expertise. In particular, I would like to thank the Carnival Committee at Seaton, Devon, for allowing me to come with them on their journey towards the 2012 Carnival and for their enduring friendship and support. I was continually struck by the hard work and community spirit of this committee, their sense of fun, their commitment to their town and their sheer organisational ability. Thanks also to the members of Westham Community Carnival Club, who welcomed me into their group with open arms and who showed such artistic skill and dedication in the building of their carnival float. Thanks to the members of Weymouth Town Carnival Committee, 2012, for access to meetings and for time spent in personal interviews during the craziness of that Olympic year, in particular to David Austin, Roger Hogbin, Ryan Hope, Ian James and John Kelly. Thanks also to all the carnival performers, paraders and float-makers who answered my questions on Carnival Days in Seaton and Weymouth.

I would also like to thank all the arts professionals who took me on board during the Cultural Olympiad. Thanks to Alan Rogers and the *Maritime Mix* and *Moving Tides* teams at Weymouth, and to Kate Wood, Wendy Petidmange and everyone at Activate Performing Arts. Thanks to all at Desperate Men and Cirque Bijoux for allowing me to participate in the amazing *Cartwheelin / Battle for the Winds* performances; to *BFTW* performers Will Coleman, Bec Applebee and Jenny Crowe for being Cornish, larking about and singing songs; to my old friend Kate Webb at *Circommedia*, Bristol; to Tim Hill at *Rag and Bone*; and to Nick Green at Arts Council England (SW). Thanks to Rebecca Pride, Adele Keeley, Sarah Dicks and the Costume and Performance Design tutors and students at Arts University Bournemouth; to Niki McCretton at the Lyric Theatre, Bridport; to Marc Parrett; to Angel Exit Theatre, and, especially, to the amazingly wonderful and talented Robert Lee, Lorna Rees and Herbie Treehead, with whom I sang, pedalled and performed my way through the wettest English summer for 100 years.

I would like to thank family and friends for their unfailing support and encouragement over the last three and a half years. Thanks to my parents and step parents; to my sister Siân Croose; to Uncle Tacko at Promenade Promotions for beer and Big Ideas; to Jon Beauregard for his hospitality in LA; to Simon Floyd at the *Common Lot*; to my dear friend Dr Adrian Pearce; to the McEvoy, Lidington and Wengraf families; to Amanda Brandish for her constant encouragement; to Jean Strawson for rescuing me in my time of need and to Tiffany Strawson for PhD therapy.

Finally, I would like to dedicate this thesis to my smart, funny, beautiful, musical daughter Tilly Croose (9), in the spirit of lifelong learning.



## Chapter One: Introduction:

### 1:1: The situated researcher: conceptualising carnival and street procession.

'Memory': It's my birthday. I am five years old. It is a cold, sharp November night in West Norfolk, way past my bed time. I am bundled in coat and woollens. I can see my breath in the air as my mother, father, sister and I step out of the house. The frosty lawn glistens in the moonlight. We walk up the street to the dark lane that skirts the edge of the fenland, past the church, to the centre of the village. By the time we get there, others have joined us, a steady accumulation of walkers, all travelling in the same direction, all with the same purpose.

The lane is lit with the sweeping flashes of torches and the excitement of children. Many walkers have lanterns on poles. Some pull wheeled trailers which carry strange, mis-shapen human figures. By the time we reach the village green with its carved wooden sign, the crowd is in the dozens. People are joining the procession from all directions, from the housing estates and private lanes; teenagers riding bicycles, infants in pushchairs. The air smells of cordite and hotdogs. The night is filled with distant bangs and crackles, shouts and whistles. I crane my neck to the sky in the hope of rockets. The moving crowd thickens as we squeeze down the narrow lane towards the rugby club, whose pitches mark the final boundary of civilisation before the landscape flattens into miles of empty salt-marsh and industrial farming.

In the playing field, a huge bonfire burns thirty feet into the air, immolating the effigy at its peak. Kids dance around its base and swordfight with sparklers. There isn't a safety rope in sight. The procession spews into the field and disperses, new arrivals swelling the crowd until we fill the pitch, jammed together like sardines. I sit on my father's shoulders, looking down at a sea of woollen hats, waving to kids perched atop their own parents, a toffee apple sweet in my teeth. And then, with the freezing night air held sharp in our lungs, we fall silent, the entire crowd, as if by some telepathy, and suddenly the sky explodes into a kaleidoscope of coloured stars, into waterfalls of white sparks and the deep thump, whizz and boom of enormous French rockets. We 'ooh' and 'ahh' and scream together, the crowd reacting as one. The field fills with white smoke, back-lit with magnesium and phosphorus, split by the whirling shadows of the men who run back and forth in the acrid mist, tapers in their hands, tempting Fate and juggling gunpowder. Thump! Whizz! Boom! Later, we test the bonfire like bullfighters. We write our names in light. We run and jump and fall. We crash into adult arms for the slow procession home, bundled into bed, our faces still sooty from the fire.

November 5. Bonfire Night. I am five years old. All this, for *my* birthday!

(26.7.13)

This composite memory<sup>1</sup> of a birthday shared with the 400-year old British folk tradition of Bonfire Night is the root of my longstanding involvement with cultural performance, festival and procession.<sup>2</sup> It also represents the beginning of a cultural trajectory which led me to the production of this thesis; a story which serves to contextualise the development of this study and to introduce its themes and questions regarding the practices of carnival, community, culture and place.

## GUN-POWDER Plot:

O R,  
A Brief Account of that bloody and subtle Design laid against the King, his Lords  
and Commons in Parliament, and of a Happy Deliverance by Divine Power.  
To the Tune of *It is not too high.* Licensed according to Order.



*T*hese Protestants I pray you do not fear,  
Unto this hour lend attentive Ear,  
The Times are hard although the Devil's Old,  
Erewhile it is as true as ever was told,  
When James the First in England Reigned King,  
At length, these wretched Romans all agreed  
With his way to make the King and Nation bleed,  
By Powder, all agreed with joint Consent,  
To blow up both the King and Parliament,  
So: to keep forever their Willing.

Fig 1 Illustration from a late 17<sup>th</sup> / early 18<sup>th</sup> century broadside ballad detailing the Gunpowder Plot and asserting the deliverance of James I by divine power.

My memory reflects acts of procession which were repeated annually throughout my childhood, and which served to constitute my sense of the symbolic spatiality of my home village. For me, the processional performance of Bonfire Night represents an enactment of place which gathers family,

1 Please Note: in order to delineate between the different 'voices' in this research - fieldnote entry, spoken testimony, text and online sources - I have distinguished between them by using different printed fonts. Fieldnotes are presented in Calibri 12, spoken testimony italicised in Ariel 12 and email, source text and online materials in Arial 10.

2 Guy Fawkes Night / Bonfire Night festivities began in 1607 in Bristol as a state celebration of the deliverance of the Protestant King James I from a Catholic plot led by Guy Fawkes and Thomas Catesby two years earlier. For a history of the origins and politics of Guy Fawkes' Night celebrations see: Wright (1940); Cressy (1989) and Marcus (1989).

neighbours, friends and strangers amid the spectacular British winter rituals of fire and fireworks, within a tradition of simultaneous national celebration. It was also my earliest experience of the affective carnivalesque; of danger, freedom and transgression; of the chaos of the crowd and the thrill of 'staying up late' and being 'let off the leash.'

This formative experience was the seed of my subsequent professional career in participatory arts and my involvement in procession and festival at a range of scales, from grassroots village lantern parades to the behemoth of Glastonbury. Years later, during my MA in Cultural Performance at Bristol University, I worked alongside John Fox and Sue Gill from the seminal performance company Welfare State International. Founded in 1968, Welfare State was a countercultural performance collective that pioneered participatory processions of large scale puppets and lanterns, spectacular fire shows, community carnivals and outdoor festival in the UK (Fox, 2002). Returning to November 5<sup>th</sup> during my MA archival research, I charted the origins of Bonfire Night and the countercultural reinvention of this festival by Welfare State between 1972 and 1981 as *Parliament in Flames*, a series of annual community processions that culminated in ritual burnings of large-scale Dada-ist models of the Houses of Parliament. (Fox, 2002: 45-47). In the course of this MA study, I began to engage with the politics of cultural performance and to consider the symbiosis of festive freedom and state control within carnivalesque culture, a symbiosis recognised by King James I as far back as the 17<sup>th</sup> century, as Marcus, (1989: 6) explains:

[James I's] consistent position was that the customs, well-managed, would serve to buttress authority by dissolving seditious impulses that might otherwise threaten Church and state. [He] anticipated the 'escape valve' theory of festival still current among one school of modern anthropologists – the view that holiday inversions of hierarchy are essentially normative and help to perpetuate a pre-existing system by

easing, at regular, predictable intervals, tensions that might otherwise build into a full scale challenge of the system.<sup>3</sup>



Fig 2 Skeleton Band members, *Parliament in Flames*, Milton Keynes, 1978.

Photo: Daniel Meadows.

Following my Masters degree, between 2004 and 2010, I worked professionally as a freelance community artist, facilitating creative responses to landscape and heritage in rural communities. In tune with developing policy in state-funded participatory arts practice at the time, much of my work involved engaging people with notions of place, community, history or location through site-specific festival or the creation of contemporary cultural performance.<sup>4</sup> Place and performance became explicitly linked in my work, which included community performance projects for local authorities, museums and National Parks in a range of geographical locations across the south west UK. The Dorset and East Devon Coast (Jurassic Coast) World Heritage Site was one such location. My

---

<sup>3</sup> Here, Marcus offers a critique of the *Basilikon Doron* of James I (1598) and Charles I's *Book of Sports* (1633) both of which set strict conditions for popular festivity.

<sup>4</sup> See *New Landscapes*, ACE, 2008.

participation in the *Get on Board* boat trip which launched the Jurassic Coast Arts Programme in 2008 led to my engagement with the newly-minted place-identity of the Jurassic Coast as a writer of educational ‘heritage theatre’.<sup>5</sup> It also led to the development of professional relationships which ultimately fostered this PhD research. Dorset County Council, as managers of the Dorset and East Devon Coast (Jurassic Coast) World Heritage Site, are CDA partners for this AHRC-funded PhD alongside Exeter University.

Ironically however, as a result of the conditionality of state funding for the arts, I became concerned that I was being increasingly drawn into using historically countercultural arts vocabularies to facilitate normative, often policy-driven narratives of places and their people. This tension, between art and instrumentality, between ‘in-place’ and ‘out of place’ cultural vocabularies, became a focus of my critical thinking with regard to cultural performances and the link between performance, place and landscape as a cultural geography. At a 2013 conference with the fantastic title *The Endless Parade*, John Fox reminded the audience of the need to be vigilant with regard to the ethics of work generated by professional community artists within street processions that are geared to the delivery of state policy:

*We need to constantly ask ourselves whose agenda we are working to. Is it an advertisement, is it power, entertainment or politics? Is it the bland culture imposed on us by the so-called creative industries? Where is the radical edge? Maybe it has gone somewhere else.... The most radical thing we can do is help people feel the power of their own creativity, to find the poetry beneath their feet.*

(John Fox, conference address, *The Endless Parade*, Taunton, 13.6.13)

---

<sup>5</sup> Dorset and East Devon Coast World Heritage Site: (23.5.08) Arts on the Jurassic Coast: *Get On Board*.

*Longshore Drift* (2009); *Smuggler’s Gold* (2011), for Common Players / East Devon District Council / Devon Museums Service / Heritage Lottery Fund.

This fundamental participatory notion, that people should 'feel the power of their own creativity' lies at the heart of this thesis in terms of its cultural politics. It points to a central theoretical tension which exists both within the affect of carnival itself and within the enactment of cultural policy with regard to carnival 'development', namely: the tension between cultural democracy and the democratisation of culture.

### **1:2: Cultural Democracy and the Democratisation of Culture:**

Kershaw (1992: 184-5) outlines the 'culture of division' between these two principles, a division which crystallised in the 1980s in a public debate between Roy Shaw, former Secretary General of the Arts Council, and Owen Kelly, a Marxist community artist. Shaw's politics favoured the democratisation of culture, the practice of making 'art' more accessible to 'ordinary' people, insofar as it is '[more] relevant to our common humanity rather than to our particular job, or social class' (Shaw, 1987:131-2). For Shaw, this accessibility depended on the cultural education of the working class in order that they might elevate their participation in cultural life:

Can we really want anyone's taste to be limited to plastic herons when they might enjoy Henry Moore?...If advanced education correlates closely with people's patronage of the arts, it seems thunderously obvious that any attempt to increase the accessibility of the arts must include the increase (and improvement) of education for the arts, that is the education of potential audiences...Those responsible for arts funding [have] not merely to care about the arts but also about people, not least the overwhelming majority of ordinary people who are outside the charmed circle of the cultivated middle class...

(Shaw, 1987, 118;121;127)

For other scholars, (Kelly, 1984; Holden, 2008) the implication of the democratisation of culture is that it assumes a hierarchy of artistic expression and enshrines the instrumentality of art as a tool for hegemonic social policy. This hierarchy, they argue, is determined by a cultural authority within society

that decides what art is, and what it is not, by virtue of the distribution of state funding. Kelly sees this as an 'act of oppression' (Kelly, 1984: 50), which '[cheats] the mass of the people of their right to create culture' (Kershaw, 1992: 184-5). In tune with the countercultural community arts activism of the 1980s, Kelly asserts that all people should be able to decide for themselves what art is and should have access to the cultural means of production, a process he describes as 'cultural democracy':

[Community artists] ask why there is a centrally controlled, and co-ordinated, set of cultural outputs at all; and wish to enquire who it is that selects the content of this set, and on whose authority do they do so... The current argument in favour of the 'democratisation of culture' goes hand in hand with the tightening of professional control over the production of cultural outputs, for it suggests that what we need is more of what we already have, given to us by better trained versions of the people who are currently trying to give it to us. For most people this will simply produce a higher level of externally directed cultural consumption, which would be the direct antithesis of genuine human creativity.

(Kelly, 1984: 99)

My own work seldom took place in theatres and galleries; rather it was about producing grassroots community plays and co-authoring small festival events and parades, working with people in parks, village halls and winding through the street. I saw the work as a mutual process in which we were digging into heritage and re-inventing tradition together, and mixing history and mythology with people's contemporary concerns. I sought to encourage people to see their own creativity as art, no matter what form it took, and to encourage audiences to feel the same. I was highly informed by the countercultural ethics of Welfare State, Bread and Puppet and other influential companies from the history of alternative theatre. And yet I became aware that the very vocabularies I was using had themselves slowly been mainstreamed; 'democratised' into a preferred notion of 'carnival art' which sometimes challenged the vernacular practices of the people I was working with, in particular their desire for a festive appropriation of the forms of popular commercial culture. A cultural contest

seemed to be underway, between perceptions of art and non-art and between institutional and vernacular notions of the cultural performance of social identity and place, as Holden suggests:

In publicly funded culture, culture is not defined through theory (you will find no definition of culture on the website of the Department for Culture, Media and Sport (DCMS), nor of heritage on that of the Heritage Lottery Fund (HLF), but by practice: what gets funded becomes culture... In publicly funded culture and commercial culture there are gatekeepers who define the meaning of culture through their decisions... in culture walls are built to defend the order of the canon, the discipline of practice, and the legitimacy of tradition against the disorder of popular culture...

(Holden, 2008: 11; 21)

Holden's analysis also reveals a neo-liberal drift in the role and function of art and culture in society since the late 1990s. He asserts the intrinsic 'public value' of art and culture and the rights of all people to participate in cultural activity (2008: 31). His paper challenges notions of cultural elitism and seeks to create frameworks that foster participation in the arts. However, Holden also suggests that these proposed participatory frameworks are ultimately to be based on the devolution of culture into law; into local authority services and into contractual arrangements within neo-liberal notions of public accountability and market forces. Holden describes the instrumentalities of publicly-funded participatory arts practice as functions of education and the 'creative economy'; functions which are supported or abandoned by virtue of mostly quantitative measures of success. With regard to the cultural performance of carnival, the warning of this thesis is, in part, that the distinctions between 'art' and 'non art' which these neo-liberal instrumentalities generate may have a subjugating effect on culturally democratic, 'non-productive' vernacular processional culture. As Kelly warned some 30 years ago:

... Unless certain forms of pleasure are derided or disenfranchised, there cannot be an agreed hierarchy of values which is the necessary precursor of the centrally co-ordinated cultural package, more usually referred to as 'serious art'... From this perspective, the democratisation of culture can be seen as the compulsory

imposition, on society at large, of the values of one particularly powerful group. These values appear as neutral, and as natural. Their imposition serves to downgrade the value of the preferred activities of other groups within society, which are designated as hobbies, folk arts, ethnic arts – or just plain quaint.

(Kelly, 1984: 100)

Edensor *et al* (2010) also clearly articulate this notion: that vernacular creativity is ‘non-productive’ and everyday in quality and may challenge our very notions of economy, place, identity and art.

Vernacular creativity foregrounds the un-hip, the un-cool and possibly the downright square, and embraces those marginal and non-glamorous creative practices excluded from arts and culture-led regeneration... In rethinking the notion of creativity, we also wish to disentangle it from economic instrumentality by arguing that there is much to be said for non-productive creativity...the affectual and sensual qualities of creative activities which may appear frivolous and playful and that produce community cohesion, neighbourhood identity, self-worth, sociality, conviviality or the production of economies of generosity.

(Edensor, *et al*, 2010: 10-11)

My situated position thus invited participatory, qualitative, ethnographic study of carnival and street procession as a method for understanding the vernacular, symbolic relationship between people’s sense of themselves, the wider culture and the places in which they live. It also encouraged the critique of professionalised, state-funded instrumentalities of carnival arts practice which forms a significant part of this thesis, and to which I now turn my attention in order to more fully describe the contextual development of this collaborative PhD studentship.

### **1:3: Carnivals & the Jurassic Coast: research contexts and CDA development:**

The AHRC CDA partnership which supported the research for this thesis arose as a result of a distinct set of institutional policy developments with regard to the cultural performance of carnival. Chapter One of this thesis describes in detail

how participatory carnival has been steadily adopted in the UK as a strategy for the promotion of public engagement with a range of state agendas.



Fig 3 Map of the Dorset and East Devon (Jurassic) Coast World Heritage Site.

Specifically, this thesis considers the role of carnival as a professionalised, state-funded instrument for public engagement with the 2012 Olympics and with the place identity of the south west UK and the Dorset and East Devon (Jurassic Coast) World Heritage Site. It contrasts this critique with the vernacular creativities of un-funded, small town carnivals in the fieldwork area and their alternative performances of 'place'. The geographical fieldwork locations for this research lie at the crossroads of a range of policies. They emerge from these ethnographies as sites where carnival has been used as an applied method within a very distinct set of state-funded instrumentalities (Carter & Masters, 1998; Jermyn, 2001; Hall, 2002; Micklem, 2006; Audit Commission, 2010; ACE, 2008) and where these instrumentalities are in tension with alternative creative economies.

In 2001, the Dorset and East Devon (Jurassic) Coast was designated a World Heritage Site by UNESCO. In 2005, an Interpretation Action Plan for the site identified use of the Arts as a vocabulary for public engagement with the aims and objectives of World Heritage, and with the unique geology of the Dorset and

East Devon coastline. This plan was in tune with the wider, national development of cultural and social policy linked to carnival, outdoor arts and public engagement which was occurring at the time (See Chapter Two). The resulting Jurassic Coast Arts Strategy (2006-13) featured carnival as one of five thematic strands geared to this purpose.<sup>6</sup> The inclusion of carnival as a vocabulary for public engagement with the place-identity of the Jurassic Coast World Heritage Site (WHS) also reflected policy involvement from a range of partner institutions related to the Jurassic Coast Team, including the Arts Council, Dorset County Council and the wider UNESCO family, as arts consultant Elizabeth describes below:

*There was some clear 'encouragement' to do so from the JC [Jurassic Coast] management, especially in the later stages of the strategy development, because of the very active working relationship the JC Team had at that time with the Santa Lucia WHS, and the forthcoming Olympics (which were announced as we were developing the strategy)... we did not feel that carnivals were directly relevant to the JC or that this was a genuinely live tradition along the Coast... [but] it was one of the five strands in the ACE Grants for the Arts application which they submitted...*

(Elizabeth, Arts Consultant, Jurassic Coast Arts Strategy, e-mail, 13.06.12)

The 2005 announcement of the 2012 London Olympics - and the subsequent national policy identification of carnival and street arts as key vocabularies within urban regeneration contexts and environmental 'site specific' work (ACE, 2008) - led to carnival becoming a 'priority development area' for the Arts Council in the south west UK (Holly, arts professional, 14.11.11). Initial plans for the 2008-2012 Cultural Olympiad placed 'Carnival 2012' at the centre of the nation's planned celebrations. By the time the Jurassic Coast Creative Coast Group submitted its application for Arts Council funding in 2007, carnival had

---

<sup>6</sup> 'There were five broad themes under which projects 'sat' within the programme: *Arts and Earth Science; Celebration of Stone; Carnival; Sounds of the Coast; and Site-specific Arts.*' (Schwarz, 2011: 7)

become a significant strategic component of the proposed Jurassic Coast Arts Programme; a cultural strategy which would at the same time operate as an artist-led, developmental 'democratisation of culture' with regard to local carnival arts practice in the region in the run up to 2012:

*The other reason that carnival was seen as being something that deserved its own strand of work was the proliferation of carnivals in the south west, and the Arts Council's awareness that there was this huge community engagement with carnivals, but that carnival as it stood couldn't really be counted as art...The Arts Council also saw that these were sustainable events that managed to pay for themselves without having any subsidy. And they were interested in that model... And 2012 being announced. So all of these things came together and it made really good sense, I think, to have a strand of work within the Jurassic Coast Arts Programme that was carnival.*

(Holly, Arts professional, 14.11.11)

Local authority arts professional Henry also reflects this pragmatic approach with regard to the links between carnival and wider cultural policy at the time. In the transcript below, he refers to the attraction of carnival and outdoor arts festivals such as *Inside Out Dorset* as a means of drawing down arts development funding from central government via the adoption of National Indicator 11 in the Local Area Agreement for Dorset between 2007 and 2010.<sup>7</sup>

*What you have in those events is the potential to attract a serious number of people. And if you are trying to increase engagement in the arts by 3%, which we were at the time, that makes carnival extremely attractive... For the duration of the Jurassic Coast Arts Strategy we have always had the Olympics in mind... What you have got is a perfect storm here. You have got the Olympics, you have got*

---

<sup>7</sup> 'Since 2005 the Inside Out Dorset festival has presented high quality, large-scale, outdoor arts events to more than 60,000 people... It is a high profile, non-metropolitan model promoting site-responsive contemporary performances in dispersed heritage locations'. <http://www.insideoutdorset.co.uk/home>, accessed 17.3.14.

See Chapter Two for a description of NI 11 as a rationale for local authority sponsorship of carnival and street procession.

*NI 11, and you have got various other factors like Inside Out developing.*

(Henry, Arts professional, 27.9.11)

This specific instrumentality was also described in the Jurassic Coast Arts Programme Grants for the Arts Project Proposal (2007a: 4). This document referred to carnival as 'one of the themes for the Cultural Olympiad starting in 2008' and expressed the project's potential to 'develop the skills of local artists in the South West of England'. The proposal listed the development priorities for carnival in strict policy terms as:

Olympics / Cultural Olympiad; Diversity; Artist residencies / exchanges; Arts & Science Interpretation / education; Young people; Skills training; Community.

(Jurassic Coast Arts Programme, 2007a: 15)

Thus, the Jurassic Coast Arts Strategy enshrined a range of contemporary policy concerns within its carnival theme and reflected the cultural public engagement strategies of a range of organisations. The Cultural Olympiad (2008-12) and the 2012 Olympic and Paralympic sailing events at Weymouth became major drivers of cultural production with regard to carnival arts development in the fieldwork area from 2008 onwards, reflecting the Jurassic Coast Arts Strategy ambitions to:

form a key part of the south west cultural programme for 2012... to build on and expand existing Jurassic Coast WHS links and [to] compliment the international strategy of Arts Council England South West.

(Jurassic Coast Arts Programme, 2007b: 4.7)

On the street, this carnival activity was reflected in major changes made to the processional vocabulary of Weymouth Town Carnival in 2008 / 2009, which involved the Weymouth Community Volunteers and the B-sharp youth music

organisation.<sup>8</sup> It also emerged through the development of the *Moving Tides* children's carnival between 2009 and 2012 and the 2011 *Light on Time* parade in Poole. *Light on Time* involved local community groups and primary schools in artist-led research into Jurassic Coast geology and processional culture and culminated in a walking procession along Poole Quay.<sup>9</sup>



Fig 4 *Moving Tides* procession, 2012.

By 2009, the Jurassic Coast Arts programme had launched a 'Festival of Carnivals 2012' initiative with the stated aim of developing a 'fantastic Jurassic Coast Festival of Carnivals extravaganza building to 2012' (Jurassic Coast Arts Programme, 2010a). This participatory 'Festival of Carnival' concept did not progress to fruition, but may be considered to be the proto-performance which eventually resulted in Dorset County Council and Jurassic Coast WHS

---

<sup>8</sup> This collaboration between Lyme Youth Music Arts Project, Magic Drum Orchestra and Bideford Flying Colours carnival group comprised workshops leading to a parade within Weymouth Carnival (Schwarz, 2010: 11).

<sup>9</sup> *Light on Time* was managed by Activate Performing Arts in partnership with Borough of Poole Arts Development Team, WAVE Arts Education Agency, Lighthouse, Jurassic Coast Arts programme and funded by the Bournemouth & Poole Cultural Hub, Creative Coast and Borough of Poole. (<http://lighthousepoole.co.uk/light-on-time-2011>, accessed 17.3.14)

involvement in *Moving Tides*, *Cartwheelin'* and *Battle for the Winds* as part of the 2012 Cultural Olympiad.

The Jurassic Coast 'Festival of Carnivals' conference in November 2009 featured a presentation by ArtReach about the 2005-7 *Three Cities Connect and Create* project as a regenerative model for carnival development in the East Midlands.<sup>10</sup> It also included a presentation by Simon Jutton, ACE Head of Development, on the Arts Council England South West perspective for regional carnival towards 2012. Delegates considered the role of carnival as an instrumentality within international cultural exchange, within formal education and learning, and as a potential vehicle for collaboration with other World Heritage sites such as The Pitons in St Lucia; Teide National Park, Tenerife; Garajonay National Park, Gran Canaria; Messel Pits, Germany and Fernando de Noronha, Brazil.<sup>11</sup>

While the instrumentality of carnival within policy contexts of urban regeneration, environmental education and international place-making are clear from the agenda paper of this conference, tensions also arose among delegates at this event between notions of cultural democracy and the democratisation of culture with regard to carnival (Jurassic Coast Arts Programme, 2010b).

Published notes from break-out discussions reveal policy objectives linked to

---

10 'ArtReach was commissioned by Derby, Leicester and Nottingham City Councils to create, direct and deliver *Three Cities Create and Connect*, an Urban Cultural Programme funded project. ArtReach also secured £420,000 support from the European Regional Development Fund and Arts Council England. The programme comprised an Urban Beats project of new Festival commissions (including *Classical Friction*) delivered at Mela, Riverside Festival and Darley Park events; an international Carnival Residency; The Beacon Project celebrating Divali and Guy Fawkes events with an extraordinary lit spectacle; and a new film project celebrating the lives of the three cities.' <http://artreach.biz/projects/three-cities-create-and-connect/> accessed 17.3.14.

11 Presentations by Charles Beauchamp, Co-Artistic Director, Mandinga Arts and Chris Slann, Carnival Development Officer, Isle of Wight Council, respectively.

place-making, such as: 'sharing expertise and [creating] a creative celebration that is a showcase for the sub region'. Delegates stressed the need to 'skill-up artists and communities so there is a new capacity and legacy of collaboration', within notions of creative economy and the creative industries. They also articulated the divisions of cultural capital which existed between professionalised and vernacular carnival practice in terms of: 'the challenge of engaging groups already delivering events...and how we motivate those people and groups who may feel threatened by this collaboration' (Jurassic Coast Arts Programme, 2010b).

These concerns came into conflict with a culturally democratic desire among other delegates to create 'a sense of place that is local and involves ownership and pride'; to recognise the understanding that 'existing local events must not be upstaged'; and the need to 'acknowledge where each [cultural] contribution has come from' (Jurassic Coast Arts Programme, 2010b). Herein lies the central theoretical tension of this thesis: the distinction between the 'productive' instrumentalities of policy-driven carnival and the 'non-productive' convivial, often 'local' outcomes of vernacular practice.

The establishment of a three-year Carnivals and Processions Co-ordinator post at Activate Performing Arts, supported by a Carnival and Processions Advisory Group, arose from this 2009 conference, with the 'productive' instrumentality of encouraging carnival development along certain guidelines. This development programme sought to shift local vernacular carnival practice away from motorised floats and carnivalesque representations of popular commercial culture and towards 'arts-led' walking parades which drew on a Jurassic Coast place iconography and a more site-specific or 'locality-focused' content. (Schwarz, 2011: 26). The mismatch between this instrumentality and the

vocabularies and purposes of vernacular carnival in the fieldwork area is highlighted by Schwarz' assessment of the relative failure of this 'top down' approach. Schwarz reports that not a single participant in the Activate carnival development and *New Perspectives* micro-bursary programme expressed the view that these programmes had achieved their stated aim of achieving 'greater understanding of high quality contemporary interpretation of the Jurassic Coast locality through procession' (Schwarz, 2011: 26). Rather, this thesis suggests that this programme of carnival development resulted in the increased separation of vernacular and 'professional' carnival practice into distinct spheres of cultural production and, as Chapter Six argues, the subjugation of the popular tropes of vernacular street carnival in the fieldwork area.

#### **1:4: Carnival collaborations: University of Exeter and the Jurassic Coast WHS:**

Partnership between the Jurassic Coast WHS and higher education partners was a key part of the Jurassic Coast Arts Strategy (2006-13) and its role in site interpretation and public engagement. Discussions between the Jurassic Coast Team and academics in the University of Exeter Geography Department began in 2009 with a view to developing three doctoral studentships supported by the Arts and Humanities Research Council for the period 2010-2015, under the thematic banner '*The Jurassic Coast and the arts of community engagement: heritage, science, policy and practice on a dynamic coastline*'.

This ongoing, extended doctoral programme investigates the geographies of arts practice and policy within the Jurassic Coast Arts Programme. In addition to this thesis, Rose Ferraby's studentship: '*Stone Exposures: Geobiographies of Stone on the Jurassic Coast*' (2011-2014) is a creative, practice-based

cultural geography which looks at the way in which people work with stone in this geological location. Fran Rylands' research: '*Entanglements of creative practice and policy: Art-Science collaborations along the Jurassic Coast World Heritage Site*' (2012-15) considers the 'geography of arts governance along the Jurassic Coast WHS' (Rylands, forthcoming) with a view to critiquing the influence of the Jurassic Coast Arts Programme as a model of international best-practice in Art-Science collaboration.

The cultural and political processes which were active within carnival in East Devon and Dorset from 2005 onwards offered an attractive 'live site' for an academic study of the cultural geographies of carnival, procession and place-making in the context of the 2012 Olympics. This study of carnival also complements ongoing research in Exeter Geography on the politics of performance and identity (Harvey DC *et al*, 2007); with regard to public display (Thomas & Ryan, 2010) and in relation to regional policy frameworks in the creative industries (Thomas, N.J., Harvey, D.C., Hawkins, H: 2009; 2010). This latter strand of Exeter-based research had previously engaged with the Jurassic Coast Arts Programme and the Dorset Loves Arts network of state-funded arts providers as part of its exploration of regional governance in the south west UK, related to notions of creative economy.

Both this study of carnival and '*Stone Exposures*' (Ferraby, forthcoming) also offer innovative, ethnographic approaches which seek to further Exeter Geography's ambitions for the development of arts-practice-led research in cultural geography. Between August and November 2009, these ambitions coalesced into a CDA partnership between the Jurassic Coast WHS and Exeter University which established the broad research aims of this studentship with regard to carnival and procession.

## 1:5 Researching Carnival: the aims of this Thesis:

The overarching ambition for this study is to consider the history and politics of carnival in the fieldwork area and the place of carnival in the lives of contemporary communities along the coast. Further, it seeks to consider the 'Jurassic Carnival' for 2012 within a broader cultural-political context and to consider contemporary debates in cultural geography that 'address the interface between identity and place, materiality, representation and the 'more-than-representational' aspects of contemporary experience'.<sup>12</sup>



Fig 5 *Battle for the Winds* logo, 2012

Practice-led ethnography and participant observation emerged in these discussions as key methods through which the development of the 2012 'Jurassic Carnival' event (which eventually became *Cartwheelin* and *Battle for the Winds*) might be charted and analysed, with a view to considering these performances as an 'active process of producing place-identity'.<sup>13</sup> Parallel participatory study of vernacular, small town carnivals emerges in this thesis as counterpoint to this institutional instrumentality. It considers alternative symbolic

---

<sup>12</sup> (CDA preparatory document - *Ideas for potential collaboration*, 6.9.09).

<sup>13</sup> (CDA preparatory e-mail, 30.09.09)

constructions of community, culture and place, as expressed through the cultural performance of carnival, and reflects upon how ‘governance structures alter the ‘nature’ of carnival’ itself.<sup>14</sup>

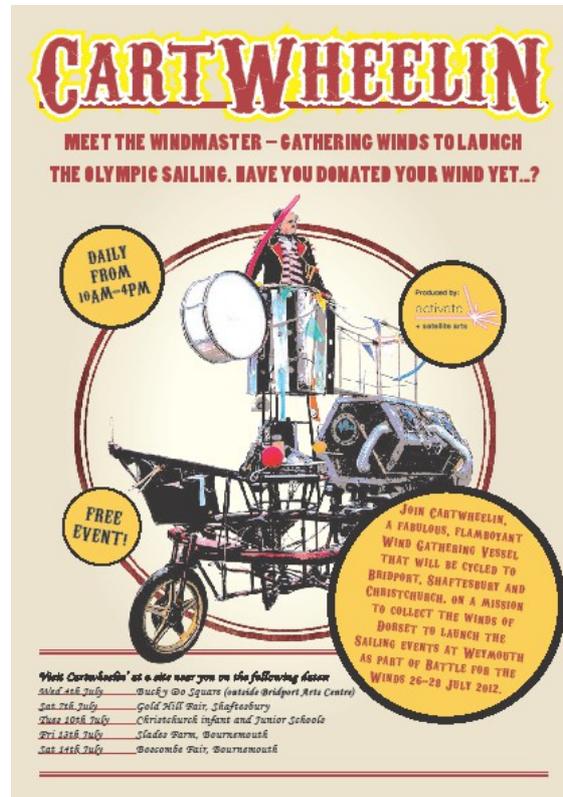


Fig 6 *Cartwheelin'* publicity poster, Activate Performing Arts, 2012.

This thesis, therefore, analyses ethnographic data gathered during participant observation within two vernacular town carnivals at Seaton, East Devon, and Weymouth, Dorset, during 2012. It also presents analysis of participant observation conducted within the professional *Cartwheelin* and *Battle for the Winds* street performances which were staged as part of the *Maritime Mix* programme of the 2012 Cultural Olympiad at Lyme Regis, Bridport, Shaftesbury, Bournemouth and Weymouth respectively. The thesis analyses the ‘performativity’ of carnival in these contexts (Austin, 1962; Searle, 1969; Derrida, 1978; Butler, 1988; Parker and Sedgwick, 1995): how it enacts and

<sup>14</sup> (CDA Draft Project aims: 4.10.09)

embodies a range of instrumentalities with regard to notions of community, culture and place.

#### **1.5 :1: Research Questions and Objectives:**

- **What is carnival?**

The data presented in response to this question contributes to the wider performative discourse of carnival as considered by Bakhtin (1984); Holloway and Kneale, (2003); Eagleton (1981); Gardiner (1993); Gluckman (1965); Jackson (1992); Koerner (2004); Lunacharsky (1931); Russo (1986); Roach (1993); Sales (1983); Schechner (2003) and Stallybrass & White (1986). It considers how we might conceptualise and de-construct processional performance in the fieldwork area in order to consider its performance efficacy and the transgressive-normative paradox of carnivalesque experience.

- **How has carnival been conceptualized, constructed and performed in the fieldwork area over time?**

This question considers the geographies of processional culture in the UK and how we may 'locate' carnival in the south west UK within a specific set of geographical, historical and socio-cultural contexts. These contexts include protest marches, pageants and 'identity' parades: (Woods, 1999; Ryan, 2007; Harvey DC et al, 2007; Jarman, 1998; O'Leary, 2008; Cottrell, 1992; Weissengruber, 1997; Perry, 1967; Turnbull, 1973; Rootes & Saunders, 2007; Harvey, 1998; Reiss, 2005); Protestant Guy Fawkes celebrations: (Tallon, 2007; Cressy, 1989; Bridgwater, 2012; Squibbs, 1982); Philanthropic parades: (Goheen, 1990; Ryan M, 1989; Mac Giolla Choille, 1975; Gunn 2000; Georgiou, 2012; Lloyd, 2002) and the development of the seaside resorts of Devon and

Dorset: (Walton, 1983; Travis, 1993). This question also allows us to locate South West carnival within contemporary geographies of processional culture that, broadly, include Pride marches, the Occupy movement, anti-war demonstrations and participatory 'fine art' approaches to procession, such as the work of artist Jeremy Deller (Edensor, 2010; De Groot, 2012).

- **What is the history of cultural policy development with regard to carnival and procession in the UK?**

This question explores how South West carnival is located within contested policy discourses of creative economy, symbolic place-making and the performance of local, regional and national 'identity' (Carter & Masters, 1998; Hall, 2002; Micklem, 2006; Audit Commission, 2010; ACE, 2008). The resulting historiography reflects the influence of both Caribbean carnival and the radical, processional counterculture of alternative theatre between 1960 and 1992, and their gradual assimilation into mainstream cultural policy as vocabularies for multiculturalism, socio-political communitarianism and post-industrial economic regeneration. The data here presented contributes to a wider critique of the decline in the identity politics of carnival and procession over time: (Roach, 1993; Berleant-Schiller, 1991; Campbell, 1988; Cohen, 1980; Jackson, 1988; Juneja, 1988; Nurse, 1999; Kershaw, 1992; De Cruz, 2005; Schechner, 1995; Fox, 2002; Mason, 1992; Wilkie, 2002).

- **How do participants experience the 'liminal performativity' of carnival, and how do they describe affects of 'energy', 'transformation', 'transgression', 'ritual' and 'social drama' within carnival and street procession?**

Through this question, I explore how participants experience carnival in an affective sense. I also seek to develop theoretical connections between

'performativity' as expressed within Performance Studies and the 'event' as described in NRT and Cultural Geography (Anderson & Harrison, 2010: 9). This data thus contributes to a wider, performance-centred analytical discourse with regard to carnival's ability to generate simultaneous, multiple subjectivities of practice, display, place and identity (Turner, 1969; Van Gennep, 1960; Schechner, 2003; Deleuze & Guattari, 1987).

- **How does carnival operate as a festive enactment of place and identity?**

Set within the context of the 2012 Cultural Olympiad, this question explores the relative extent to which professional and vernacular carnival practices reflect the 'cultural politics' of places. The data contributes to debates regarding the 'social construction' of place identity as a reflection of power and as a reaction to the mobilities of globalised economic investment (Harvey, 1996). It also reveals the extent to which carnival facilitates the 'symbolic construction' of place (Cohen, 1985), and how a progressive 'global sense of place' (Massey, 1997) might be facilitated by way of culturally-democratic vernacular carnival practice. The primary contribution of this research with regard to place theory is to suggest that place itself is a 'carnavalesque' concept.

- **How does carnival practice operate as a cultural container for the symbolic construction of 'community' (Cohen, 1985)?**

This question contributes to the conceptual discourse of community by considering how community is imagined and identified by people through their carnival symbolism and practice. The question seeks to unpick people's engagement with systems of social recruitment (Carey & Sutton, 2004; Silk, 1999; Newman *et al*, 2003; Kay, 2000) and the organised creativity of

communities of practice (Wenger, 2000). It also engages with people's encounters with the affective, carnivalesque experience of 'communion' or 'unity in diversity', (Carey & Sutton, 2004; Rose, 1997b, Nancy, 1991) and their performance of alternative forms of social organisation as a challenge to normative structures (Kelly, 1984; Silk, 1999). The question also seeks to explore the tension between philosophical communitarianism and notions of cultural democracy (Silk, 1999; Frazer, 1999; Kelly, 1984) as expressed within professionalised and vernacular carnival practices respectively.

- **What are the distinctions between 'vernacular' and non-vernacular carnival creativities?**

Through this question, I seek to discover the relationships that exist between vernacular and professionalised carnival and the attitudes that differently-positioned participants express with regard to these distinct practices. I seek to consider the effect that state-funded cultural performance has on the vernacular practice of carnival and vice versa, and the tension which exists between vernacular and non-vernacular practice in terms of power, cultural capital and access to public space. The data presented in response to this question contributes to a growing alternative discourse of 'vernacular creativity' that seeks to 'rethink the cultural economy' and to challenge Floridian instrumentalities of neo-liberal cultural development (Daskalaki & Mould, 2013; Edensor *et al*, 2010; Edensor & Millington, 2009; Florida, 2002; Fox-Gotham, 2011; Gibson & Kong, 2005; Haylett, 2000; Landry, & Bianchini, 2007; Miles, 2005; Miles & Paddison, 2005; Shaw, 2013). Likewise, it informs the debate surrounding the tension between 'productive' carnival, which is embedded within the social and economic instrumentalities of the state or other governance organisations, and 'non-productive', or 'vernacular', carnival: which

occurs as a cultural performance of place and identity outside such development processes, and may act as a challenge to normative agendas.

## **1:6 Thesis structure:**

Throughout my research my primary aim has been to engage with carnival through practical participation and observation, alongside its practitioners, in 'live' situations. Thus, I adopted an approach informed by the 'grounded theory' of Glaser and Strauss (1967), in which I gave priority to 'developing rather than verifying analytic propositions' (Emerson *et al*, 1995: 143). As a result, this thesis seeks to introduce theory and literature as it becomes relevant to participatory experience; to present it as a developmental framework for understanding 'what happened' during the research, rather than as a starting point for verification. To this end, this thesis dispenses with the traditional PhD format of the substantive literature review followed by a series of empirical chapters. Instead, it is divided into seven chapters, each of which considers a different aspect of carnival as cultural performance in the fieldwork area. Each chapter therefore offers its own conceptual literature review related to the theme in question, in order to ground theory and literature firmly alongside the ethnographic data.

Following this introduction, **Chapter Two** considers how carnival has been conceptualized, constructed and performed in the fieldwork area over time, in order to establish a set of discursive frameworks for our understanding of carnival practice in the three fieldwork contexts. The chapter begins by reflecting upon 'carnival' itself as the primary contested term in this study. It deconstructs the Bakhtinian symbiosis of festive freedom and state control

within carnivalesque procession.<sup>15</sup> It also seeks to conceptualise the transgressive-normative paradox of affective, carnivalesque experience, as a foundation for further study. The subsequent historiography of this chapter 'locates' this study of carnival in the south west UK within a specific set of geographical, historical and socio-cultural contexts. These include historical geographies of late 19<sup>th</sup> and early 20<sup>th</sup> century pageants; carnival traditions in the fieldwork area that are linked to Guy Fawkes Night; the historic development of British seaside resorts, and traditions of processional civic philanthropy.

**Chapter Two** also asserts the influence of diasporic Caribbean carnival on south west processional culture within discourses of state-sponsored multiculturalism. The chapter charts the democratisation of both Caribbean carnival and radical, countercultural processional practices developed by the post-1968 UK 'alternative theatre' movement, and their assimilation into preferred vocabularies for state-sponsored carnival development. Finally, it introduces the reader to the history of cultural policy development with regard to carnival and procession in the UK, locating policy within contested discourses of creative economy, symbolic place-making and the role of spectacular processional performance within recruitments to notions of local, regional and national identity.

**Chapter Three** outlines the mixed methodology which emerged as I engaged with the carnivalists of the fieldwork area, a methodology which might itself be described as 'carnavalesque'. The chapter describes my practical application of methods including performance-as-research, reflexive writing, semi-structured interview, ethnographic participant observation, policy analysis and primary archival research. The chapter discusses rationales for the use of qualitative

---

<sup>15</sup> Bakhtin, 1984.

research methods, and links these to the ethics of culturally-democratic participatory 'community arts' practice, namely: that the 'situated' or 'local' knowledges of subjects (Haraway, 1988; Geertz, 1983) should be the primary focus of research. The chapter outlines the methodology of personal encounter and networking that led me into extended periods of active participation alongside vernacular and professional carnivalists. Thus, it describes the initial offer that Performance Studies makes to Cultural Geography in this thesis, in terms of developing an alternative, performative research praxis which challenges 'traditional' methods of scholarship. The chapter concludes by outlining my practical methods of data recording and inscription, the methods by which I processed fieldnotes and conducted data analysis and the ethical safeguards applied within this research in the interest of participants.

**Chapter Four** considers the affective carnivalesque experience as the foundation of the 'liminal performativity' of carnival, and charts people's expressions of the 'energy', 'transformation', 'transgression', 'ritual' and 'social drama' of carnival and street procession. It describes people's immersion in the temporal and spatial structures of carnival, their inversions of everyday social experience and their embodied use of spectacular amplifications of light, colour, size, texture, sound and behaviour to foster individual agencies of festive transformation. This chapter constitutes a further offer from Performance Studies to Cultural Geography by way of its association of carnivalesque performance with the affective 'event' as described in Non Representational Theory. Its attempt to inscribe carnivalesque experience as an expression of 'liminal performativity' highlights the relevance of the study of carnival to the 'performance turn' in Cultural Geography (Anderson & Harrison, 2010: 9). The chapter suggests that this liminal performativity is essential to the 'ideological

transaction' between carnival performers and audience that creates a 'social constituency' (Kershaw 1992:19) and permits the symbolic (de-) construction of identity, community and place (Cohen, 1985; Smith, 2009). The chapter highlights the tension between normative and transgressive tendencies within this process. The inscription it presents of *Battle for the Winds* permits a view of the liminal carnivalesque as an affective instrumentality which bound its participants in a ritual of shared 'local', 'regional', 'national' and 'international' experience and place-identity.

**Chapter Five** presents ethnographic data that facilitates a view of carnival as a festive enactment of place and identity. The chapter reviews critical conceptualisations of 'place' (Harvey, 1996; Massey, 1997) as frameworks for an analysis of how these carnival ethnographies reflect the 'cultural politics' of places. It presents ethnographic inscriptions of the different 'versions' of place which were expressed during *Battle for the Winds* and at Seaton and Weymouth town carnivals during 2012. In its analysis of *Battle for the Winds*, the chapter considers how these expressions reflected institutional processes of place-making (Harvey, 1996), geared to the global performance of a preferred 'place identity' for the South West UK during the 2012 Olympiad. The chapter looks in detail at the symbolic geographies presented through *Battle for the Winds*, and considers place as a contested 'symbolic construction' within the wider carnival culture of the fieldwork area (Cohen, 1985). This further analysis is facilitated through discussion of the 'Weymouth Carnival Conflict' narrative, which highlights the subjugation of vernacular carnival practice by institutional efforts to re-construct the cultural place identity of the town in the run-up to the Olympics. By way of contrast, and as a challenge to orthodox thinking in professional carnival arts contexts, the chapter encourages a re-consideration

of vernacular town and 'circuit' carnivals. It re-frames them as sites which produce symbolic constructions akin to Massey's progressive, 'global sense of place' (Massey, 1997: 317) by virtue of their participatory structures and their popular cultural aesthetics. Vernacular carnival emerges from this critique as a processual, inter-subjective expression of symbolic links between people and their wider world, set within a particular location. 'Place' is thus conceptualised as a highly 'carnavalesque' notion, and analysed through an ethnographic narrative of Seaton Carnival Day. The warning of this chapter is that institutional processes of place-making through carnival are influenced by a neo-liberal agenda which is based on inter-place competition and preferred notions of society, art, creativity and culture. The chapter argues that the effect of this tendency is to subjugate vernacular carnival practices that might contest these aesthetic values and challenge these preferred notions of place. Finally, the chapter suggests that an alternative to this polarising process lies in the offer that the concept of free-expressive, culturally democratic carnival makes to society, when expressed as a simultaneity of multiple expressions with regard to place and identity in public space.

**Chapter Six** considers carnivalists' expressed notions of 'community' and their encounters with the carnivalesque experience of 'singular-plurality' (Nancy, 1991:29). The chapter presents ethnographic data which suggests that concepts of 'carnival' and 'community' symbolise similar meanings and moral values: among them reciprocity, tolerance, trust and self-sacrifice (Smith, MK, 2001). The chapter thus considers how community is imagined and identified by people through their carnival symbolism and practice. It describes how professional and vernacular carnivalists conceptualise community in terms of 'boundary, inclusion and exclusion'; 'communion, togetherness and attachment';

within 'communities of practice' and as a 'moral value'. The chapter suggests that individual agency within the 'symbolic construction of community' (Cohen, 1985: 15) is an important feature of the cultural democracy of vernacular carnival practice, and that this insight has significant implications with regard to the contrasting democratisation of culture within professionalised carnival arts. Finally, the chapter asserts the potential of carnival as a symbolisation of a progressive, radical sense of community, one which simultaneously enacts a multiplicity of identities in public space. It further suggests that carnival's culturally democratic potential as a 'container' for a progressive sense of community might allow for the decentralisation of institutional preoccupations with aesthetic form and offer an opportunity for the more equitable distribution of social and cultural capital between actors within its cultural practice.

**Chapter Seven** consolidates this understanding by way of reflection upon the value distinctions encountered in these ethnographies between notions of the 'professional' and 'non-professional' carnivalist; between 'art' and 'non-art', and between 'vernacular' and 'non-vernacular' carnival creativities. This analysis supports a growing alternative discourse that seeks to 'rethink the cultural economy' (Edensor *et al*, 2010). It considers the effect that state-funded cultural performance has on the vernacular practice of carnival, and reflects the diminishing public space which is now available to people for spontaneous, 'non-productive' festivity in the UK. Interviews with arts professionals serve to unpack the hierarchical discourse of 'art' and 'creative economy' related to state-funded carnival: a discourse which tends to subjugate vernacular carnival and denigrate its popular, commercial, cultural aesthetic. By way of contrast, this chapter also presents ethnographies which explore the aesthetics and participatory structures of vernacular carnival practice and offer a hearing for

the marginalised voices of vernacular carnivalists. The chapter further asserts the progressive function of vernacular carnival as a culturally-democratic process that produces qualitative outcomes of conviviality and cultural agency. Finally, the chapter re-imagines progressive structures of public engagement through culture that support 'vernacular' practice alongside the instrumentalities of arts-development and public policies of place.



Fig 7 *Like a Fish Needs a Bicycle*: Walking entrant, Weymouth Carnival, 2012.

## Chapter Two.

### Carnival, procession and the carnivalesque: contexts and discourses:

#### 2:1 What is carnival?

*It is an amazing event with a fantastic atmosphere. Nobody in the town misses the carnival!*

(Katie, Float participant, Carnival Day, Weymouth, 15.8.12)

*These arts are essential arts – part of what it means to be human. Humans are processional creatures.*

(Rob, Arts Professional, 13.10.10)

*On the day itself, everybody is there, smiling, people are happy, they are enjoying the day out and we are making money for charity. There is my driving force, really. It is a simple answer to what could be a really big question.*

(Archie, Town Carnival Committee member, Weymouth, 2.11.11)

*It means I have glitter in my blood!*

(Eve, Arts Professional, 23.9.11)

The aim of this chapter is to consider how carnival is conceptualized, constructed and performed in the fieldwork area, and to reflect upon 'carnival' itself as the primary contested term in this study. The term 'carnival' has its origins in 16<sup>th</sup> century Italy as *carnevale*, the 'farewell to flesh' that precedes the Christian abstinence of Lent and prefigures Christ's transcendence of the physical body (Koerner, 2004: 226). However, as this chapter seeks to establish, the wider notion of carnival encompasses a range of cultural performance practices and modes of symbolic, festive encounter around the world, and reflects a dynamic inter-subjectivity of cultural practice which itself

constitutes the carnivalesque experience. The aim of this chapter, then, is also to establish a set of historical, theoretical and discursive frameworks for our understanding of carnival practice in the three fieldwork contexts of Seaton Town Carnival, Weymouth Town Carnival and *Cartwheelin' / Battle For The Winds*.

In this chapter I explore the influence of diasporic Caribbean processional performance in the fieldwork area within discourses of state-sponsored multiculturalism. I consider the radical traditions of countercultural, theatrical street procession and the extent to which they have been assimilated into mainstream carnival development practice. Further, I consider carnivals linked to tourism and the historic development of British seaside towns, and witness illuminated night parades which reflect traditions of winter ritual, religious identity and civic philanthropy. The chapter also seeks to introduce the reader to the contested discourses of symbolic place-making, to the politics of festivity, to the affective experience of the carnivalesque, and to the role of processional street performance and spectacle within ideological recruitments to notions of local, regional and national identity. This combination of conceptual analysis, literature review and primary historical research allows us to view carnival as a cultural performance, organised within controlled conditions, which is enacted in processional modes in civic landscapes, creating public, symbolic, spatial dramas of power, identity and place (Jackson, 1992).

Within its diverse performance vocabularies, carnival features music, dancing, feasting, parades, games of chance, festive transformation, the display and procession of sacred or significant objects and a symbolic inversion of everyday hierarchies. It is a bounded, temporal period of license and festive release. In the European medieval tradition, carnival represents the pre-Lenten excess that

heralded Christian fasting (Bakhtin, 1984; Gardiner, 1993; Russo, 1986). In the plantation cultures of the Caribbean, carnival found expression in the period of celebration which developed as Canboulay and Mardi Gras, following the revolutionary emancipation of African slaves (Roach, 1993; Berleant-Schiller, 1991; Campbell, 1988; Jackson, 1988; Juneja, 1988). In all its forms, carnival constitutes a festive empowerment of people and a contestation of the symbolic construction of community (Cohen, 1985), producing energies which contest the 'meaning' that turns 'space' into 'place' (Poole, 2009; Cresswell, 2004: 12).

## **2:2 The carnivalesque experience:**

Central to this thesis is the notion, drawn from the work of Mikhail Bakhtin (1984), that carnival is a force for change which contests the social, political, symbolic and moral status quo. As Holloway & Kneale (2000: 71) explain, Bakhtin views carnival as 'open-endedness and becoming', an expression which is present within, but by no means limited to, acts of festivity, revelry, riot and procession. Further, as Stallybrass and White have suggested (1986:6), Bakhtin also presents carnival as a wider cultural attitude; as a 'cultural analytic'; as a speech genre, as a literary mode, and as a way of seeing the world. For Bakhtin, the carnival attitude, constantly at play as the Other to authority, represents an outright challenge to fixed structures of social organisation and hegemonic, symbolic monologues of place and identity (Bakhtin, 1984b:6). Bakhtin conceptualises carnival as a force that encourages the 'suspension of all hierarchical rank, privileges, norms, and prohibitions' (Holloway & Kneale, 2000: 80). Carnival opens society and space to dialogic reinterpretation and is particularly powerful during certain festive temporalities in the seasonal calendar.

Importantly, Bakhtin also locates acts of carnivalesque transgression within a 'grotesque realism' that centres on the material body, a body that celebrates its orifices, its fertilities, excretions, excesses and sexualities. Such are the Bakhtinian vocabularies of carnivalesque transformation: the amplification of the body's affinity to nature, growth, fertility and the animal world (Gardiner, 1993) in a manner which serves to 'establish a unity between the people, setting the stage for freer social relations' (Holloway & Kneale, 2000: 80). Carnival is thus a setting for 'communitas' as Turner sees it (1982, 44-48): a 'flash of lucid, mutual understanding on the existential level'. Further, this 'communitas' takes place in public space and within a commonly understood language or 'Billingsgate' derived from 'the markets, streets, and public spaces of the people' (Holloway & Kneale, 2000: 80). This notion of Billingsgate is particularly useful when considering the value of the tropes of popular culture within the aesthetic of contemporary, vernacular carnival practice.

For Bakhtin, then, carnival is an alterity wherein 'the exalted and the lowly, the sacred and profane are levelled and are all drawn into the same dance' (1984b: 160). As Holloway and Kneale explain:

... It is this sense of openness and unity which creates Carnival's progressive force...this speech genre has the potential to rewrite language and social space.

(2000: 81)

Gardiner further outlines the Bakhtinian contest between these forces of normative order and progressive change, describing a medieval world view or 'agelastic culture' which 'projects carnival as its Other, as an inverted mirror-image' (Gardiner, 1993: 769). For Gardiner, as for Bakhtin, a clear distinction exists between official, formal festivity which is 'designed to legitimate the existing social hierarchy and the system of taboos and prohibitions that

reinforce[s] it', and the 'popular desire for progressive social change' which is expressed through carnival festivity:

It is Bakhtin's position that the folk-festive mentalité encapsulated a very different conception of the cosmos... the forces of flux, change, and difference that [lie] at the very heart of the social and natural worlds... a ceaseless battle between the forces of stasis and fixity on the one hand, and movement, change, and creativity on the other.

(Gardiner, 1993: 769)

Within this thesis, I refer to these 'forces of flux, change and difference', and to the 'riotous' juxtaposition of behaviours and symbolism within carnival practice, by using the term 'carnavalesque'. For Bakhtin, (1984) the term refers to the 'ritual laughter' of transgressive social behaviour which embodies ritual, festival practice and folk culture, in opposition to 'official' ideology. The term also refers to a mode of becoming in which we are open to 'movement, change and creativity,' as expressed by Gardiner (1993, above). For Julia Kristeva, this aspect of carnivalesque experience reflects the 'split speech act', a blurring of the line between performer and audience in which 'the actor and the crowd are each in turn simultaneously subject and addressee of discourse' (Kristeva, 1980: 46).

The notion of the 'carnavalesque' offers us an opportunity to link progressive theoretical discourses of 'place' from within Cultural Geography (Massey, 1997; Lippard, 1997) with the notion of performativity as expressed within Performance Studies. For many Performance Studies theorists, the inter-subjectivity of the carnivalesque experience exists within the liminal performativity of transformational ritual. In this context, carnival is seen as a rhizomatic encounter between multiple subjectivities of practice, belief, display, place and identity (Turner, 1969; Van Gennep, 1960; Schechner, 2003; Deleuze & Guattari, 1987). Likewise, the symbolic politics of the carnivalesque are

expressed by Smith as being *nigredo* (2009: 15), where *nigredo* is the shifting counter-position to normative instrumentalities of public drama. Later in this chapter I present a review of historical geographies of pageants and parades. This review suggests that their normative instrumentalities involve what Smith (2009) refers to as the 'manufacture' of ideological symbolism, its 'absorption' and 'simulation' by processional performers and their subsequent 'transformation' by it into a social constituency. In geographical terms, normative identity is thus asserted through processional performance, and 'space' is transformed into a particular version of 'place'. Carnival, therefore, carries a distinct performativity as an exercise in place-making.

By contrast, Smith identifies the carnivalesque influence within street procession as a process of 'deconstruction, improvisation, [and] re-making' with regard to this place-symbolism (2009: 15). He locates the carnivalesque within the active-reactive energy of the crowd, and within the 'pre-drama' stage of an event: in 'the contested organisation of a public display' (2009: 20). Smith's analysis highlights the liminal performativity of carnivalesque experience. For Smith, these ideological sites contain a chaotic mix of dynamic elements which are in tension with the 'tendency to recruit symbols and rituals to the level of ideological representation' (2009: 17). Created in part by the 'volatility of motion,' generated by the procession, the *nigredo* is the point of separation between the intrinsic dramatic intensity of the event and its organisationally professed meaning; a place variable in time and space where both conditions exist and are deconstructed, improvised and re-made through the creative actions of participants. During carnival, then, notions of place and identity become ephemeral, contested and disrupted, allowing for a view of place as

'locus' rather than 'location' (Massey, 1997); as a multiplicity, rather than a singularity, of meaning.

A further link between the discourses of Cultural Geography and Performance Studies with regard to carnival lies in the conceptual similarity between carnivalesque experience and the 'event' as described within Non-Representational Theory (Caputo, 2007; Anderson & Harrison, 2010). Smith's concept of the *nigredo* echoes Bakhtin's view of the carnivalesque moment as an 'event of being'; an 'unending self-activity, wherein the 'givenness' of the external world is transformed by an on-going project of meaning-creation' (Gardiner, 1993: 770). Gardiner summarises 'carnival attitude' as: 'an intense awareness of the unfinalized, open-ended qualities of the world, of the cycles of birth and death, regeneration and renewal that mark the cosmos as a whole'. The conceptual affinity between the performative notion of the carnivalesque experience and the 'event' as a theoretical element within NRT is clear, as Anderson & Harrison suggest when they assert that:

If we are caught within a world of becomings, where events can be found everywhere, then any ordering is always volatile. This is the basic insight at the heart of thinking with the event.

(Anderson & Harrison, 2010:21)

These Bakhtinian affects are fundamental to the creative vocabularies of much of the radical, carnivalesque, processional performance that emerged from the alternative theatre scene in the UK and USA post-1968. This was an expression of carnival which Stallybrass and White recognize as being more than a 'ritual feature of European culture,' and, rather: 'a mode of understanding, a positivity, a cultural analytic' (1986:6). Carnival and the carnivalesque may also, therefore, encompass elements of ritual and theatrical performance in landscape or in the street: 'artistic' performances which are designed to effect catharsis and

transformation and the alteration of our perception of everyday spaces (Artaud, 1938; Kershaw, 1992; Wilkie 2002a/b; Mason, 1992; Hall, 2002).

In summary, 'carnival' is an instrumental, festive cultural practice, performed in public space, which finds expression through music, dancing, feasting, and processional display. The processional, symbolic energy of Carnival may operate both to re-assert and to contest our fundamental notions of space, place, social order and identity. Within the carnivalesque, we encounter the possibility of change and renewal, of symbolic birth, death and rebirth, in a manner which asserts the dynamic creativity of existence and challenges the fixed structures of society. Paradoxically, the temporary catharsis of carnivalesque experience may also operate to dissipate pressure for change and re-assert the status-quo in a manner that is attractive to those seeking to maintain a fixed social order. As a result, carnival can be tuned to the service of hegemony. Likewise, processional display which overtly challenges carnivalesque social expression by presenting symbols of restraint, order and control is a powerful tool for the representation of religious and social 'virtue' and for the recruitment of participants and audience alike to certain ideological constituencies and preferred notions of heritage. In short, we are here concerned with a continual struggle between freedom and restraint: with the *'Battle Between Carnival and Lent'*.<sup>16</sup>

### **2:3: Geographies of Processional Culture in the UK:**

This thesis seeks to position the vernacular carnival practices of the South West UK and the professionalised artist-led Olympic carnival of *Battle for the Winds* within a broader set of relatively overlooked historical geographies of

---

<sup>16</sup> Pieter Brueghel (1559) Kunsthistorisches Museum, Vienna.

processional culture in the British Isles. These geographies include a range of practices, from marches geared to the display of religious, political or ethnic identity (Jarman, 1998; O'Leary, 2008; Cottrell, 1992; Harvey DC *et al*, 2007; Weissengruber, 1997), to trades processions, historical pageants and philanthropic civic parades (Goheen, 1990; Woods, 1999; Ryan, D, 2007; Ryan M, 1989; Mac Giolla Choille, 1975; Gunn 2000; Lloyd, 2002). They include seasonal festivities linked to folk-culture (Howison and Bentley 1960; Thompson, 1992), protest marches and carnivalesque demonstrations (Perry, 1967; Turnbull, 1973; Rootes & Saunders, 2007; Harvey, 1998; Reiss, 2005) and the contemporary use of procession and carnival within socially-engaged participatory arts practice, such as Jeremy Deller's *Procession* (2009) (Edensor, 2010; De Groot, 2012).

Later in this chapter, this thesis contributes to this under-developed area of geographical scholarship by focusing on the key cultural influences which have shaped the processional vocabularies of the case studies in question, namely the illuminated 'Guy Fawkes' circuit carnival of Seaton, the carnivalised philanthropic procession of the seaside resort of Weymouth and the multicultural, arts-led approaches of *Battle for the Winds*.

It is beyond the purview of this thesis to consider the broader historical geographies of UK processional culture in fine detail, but it is important at this point to consider some key features with a view to establishing historical context and encouraging further academic study.

### **2.3:1: UK Processional Culture: A Brief Historiography.**

Ritual, processional movement has played an enduring role in the British Isles as a performative mode through which identity, belief and social organisation are made visible in relation to landscape. Bender and Pearson identify the Neolithic landscape of Stonehenge as among the oldest sites of ritual, processional performance in Britain. The archaeological record of Stonehenge suggests a symbolic, funerary, processional route which links the stones with the nearby henge at Durrington Walls, via the banks of the nearby River Avon. With its wide avenues, restricted views, revelatory vistas and areas of gender-specific participation, the processional landscape of Stonehenge provides some of the earliest evidence of the hierarchies of participation and of the spatial controls which are a consistent feature of carnivals, rituals and parades (Bender, 1992; Pearson MP *et al*, 2006).

In the medieval period, trades-based processional pageant wagons featuring religious mystery plays set the foundations of early theatre in British cathedral towns during the festivals of Corpus Christi (Craig, 1914; Woolf, 1972; Prosser, 1961; Weissengruber, 1997; Davies and Pugh, 2011). While these theatrical processions served in large part to reinforce liturgical teaching and maintain religious and social order as examples of the Bahktinian 'official feast', Weissengruber in particular argues that these events also represented a 'symbolic struggle in public space' (1997: 117) in the manner of carnivalesque social drama. Likewise, Thompson's description of the 'English *charivari*' or 'Rough Music' processional tradition in Britain which endured until the nineteenth century evokes cacophonous theatricalised enactments of vigilante justice, effigy burning and common-law punishment which lay firmly outside official regulation. Thompson further describes Rough Music as a form of processional 'street theatre' and as a form of 'anti-procession' to the public

parades of Church and State, wherein: 'horsemen drummers, lantern-carriers, effigies in carts, etc. mock, in a kind of conscious antiphony, the ceremonial of the processions of state, of law, of civic ceremonial, of the guild, and of the church' (Thompson, 1992: 6). Similarly, the 17<sup>th</sup> century Guy Fawkes processional tradition, described later in this chapter, endures to this day within an active tension between 'official' and 'unofficial' celebration; between controlled expressions of religious and national identity and the explosive, secular, festive use of gunpowder.

The eighteenth and nineteenth century saw a rapid development of processional culture in Northern Britain in particular, through the hybridisation of agricultural and industrial festivity with political action and assertions of social and diasporic identity. Howison and Bentley (1960: 43) describe the rushcart and morris dancing processions of Lancashire, for example, as a 'favourite form of celebration' during this period. Northern processional celebrations also included Wakes Week summer holiday parades during mill and factory maintenance closures. Other popular processional festivities at the time included Sunday School Whit Walks, processions to celebrate significant civic appointments and Acts of Parliament, and lifeboat and cycle parades.

Cottrell (1992) and Marston (1988) also describe a flowering of diasporic identity parades during this period, particularly among Irish communities in America celebrating St Patrick's Day. Jarman explains (1998: 1415) how parading 'as a political display, as a show of strength, or simply as a social occasion' has been an active Irish tradition since the fifteenth century. The formation of the Orange Order in Ulster in 1795 featured the establishment of annual parades in memory of the Battle of the Boyne in 1690. These processions, and their oppositional Catholic counterparts, remain a source of conflict in Northern

Ireland, as rival communities stage parades 'as markers of collective identity and as a means of claiming territory' (Jarman, 1998: 1415).

Processional activity in Britain took on a distinctly political character from the nineteenth century onwards as pressure grew for universal suffrage and industrial and social reform. Weinbren (2006: 167), for example, describes the symbolic discourse of 'mutuality, loyalty, mythology, history, trades, locality, empire, and the Bible' which was displayed on the parade banners of nineteenth-century friendly societies. Dodd (2008) Borda (2009) and Sheridan (1913) identify procession and parade as key strategies employed by the Edwardian Women's Suffrage Movement in Britain and America, while Reiss (2005) asserts that the National League of the Blind pioneered the use of parade as social protest in Britain after the Great War, establishing a processional tradition which inspired the world-famous Jarrow 'Crusade' of 1936 (Perry, 1967) and the 'Hunger Marches' of the Communist-dominated National Unemployed Workers' Movement (Turnbull, 1973). For Reiss (2005: 133), the inter-war years were 'the heyday of the protest march in Great Britain [when] thousands of men and women took to the streets... to protest against their unemployment and to demand work, financial support and decent treatment by the authorities'. More recently, in 2003, more than a million people marched through London in a carnivalesque procession against the war in Iraq. Similarly, the Gay Pride, Make Poverty History, Stop Climate Chaos and Occupy movements have all adopted processional, carnivalesque occupation of significant areas of public space as a primary tactic for political activism (Browne, 2008; Rootes & Saunders, 2007).

The development of historical pageants in the early 20<sup>th</sup> century (Ryan, 2007; Woods, 1999; Marston, 1988) is discussed in detail later in this chapter (see

section 2:3:2). Pageants of this sort began the 'theatricalisation' of UK processional culture through promenade performance, a tradition which was later subverted by the alternative theatre movement of the 1960s-1990s (see section 2:5). Post-war Commonwealth migration led to multicultural influences on British carnival and procession, such as South Asian Mela and Caribbean carnival. Participatory arts approaches to carnival and procession became mainstream features of cultural policy from the mid-1990s onwards, as vocabularies for neo-liberal, post-industrial urban regeneration and within cultural programmes of social inclusion that reflected the political communitarianism of New Labour (see section 2:6).

Section 2:5 of this chapter describes the influence of alternative theatre practice on UK processional culture post 1960, an approach which ultimately led to the appearance of 'fine art' approaches to procession. In 1990, artist Jeremy Deller was commissioned by Manchester International Festival to make a public artwork, and chose carnival as a means of assembling 'a procession of the city's people and their activities'<sup>17</sup>. The resulting artwork, entitled *Procession*, sought to subvert and reframe the conventions of civic parades by offering festive public space to marginalised groups such as the homeless and through a popular focus on the city's musical and ethnic subcultures. It sought to affirm the value of popular, contemporary vernacular culture and to encompass 'social memory, folk art, re-enactment, situationist polemic and a dedicated interest in art as a social form of political engagement' (De Groot, 2012: 587). Deller's work established the practices of carnival as an artistic method by which, as Edensor (2010:76) asserts, the 'identity' of a city may be 'refracted through an abundance of marginalised, pop-cultural, eccentric and historical themes,

---

<sup>17</sup> [http://www.jeremydeller.org/Procession/Procession\\_Video.php](http://www.jeremydeller.org/Procession/Procession_Video.php), accessed 3.9.14.

performed by an array of walking and mechanised participants'. This event, along with developments in street theatre discussed later in this chapter (see sections 2:5 and 2:6) has had a significant influence on the contemporary practice of state-funded, artist-led carnival and procession in the UK.

Another significant influence on contemporary processional culture has been the development of Caribbean carnival practice in the UK as a result of postwar Commonwealth migration. Since 1950, Caribbean carnival in the UK has developed over time from a cultural politics of diasporic racial identity to a commercialised, state-funded model of multicultural arts practice. This history reflects the extent to which attempts have been made to assimilate its forms and structures into a mainstream, state-sponsored cultural vocabulary for economic regeneration and place-making, and for the construction of multicultural symbolic and social identities at a local, national and international scale. Within this trajectory, the performance vocabularies of Caribbean (and South American) carnival have had a major influence on the preferred style of many Arts Council-funded carnival development programmes that are co-sponsored by local authorities and arts organisations, sometimes in ways which have contested alternative, local vocabularies within established street processions.<sup>18</sup>

Nurse (1999) Jackson (1992) and Cohen (1980; 1982) chart the general history of Caribbean carnival in the UK through a focus on the iconic Notting Hill Carnival, an event which has inspired more than 30 'satellite' multi-ethnic carnivals nationwide which share its general form and vocabulary (Nurse, 1999: 674). The most influential of these with regard to the development of carnival vocabularies in the South West UK is St Pauls Carnival in Bristol. Nurse further

---

<sup>18</sup> See Chapter 5 for an example of this contestation in Weymouth, Dorset, 2008-9.

recounts how UK-Caribbean carnivals were quickly identified as major tourist attractions which generated large amounts of money and offered opportunities for commercial exploitation by local authorities and corporate interests (Nurse, 1999: 667). Ampka describes how diasporic Caribbean carnivals in other parts of the world have experienced similar attention from state and corporate entities, all keen to exploit their economic potential and their symbolism with regard to normative versions of globalised identity (Ampka, 1993: 6).

Caribbean carnival arts education offered the perfect site through which local authorities and arts organisations could articulate notions of cultural participation and progressive multiculturalism (Nurse, 1999: 675; Dabydeen, 1988:40). Partly in recognition of this integrative function, UK cultural policy shifted through the 1990s towards recognition of the role of Caribbean carnival and street arts in multiculturalism (See section 2:6), within economic regeneration and as a framework for arts participation and the delivery of wider social policy. As a result, the creative vocabularies of Caribbean and South American carnival (steel band, samba, mas, sound systems and walking participants in elaborate costumes and head-dresses) were lined up alongside the carnivalesque practices of alternative theatre (fire, street bands, large scale animated puppets, lanterns and human-powered vehicles) as the preferred vocabularies of carnival development programmes. The mission statement of the UK Centre for Carnival Arts (UKCCA), for example, which emerged from the Luton Carnival Arts Development Trust in 1998, clearly articulates this confluence of social, economic and cultural policy, and multiculturalism within carnival development, and brings us to the present day with regard to the instrumentalisation of processional activity in the UK as a tool of social, cultural and economic policy:

The leading agency for carnival in all its forms... [working] from a grass roots to strategic level complementing and supporting agendas for neighbourhood renewal and regeneration, tourism development, arts in education, business development and community cohesion...The first of its kind, the UK Centre for Carnival Arts in Luton is the UK's first centre purpose-built for the Carnival Arts, providing space for carnival creation, training, teaching, circus, street arts, music, dance and as the hub of activity for Luton's annual carnival in May. UKCCA, believes that participation in and enjoyment of the Carnival Arts can significantly enhance racial harmony, improve the quality of life, build a confident local cultural identity, improve educational attainment and tackle social exclusion. It aimed to achieve this mission by building the UK Centre for Carnival Arts providing focus for Carnival Arts Development, including addressing gaps in the funding provision for black and diverse organisations in the East of England. The Centre was built to provide facilities for an area of the arts not previously catered for in the UK. As a national centre, UKCCA will position UK carnival as best practice alongside other international carnival events such as Rio, Trinidad, New Orleans and Italy.

<http://www.carnivalarts.org.uk/Aboutus/Background.aspx>, Accessed 31.7.13

### **2:3:2: Pageants and parades:**

Historical geographies of the pageants and parades of late 19th and early 20th century Britain offer us a further understanding of the power-relations, instrumentalism and politics of parades and civic processions (Woods, 1999; Ryan, 2007; Harvey DC et al, 2007). Ryan places pageant-master Frank Lascelles (1841-1920) at the leading edge of a performance tradition prevalent in Britain from 1905 onwards, which 'constructed 'popular memory,' relying on visual spectacle rather than the spoken word'(Ryan, 2007: 63). This tradition, developing the work of Napoleon Parker (1852-1944) was 'dependent upon the idea of an 'authentic' place with memories that could be reconstructed in its landscape' (*ibid*). Historical geographies of the 'pageantitis' which swept Britain and America in the early 20th Century thus offer insights into the role of processional ritual and performance in the establishment and maintenance of preferred, heritage-based notions of place and social identity.

Woods (1999), for example, examines the process by which a Parkerian processional civic pageant was enacted in Taunton in 1928 in order to achieve the socio-political intentions of the local elite. His description highlights the

processes of symbolic construction with regard to place and history that were active within this cultural performance, and as such is worthy of detailed further reflection here. Woods describes how the Pageant opened on 26 June, 1928, with a civic procession through 'streets decorated with flags and streamers and shop-window displays' to a large open site dedicated to the main performance (1999:61). There followed a play, set on Midsummer Night and drawing on Arthurian legend, in which the Lady of the Lake appeared as 'the Spirit of their Countryside', in order to resurrect King Arthur and unite the Britons for an epic battle in 'defence of country, custom, law, and freedom', told through six historical episodes. These reconstructions dramatised the foundation of Taunton itself, a visit by the Archbishop of Canterbury in the 13<sup>th</sup> century, the 1645 siege of Taunton during the Civil War and the defeat of the Monmouth Rebellion of 1685, respectively. The pageant closed with an epilogue which announced the success of the people's dutiful efforts to uphold their 'British' values. It culminated in a ritual in which members of the audience were recruited to join the performers as part of the final tableau and in the communal singing of the hymn *Jerusalem*.

Woods thus identifies ritual, spectacle and carnival as vocabularies which were employed as part of four distinct strategies by which these civic elites sought to maintain power, namely:

The display of members as a privileged social group; the occupation of symbolically significant space; the demonstration of local power and autonomy [and] the legitimisation of the leadership position of the elite among the wider populace.

(Woods, 1999: 58).



Fig 8 Frontispiece, Taunton Pageant pamphlet depicting the “presentation of Bible, sword and colours to the Duke of Monmouth by the fair maids of Taunton Deane, June 1685”.

Woods defines the spectacle of the Taunton Pageant in terms of ‘a ‘moral message’ performed to an audience through text and action’. For Woods, the ritualistic elements of this event lay in the recruitment of local people, which ‘[blurred] the boundary between performers and spectators’. These events often included a religious service and a civic procession, in which participants ‘act[ed] out certain symbolic roles’ and which emphasised ‘the hierarchy within local society by placing the elite on public display’ (Woods, 1999: 58). Woods also draws on Lukes (1997) in defining ritual cultural performances as instructive, didactic and iterative activities; controlled by cultural and political elites in order to re-affirm social and place identities and to legitimise socio-cultural practice. Ritual processions, then, with their carefully selected spectacle of a mobile visual imagery that occupies symbolic civic space, may be seen as an enactment of social power relationships and as a means by which social constituencies are expressed and place-identities are constructed and made visible.

Further, Woods dissects the carnivalesque aspect of the public drama and argues that use of a carnivalesque vocabulary creates 'potential for the transgression and subversion of the intended aims' of a procession (Woods, 1999: 58). This potential is focused on the existence of differential readings of the presented symbolism of the event and of the social representations embodied in the performance. This concept of differential readings within carnival is a key notion in terms of the identification of the various levels on which a public drama may operate. It also pertains to the loci of free-expressive and instrumental elements within carnival and processional performance. Klein (1992) and Marston (1988) support the view that the dynamics of public dramas, such as pageants, enact and reflect differential readings within their audiences, such that the representations conveyed 'may be simultaneously both an act of affirmation and an act of resistance to different audiences' (Woods, 1999: 58).<sup>19</sup> Such considerations also encourage us to turn our attention to the audience as an important site within public dramas of identity and place. Further, Woods asserts the important influence of wider social and political contexts on the performance of processions, and their role as reactionary, place-based, identity-framing activities, driven in part by outside pressures. In Taunton in 1928, this related to the town's position in the political hierarchy of the county and the perceived threat of socialism. In 2012, as this research demonstrates, the Olympics and the Diamond Jubilee of Queen Elizabeth II exerted similar cultural pressure on the form and content of procession.

Pageants and parades such as these, therefore, seek to contest the popular, carnivalesque tendency in society which prefigures social change, by

---

<sup>19</sup> See p229 for a comment from a Cornish performer in *Battle for the Winds* with regard to this.

presenting a particular symbolic order for public consumption and by recruiting the public to its performance. Harvey *et al* (2007) and Marston (1988) offer further insight into how particular groups have historically used processional activity to project idealised cultural identities into public space in order to gain social capital and recruit new membership. These scholars describe the tea treats and Sunday School parades of nineteenth century Cornish Methodists as just such a 'constituency-forming practice.' For them, annual processions of this type allow social groups to establish a visible identity which is anchored in iterative cultural performance. Thus, over time, processions such as these create a 'construction of history' which allows certain groups to take their place in an agreed 'shared past' and to develop influence over the organization of the present and future social identities within a community:

...the public performance of rituals enables collectives to affirm what might otherwise be an ambiguous social existence. In constructing histories and imagined futures, therefore, parades represent such ambiguities of whatever kind within a narrative that provides acceptable resolutions to those seeking to legitimate their power to organise collectives and those who subject themselves within a constituency.

(Harvey, DC *et al*, 2007:12)

For the Methodists, this processional practice was also an attempt to 'perform' idealized religious, moral and ethical behaviours as an exercise in recruitment and as a means of legitimising their own social position. Parades such as these used spectacle to project the virtues of Methodism into public space for public consumption and to present, as Harvey *et al* (2007: 30) point out: 'connotations of order, continence, propriety, sobriety, seemliness and rectitude, which ensured, if not the patronage of the ruling elite, then at least their acquiescence':

For many historians of recreation, the nineteenth century was marked by the desire of the ruling classes to reform popular culture in order to achieve social and industrial discipline, and within the context of pagan carnival and religious revival,

Methodist tea treats operated as a more rational and respectable appeal to hearts and minds. As a counterpoint to the perceived chaotic use of public space evidenced by carnivals, the Methodist tea treat and parade were an orderly use of space that emphasised bodily restraint and continence.

(Harvey, DC *et al*, 2007: 19)

In brief summary, it may be seen from these studies that procession, pageant and spectacle may operate as demonstrations of the power of social groups to organize and claim public space, to project and exercise certain symbolic identities, and to establish 'histories' of social organization through iterative practice. Studies such as these also offer a useful conceptual framework for the study of modern equivalents within this thesis, such as the *Cartwheelin'* and *Battle for the Winds* performances within the 2012 Cultural Olympiad. Historical geographies of the pageants and parades of late 19th and early 20th century Britain offer an understanding of the power-relations, instrumentalism and politics of parades and civic processions. The development of pageants such as these in the south west UK: at Taunton in Somerset, and Sherbourne in Dorset, in particular, also constitutes a significant performance tradition within the processional culture of the fieldwork area, as I shall explore in the next section of this chapter.

#### **2: 4 Carnivals in the South West UK: Gunpowder, Charity and the Seaside:**

As the following sections describe in more detail, this thesis asserts that the themes and motifs of contemporary South West Carnival have evolved over time from a distinct set of processional practices. Notions of 'tradition' and 'heritage' form a consistent theme within these vocabularies. These notions carry a distinct performativity within processional carnival cultures that often seek to assert 'local' rights of free expression; to legitimise certain practices and

reiterate certain notions of place, community and identity while contesting and subjugating others. As Harvey explains (2014) 'the notion that heritage 'does things' is not new' and 'tradition' may be used as an excuse for reactionary practices which deny actual social conditions.

The 'heritage' vocabularies of 'traditional' vernacular carnival in the fieldwork area centre on processions of illuminated, decorated 'carts' or 'floats', alongside walking paraders in fancy dress. Originally horse-drawn, these carts have been motorised over time, and their illuminations have developed from candlelight and oil lamps to extensive electric-lightbulb illumination powered by powerful accompanying diesel generators. In many parades, the number of lightbulbs on a float and the horsepower of its generator has become a badge of honour for participants. The size of these carts and the degree of their illumination is also considered by many participants as a bellwether of the economic and social vibrancy of carnival itself. Latterly, motorisation has also brought vernacular carnival clubs into conflict with state-funded 'green' or 'ecological' artist-led approaches to carnival development, as I discuss in Chapter 5. Mobility in procession has developed over time from walking and the horse-drawn, to include bicycle parades, motorcycle rallies and a wide array of decorated motor vehicles.

In general terms, these motorised carnival floats carry idealised or subversive, comic representations of local and global places. They represent local trades, commercial, philanthropic, sporting or social activity, and feature re-enactments of literary and popular culture from drawn from theatre, TV and film. Vernacular parades also feature walking participants in fancy dress, marching bands and majorettes. Many floats carry carnival 'Royalty': often young girls elected by local popular vote as Carnival Queens and Princesses to represent their towns

at carnivals held at other towns within a geographical circuit of events. This particular 'tradition' is evocative of a Bakhtinian inversion of authority and social hierarchy, through which 'ordinary' people are elevated to temporary 'regal' status. As a vernacular practice, as was the case in Weymouth in 2008, it has also come under contemporary pressure as an example of the sexist objectification of young women (see Chapter 5).

Carnival floats may also act to satirise or comment on political or social events and to challenge the boundaries of taste, often in a highly transgressive way. This was the case with the infamous 'Jimmy Saville' float in Lauder, Scotland in 2013, which represented the celebrity paedophile surrounded by men cross-dressed as schoolgirls (See Chapter 4). At the other extreme, voluntary organisations, charities and religious communities have long used these parades as a public demonstration of their dedication of 'community service' and as a demonstration of their moral virtue, often conducting charity collections en-route.

Circuit carnivals in the South West UK also maintain a 'tradition' of representing other nations or places on carnival floats. Representations of 'Africa,' 'China,' 'India' 'The Wild West,' 'Rio' or 'The North Pole' are commonplace, often presented by people who are not of the races, cultures and nationalities presented. These representations are regularly contested as examples of racist stereotyping, a charge which is roundly rejected by most participants (Harvey, (2014-in press). In their most extreme incarnations, examples persist in the South West UK of parades where white people black their faces, legitimising their practice within narratives of pagan, industrial or historical 'heritage' that deny contemporary sensitivities or any potential offence to non-white communities. Harvey (2014) provides a particular example of this from Padstow,

Cornwall. Here, the 'traditional' blackface and '[N-word] songs' of Boxing Day 'Darkie Day' processions have been moderated by political pressure into a celebration of 'Mummers,' but remain an expression of 'local' legitimacy despite their public re-branding:

'...examples of what can be called 'local heritage', and implicitly align themselves with the notion that 'localness' is, by definition, always correct. Their legitimacy is founded upon a notion that local decision making, and a local performance within a local public sphere is always a good thing; *more real, more authentic, more democratic*... In the case of Darkie Day, largely stemming from the revivalist movement of the 1960s, it acts to define a sense of localness, as being separate and natural; self-affirming and of a higher order of authenticity. This unquestioning confidence of rectitude would seem to have led people to practice deeply racist practices until at least 2005, and even now it seems to have insulated them from questioning the historical legacy of racism that was clearly persistent until the re-branding exercise of 2005.

(Harvey, 2014)

In other towns, these practices have disappeared entirely from local carnival processions, as is the case in Seaton, East Devon. In the following fieldnote, a former Carnival Committee chairman describes some of the entries that have appeared in the Seaton procession over the years and expresses, not without personal reservation, this evolution in the acceptable vocabulary of carnival:

*[He] hands me photograph after photograph: pictures of the Regal Girls Club parading in the 1960s, Seaton Sports Club marching with drums and bells, the RNLI float from 1951 with children in sowesters and lifejackets, sitting in a sailboat on the back of a truck. There is the Akerman's Ironmongers Express Delivery float from 1948 which featured an oversized kettle on a handcart. Here is the Seaton Youth Club dressed as 'Uncle Tom Cobby and All' in 1953. A grainy shot from the 1930s shows the Krazy Band, a group of black-faced minstrels with bowler hats, trumpets and drums. 'You couldn't do that nowadays,' says Ted. 'People have lost their common sense. It wasn't about racialism, it was just a bit of fun.'*

(Fieldnote: Interview, Seaton, 2.5.12 See Fig 11, p73)

As I outline in Sections 2:5 and 2:6, the practices of alternative theatre and the assimilation of countercultural arts practice into cultural policy have also exerted

pressure on the carnival vocabularies of the South West UK, promoting a craft-based, socially-inclusive and multicultural set of vocabularies that seek to remove motorised floats and promote themed, artist-led, Caribbean-influenced walking carnival as a preferred practice. The following sections of this chapter seek to focus in more detail on the historical development of my case study carnivals at Seaton and Weymouth and to show how, in general terms, carnival practice in the south west of England, outside the major cities of Bristol, Exeter and Plymouth, has been historically characterized by three main influences: Gunpowder, Charity and the Seaside.



Fig 11: Minstrels in blackface, Seaton Carnival, circa 1930.

#### **2:4:1 Gunpowder Carnivals and the Illuminated Circuits:**

Descriptions of Somerset carnival dominate the sparse literature with regard to carnival practice in the south west UK, but also demonstrate the link between public spectacle, state power and popular festivity. The processional events of Somerset have a strong influence on the organization, style and function of

small-town carnivals elsewhere in the region, including the East Devon Circuit carnival at Seaton which is featured in the ethnographies that follow.



Fig 9 Harlequins Carnival Club Float, Bridgwater Carnival, 2013

Tallon (2007) focuses his attention on the ‘Guy Fawkes’ or ‘Gunpowder’ carnival tradition of Somerset and its associated illuminated circuit carnivals in Devon and Wessex. Winter ‘Guy Fawkes’ processions, bonfires, effigy burning and firework displays developed in the region after 1606 as an expression of Protestant solidarity within annual, state-led ‘Gunpowder Treason Day’ celebrations each November 5<sup>th</sup> (Cressy, 1989). These cultural performances, which also included compulsory church sermons, marked the failure of the 1605 Catholic plot to blow up Parliament and kill the Protestant King James I. National celebration of the deliverance of James I was required by law under the Observance of 5th November Act 1605, also known as the ‘Thanksgiving Act’ (Cressy, 1989). By the mid 1800s in Somerset, Guy Fawkes celebrations had lost some of their religious fervour and had evolved into a processional tradition which featured fireworks, costumed walking parades and illuminated, decorated floats known locally as ‘carts’. This processional vocabulary centred on the strongly Protestant Somerset town of Bridgwater, where the sheer scale

of the processions and the town's spectacular displays of hand-held fireworks, known as 'squibbing', have since earned it the title of 'Home of Carnival':

Bridgwater... is believed to be the location for the largest illuminated carnival in the world, and the oldest event of its kind in the UK... The night-time procession consists of a display of over 150 entries, including around 70 floats of up to 30 metres long, 5 metres high and 3 metres wide festooned with dancers and up to 30,000 light bulbs, in addition to costumed walking individuals and groups of masqueraders. The procession follows a 3-mile route and takes around 3 hours to pass any one point on the route. Following the carnival procession, a unique display of 'squibbing' takes place, consisting of the simultaneous firing of around 150 large fireworks (or squibs) in the High Street.

(Tallon, 2007:258)

The 'official' history of Bridgwater Guy Fawkes Carnival, presented by the event's organising committee (Bridgwater, 2012) presents the event as 'the oldest event of its kind in the United Kingdom.' This history also identifies Bridgwater as the source of several key vocabularies which are common to other south-west circuit carnivals, namely: the procession of large, illuminated carnival carts, parades of local people in 'mischief' costumes, fancy dress, masks or disguises, and the staging of charitable fundraising concerts and other entertainments during 'Carnival Week.' Bridgwater (2012) also asserts the role of carnival activity as a supporting cultural process alongside wider national celebrations and major local civic development projects. In 1881, for example, following the drunken riots which arose at the previous year's carnival event, Bridgwater was the first south-west town to form an organized, 'official' civic carnival committee, made up of local businessmen and dignitaries (Bridgwater, 2012). The Bridgwater Carnival was highly regulated by this committee as a festive affirmation of Protestant civic order, notwithstanding the occasionally riotous, carnivalesque disruption of the event by local people and the continuing widespread public drunkenness of the day after carnival, known locally as 'Black Friday' (Bridgwater, 2012). The spectacular Bridgwater Carnival firework display of 1883, for example, was carefully tuned to celebrate the official

opening of the town's new bridge over the River Parrett, for which display the first fundraising carnival concerts were staged in the town (Squibbs, 1982). In 1902, Bridgwater Carnival celebrated the coronation of Edward VII by re-enacting the coronation procession with a series of tableaux which included 'a replica of the magnificent State Coach, correct in every detail and drawn by eight cream coloured horses' (Bridgwater, 2012). In 1905, the carnival was electrified, replacing its tallow and paraffin illuminations with the creative use of generator technology and affordable mass-produced lightbulbs (Bridgwater, 2012). More than a hundred years later, the event's tradition of engagement with wider state-sponsored festivity continued when, in 2012, the Bridgwater Squibbers performed for the first time outside their home town, representing 'traditional' south-west carnival culture within the spectacular *Battle for the Winds* performance which launched the Olympic sailing events at Weymouth.

The history of Bridgwater Carnival also parallels the history of the national Guy Fawkes festival itself in terms of the periodic authoritarian control which has been exerted on November 5<sup>th</sup> street festivity and carnival, particularly with regard to the use of fireworks and gunpowder. Bridgwater squibs were originally made by participants in local homes but are now 'produced to a secret formula by leading firework manufacturers' (Bridgwater 2012). In 1905, the uncontrolled use of fireworks in the street procession at Bridgwater led to calls for the 'abandonment or modification of the Guy Fawkes demonstration in the town' and, in 1913, Home Office authorities threatened to ban both carnival and fireworks (Squibbs, 1982:110). Squibbs reports how, in response to this threat, 'the Carnival Committee expressed their determination to celebrate the Carnival in the usual way and the Chief Constable, acting presumably on the advice of the Watch Committee, very wisely refrained from active interference' (1982:

117). In 1929, over 2,000 squibs were ignited during the course of carnival night (Bridgwater, 2012). The use of fireworks in the parade today is highly regulated and limited to the 150-strong, trained team of 'official' Squibbers, reflecting the general, national consolidation of the Guy Fawkes festival away from vernacular expression and into the hands of committees and regulated, organized displays.

The Bridgwater Guy Fawkes Carnival exerts a significant influence on other carnivals in the region, both in terms of its creative vocabularies and its position as the signature event within the Somerset County Guy Fawkes Carnival Circuit. Bridgwater entries are drawn from across the region, and south-west carnival circuits operate generally as a reciprocal community of cultural exchange, in which carts from surrounding towns visit each other's carnivals, compete for prizes and support local charitable fundraising. Bridgwater also sits at the head of four other carnival circuits in the region and exerts significant influence over their calendars of festivity.<sup>20</sup> These circuit carnivals share a vocabulary of illuminated floats, town-centre processions and competitive display in a range of categories, such as 'open' and 'local' 'Tableau' and 'Feature' carts, 'Comic' and 'Juvenile' carts, single, pair and group 'Masqueraders' (also known as 'Walking Entries'), and best-dressed towing vehicles. Local categories vary, and also include memorial trophies for music, performance energy and amounts raised for charity.

Tallon describes how the practical organization of town carnivals in the region, alongside the production of processional carts, is focused on the creativity and voluntary effort of independent, self-funding Carnival Clubs or Committees.

These organizations may be constituted within 'town carnival committee'

---

20 'The circuits of affiliated carnivals comprise the East Devon Circuit.. the South Somerset Federation of Carnivals... and the Somerset County Guy Fawkes Carnival Association. There are in addition a couple of independent illuminated carnivals which take place during the season at Crewkerne and Midsomer Norton.' (Tallon, 2007:257) In 2012, a change to the date of Bridgwater carnival caused significant problems to other circuit carnivals, who had to alter their own dates in order to participate fully in the circuit as a result.

identities, or as sub-groups of social clubs, agricultural or trade-based organizations. Carnival committees may be run by Scouts and Guides, youth groups, or sporting associations and teams, Rotary Club, Round Table or other Friendly Society members, for example. Often there is a separation between the practical organization of a town's carnival event and the 'crews' who produce the town's annual circuit cart. In some places, however, as is the case with Seaton in Devon, the town cart is produced by a sub-committee of the main organizing group.



Fig: Map of Circuit Carnivals in South West UK

Mostly, carts serve to represent their 'town' identities at a series of 'Guy Fawkes' circuit events, which form a calendar of festivity and fundraising from September onwards, the celebration of November 5<sup>th</sup> itself being strictly

reserved for Bridgwater Guy Fawkes Carnival. Some independent Carnival Clubs, such as the Exeter-based 'Phoenix' group, are not strictly tied to their town identity when they participate elsewhere on the circuit, presenting a more individual social identity. Carnival carts and club members often also support late-night shopping events and other civic gatherings in the run up to Christmas, as is the case with the Seaton float and Westham Carnival Club participation in the Weymouth 'Christmas Sparkle'. Tallon identifies 60 carnival clubs in Somerset alone in 2007, with memberships ranging from 10 to 100. These organizations constitute a significant social and cultural presence in the festive lives of their communities, organizing local concerts, exhibitions, bingo, dances, competitions and sporting events throughout the year as fundraisers for their carnival activity, an influence which Tallon describes as 'a vibrant component of society' (Tallon, 2007: 259). Within this community of cultural practice, carnival float-building is considered a demonstration of craft skill among local model-makers, carpenters, electricians, painters and costume-makers, with floats often sponsored by local trade organizations and businesses. Tallon estimates that 1,000 people are actively involved in carnival in Somerset alone, while up to 10,000 are involved indirectly, contributing some £2 million in tourist spending each year to the regional economy and generating as much as £120,000 in voluntary charitable donations (2007:258).

A key feature of these events is their 'open door' policy with regard to participation. While the circuit carnivals judge entries according to a set of agreed general categories, the symbolic form and content of entries in circuit carnivals is unspecified, allowing for culturally-democratic participation by people of all ages and backgrounds, as we explore in more detail in Chapter Seven In terms of symbolic vocabulary, this approach creates what Edensor

and Millington call a 'bricolage of numerous symbols', producing 'displays that are inevitably profuse in matter, use and meaning' (Edensor & Millington, 2009: 113). Like the vernacular Christmas illuminations described by Edensor and Millington (2009:113), south-west Gunpowder circuit carnivals offer a 'proliferating range of popular cultural forms [which allow] celebrants to adopt and adapt a range of icons and symbols'. Conviviality is the key feature of south west 'Guy Fawkes' and circuit carnivals, many of which challenge tendencies towards aesthetic unity or shared theme in terms of their creative vocabularies. Tallon shares this appreciation of the convivial inclusivity of these events, while also adding that membership of carnival groups 'tends to be slanted towards working-class groups based around skilled trades.' He also notes that 'there is an under-representation of ethnic minorities' in the carnival culture of the south-west UK, outside its major cities (Tallon, 2007: 259). Tallon's most astute observation in his analysis of circuit carnival culture in Somerset, a view which is applicable to many carnivals across the south-west region, is that:

Carnival is a tradition which still glues communities together and lives on not because anybody has insisted that they are educational, or that they will bring tourists in, or because there is funding available, but simply because people enjoy taking part and celebrating their particular traditions... In contrast to the recent top-down, city authority initiatives and support for festivals as part of wider marketing or regeneration efforts, the South West's illuminated carnivals represent a more inclusive, traditional form of street festival, which developed and continues to evolve in a bottom-up fashion.

(Tallon, 2007:259)

#### **2:4:1a: Fieldwork locations: Demographic information:**

##### **Seaton, East Devon:**

Seaton is a seaside town in East Devon, with a population of 14,600 people (Devon County Council Census, 2011). The average age in Seaton is 52 years and the town has a higher proportion of people aged 65 and over (36%) and a lower proportion of those aged five to 64 (62%) than the county of Devon as a whole. Seaton's population has increased by 6% since 2001, reflecting its popularity as a retirement community, and in terms of ethnicity, 96% of the town's residents classify themselves as White British, with only 2.5% of people from minority ethnic groups. Employment levels in Seaton (including self employment) are below the county average, retirement levels are above the county average at 28%, and unemployment equal to the county as a whole at 2%. The town is classified as a 'Gateway Town' to the Jurassic Coast World Heritage Site and is soon to be the site of the new Jurassic Coast Visitor Centre, a development which is central to its development strategy.

### **Weymouth, Dorset:**

Statistical information from Dorset County Council describes Weymouth as 'a significant port since medieval times and a major seaside resort since the 18th Century' (DCC, 2012).<sup>21</sup> The town has a population of 52,223 people <sup>22</sup> and, along with the Isle of Portland, hosted the sailing events for the 2012 Olympic Games. The town sits at the Eastern end of the Jurassic Coast World Heritage Site and has an industry based largely on summer holiday tourism. The population of Weymouth, self-classified in the 2011 Census as 94.9% White British, is older than average for England and Wales and the town suffers from high levels of deprivation. Unemployment is at 3%, double that of the rest of

---

<sup>21</sup> Source: DCC (2012) Weymouth Town Profile <https://www.dorsetforyou.com/343610> Accessed 11.9.14.

<sup>22</sup> Source: Office for National Statistics, 2012 Mid Year Estimates.

Dorset. 21.2% of residents are in receipt of Housing or Council Tax Benefit (DCC, 2012) and 18% of children in the borough live in poverty (ECP, 2013)<sup>23</sup>. By contrast, the town's tourist information website describes Weymouth as 'one of the UK's most beautiful seaside resorts, and blessed with one of its sunniest and warmest climates'. As a gateway to the UNESCO World Heritage Site, Weymouth is further described as 'the perfect base for exploring the beautiful county of Dorset, one of the UK's most picturesque counties'<sup>24</sup>.

## **2:4:2 Charity and Seaside Carnivals:**

### **(i) 'Hospital' Parades:**

Primary archival research and analysis that I conducted in the fieldwork area leads me to contend that a further significant tradition within the seaside carnivals of East Devon and Dorset emerged from the eighteenth and nineteenth century development of Hospital Parades, which were organized to raise money for local community healthcare provision.<sup>25</sup> Many of the coastal carnivals in the fieldwork area retain this principal function of charitable fundraising for local good causes. Continued organizational participation by Friendly Societies and other charities may also be seen as an extension of this Hospital tradition of festive philanthropy. By the late 1800s, annual Hospital Parades had become a significant feature of charitable fundraising in Great Britain (Georgiou, 2012; Lloyd, 2002). Over time, these processions, which

---

<sup>23</sup> Source: Campaign to End Child Poverty, Child Poverty Map of Britain, 2013 <https://www.endchildpoverty.org.uk> Accessed 11.9.14

<sup>24</sup> Source: Weymouth Tourist and Town Guide <http://www.weymouth.co.uk/> Accessed 11.9.14

<sup>25</sup> See Appendix 2 for a schedule of local studies resources regarding the development of Weymouth Hospital Parade, held at Weymouth Library.

initially presented highly controlled and idealized symbolisms of civic order, social decorum and philanthropy, became more carnivalesque, as fundraisers began to appreciate the relationship between spectacle, public attendance and the level of charitable giving.

In the Dorset coastal town of Weymouth, for example, the annual Hospital Parade thus evolved to feature marching bands, processions of decorated floats, military parades and seaside competitions and entertainments. Fundraising philanthropic processions of this type also incorporated 'regatta' events linked to local harbours, recreational sailing, naval activity and maritime and tourist economies. Today, these coastal events maintain a tradition of charity fundraising, while also serving as attractions designed to extend the summer holiday season for local tourist businesses, particularly in the seaside resorts of Seaton and Weymouth. The history of these events thus reflects the rise and relative decline of the Georgian and Victorian coastal spa towns of the south west coast, the cultural symbolism of the Golden Age of British, working class seaside holidaying in the 1950s and 1960s, and the steady aesthetic and participatory democratisation of the south-west seaside (Walton, 1983; Travis, 1993), as the following analysis seeks to reveal.

(ii) **Parading Philanthropy:**

Lloyd (2002) identifies processional activity as a significant feature within the public 'performance' of philanthropy and charitable giving by the middle and upper classes from the eighteenth century onwards. By way of example, Lloyd refers to street promenades which took place as part of the public commencement of charitable dinners; to organized parades of the 'deserving poor' who had been assisted by charitable donation; to processions of lives

saved by the Royal Humane Society, and to the anniversary parades by the 'benevolent supporters' of hospitals and infirmaries (Lloyd, 2002: 24). As well as reinforcing symbolic notions of social hierarchy and order, Lloyd argues that these types of processional display 'enabled each charity to project and display its objectives, [which] included not just the productive outlay of money and effort on the poor, but also appropriate sentiment and behaviour among the charitable themselves' (Lloyd, 2002: 25). Referring to the London and Westminster charity schools' anniversary procession, for example, Lloyd asserts that: 'the procession of charity school children conveyed a national message; they walked a discourse of population, productivity, order, and piety' (Lloyd, 2002: 37).

Further, Lloyd asserts that anniversary processions were a means by which charities 'exchanged spectacle for money and dealt in desire, blurring distinctions between resorts, theaters, livery halls, and churches' (Lloyd, 2002: 27). Recognizing the difficulty of maintaining such strictly controlled and idealized identities within public processions, which were inevitably subject to festive contestation by audience and participants alike, Lloyd describes how carnivalesque symbolism slowly began to infiltrate charitable parades, beginning with the wearing of 'Anniversary Ornaments': 'the 'ribbons, feathers, and fans... much frowned upon by the trustees as signs of economic excess, political insubordination... and effeminating luxury' (Lloyd, 2002:39). Notwithstanding this carnivalesque challenge, the charitable procession and the social promenade were established primarily as activities through which the wealthy could perform their social position, their moral rectitude and their financial largesse in a range of settings, and the poor could present themselves as worthy, upright and grateful recipients.

The rising coastal spa towns of Dorset and Devon were well placed to tap into this public, processional 'performance' of social position and philanthropy in the eighteenth and nineteenth century, marketing themselves, as they did, as exclusive resorts which were set apart from the commonly accessible attractions of other British seaside locations (Walton, 1983). These towns, including Weymouth, Lyme Regis, Seaton, and Sidmouth, developed an exclusive identity which led to the promotion of a very distinct set of social, recreational and aesthetic values and practices designed to appeal to the upper classes. Among these was the daily summer promenade, in which visitors: 'paraded up and down the sea-front, admiring the brilliant appearance of well dressed ladies' (Travis, 1993:18).

Revolution in France in 1789 led to a retreat of wealthy holidaymakers from their usual destinations in Northern France and the French Mediterranean, and the re-framing of the Devon resorts as an English alternative, within an 'English Riviera' identity which persists in the tourism industry to this day. Travis cites George III's visit to Weymouth in 1789 and the visit of the Prince of Wales to Torquay in 1806 as events which cemented the identity of the Dorset and Devon resorts as fashionable, elite destinations (1993: 31). Purpose-built seafront promenades began to appear in south Devon resorts from 1789, prompting the development of 'public walks' each evening. (1993: 42). Travis further marks the appearance of England's first regattas in the Devon resorts from 1772 and a surge in popularity of these events between 1789 and 1815, featuring competitive boat races and evening dances and balls (1993: 45). This socially-elevated place identity, which was firmly established in the resorts of Dorset and South Devon by the late 19<sup>th</sup> century, persists in the aspirations of local economic and tourism development agencies today with regard the

presentation of preferred symbolic representations of the south-west coastline to the rest of the world.

Many of these aspirations may be traced back to a Victorian demand for self-improvement and 'rational recreation,' as embodied in seaside pursuits such as marine biology, geology, naturalism and fossil collecting (Travis, 1993: 167). Other preferred Victorian pursuits: painting, literary culture, floral display, seasonal marching bands and concerts, and seafront sports including cycling, also contributed over time to the cultural vocabularies of annual charitable parades and processions in these towns. Thus, we begin to see the contribution of social procession, philanthropic activity, economic place-making and organized festivity to notions of place identity: to representations of Weymouth as a regal, maritime spa town, for example.<sup>26</sup>

With regard to the wider development of Hospital Parades and their 'performance' of philanthropy, Georgiou's analysis of the 1905-1914 Ilford Hospital Carnival in Essex as a philanthropic spectacle offers a useful parallel with the development of Hospital Parades and carnival in Weymouth, one of the fieldwork sites for my own research (Georgiou, 2012). Georgiou outlines the four-mile long processional vocabulary of Ilford Hospital Carnival, which featured Fire Brigades, cycling and sports clubs, youth groups, church groups, bands and Friendly Societies, and which performed to crowds of 250,000 by 1912. He also acknowledges the progressive carnivalisation of this philanthropic event when he says (Georgiou, 2012):

The Ilford Carnival's charitable rationale was central to its perpetuation, but its significance as a form of recreation also became increasingly apparent and was

---

<sup>26</sup> This tendency persists in the early 21<sup>st</sup> century, and is reflected in the place marketing of Lyme Regis as the 'birthplace of geology', and in the creation of 'Gateway Town' identities within the 'Jurassic Coast' World Heritage Site.

closely intertwined with its philanthropic purpose, even as the former occasionally obscured the latter... Processions included a growing rate of items unrelated to the theme of charity, drawing instead on an increasingly varied set of subject matter that highlighted the carnival's entertainment function.

Georgiou's critique of the development of the Ilford Hospital Carnival points out that 'supplying entertainment was essential to the carnival's fundraising capacity.' He identifies a steady democratisation of the symbolic imagery of the Hospital Parade to include contemporary references to international politics and trade relations, the influence of popular entertainment and Music Hall, processions of motor vehicles as new technologies, local business advertising and a recurrent pastoral symbolism which reflected the tensions between urbanism and rurality. The symbolic history of this event neatly parallels the development of Weymouth Carnival from its own origins as a Hospital Parade. It also parallels the cultural, symbolic and aesthetic democratisation of the exclusive seaside resorts of Devon and Dorset over time, as improved railway communications led to more competition between towns, and economic pressures led them to welcome the working classes to their beaches and promenades (Walton, 1983).

(iii) **Weymouth Carnival:**

The origins of Weymouth Carnival lie in the Hospital Parades of the 1890s, which were organised in aid of the Weymouth Hospital, Sanatorium and Eye Infirmary. A report in the Southern Times of 17th September 1898 is the earliest reference to a 'procession of the friendly societies, athletic clubs and fire brigades' staged to raise money for the hospital in the town. This report also gives details of the order of the torch-lit procession, which:

...left for a perambulation of the principal parts of the town, in the following order: Cyclists Section, Volunteer Artillery Band, Members of United Benefit Societies, Torpedo on car, Whitehead Fire Brigade, Fire Escape, Weymouth Fire Brigade, Rifle Drum and Fife Band, Weymouth Harriers on Car, Hope Brewery Fire Brigade, Weymouth Town Band, Weymouth Rowing Club boat on car, Salvation Army Band,

This list of participants reflects the mobilization of charitable and civic organizations in the town to produce a procession of social identities which was specifically designed to encourage dutiful giving by others as part of a wider 'performance' of philanthropy. Staged at the end of the summer season, when the Georgian spa town was still busy with affluent guests taking the waters and engaging in uplifting 'rational recreations,' it was a performance which appealed directly to the moral conscience of locals and visitors alike. Participation by the Oddfellows and Foresters presented discourses of assistance to one's fellow man, accompanied by the upright temperance values of the Templars and Rechabites. The symbolic unity which the procession presented between the idealised identities of these organisations and local Naval and military elements further cemented the notion of charitable giving within hegemonic notions of social and moral order. The procession was also a demonstration of local industrial craft skill and civic organization, featuring 'a large number of torches' and 'a Whitehead torpedo of the latest pattern' (*The Southern Times*, 17th September, 1898, p5).

Clearly, this procession was designed to stimulate a certain kind of elevated charitable response in its audience, but even from its early days, Weymouth Hospital Parade demonstrated an understanding of what Georgiou refers to as the event's 'entertainment function' (Georgiou, 2012) and the commercial power of the carnivalesque; striking a balance between pious giving and popular festivity:

---

<sup>27</sup> *The Southern Times*, 17th September, 1898, p5

The streets were crowded along the route which the procession took, and collections were industriously made... A large number of persons made a silver collection for admittance to the gardens, and the concert, which was under the direction of Mr HA Hurdle, gave the greatest satisfaction...The car which created the greatest amusement was the one in which the virtues of a certain soap were represented, men dressed as women being engaged in all kinds of laundry work.<sup>28</sup>

Archival research reveals that, by 1905, an element of friendly competition had arisen in the Weymouth parade, reports of which also reflect notions of moral and social duty with regard to participation. The *Southern Times* of 26 August, 1905, (p5) reported that: 'As in past years, the Friendly Societies of the town vied with each other in endeavoring to help forward the worthy object for which the parade is annually arranged.' The report also locates the procession within hierarchical notions of social order and re-affirms its role as a visible performance of philanthropy by the upper classes, stating that: 'The hospital parade was under excellent patronage both of county and local gentry.' Further, it criticizes the commercial content of the procession, suggesting that self-advancement, rather than philanthropy, was gaining the upper hand in terms of the symbolic representations offered by the town's commercial classes:

This part of the proceedings could not, by the slightest stretch of the imagination be regarded as a success. Tradesmens' vehicles were almost conspicuous by their absence and the procession was made the medium for advertisement purposes only.<sup>29</sup>

In 1906, plans for the Weymouth Hospital Parade were abandoned after a disagreement between the Friendly Societies of the town, the Alexandra Gardens Committee and Whitehead's Torpedo Works. The Gardens Committee insisted that each member of the procession pay a sixpence to enter the

---

<sup>28</sup> *The Southern Times*, 17th September, 1898, p5.

<sup>29</sup> *The Southern Times*, 26 August, 1905, p5

Alexandra Gardens for the final evening treat and entertainment, in order to keep numbers down and protect flowerbeds from marauding children. At this news, various participating groups withdrew their entries, including Whitehead's who had previously outlined ambitious plans for a dramatic 'sea battle' by the King's Statue, featuring processional models of a battleship and two destroyers. The dispute over use of the Alexandra Gardens also revealed the hostility within the parade's organising committee towards those who did not support the event financially, but nevertheless drew profit from it. A *Southern Times* report voiced a similar sentiment, stating that: 'in a laudable object of this kind there ought to be no dissension' (*Southern Times*, August 18, 1906, p6).

Weymouth Hospital Parade also reflected the involvement of the Navy in the local community and offered an opportunity for the military to display its own philanthropic identity. In 1926, a Naval Crossing the Line ceremony was held as part of the event and Naval troops paraded a 'Neptune Float' featuring a figure of Neptune with 'webbed feet, a big bunch of seaweed, and a trident.' Navy men, dressed as pirates and 'brandishing swords and Very pistols,' ran through the crowds in Pursuits and Mock Trials, 'robbing' pennies from the crowd. A team of mounted Osprey Horse Marines also galloped the length of the Esplanade: 'a dozen sailors wearing fantastic pattern three-ply horses heads, complete with false legs, tin hats, tin medals and broomsticks'.<sup>30</sup>

By 1933, the Hospital Parade had succumbed to the 'pageantitis' that, Ryan (2007) argues, was sweeping the nation to feature the 'Historical Pageant of Weymouth in Seven Episodes' in the grounds of Radipole Manor. The parade

---

<sup>30</sup> Press cutting 1983: *Weymouth Carnival 1926: When Neptune and the Horse Marines reigned supreme*. Weymouth Local Studies Library: Weymouth and Melton Regis Carnivals: STACK (Oversize) L.394.25 WE6.7

had also begun to show a more carnivalesque symbolism alongside its philanthropic identity and to expand its festivity beyond its purely processional form along the Esplanade. By this time, the Hospital Parade had also changed its name to 'Weymouth Hospital Carnival.' A 'Mile of Pennies' competition between local Ladies and the Navy took place, alongside public tours of Navy submarines and deep-water diving displays in Weymouth Harbour. The main procession featured a comic tableau on a Chinese theme which included: 'the Mandarin and his Wives, Headsmen, prisoners, rickshaw, a Crowd of Chinese (assorted) and a Chinese Laundry'. As well as a Carnival Queen, the event featured the crowning of a Carnival King opposite the Royal Hotel and finished with a carnival Ball at the Sydney Hall, with dancing until 2am.<sup>31</sup>

While the procession did not have an overall theme in the 1930s, the categories for judging establish a clear processional order and set of criteria for the processional entries. They also reveal an increasing carnivalisation of the symbolism of the event during this period, featuring: 'Decorated Groups, Decorated Motor Cars and Motor Cycles, Fancy Dress Groups, Jazz Bands, Tradesmens' Decorated Cars, Decorated Push Bikes and Carrier Cycles, Portland Town Band, Grotesque Figures, Messr's Whitehead's Contingent Tableaux on Cars, Decorated Perambulators, the Weymouth Fire Brigade, Hope Brewery Fire Brigade' and other processional 'attractions'.

In the 1950s, organisational responsibility for the event was handed to the local Round Table, and the event's carnivalesque transition from philanthropic Hospital Parade to a new charitable identity as 'Weymouth Carnival' was complete, reflecting the town's own transition from exclusive spa resort to one

---

<sup>31</sup> Source: Weymouth Local Studies Library: Weymouth Hospital Carnival *Rag Mag*, 1933, p35-38. STACK L.394.25 WE.7

of the nation's favourite working-class seaside holiday destinations. By now, the idealized social order and moral rectitude of the Hospital Parade had been replaced by more popular symbolic representations. Carnival Programmes for 1957 and 1959 list attractions such as an 'Island Treasure Hunt', a 'Barmen, Waiters and Waitresses Road Race', a 'Crackerjack Hour', a performance by 'King Carnival and the Rock n Roll Wagon', a 'Tug of War', 'Bathing Beauty Contest', 'Talent Show', 'Procession' and 'Comedy Football Match'. The event also features a 'Sports Day', 'Jazz and Skiffle Band competition', 'Fireworks Display', 'Jazz Ball', and a parade of 'Pearly Kings and Queens'.



Fig 10 Weymouth Carnival procession, 1956.

While the 'entertainment function' of the event had thus clearly developed to support tourism, to satisfy the town's new 'bucket-and-spade' seaside identity and to reflect the preferred popular culture and aesthetics of working class holidaymakers from London and other industrial towns, Weymouth Carnival had by no means lost its philanthropic fundraising function. The Weymouth Carnival Programme of 1962 makes the clear assertion that Weymouth Carnival

is about 'giving', and that its entertainment should be a stimulus for acts of charity: 'We say quite frankly that from 10am to 10pm on Carnival Day, assisted by numerous other local organisations and individuals, we shall be trying to extract money from you, although it is our sincere belief that at all times you will receive good value for money.' In 1971, the carnival made national news in the *Daily Mirror* and was established as one of the nation's favourite seaside events, with its funfair, bingo, Punch and Judy, beer barrel rolling, waitress race, Red Arrows air display, ladies' tug of war, procession and Blue Eagles helicopter display, setting a cultural vocabulary which has changed little in the years since. In 2005, the *Dorset Echo* reported: '200,000 in town for carnival', during which, three people collapsed from heat stroke, 30 were stung by weaver fish, one man was stabbed, a woman was assaulted, there were a dozen drink-related fights and 20 lost youngsters. In spite of all this, the *Western Gazette* was able to report: *Carnival Cash Smashes Records: £30,000 raised!*<sup>32</sup>

Thus, the history of Weymouth Carnival offers a clear example of the historical arc through which the Hospital Parades' processional 'performance' of philanthropy and social order became carnivalised over time, due to changing social demographics and the attempts of charitable organizations to 'deal in desire' and to 'exchange spectacle for money' (Lloyd, 2002: 27). This tension, between social status, philanthropy and popular entertainment, remains an active contest in the economics and rationale of Weymouth Carnival to this day, as one research participant explained to me in 2012:

From a Rotary point of view you have to be absolutely clear that the main objective, which is raising money for good causes, is not lost. Our Club has been established for almost 90 years and, as such, has been at the heart of all the major charitable fundraising during this time. Many of its members are ex Round Tablers, the organisers of Weymouth Carnival for 50 years, and understandably therefore it's in our DNA when it comes to the true aims and objects of Carnival. There can be no

---

<sup>32</sup> *Dorset Echo*: 18.8.05, p1 / *Western Gazette*, 25.8.05

deviation from its original conception, its true raison d'etre, and that is to provide a super day for our town, and at the same time to raise and donate substantial sums for those that have a crying need for help.

(Luke, Weymouth Town Carnival Committee member, e-mail: 23.3.12)

(iv) **Seaton's Seaside Carnival:**

The following history of Seaton's annual Carnival, the first in the East Devon Illuminated Circuit, brings together the philanthropic tradition of charitable processions along the Devon and Dorset coast, the south-west 'Guy Fawkes' tradition of illuminated carnival through the winter months, and the popular aesthetics of the British working-class seaside holiday. Drawn from a sparse local studies literature related to local processions, from participant interviews and from museum sources, this history suggests that the event has also developed as a key part of the town's ongoing assertion of a worthy identity alongside its more fashionable and wealthy coastal neighbours: the resort towns of Lyme Regis to the East and Sidmouth to the West.

Travis charts the development of Seaton as a seaside resort to 1793, when Devon clergyman John Swete recorded in his journal that he had found Seaton 'beginning to have its share of company' (Travis, 1993: 34). Travis also cites Swete's identification of Seaton as a lower-class alternative to other local resorts, one which: 'catered for only a handful of holiday-makers who were seeking cheapness and retirement. (1993: 34). The town's development as a resort suffered as a result of its pebble beach and the late arrival of its railway, as holidaymakers bypassed it in favour of the sandy beaches further west. In 1896, Seaton's relative separation from the social and moral conventions of upper class holidaymaking led it to become the first Devon resort to permit mixed bathing. Like other Devon resorts in the 19<sup>th</sup> century however, Seaton shared an 'aversion to brash and uncultured commercial entertainment: the

pierrots, sideshows and stalls which were popular seaside entertainments elsewhere in Britain at the time' (Travis,1993: 183). Ironically, while many of the more fashionable resorts slowly succumbed to the demand for these popular entertainments from 1900 onwards, Seaton remained resolutely sedate, such that Burrow's 1911 'Official Guide to Seaton and District' describes it as follows:

People who find Pierrot entertainments, swarthy minstrels, band concerts, animated picture shows and a Promenade Pier indispensable accompaniments of a sojourn by the sea, may entertain grave doubts as to the desirability of running down to Seaton... There is no fashionable Parade paced by over-dressed women and ogling men. There are not even any public gardens, brilliantly illuminated at night, or great halls of pleasure filled with the inanities of so called entertainers. For all these negative virtues, many visitors will offer grateful thanks.

(Burrow, 1911:20)

The origins of Seaton's carnival remain obscure. Neighbouring Sidmouth staged a Guy Fawkes carnival procession until just after the First World War and a Foresters' charitable fete every August Bank holiday which featured: 'a procession with wonderful tableaux on horse-drawn wagons, the same people taking part each year' (Sutton, 1959: 123). Gosling traces the earliest reference to a carnival in Seaton to a diary entry from November 1895 by Miss Skinner, a local dairy owner, placing the event firmly within the seaside philanthropic tradition:

Using Miss Skinner's Diary, Ted's traces the first carnival back to a hot day in November 1895, when 'hundreds of people lined the streets to view the event.' Ted's history establishes that carnival ran throughout the early part of the 20<sup>th</sup> century as a fundraiser for local charities, interrupted only by the Second World War. It was revived in 1947 by The Seaton Football Supporters Club and the 1<sup>st</sup> Seaton Scout Group. In 1953 these groups joined forces with the British legion, using Carnival to mark the coronation of Elizabeth II. Ted shows me a photocopy of the front page of the 1953 Carnival programme: 'After the war the Scouts started it up again. I came out of the Air Force in 1949 and I joined the British Legion, and in 1953 I was on the committee,' he says. 'It was a good carnival and we done some amazing things.' Ted remembers the marching bands, a 'human whist drive,' a huge carnival marquee on the cricket field the year the Town Hall burned down. He has crowned three carnival Queens and once went out with the winner. 'She was a beautiful girl.

They judged it on beauty in those days, so I knew I was going out with the most beautiful girl in Seaton' ... Ted tells me the carnival eventually declined, and ended in 1955 due to lack of support. It was revived in 1965 and has been running ever since.

(Fieldnote: Interview with Ted Gosling, Seaton Museum, 2.5.12)



Fig 12 RNLI float, Seaton Carnival, 1951.

East Devon carnivalist Dennis Morgan recalls that the early Seaton Carnival was staged in conjunction with Seaton Regatta until it was interrupted in 1939 by the Second World War and later revived for the first time in 1947.<sup>33</sup> Seaton Regatta Day was held on the last Thursday in July, described by Gosling (1991) as 'the major event of East Devon' one which combined competitive lugger racing with charitable fundraising, organized sports and fairground attractions:

All the showmen, such as Anderton and Rowlands, Hancocks, and Brewers, brought their fairs, and other entertainers flocked to the town. Hancocks organised sports in the marshes and one of the big events was the one mile race...

(Gosling, 1991: 67)

Rivalry with neighbouring Sidmouth was also a stimulus to the development of Seaton Carnival. The Sidmouth autumn carnival was revived in 1957 for the first time since 1938 (Sutton, 1959: 150) and the following year, at Exeter Carnival,

---

<sup>33</sup> Interview, 13.1.12

Sidmouth's Carnival Queen Tableau won the Bruford Cup for the best Carnival Queen tableau in Devon, demonstrating that the town was participating in the wider regional carnival circuit. Sutton describes the 1958 Sidmouth Carnival as a great success:

There was an entry of nearly 50 items with five bands. Hundreds of youngsters among the onlookers waved coloured balloons as the procession made its way through the town, headed by Sidmouth Fire Brigade, Sidmouth Town Silver Band and the Carnival Queen. Seated under a graceful canopy on a setting of red velvet, the Carnival Queen was accompanied by her attendants...and the Carnival Prince and Princess...An escort was provided by a posse of mounted riders...Prizes were distributed by the Carnival queen in the Market Square.

(Sutton, 1959: 150)

From 1935 to 2000, the Blue Waters Holiday Camp at Seaton attracted working-class holidaymakers who participated in the fancy dress section of Seaton Carnival procession as part of the camp's organized entertainments.<sup>34</sup> Morgan describes the carnival's second revival in 1965 as being directly linked to local efforts to extend the summer tourist season for a week beyond the August Bank Holiday, framing the event within a now-familiar seaside symbolism of military bands, organized sports, displays and popular culture. Later the event combined its late-summer function with charitable fundraising and participation in the early-season 'Guy Fawkes' carnivals of the East Devon Illuminated Circuit. Morgan claims the foundation of the East Devon Illuminated Circuit as a direct result of the second revival of Seaton Carnival in 1965, when the event took its place as the first illuminated carnival of the local 'Guy Fawkes' season:

*The first meeting I had, I knew most of the guys that was on the committee. They were all business people. Mostly business people or managers of shops and this sort of thing. And we re-formed the carnival. They done that date purely to lengthen the season in Seaton. To lengthen that end of August beginning of September week, to keep the tourists. And it worked. We had a lot of tourists come back especially for the carnival. Because bear in mind we were*

---

<sup>34</sup> The camp was renamed as the 'Lyme Bay Holiday Village' in the mid 1980s

*one of the first floodlit carnivals in this area. We had lights on the carts, on the floats. You had the Scouts come in with an exhibit, you had Warner's Holiday Camp then, they used to always put in a float or a walking entry. They had a lot of the visitors would walk along in fancy dress. We were one of the few at the very beginning who done a week. We used to have Pram derbys, rolling the barrel, racing, cycle races, skittles on the seafront and all that sort of thing. It was just a week's entertainment. And you always had hundreds, when Warner's Holiday camp was packed in. All the campers used to come out. [Warners] used to sponsor the carnival with a few bob on the agreement that we went down the sea front and come past their premises. And they would have all the people out there. And they used to join us at the carnival with their walking entry. Since then it has grown, because you have got Exmouth come into the circuit, you have got Honiton come into the circuit. Sidmouth come into the carnival circuit, Ottery St Mary come into the carnival circuit. Seaton. Colyton. Axminster, Sidmouth, Honiton, Ottery, Exmouth. Oh, and Newton Poppleford.*

(Dennis, East Devon Carnival Circuit Committee member, 13.1.12)

Seaton Carnival thus brings together three distinct traditions within south-west carnival culture: the Autumn-Winter illuminated tradition of the Guy Fawkes circuits, a philanthropic processional culture derived from the Hospital Parade, and the popular aesthetics of the working-class British seaside holiday.

## **2:5 Resuscitations of Cultural Performance: the influence of UK Alternative Theatre post-1960.**

By 1939, with the advent of the Second World War, the 'pageantitis' which had swept Britain in the late 19<sup>th</sup> and early 20<sup>th</sup> century had died down. Its place-making instrumentality was reborn in altered form for the spectacular 1951 *Festival of Britain*, (described by Simpson as 'the impetus for another outbreak of celebratory pageants') that sought to reaffirm hegemonic notions of tradition and mythical heritage (Simpson, 2008: 80). The re-invigoration of carnival, outdoor processional arts and carnivalesque, site-specific performance that subsequently occurred in the UK post 1960 arose from a very different

instrumentality, as a feature of the radical, countercultural 'alternative theatre' movement (Kershaw, 1992) and, as we have seen, as a reflection the identity struggles of Caribbean immigrant communities in the face of widespread racial discrimination. Fifty three years later in 2013, diasporic Caribbean carnival, South Asian Mela, street theatre and procession, outdoor and site-specific arts have achieved a central position within national cultural policy (Arts Council, 2008).



Fig 16 *Big Heads*, Frome Carnival, 2011.

Kershaw's historiography focuses on the development of notions of performance 'efficacy' within British alternative theatre between 1960 and 1990 and the performative ability of cultural performances to effect or mitigate social change (Kershaw, 1992:1). Kershaw also charts the development within alternative theatre practice of the notion of performance as an 'ideological transaction' between performers and audience (1992:19). Carnavalesque procession and performance-in-landscape emerged in the late 1960s as part of a radical participatory theatre practice which may thus be seen as a symbolic form of negotiative, identity-framing and place-making activity.

Between 1960 and 1990, alternative performance in the UK increasingly moved out of established theatres and into alternative buildings and open spaces (De Cruz, 2005; Schechner, 1995). In its early phase in particular, between 1964 and 1970, practitioners drew on traditions of folk art, procession and the carnivalesque, inspired in part by visits to the UK by American companies including Peter Schumann's Bread and Puppet Theatre (Fox, 2002).<sup>35</sup> Bakhtinian notions of carnival and the European outdoor work of practitioners such as Eugenio Barba were also key influences on the movement. Working on the European mainland during this period, Barba's Odin Teatret Theatre Company developed travelling, outdoor performance as a dialogic 'sharing' of song, dance, story and drama between performers and audiences; a cultural 'barter' analogous to the ethics of many artists working in participatory, community settings today (Barba, 1979).

Kershaw (1992) also identifies Albert Hunt as a further key influence on the development of outdoor performance within UK alternative theatre. Hunt's formation of the Bradford Art College Theatre Group encouraged innovative, participatory collaborations between students and artists which culminated in large-scale street performances. Hunt worked closely with John Fox (later to form Welfare State) and with cultural activists John Arden and Margaretta D'Arcy (pioneers of the participatory community play).<sup>36</sup> Hunt and Fox were the nucleus of much that followed in terms of the fusion of theatre, performance, art and environment by UK alternative theatre practitioners. Inspired by Welfare State in particular, artists increasingly moved towards community-focused,

---

<sup>35</sup> Bread and Puppet Theatre, *A Man Says Goodbye To His Mother*. Oval House, London, 1965.

<sup>36</sup> John Arden & Margaretta D'Arcy: *The Business of Good Government*, Community Play, Brent Knoll, 1960.

participatory, outdoor and site-specific work which explored new performer-audience relationships by working outside and in the street, and which reflected an increasing integration of performance with features of landscape, topography and cosmology (De Cruz, 2005; Mason, 1992).<sup>37</sup>

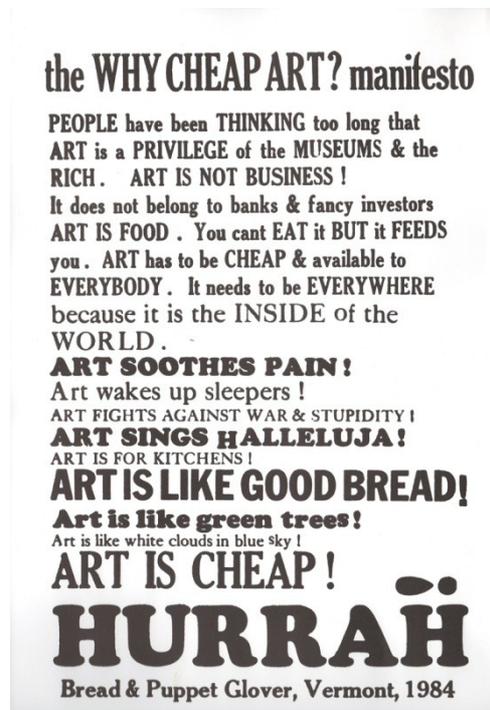


Fig 17 *Why Cheap Art? Manifesto*, Bread and Puppet Theatre.

In the United States, conscription and the Vietnam War led to the emergence of radical political street theatre which articulated utopian theatrical visions of a new society, alongside the adoption of carnivalesque notions of 'world as circus / circus as world,' and the organisation of mass 'happenings' (Falk, 1977).<sup>38</sup> Schechner (1995:46) charts the role of 'festive action' and 'direct theatre' as carnivalesque phases in this politics of civil disobedience. For

---

<sup>37</sup> Welfare State, *The Tide is OK for the 30<sup>th</sup>*, beach event, Instow, N Devon; *Heaven and Hell*, Ashton Memorial, 1968.

<sup>38</sup> Bread and Puppet: *Rent Strike and Vote Registration* demonstrations, New York 1964; *March on Washington to end the war in Vietnam*, 1965; *International Days of Protest and Memorial Day* processions, 1966.

Schechner, the flowering of this type of alternative, outdoor and processional street theatre in 1960s and 1970s America was a key influence on radical performance cultures in the UK, where alternative theatre practitioners began to explore the political and social 'efficacy' of cultural-democratic performances which engaged communities with alternative notions of place, heritage and mythology through arts practice (Kershaw, 1992).

Work of this kind included Bread and Puppet's *Domestic Resurrection Circus*, at Glover, Vermont in 1976, a synthesis of rural landscape and performance involving local people as audience and participants. This model, championed in the UK by John Fox and Welfare State, encouraged the mobility and interconnectedness of communities of cultural exchange, in ways which created local and regional networks of culturally-democratic arts practice. The outdoor and site specific performances which emerged as features of this movement took a variety of forms, from travelling circuses, to performative journeys, street theatre, community plays, and celebratory spectacles.<sup>39</sup> Use of the creative vocabularies of folk tradition and the carnivalesque in these performances: fire, fairground, feast, puppet, procession, mummers, music hall, ritual and ceremony, reflected a notion that traditional, popular forms offered a site of creative challenge to notions of 'high art' and the commodification of culture (Limòn, 1983: 39).

---

39 See also: John Fox and Mike Westbrook's *Cosmic Circus* (1970), involving high-divers, tight-rope walkers and carnival processions; Welfare State: *The Travels of Lancelot Quail*, processional journey from Glastonbury to Land's End, (1972); AgitProp Street Players (Red Ladder) / Bill Stickers Street Theatre (1970s); Anne Jellicoe, *The Reckoning*, community play with Medium Fair at Lyme Regis (1978); Welfare State, *Parliament in Flames*, (1976-1981).

The identification of the stupefying effects of the 'Culture Industry' by Adorno and Horkheimer (1972 [1944]) was central to a Western Marxist cultural politics that prompted countercultural artists to resuscitate 'traditional' forms of participatory popular culture, such as procession, during this period. This political tendency viewed 'folk art' and 'folklore' as being inherently oppositional to 'mass culture' and to the hierarchies of 'high art', and as being keenly threatened by them. Adorno and Horkheimer went so far as to assert that, as a result of the industrial commodification of culture, folklore, and the 'folk' themselves, were already extinct, features of the pre-industrial past (Adorno, 1978: 133).



Fig 18 *The Skeleton, the Pilot and the Rainbow Fish*, Welfare State: Lyme Park Festival, 1981.

The resuscitatory cultural politics that emerged during this period also reflected the ethics of the 19<sup>th</sup> century Arts and Crafts Movement, described by Mascia-Lees as: 'an artistic, philosophical, and socialist movement that arose in opposition to industrial capitalism and had as its expressed goal 'making the everyday beautiful'' (2011: 6). The participatory approaches of countercultural collectives such as Bread and Puppet and Welfare State also reflected an 'Arts

and Crafts' ethic towards the production of '[cultural] experiences connecting mind, body, individuals, and community' (Mascia-Lees, 2011: 8). These principles, which sought to reconnect people with the means of cultural production through participatory arts practice, were the foundations of notions of 'cultural democracy' (Kelly, 1984). They were also a feature of the countercultural, socially-engaged Arts and Crafts revival which took place in the United States during the late 1960s and 1970s (Mascia-Lees, 2011: 10).

Limòn (1983) also locates this sentiment within the Frankfurt School, where Western Marxists shared the view that 'the condition of human emancipation, the autonomy of reason, no longer exists except in the margins of society - as art' (Aronowitz, 1981: 24). Limòn suggests that the Western Marxists sensed 'the potentially oppositional nature of folklore,' defined it as a cultural domain that is 'under constant and competitive attack from the hegemonic sociocultural social order,' and viewed it as 'therefore in a process of decline' (Limòn, 1983: 39). Since this period, Marxist cultural theorists such as Baudrillard (1983), Featherstone (1991), and Jameson (1984) have further theorized the role of vernacular practice and aesthetics within an analysis of the relationship between art and the economic commodification of mass culture. This analysis has ultimately led to the post-modern view that vernacular practice has declined as cultural production has been steadily integrated into commodity production, and that the de-politicised aesthetic saturation of everyday life produces a social detachment from 'depth and history' (Jameson 1984) within a 'culture of superficiality' (Featherstone 1991: 66).

By way of early remedy, countercultural artists and scholars established a view of 'traditional' forms of cultural performance, folk art and folklore as being almost synonymous with the 'folk' themselves; and as vocabularies for the revival of

'non-alienated' practices associated with the pre-industrial working class (Benjamin, 1968; Marcuse, 1964; Thompson, 1978). Thus it became an act of solidarity for radical artists to abandon or subvert the forms of 'mass culture' and 'high art'; to reject the gallery or theatre building in favour of the pub, the field or the street, and to abandon the well-made play in favour of the dramatic storyteller, the procession, the fairground or the communal bonfire.

Limòn describes the political appreciation of folklore, folk music, folk art and traditional popular modes of performance as counter-hegemonic practices that emerged during this period. His historiography parallels the developing attempt of alternative theatre to re-incorporate the communal, the collective and the 'residual' into outdoor and site-specific performance practice (Williams, 1977: 122). This thesis also asserts that, ironically, this retrospective appropriation of traditional popular culture and the 'folk' as a culturally democratic challenge to 'mass culture' has itself been elevated over time to the preferred status of commodified 'art.' As mentioned previously, in this thesis, the processional work of Jeremy Deller (1990), while participatory and popular, also marked a moment in which the 'folk' vocabularies of vernacular carnival were transferred from the street to the art gallery installation. Further, as Edensor and Millington suggest below, cultural appropriation of the 'past' is often a tactic for the democratisation of symbolic forms which may ultimately undermine and appropriate contemporary popular culture:

Clearly, the symbolic economy is increasingly an important arena for classmaking endeavours... This liberal outlook is often underpinned by nostalgic representations of yesteryear, which offer exemplary occasions of *communitas* and celebration, in contrast with the recent disappearance of collective festive occasions.

(Edensor & Millington, 2009: 110,116)

Kershaw relates how 'audience and community participation... became central to alternative theatre aesthetics at this time, through the adaptation of popular historical genres such as pantomime and music hall and the transposition of these techniques beyond their usual performance settings' (Kershaw, 1992: 103). These re-inventions of tradition re-invigorated what Williams refers to as 'residual culture' (Williams, 1977: 122). As a reflection of the radical spirit of the age, they sat alongside entirely new, experimental, or 'emergent' methods which forged new performance modes from an aesthetic synthesis of more recent forms. These included comic strips, cinema, and animation, as well as 'psychedelic spectacle, rituals, psychodrama and the new practices of educational drama' (Kershaw, 1992: 103).

A similar revival took place during this period with regard to the use of processions and performative journeys as features of performance. In the early 1970s, Welfare State Theatre staged impromptu, small-scale processions in a number of northern towns to celebrate New Year. Other Welfare State processions had political or confrontational aims, fusing re-inventions of northern folk tradition with out-of-scale, Dadaist, fine-art visual imagery (Fox, 2002: 26-27). Processions were attractive to alternative practitioners, who were keen to draw ordinary people into the body of their work by creating theatricalised environments in everyday places and by involving them in large-scale communal activity. Strolling companies, such as Medium Fair and Footsbarn, began to engage with rural communities, often entering villages in procession as a means of gathering audiences. Similarly, artists began to experiment with performative journey forms, some of which covered large distances and engaged with many different communities en-route. In 1972, Welfare State Theatre staged *The First Going Away*, a 'month-long ironic

pilgrimage...from Glastonbury Abbey in Somerset to Marazion in Cornwall, reversing the mythical route of Joseph of Arimathea’:

Along this ancient religious trail, marked by leylines, as well as a number of surprisingly well-aligned red telephone boxes. Quail...dressed in a ludicrous gold lamé woman’s swimming costume...led his flock. (Fox, 2002: 17)

This journey, featuring the archetypal central character Lancelot Quail, combined the ‘procession and station’ performance mode with the notion of the pilgrimage (Kirshenblatt-Gimblett and McNamara, 1985:3). In ‘procession and station,’ the procession stops occasionally along its route so that static performances may occur in significant outdoor locations. Pilgrimage, for Kirshenblatt-Gimblett and McNamara, is a performative mode in which ‘a special location is the object of a journey which may begin individually, but which becomes communal and eventually processional.’ For alternative theatre-makers, the performative efficacy of this combination often centred on symbolic cycles of birth-death-rebirth and on notions of ‘quest’ and ‘transformation’: persistent themes within the *Battle for the Winds* performance narratives at play 40 years later in the context of the 2012 Cultural Olympiad at Weymouth, as my research suggests.

For Mason, (1992:156) the dual function of the outdoor procession – symbolic and educational – is what made it an attractive form. Welfare State in particular created a highly influential form of participatory engagement based around the community procession, in which participants made and paraded ‘sacred objects’ related to their landscape, heritage, local mythology or contemporary concerns, often in the form of large-scale puppets or lantern structures. These symbolic elements were built into a narrative which served the ‘educational’ function of procession, as Mason sees it. In the Welfare State model, the processional event was developed over an extended period of culturally-democratic

engagement by artists who responded to and facilitated the ideas of the participating community and sourced materials and creative expertise from within that community (Fox & Gill, 1985). This culturally-democratic ethic informed much of the community arts practice which evolved from the early participatory experiments of alternative theatre practitioners (Kelly, 1984).

Ritualistic, symbolic occupations of public space were attractive to the alternative theatre movement as reclamations of spatial territory for the counterculture. For Kirshenblatt-Gimblett and McNamara (1985:3) the meaning of a procession can become the 'dominant [spatial] element' in the given location for a specified time, thus changing the 'meaning' invested in space which affords it its place-identity. As a reflection of the Bakhtinian binary between the carnivalesque and the official feast (Bakhtin, 1984), these scholars contrast the clear-cut routes and separation between parade, performers and spectators in civic processions with alternative processional styles which are 'informally organized, with a hazily defined route and a constant interchange between performers and spectators, which makes all of them equal players in the event' (Kirshenblatt-Gimblett & McNamara, 1985:3). Here, we encounter further competition between symbolic and spatial identifications of 'place'. Audience involvement of this kind is a key historical feature of alternative theatre, especially in outdoor contexts. The community lantern processions, parades of large puppets, stilt-walking and street animations developed within the alternative theatre tradition have since become the standard vocabulary of participatory and celebratory arts practice in civic contexts, although their spatial boundaries are increasingly corralled within crash barriers and traffic cones.

Engagement by artists with landscape and topography was also a feature of the alternative theatre movement, which increasingly saw the land itself as a

dynamic element within performance. John Fox fondly locates this evolving dialogue within a 'fake primitive ruralism' which emerged from a revival of interest in 'pre-industrial ancestral links and alternative congregational and spiritual ways outside Christianity and civilisation' (Fox, 2002: 39), a critique which chimes with Relph's notions of 'vertical' heritage, anchored in concepts of 'rootedness and authenticity' (Relph, 1976). Thus, performance artists and alternative society in general began to turn their focus onto the ancient sacred sites of Britain; its ley lines and 'lines of desire'; the function of its ancient monuments as astronomical calendars and as sites of collective, often processional, performativity (Bender, 1996; Pearson MP *et al*, 2006). For Fox, 'the pattern of working in the open air, attending to astronomical, tidal, diurnal, nocturnal and seasonal rhythms, and the weather, provides us with a useful geophysical and ecological perspective, a stimulus for imagery and mythology' (Fox, 2002: 40). Thus, artists began to adopt an integrative approach to outdoor work; one in which the physical dynamics of a location, its gradients, views, pathways, orientations and relationships to the wider world became considered features of the aesthetic and symbolic dynamics of performance.

Wilkie's survey of site-specific and outdoor arts companies outlines the generic variations which emerged as artists explored the relationship between performance and landscape, topography, site and location (Wilkie, 2002a: 150). For Wilkie, the most straightforward of these was 'outside theatre:' the simple staging of a theatre piece in an outdoor location, such as a Shakespeare play performed in a park. 'Site-sympathetic' performances evolved as the staging of existing, independent performance texts in selected sites, perhaps chosen for their association with dramatic theme or physical ability to amplify the effect of the piece. 'Site-generic' performances were 'generated for a series of like sites'

and able to tour to similar sites in different locations. Finally, Wilkie reserves the term 'site-specific' for performances which were produced for a single site and which reflected the specific histories, archaeologies, morphologies and associations of that site alone.

The developing incorporation of the land as an element of performance was also reflected in the way artists worked in community to explore local attachments to place and to unearth alternative heritage narratives through community performance. The 'community theatre' and 'community plays' of the 1970s saw communities and artists exploring 'hidden histories of repression' which were often associated with land-rights, agrarian reform and the effects of industrialisation on rural communities. For Kershaw, 'by animating history, community plays aim to make the past vividly alive in the present. Many scenes are set in known local locations, so local geography and topography gradually emerge as significant to the action' (Kershaw 1992: 193). Here, alternative theatre practitioners revisited the structures of Parkerian pageant within a countercultural politics. On a more practical level, Mason celebrates the flexible creative vocabulary of scale and materials which is available to artists working in outdoor settings, materials such as fire, water, vehicles and machinery. Mason also identifies how outdoor theatre enjoys a dynamic relationship with place and geography 'due to changing conditions of place and weather,' (Mason, 1992: 88).

Wilkie presents a view of site-specific performance as a 'process of negotiation between three sets of rules: those of the site, the performance, and the spectators' (Wilkie, 2002b: 255). Her analysis of the methods by which performance, place and spectator combine to generate meaning in outdoor performance articulates both the transgressive potential thus offered to radical

theatre-makers and the hegemonic, normative potentials of procession as a vehicle for economic and cultural regeneration. These rules affect both how audiences experience movement through space and their dramatic view of the performance, a view which is itself influenced by 'the ambiguity of deciding what is part of the performance and what is part of the site' (Wilkie, 2002b)

This developmental history of processional alternative theatre practice thus sets an essential context for the ethnographic study of carnival practice in the fieldwork area which follows in this thesis. Alternative theatre practitioners led the way in the production of cultural performances which sought to reconnect people with places, as a challenge to hegemonic culture and as a reassertion of what might be seen as a cultural 'phenomenology of landscape' (Tilley, 1994: 11-14). As Gardiner explains in relation to Bakhtin's association of the carnivalesque with 'grotesque' nature (1993:774):

The carnivalesque functioned to reverse the estrangement of humanity from nature fostered by the hierarchical medieval order, to re-familiarize human beings with the natural world (including human nature) and thereby bring it "closer to man."

(Gardiner, 1993:774)

A key question for this thesis is the degree to which these radical techniques have been assimilated into cultural policies which preserve the vocabularies, but not the politics of alternative theatre practice, in the service of notions of creative and cultural economy. This process is examined in detail in Chapter Seven by way of analysis of carnival ethnographies from the fieldwork area, an understanding which draws on the historical contextualisation of cultural policy which follows.

## **2:6 Developments in cultural policy: from the fringes to the mainstream**

This analysis of the historic development of carnivalesque procession and site-specific performance in UK alternative theatre, alongside the influence of

diasporic Caribbean carnival traditions and the role of Gunpowder, charity and seaside carnivals in the south-west, offers insight into why these cultural performances have been adopted so readily by official policy-making bodies as instrumental methods of cultural intervention. By moving outside established theatre buildings, alternative practitioners began to develop more direct interactions with the public, working across the borders of class and location. Mason asserts that 'without the defined spatial arrangements of indoor theatre all kinds of interaction with the public are possible' (Mason, 1992:11). The Gunpowder carnival tradition of Bridgwater, for example, defines the town's cultural identity, influences the wider carnival vocabularies of the region and is part of an estimated, annual £2million contribution to the local economy generated by the Somerset carnival circuit (Tallon, 2007:259). Seaside carnivals along the coast of Devon and Dorset are an established feature of local life and the tourist experience. Outdoor cultural performances such as these therefore offer a range of performance efficacies which have been adopted by mainstream institutions to instrumental purposes of place-making and ideological recruitment.



Fig 19 *Storyweir*, by Proboscis. Site specific artwork on the Jurassic Coast, 2012. Photo: Pete Millson.

The rationale of the current Arts Council *New Landscapes* plan for outdoor arts (ACE, 2008) encapsulates this historical arc of outdoor performance in the UK, one which has seen it develop from a radical, countercultural reinvigoration of popular forms and the power of spectacle within communities into an assimilation of these techniques by the commercial mainstream and their application to economic and governmental concerns. Since the 1990s, 'official' cultural policy within the Arts Council has developed from early explorations of the instrumental efficacies of performance as an interpretative tool in environmental education (Carter & Masters, 1998) to the development of practical frameworks for the use of these art forms for place-making exercises in urban regeneration, multiculturalism and 'community cohesion' (Hall, 2002; Micklem, 2006; Audit Commission, 2010). *New Landscapes* (ACE, 2008) also establishes a framework for the standardisation of 'artistic quality,' the professionalization of artists, the commercial marketing and distribution of outdoor performance as product, and its use as national spectacle within state-sponsored projects such as the Cultural Olympiad. As such, this development of state policy reflects a decline of the progressive efficacies of alternative theatre and an assimilation of countercultural vocabularies into the mainstream project of neo-liberal capitalism.

Wilkie identifies the 1980s as the period in which the term 'site-specific' began to gain currency in theatrical terms. As it did so, site specific performance also emerged as a form whose 'intervention into everyday spaces has meant that its effect might be harnessed and put into the service of social and political concerns and issues of community' (Wilkie, 2002a: 141). Historically, as state funding for the arts became more competitive and concentrated, many practitioners relied on a 'social' justification for their art in order to secure

financial support for their work. Wilkie locates site-specific performance at the 'intersection of a number of territories [among them] tourism, town planning, art, community, and social control.' Her survey of companies raises a view of performances in this sector as 'a public platform for a broad programme of training and work in the community.' This analysis supports a historical view that techniques fired in the crucible of countercultural art have been steadily co-opted to mainstream purposes, and that funding allocated to outdoor and site specific art 'tends to be less about funding the art itself, and more about the vast process behind it' (Wilkie, 2002a: 148).

Mason also assesses the developmental arc of outdoor performance as a movement away from the 'dynamic period of innovation during the 1970s' towards 'more market-oriented productions' (Mason, 1992: 205). By the 1990s, the influence of countercultural performance art and alternative, political theatre within outdoor work had declined. Mason takes the view that the 'radical nature' of outdoor performance had been 'toned down to make it more 'acceptable' as artists struggled to find funding' (Mason, 1992: 205).

By this point, a process of assimilation of the techniques, if not the politics, of alternative, participatory, outdoor and processional performance into the cultural and commercial mainstream had begun. Kelly's prediction ten years earlier that alternative theatre and community arts 'was ceasing to be a movement of activists and beginning to become a profession' (Kelly, 1984: 31) appeared to have been vindicated. Kershaw expresses this shift as a tactical pragmatism, carnivalesque in itself, on the part of artists whose 'increased dependence on the state can be read as both a prudent political tactic used to stay in oppositional business *and* a craven accommodation to the status quo' (Kershaw, 1992:147). Mason identifies a similar shift in site-specific work during

this period towards a definition as 'environmental Arts'; a genre which began to enjoy 'a belated honeymoon with arts funding bodies' (Mason, 1992: 205).

The 1998 report *Arts and the Natural Heritage* (Carter & Masters, 1998) offers key insights into the development of institutional thinking within environmental organisations in particular with regard to the increasing role of art and performance as strategies for site-interpretation, place-making and community engagement. The report, commissioned by Scottish Natural Heritage and the Scottish Arts Council, establishes performance-based work as the 'ideal' art form in this regard. For Carter and Masters (1998:2), outdoor performance offers an 'ephemeral' performativity that leaves no permanent physical trace on the land which might degrade the physical environment or cause lasting offence to the cultural sensitivities of the visiting public. Carter and Masters also position the relationship of art and performance to landscape firmly in the affective mode; their efficacies operating in the realm of emotion as opposed to that of cognitive or scientific understanding. Outdoor and site-specific performance are seen here as methods by which audiences can be emotionally engaged with a location and develop an affective bond with a preferred place-identity that promotes conservation tendencies and sentiments of associative value. The report also embraces the celebratory modes developed by alternative theatre practitioners as methods of community engagement, promoting 'community celebration or involvement work, linked to the natural as well as cultural heritage,' which 'aim to reinforce a community's sense of identity and pride' (Carter & Masters, 1998: 6).

Carter and Masters make pragmatic acknowledgement of the contribution that projects which link the arts and natural heritage can make to the economic development of an area by promoting tourism agendas and 'attracting people to

a site who might not otherwise have visited' (1998:7). They set an early, progressive tone in encouraging structured, dialogic relationships between institutions and artists which balance artistic and instrumental concerns. However, the report also carries a warning to organisations considering such involvement. Its tone reflects an implicit sense of danger. Here, working with artists constitutes a risk to institutions that choose to engage with techniques developed as part of the countercultural evolution of alternative theatre. Artists require 'freedom of expression' (1998: 10), and working with them is an 'adventure' which does not offer definite or quantifiable outcomes. Carter and Masters' report distils the inherent tensions that exist between the cultural-democratic genealogies of countercultural artists and the aims of mainstream institutions which are seeking to use the arts to promote preferred notions with regard to landscape, place and identity.

By 2002, Arts Council England (ACE) had established a view of the civic role of outdoor performance and street arts in particular as significant features of cultural policy with regard to public notions of place. Increasingly, performances of this type were being incorporated into strategies of urban renewal as cultural features of post-industrial regeneration and the necessary ideological recruitment of communities to such projects. In its *Strategy and Report on Street Arts* (Hall, 2002) ACE states that 'street arts have been used extensively by local authorities and regeneration bodies to provide positive cultural profile for specific areas, and as a key driver for regenerating a variety of urban spaces,' (Hall, 2002: 4).

Hall (2002) also recognises the diversity of creative vocabularies at play within street arts and its history as a focus for political action. He asserts the ability of the form to 'defamiliarize the surroundings of the audience' (Hall, 2002:7) a

technique long-recognised by artists seeking to create alternative visions of social organisation in their work. Finally, Hall's critique of the free-expressive relationship between artist, place and audience for street arts offers a neat summary of the development of this reinvigorated genre within the alternative theatre movement:

The audience is participating in an event within a specific situation, and in a specific spatial context, in a way that is qualitatively different from the way in which a theatre audience relates to a play. It is the freer relationships with the audience, and with the environment, which cannot be controlled that are the defining characteristics of street arts. The challenges that come from these relationships, and the opportunities for spontaneity that they present, provide a depth of inspiration and stimulation for the artist that more traditional forms often cannot.

(Hall, 2002: 7)

Hall's snapshot of street arts activity in the UK in 2002 reveals a growing recognition among institutions and local authorities as to the cultural and social efficacies of this kind of performance. However, the sector at this time was limited in its scope due to a lack of clarity in the funding system, a 'lack of consistency at regional and national level to recognising the value of the art form,' and a shortage of officers within funding bodies who possessed sufficient knowledge about street arts to be able actively support it (Hall, 2002: 2). Arts Council and Regional Arts Board investment in street arts in 2002 was low, and the sector lacked advocacy. With the exception of opportunities arising from independent summer schools, residencies and workshop programmes run by countercultural groups such as Welfare State, International Outlaw University (ex-Welfare State) and Emergency Exit Arts, formal training opportunities were few. The general artistic quality of street arts in the UK was considered by the Arts Council to be 'poor' in comparison with similar work in Europe, where outdoor and street performance enjoyed higher 'cultural importance' (Hall, 2002: 13). Notwithstanding this set of challenges, Hall's report identifies during this

period 'a zeitgeist shift towards more celebratory and communal events taking place outside,' (Hall, 2002: 13). Coinciding with a restructuring of the funding system, the ACE report set new conditions for the recognition of the cultural influence and social efficacies of street arts and outdoor performance. It also promoted its increased funding as a significant strand within Arts Council activity, a factor which has ultimately led to the development of significant structures of formal education and training in carnival arts and the creation of a professionalized cadre of carnival artists.

Hall's report was followed by the Arts Council's *Street Arts Healthcheck* (Micklem, 2006) in which the definition of street arts was expanded to include 'a variety of forms including theatre, music, circus, dance, carnival, mela, installation, pyrotechnics and spectacle.' By this point, the wider efficacies of street arts and outdoor performance were recognised as persistent and enduring features of mainstream place-making:

As well as the intrinsic artistic value of much of this work, street arts has proven an extraordinarily potent force with regeneration, social inclusion, participation and tourism agendas.

(Micklem, 2006: 4)

Micklem identifies two key factors which influenced the development of street arts and outdoor performance during this period. The first of these factors was the financial reliance of artists on the production of visually spectacular performance work for corporate clients. The second factor was the seminal performance of *The Sultan's Elephant*, by the French Royal de Luxe theatre company in London between May 4 and 7, 2006 (Micklem, 2006: 8). With regard to the former, the ACE report implicitly confirms the decline of the countercultural tendency in outdoor performance signalled by Mason (1992) and Kershaw (1992) and its replacement by commissioned work from

‘commercial partners who value visual impact over art-form development’ (Micklem, 2006: 8). This movement also signalled an increasing professionalization of the sector away from its culturally-democratic beginnings.

Fifteen years earlier John Fox of Welfare State had predicted exactly such a decline. His paper *A Plea for Poetry*, presented to the National Arts and Media Strategy Unit in 1991, warned that public art was increasingly commercialised and was being translated exclusively via discourses of urban regeneration, tourism and economic development. Fox predicted the neo-liberal drift in state-funded arts production when he referred to this process as: ‘a rationalisation written in the jargon of the dominant culture of grocerism’ (Fox, 1991). Such a translation parallels the experience of Welfare State itself as a company between 1968 and 1991, and its journey from alternative travelling circus to civic directors of *Glasgow All Lit Up*, the spectacular official celebration for the city’s role as European City of Culture. Increasingly, Fox found himself producing work where the cultural-democratic, participatory elements of the process were limited, the spectacular took precedence over the meaningful, vernacular poetry in performance was reduced and he felt himself becoming a ‘state-licensed buffoon’. For Fox:

The history of art and culture over the last few hundred years ...can be seen as a continuous erosion of home-made, participatory art, craft and ritual and its replacement by standardised products fashioned by trained professionals for sale. Furthermore these products are not ideologically neutral. They reflect the preoccupations and values or otherwise serve the interests of a relatively small group of people – the privileged within the industrialised western world.

(Fox, 2002: 141)

Micklem agrees that much UK street art in 2006 ‘fails to adequately describe a narrative,’ and creates ‘compelling visual imagery but with acknowledged deficiencies in the ability to tell a story’ (Micklem, 2006: 8). Perhaps unwittingly,

his critique signals the decline of a key efficacy of alternative outdoor theatre; a decline in the politics of its narrative function which signalled a lessening of its attempt to lead its audience into alternative visions and mythologies of human experience. As Fox puts it: 'by 1991...I had a sneaking anxiety that however we struggled in the context of broad-based mass fire shows, most audiences and many local authorities and promoters couldn't tell the difference between heart-bashed poetry and Disney turn-on' (Fox, 2002: 138).

Micklem's report serves to reinforce the role of street arts as a symbolic function within 'inter-place competition' (Harvey, 1996). Micklem points to the existence of a highly-developed outdoor performance circuit of street arts festivals on the European mainland, and stresses the both exportability of UK outdoor and street performance and the financial opportunities offered by the European circuit. He contrasts this circuit with the UK, where free, independent street arts festivals were declining after a period of expansion in the run up to the Millennium celebrations, and were disappearing due to subsequent cuts in local authority funding (Micklem, 2006: 12). By way of compensation, commercial showcases began to develop for the promotion of outdoor performances to the European circuit.

A consistent feature throughout the changing culture of outdoor performance in the UK, however, has been its popularity with audiences. The size of these audiences, ranging from tens of thousands to hundreds of thousands at some extended events, was also becoming a consistent feature of these types of performance, outstripping many other types of event. Micklem attributes this to 'changes in society and a culture which is developing a new relationship with the outdoors' (Micklem, 2006: 13). He also points to one highly influential event in particular, the performance of *The Sultan's Elephant*, by the French Royal de

Luxe theatre company in London between May 4 and 7, 2006. Micklem states: '*The Sultan's Elephant* is estimated to have attracted audiences of one million people...the public response to this work has been extraordinary' (Micklem, 2006: 13).

The Royal De Luxe processional performance in London was indeed spectacular, featuring a huge animatronic elephant and a giant marionette of a young girl, surrounded by a large, mobile retinue of associated human-scale performers. The narrative evolved over three days as the performance moved through the city, attracting audiences of up to a million people.



Fig 20 The Sultan's Elephant, by Royale De Luxe, London, 7.5.06. (Reuters/Stephen Hird)

Writing in the Observer on May 14, 2006, theatre critic Susannah Clapp described *The Sultan's Elephant* as 'a staggering spectacle that has changed the way we think about street theatre' (Clapp, 2006). *The Sultan's Elephant* demonstrated the power of outdoor performances to attract huge numbers of people as audience, and did so primarily by virtue of its size and scale; the

sheer spectacle of its presence within the everyday spaces of Central London. For Read (2006) 'the images were marvellous, the crowds were huge but the language was essentially sizeist...almost everyone who saw it spoke about it in terms of scale and little else' (Read, 2006:523). Read further criticises the show's avoidance of political engagement with its location. For Read, 'the opportunity for exposing the locality, one of the most entrenched power-bases in the western world, to a more sustained, poetic critique, would not be beyond Royal de Luxe' (Read, 2006:523). Read suggests that despite its occupation of the city over three days, the performance also missed opportunities to contest the meaning of public space that historically radical outdoor practitioners would have been keen to explore. Furthermore, he situates the event within a chronology of large-scale spectacular 'animations' of civic space in the run up to the 2012 Olympics:

With the Olympics heading for Stratford in 2012 and all the sizeist mumbojumbo that will attend the ceremonial of that dubious paean to body-efficiency, these reservations regarding hollow spectacle will escalate not diminish.

(Read, 2006:523)

For Eaglestone (2006) *The Sultan's Elephant* was a triumph of spectacular machinery, and technical achievement, which reflected an impressive level of civic organisation and encouraged a de-familiarization of the urban landscape in which it took place. Citing Heidegger, Eaglestone contests Read's analysis and reflects on how the performance drew his attention to the nature of the everyday world in which it existed; to the spatiality of the streets, to their 'differences in colour (the dark of the tarmac, the roughness of the curb stones, the red and yellows of the advertising)' (Eaglestone, 2006:524). For Eaglestone, 'the hugeness of the elephant – its 'out of scaleness' – made me look at the second, third and fourth stories of the buildings around it, the details around their

windows and the decorations on their roofs' (*ibid*). Here the effect of the spectacle is indeed primary, but primary in its re-positioning of the relationship between the observer and the nature of the urban space, rather than as a distraction from that space.

However, and in spite of, the spectacular distractions of *The Sultan's Elephant* in terms of its re-framing of public space, Eaglestone finds himself troubled by the textual narrative of the performance. This was published as four downloadable, Victorianesque, Jules Verne-inspired newspapers, which Eaglestone refers to as an 'almost a set piece of orientalism: a sultan, complete with irrational rages; eunuchs; five concubines; naked African warriors and 'jabbering' witch doctors; 10,000 enslaved Egyptians sewing and so on' (*ibid*) For Eaglestone, beyond the spectacle, the performance and its million-strong audience took on a more worrying aspect, that of imperial propaganda:

This orientalist spectacle was proceeding down these great streets with their Victorian architecture, originally funded in no small part by Empire, past the statues of Imperial generals from colonial wars. The huge elephant was not, was no longer, a challenge to these, but rather of one piece with the spectacle of Empire, a celebration of Empire, in fact.

(Eaglestone, 2006: 524)

Perhaps unsurprisingly, the official response to this £695,000 cost to the taxpayer (Micklem, 2006:7) was somewhat different. Speaking at the International Federation of Arts Councils and Culture Agencies World Summit on Arts & Culture in June 2006, which took as its theme the role of the arts in regeneration under the banner *Transforming Places, Transforming Lives*, the Culture Secretary Tessa Jowell said of the show:

Even now it seems incredible, but the spell that 'The Sultan's Elephant' cast on those who saw it meant that for those few precious hours, everyone involved felt a sense of kinship and connectedness. Part of a single life-changing experience. And all in a single city.

(Jowell, 2006)

The longer term effects of *The Sultan's Elephant* on the development of cultural policy in the UK with regard to outdoor arts and street performance are not to be under-estimated. The show re-affirmed on a world stage the ability of free outdoor performances to attract huge audiences in public spaces. It was a demonstration of civic organisational power, political largesse and international cultural linkage. When the Department of Culture and Local Government published its *New Performance Framework for Local Authorities & Local Authority Partnerships* (DCLG, 2007) in October 2007, the fact that one million people had attended this arts event was a lightbulb moment for the cultural sector of local government in the fieldwork area.

Framed within the *New Performance Framework for Local Authorities & Local Authority Partnerships*, and dedicated to the outcome of creating 'stronger communities,' National Indicator 11: Engagement with the Arts (NI 11) established targets for local government with regard to 'attendance at and/or participation in the arts at the local level' (Audit Commission, 2010). NI 11 was defined as 'the percentage of the adult population in a local area that have either attended an arts event or participated in an arts activity at least three times in the past 12 months' (DCMS, 2008). Between 2007 and 2010, local authorities, in negotiation with central government, were given the option to choose NI 11 as a key priority within their Local Area Agreements. In doing so they committed themselves to increasing adult engagement in the arts in their area by between 3% and 6% by 2010. If successful, they received a reward grant from central Government. Progress towards the target was monitored by the Audit Commission by way of a sample survey in which local people were asked to complete a questionnaire about their level of local engagement and participation in arts and culture.

In the first decade of the 21<sup>st</sup> century, the proven ability of outdoor arts to be 'attractive and accessible to an audience far wider than those who visit indoor theatres' (Mason, 1992: 11), its repeated assessment at policy level as an art form which attracts large audiences (Hall, 2002; Micklem, 2006), the million-strong success of *The Sultan's Elephant* and the potential financial reward for meeting NI 11 targets all turned carnival, street procession and outdoor performance into attractive propositions for UK local authorities. With a single outdoor event, local authorities could engage hundreds, if not thousands, of people who might not otherwise visit a theatre or exhibition, and get paid by the government for doing so. Support for carnival, processions, street arts and site specific theatre thus acquired a new-found rationale in the cultural sector of local government. One arts administrator interviewed in this research cited NI 11 as a primary rationale for the re-invigoration of outdoor arts festivals such as the *Inside Out* festival in Dorset, for example:

*Outdoor arts is where people can access high quality arts who wouldn't otherwise attend arts events. That is the bottom line. The Arts Council is saying that, Dorset is also saying that...and they invested hugely in Inside Out. Dorset County Council see it as a major way of reaching large numbers of people. The first one in 2007 reached 30,000 people, so big numbers... How do you reach everyone? Do it where they are. So those drivers are behind it, NI 11 and the Arts Council.*

(Jessica, Arts Development Professional, 27.10.10)

The subsequent ACE *New Landscapes* Outdoor Arts Development Plan (ACE, 2008) reflected the relevance of outdoor performance to NI 11 and the place of large-scale spectacle as a feature of national and local government-sponsored programmes. The document stresses from the outset its agenda to 'enable more people to participate in more places' and acknowledges that 'local authorities have a unique and crucial role as supporters, funders, licensors and promoters of outdoor arts activities' (ACE, 2008:2) thus consolidating the in-

roads made by official institutions into what was once a countercultural creative sector.

*New Landscapes* also consolidates the role of outdoor performance and as a feature of neighbourhood renewal and urban regeneration. It recognises the potential of the sector as a highly visible form of public art within official programmes such as the Cultural Olympiad, Liverpool's role as European Capital of Culture in 2008, and the 2014 Commonwealth Games in Glasgow. In the aftermath of high profile events such as *The Sultan's Elephant*, this document signals a significant movement for outdoor processional performance (and other forms of site-specific and public art) from the 'fragile' cultural fringe (Hall, 2002) towards the centre of mainstream cultural activity. For the Arts Council, outdoor arts, by this point in its history, has achieved a status as 'a viable and essential part of the arts ecology, reaching new and more audiences and increasing engagement in the arts whilst supporting our partners in meeting their own agendas' (ACE, 2008:6).

Alongside its re-definition of the genre to include 'street arts, tented circus, carnival, celebratory and participatory arts, spectacle, community arts and art in the public realm,' *New Landscapes* reasserts both the convenient ephemerality of outdoor performance highlighted by Carter and Masters (its 'time-limited' nature) and the instrumental ability of outdoor arts to work across a range of sectors: rural, urban, participatory and educational (ACE, 2008:7). The report recognises the longstanding efficacy of outdoor performance which 'uniquely links its audience to the landscape' and its affective, interpretative function, through which 'the qualities of the work, its aesthetics, and the nature of the participatory experience reflect the relationship with the environment in which the work is presented' (ACE, 2008:7).

The potential of outdoor performance as spectacle is also recognised in the *New Landscapes* plan, which emphasises ACE's commitment to supporting large-scale work in particular as a feature of the Cultural Olympiad, and suggests that televised coverage of large-scale performance events should be transmitted nationwide via the 18 *Live Site* outdoor screens set up by LOCOG in the run up to 2012 (ACE, 2008: 17; 25). Thus, *New Landscapes* sets out an institutional vision for the mainstreaming of outdoor arts, a vision to be achieved via the development of national infrastructure, international commissioning and formal training programmes in the art form within state education. Further, it sets out to continue the professionalization of the sector through the dissemination of 'best practice' and stresses the centrality of partnerships between outdoor artists and the heritage, tourism and commercial sectors.

## **2:7 Conclusions:**

The project of this chapter has been to establish a conceptual and contextual framework for the analysis of the ethnographic data which follows. This framework allows us to consider the contemporary practices of carnival in the fieldwork area with reference to historical precedent, critical theory and a Bakhtinian understanding of the performative and affective qualities of carnival. As such, the chapter has addressed the research questions in the following ways:

- **What is carnival?**

This chapter has established a conceptual framework for the contribution that this thesis makes to the wider performative discourse of carnival as considered

by Bakhtin (1984); Holloway and Kneale, (2003); Eagleton (1981); Gardiner (1993); Gluckman (1965); Jackson (1992); Koerner (2004); Lunacharsky (1931); Russo (1986); Roach (1993); Sales (1983); Schechner (2003) and Stallybrass & White (1986) among others. A key point that emerges from this review is that 'carnival' is a highly contested and paradoxical term, which encompasses a range of cultural performance practices in the fieldwork area. A further understanding centres on the dynamic inter-subjectivity of carnivalesque experience itself. This review asserts that carnival creates a rhizomatic hybridity within its cultural performance, through which participants encounter 'forces of flux, change and difference' (Gardiner, 1993: 769).<sup>40</sup> Combined with theories of performance and social drama, these insights allow us to recognize and apply carnival within this thesis, as Stallybrass and White suggest (1986:6), as 'a mode of understanding, a positivity, a cultural analytic'.

- **How do participants experience the 'liminal performativity' of carnival, and how do they describe affects of 'energy', 'transformation', 'transgression', 'ritual' and 'social drama' within carnival and street procession?**

This review also allows us to establish a critical framework for the consideration of the above research question, by way of the theoretical connection I make between Bakhtinian carnival affects, notions of 'performativity' as expressed within Performance Studies and the conceptual similarity between carnivalesque experience and the 'event' as described by cultural geographers within Non-Representational Theory (Caputo, 2007; Anderson & Harrison, 2010): described as an affective state of 'becoming'. This theoretical connection offers a framework for understanding how participants experience carnival in an affective sense and for the contribution this thesis makes to a wider,

---

<sup>40</sup> See Chapter Four.

performance-centred analytical discourse with regard to carnival's ability to generate simultaneous, multiple subjectivities of practice, display, place and identity (Turner, 1969; Van Gennep, 1960; Schechner, 2003; Deleuze & Guattari, 1987).

- **How has carnival been conceptualized, constructed and performed in the fieldwork area over time?**

The geographies of processional culture presented in this review allow us to 'locate' carnival in the south west UK within a specific set of geographical, historical and socio-cultural practices. These practices reflect a hybridity of influences, including pageants and parades: (Woods, 1999; Ryan, 2007; Harvey DC et al, 2007); Protestant Guy Fawkes celebrations: (Tallon, 2007; Cressy, 1989; Bridgwater, 2012; Squibbs, 1982); Philanthropic parades: (Georgiou, 2012; Lloyd, 2002) and the development of the seaside resorts of Devon and Dorset: (Walton, 1983; Travis, 1993). This question also allows us to locate South West carnival within geographies of processional culture that, broadly, include historiographies of processional social drama and protest, the development of Caribbean carnival in the UK, alternative theatre and participatory 'fine art' approaches to procession, such as the work of artist Jeremy Deller. With regard to these latter considerations, this review also asserts that they emerged in part in response to the cultural politics of the Arts and Crafts Movement and the development of Western Marxism, a politics that contributed to radical vocabularies of countercultural, theatrical street procession and participatory arts from the 1960s onwards as a reaction to 'mass culture'. While recognising the essential hybridity of carnival and resisting the temptation to over-categorise, this review frames my consideration of the nature and development of carnival practice in our three research locations: the

town carnivals of Seaton and Weymouth and the state-sponsored Olympic festivity of *Battle for the Winds*.

- **What is the history of cultural policy development with regard to carnival and procession in the UK?**

This chapter has presented a detailed historiography of the development of outdoor arts policy in the UK since the 1990s (Carter & Masters, 1998; Hall, 2002; Micklem, 2006; Audit Commission, 2010; ACE, 2008). It presents an interpretation of instrumental, state-funded, policy-driven arts practice as a cultural vocabulary for programmes of site-specific environmental interpretation, post-industrial regeneration, economic place-making, multiculturalism and the representation of local, national and global identity. It also describes how hitherto countercultural practices of street procession and carnival have been effectively assimilated into mainstream, state-sponsored cultural policy (Roach, 1993; Berleant-Schiller, 1991; Campbell, 1988; Cohen, 1980; Jackson, 1988; Juneja, 1988; Nurse, 1999; Kershaw, 1992; De Cruz, 2005; Schechner, 1995; Fox, 2002; Mason, 1992; Wilkie, 2002). A key consideration for the analysis that follows in thesis is the degree to which this assimilation has preserved the vocabularies, but not the politics, of processional alternative theatre practice, tuning them to the service of neo-liberal creative and cultural economy.

- **How does carnival operate as a festive enactment of place and identity?**
- **How does carnival practice operate as a cultural container for the symbolic construction of 'community' (Cohen, 1985)?**
- **What are the distinctions between 'vernacular' and non-vernacular carnival creativities?**

Key distinctions emerge in this review between vernacular and professionalised carnival practice, and between notions of commodified 'mass culture', 'folk-practice' and communitarianism. This chapter has identified a contested geography of processional culture in the fieldwork area, each aspect of which reflects a different set of considerations with regard to the discourses and vocabularies of symbolic place-making, to the politics of festivity and to the role of carnival within notions of place-identity and 'community'. This review has also re-affirmed the Bakhtinian conceptualisation of carnival as contest between forces of change and stasis. This observation also offers an opportunity to link progressive discourses of 'place' from within Cultural Geography (Massey, 1997; Lippard, 1997; Harvey, 1996) with the notion of performativity, as expressed within Performance Studies; a chance to see 'place' and 'identity' as 'carnavalesque' concepts. Further, the cultural politics of Western Marxism suggests that the cultural democracy of carnival empowers people in public space in opposition to hegemony. It offers a progressive contestation of the symbolic construction of community (Cohen, 1985) and destabilises the 'meaning' that turns 'space' into 'place' (Poole, 2009; Cresswell, 2004: 12). At the same time, however, the history of cultural policy here presented suggests that carnival is a site for the exercise of cultural capital and power. It can be used as a cultural tool for the maintenance of preferred, heritage-based notions of place and social identity, presenting a particular symbolic order for public consumption and recruiting the public to its performance (Harvey DC *et al* 2007; Marston,1988). This is the essential paradox of carnival, a tension that pervades my research findings and which informs the ethnographies which follow.

## Chapter Three: A Qualitative Methodology:

### 3:1 Why Qualitative Research?

Throughout my research my primary aim was to engage with carnival through practical participation and observation, alongside its practitioners, in 'live' situations. This choice, in large part, arose from an understanding, derived from my early reading, that the cultural performances of carnival might be viewed as moments in the lives of communities that 'testify to the power relations, struggles and negotiations that allow particular versions and visions of the world to be realised in particular places at particular times' (Smith, 2001: 25).

Smith's further assertion that for the qualitative researcher the world is 'an assemblage of competing social constructions, representations and performances' (*ibid*: 25) resonated with my reading on the social and symbolic construction of 'place' (Harvey, 1996; Massey, 1997; Cresswell, 2004). The methods of qualitative research also seemed to match closely the practices which had long informed my professional participatory arts work. Both qualitative research and participatory arts practice rely on an 'intensive' engagement (Harre, 1979) with individual and group experiences of 'becoming' (Whitehead, 1929). Kelly articulates this process as a: 'recognition that there is a process of co-authorship, of collectivity, underlying *all* creative activities' (Kelly, 1984: 137). The practice of ethnography, as an inscription of processual 'life-worlds' (Buttimer, 1976), seemed to offer an affinity with participatory arts practice, and a focus on participating in individual and group experiences of creative 'process' (Kelly, 1984: 137).

### **3:1:1 Ethnography and Participant Observation:**

Ethnography offered me a way of approaching carnival from the inside (Cook, 1998) by means of participant observation and creative participation in carnival and processional performance alongside small groups of carnivalists and professional street performers. Cook describes participant observation as a method by which a researcher gathers data by 'deliberately immersing themselves into [a community's] everyday rhythms and routines', in order to: 'develop relationships with people who can show and tell them what is going on there' (1998:167). Through this method, data gathered through observation and participation in group activities is recorded as fieldnotes and re-constructed as written accounts for analysis. In my early reading I was also encouraged by the 'Grounded Theory' approach of Glaser and Strauss (1967), that gives 'priority to developing, rather than verifying, analytic propositions' (Emerson *et al*, 1995: 143). This approach also seemed to offer a shared ethic with culturally-democratic community arts methods, namely that the 'situated' or 'local' knowledges of subjects should be the primary focus of the practice (Haraway, 1988; Geertz, 1983) and that an understanding of the meaning of these practices could be gained by experiencing them directly, in an emergent fashion.

### **3:1:2: Attempting Grounded Theory:**

In summary, Grounded Theory is a development from 'symbolic interactionism' (Blumer, 1937) wherein the researcher seeks to observe and analyse how 'social interactions create meaning' (Heath & Cowley, 2004: 142). Corbin & Strauss describe how, within Grounded Theory approaches, data collection draws on a range of sources in the field, from interviews and observations to

'government documents, video tapes, newspapers, letters, and books - anything that may shed light on questions under study' (1990: 5). These mixed methods are established through 'discovery', as the researcher is prompted to compare and contrast emergent categories within social process, adopting a method of ongoing conceptual analysis that is led by events and observations in the field.

Analysis thus becomes an ongoing part of data collection, rather than a staged process which begins once 'data' has been collected (Corbin & Strauss, 1990: 6). It is used to inform and direct the developing research by way of developing comparative questions, attuning to patterns and variations in social practice, and developing theoretical hypotheses which may be tested and revised in the field through observation and interviewing, for example. The influence of wider conditions on behaviour and practice in the fieldwork setting is also considered, namely: 'economic conditions, cultural values, political trends, social movements, and so on' (*ibid*: 11). In this approach, as Corbin and Strauss explain:

'the incidents, events, and happenings are taken as, or analyzed as, potential indicators of phenomena, which are thereby given conceptual labels ... In the grounded theory approach such concepts become more numerous and more abstract as the analysis continues'

(Corbin & Strauss, 1990: 7).

Thus, the research process involves a developmental, comparative categorisation of concepts within social experience, centred within sample groups that are 'representative of [the phenomenon] selected for study' (*ibid*: 8).

Ultimately, the aim is, as Corbin and Strauss further assert (1990: 8):

...to build a theoretical explanation by specifying phenomena in terms of conditions that give rise to them, how they are expressed through action/interaction, the consequences that result from them, and variations of these qualifiers.

### **3:2 Access to the field:**

Thus, I sought to engage with the social and creative processes by which people were generating symbolic constructions of identity, community and place through carnival practice in the fieldwork area. I applied a methodology of personal encounter and networking that led me from the organising committees of vernacular town carnivals and professional arts-development organisations into extended periods of active participation alongside the grassroots members of Westham Carnival Club, Weymouth Town Carnival committee, Seaton Town Carnival committee and the *Cartwheelin'* collective of professional, Dorset-based street theatre performers within *Battle for the Winds*.

On Carnival Day in Seaton and Weymouth, I also conducted short vox-pop interviews with participants and audience, and recorded audio and written reflections by way of self-reflexive field notes. I conducted historical research in local archives and museums, and policy research relevant to the cultural programmes of local authorities, NGOs and the Cultural Olympiad, using this research to inform my ethnographic observation and interview questioning.

Most importantly, ethnography offered an immersive research practice that permitted the reflexive integration of my situated, professional knowledge and carnivalesque identity as a street performer with my observations in the field. It also allowed for the 'acquisition of 'insider knowledge' through interaction, observation, participation in activities and informal interviewing' (Eyles and Smith, 1988: 2).



Fig 21 Performance-as-research.

The author (foreground) participating with the *Cartwheelin'* crew, BFTW, Weymouth, July 2012.

### **3:2:1 'Professional' Participations:**

Cook (1998: 169) describes how many qualitative researchers use the 'labour processes which have become part of their own lives' as a gateway to participant observation. This was certainly the case in my research, where my professional identity as a community arts practitioner and street performer served to help me gain significant access to the outdoor arts networks of the 2012 Cultural Olympiad in Dorset. I began by following leads suggested by Daisy Sutcliffe, arts officer for the East Devon and Dorset Coast World Heritage Site (hereafter: WHS) who were CDA partners for my research. WHS partners had previously identified carnival as a development strand within the Jurassic Coast Arts Programme (hereafter: JCAP) and as a potential vehicle for

community engagement.<sup>41</sup> These initial leads led to meetings at an arts development agency who had been commissioned by the WHS to deliver a programme of community-based carnival and processional arts development as part of the JCAP and the regional contribution to the Cultural Olympiad at Weymouth. This programme sought to introduce 'artistic' content to vernacular town carnivals by fostering collaborations between schools, carnival clubs and professional artists. It sought to promote symbolic processional vocabularies linked to the Jurassic Coast, and to encourage a reduction in the use of petrol-driven vehicles in local carnivals by promoting walking entries and the design of 'human-powered' carnival floats.

This carnival development programme was also taking place as a function of wider partnerships between the JCAP and Dorset County Council's *Inside Out* festival and the *Maritime Mix* programme of events in Weymouth for the 2012 Cultural Olympiad, including the Olympic Torch Relay and the schools-based *Moving Tides* procession. In 2011, *Light on Time*, a schools-based procession, was produced in Poole, Dorset, in partnership with the Borough of Poole, WAVE Arts Education Agency and the JCAP. By 2012, carnival development work in the fieldwork area had expanded to include the *Cartwheelin* project: the Dorset contribution to the regional, Arts Council and local authority-funded, *Battle for the Winds* performance which launched the Olympic sailing at Weymouth.

In turn, *Battle for the Winds* brought together a strategic partnership of arts organisations and outdoor performance groups from Gloucestershire, Bristol /

---

41 'Carnival: Building on an already strong relationship with The Pitons WHS in St Lucia, and the potential for links with Olinda WHS in Brazil amongst others, the theme of carnival offers the opportunity for international artistic exchange, skills development and increased cultural understanding. Carnival also has a strong historic presence in many communities along the Jurassic Coast and is therefore well placed to be pivotal to celebrating our surroundings.' Jurassic Coast Arts Programme: How to Get Involved (2008)

West of England, Somerset, Wiltshire, Devon, Cornwall and Dorset respectively, led by two Bristol-based outdoor circus and performance companies: Cirque Bijou and Desperate Men. Each satellite performance company within *Battle for the Winds* involved itself in community engagement and participation processes within its own local authority area before combining with the other groups for a spectacular finale in Weymouth at the start of the Olympics. The carnivalesque and processional street performance of *Battle for the Winds* was developed as a model of 'sustainable' carnival practice, as an 'Olympic' expression of 'south west' regional culture, and as a strategic legacy project for the future development of professional outdoor arts in the region.

I quickly discovered a range of useful loose connections between my own grassroots community arts practice in procession and festival and the wider state-funded professional networks of artists and producers who had been recruited to deliver *Battle for the Winds*. At an early public engagement meeting at Activate Performing Arts in Dorchester, I ran into a former Welfare State International practitioner I had met during my Masters placement with the company in Cumbria ten years previously. He was now in charge of a local authority arts development scheme for Somerset, and was one of seven recently-appointed lead artists on *Battle for the Winds*. The fact that he and I knew each other was part of my passport into the state-funded networks of cultural production surrounding the Cultural Olympiad in the south west UK. His involvement in the project also alerted me to the potential cultural tensions between this strategic, instrumental network and a distinct set of countercultural performance and participation vocabularies which had evolved in the UK's alternative theatre, free-party and festival scene over the previous 40 years.

I also discovered several other professional connections with members, via my longstanding work as a stage manager in the theatre fields at Glastonbury Festival. These included members of the West of England *Battle for the Winds* team, members of the core team at Desperate Men who had performed regularly over the years as 'walkabouts' at Glastonbury, and members of the Dorset *Cartwheelin* collective of professional *Battle for the Winds* street performers, with whom I eventually conducted an extended period of participant observation as a result of my association with Activate Performing Arts. My fringe membership of this south-west community of outdoor artists enabled me to quickly gain trust and access to documentary resources, production meetings and e-mail networks. Mutual friendships and 'six degrees of separation' between my own practice and that of my research subjects secured me interviews with key practitioners and policy-makers. Ultimately my productive relationships within this network allowed me to negotiate an intensive period of performance-as-research, undertaken at the heart of the *Battle for the Winds* event, during which I bartered my unpaid services as an experienced street performer for research access and support.

My brief association with Welfare State International (hereafter: WSI) in 2003-4 was particularly useful within this professional network. It quickly became clear that the influential vocabularies of carnivalesque, processional practice which were developed by WSI founders John Fox and Sue Gill between 1968 and 2006 constituted a widely-shared cultural genealogy among the *Battle for the Winds* artists, vocabularies with which I was entirely familiar. This strand of the research also exposed the degree to which cultural capital in state-funded outdoor arts production in the south west UK was shared among a very distinct set of practitioners and policymakers.

I made best use of my professional connections within this network in order to develop the participations that would ultimately allow me to produce a detailed ethnography of the processes by which the *Battle for the Winds* production embodied and enacted carnivalesque expressions of place-identity as part of the 2012 Olympic celebrations. I also took advantage of the distancing and separation that my own, 'fringe' membership of these networks offered me in terms of my independence as both practitioner and researcher. Throughout, I took confidence from Eric Laurier's assertion (Laurier, 2010: 135) that 'the best participant-observation is generally done by those who have been involved in and tried to do and/or be a part of the things they are observing.' This 'professional' set of relationships was not without its challenges and dilemmas with regard to negotiating my research identity among my colleagues, as I describe later in this chapter.

### **3:2:2 Vernacular participations:**

My participation in vernacular settings came about as a result of a very different set of negotiations, with people to whom I had no previous personal or professional connection. I began the process by using a speculative process of 'snowballing' within local town carnival committees (Cook and Crang, 2004: 156): an initial request to attend meetings, followed by the development of key relationships and a process of following leads as they presented themselves from within the groups concerned. This allowed me to identify 'gatekeepers' (Cook and Crang, 2004: 184) who might facilitate wider access to potential fieldwork contexts by way of personal recommendation and introductions. Key gatekeepers within this process were a Weymouth Town Carnival Committee Member and community worker in Westham, Weymouth, and the (then) chairperson of Seaton Town Carnival.

After a few sessions during which I observed WTC meetings, and after I had conducted initial interviews with the outgoing chairperson and treasurer, I was invited to the first annual meeting of Westham Community Carnival Club. Here, I was introduced to members and an agreement was reached for me to attend fortnightly making sessions as the group prepared their float entry for the 2012 Weymouth Carnival. I took part in these sessions at intervals throughout the year as a maker of props and costume objects alongside local people, and helped decorate the float prior to the parade. At that point, I took a more distanced stance, observing the group as they performed in the parade and interviewing other participants and audience about their reactions to the group entry and about the carnival as a whole.

In Seaton, the committee chairperson was one of my first interviewees, and she subsequently agreed that I could attend a committee meeting, where a vote was taken to allow me to attend regular meetings and help at the forthcoming AGM. Invitations to other gatherings soon followed, along with introductions to key local figures in the East Devon Carnival Circuit, including judges and float makers. My participation in this setting was largely as a committee member. Over the course of the year I helped to organise Carnival Week events and participated in committee discussion. In Carnival Week I organised a busking competition and helped set out the parade route and marshal the procession on Carnival Day itself, while at the same time interviewing other participants and audience about their involvement and attitude to the event.

My aim in both settings was to develop ethnographies of the processes by which people engaged in carnival in vernacular contexts, how these processes were organised and experienced, and the meanings and values which participants attached to those processes. These research methods sought to

foreground the development of mutually-beneficial social participation in these creative settings, and to recognise vernacular locations of expertise. To that end, I sought to participate as far as possible in the developing, annual cultural cycle of vernacular carnival production for organisers and participants. In this I recognised Laurier's further assertion that 'the stages that anyone doing participant observation must go through are the stages which arise out of the phenomenon and settings that you are investigating' (Laurier, 2010: 134).

### **3:3: Research practices:**

#### **3:3:1: Performance-as-Research:**

My participant observation involved working alongside people as they went through various phases of social organisation, prop, costume and float-making and creative rehearsal. It culminated in public performances of processional carnival and carnivalesque street theatre. As such, it constituted a form of performance-as-research; an exercise in 'learning-by-doing'. This participation, as a maker of symbolic objects and as a street performer and musician, allowed me to get closer to the symbolic vocabularies we embodied as participants through our sensory and haptic relations with performance and performance objects in carnival settings. Following Conquergood, I was keen to include the *performance* of carnival as a research praxis within this cultural geography, and to 'open the space between analysis and action... to pull the pin on the binary opposition between theory and practice' (Conquergood, 2002: 145). Herein lies a further offer that Performance Studies makes to Cultural Geography in this thesis, through the employment of an alternative, performative research praxis. The act of performance allows for an affective engagement by the researcher with the subject matter, one which challenges 'traditional' methods of

scholarship. Conquergood further describes the benefits of performance-as-research, within 'its capacity to bridge segregated and differently valued knowledges, drawing together legitimated as well as subjugated modes of inquiry' (2002: 151). I employed this approach as a primary method of participant observation (Cook, 1998; Dowler, 2001; Parr, 2001; Valentine, 2001) and as an exercise in what Cope refers to as the 'collaborative production of knowledge' (Cope, 2010: 31).

This method was also informed by reflexive feminist geographies which '[pay] attention to and [respect] diverse subjectivities and multiple truths in the form of local knowledges' (*ibid*). The resulting ethnographic inscriptions reveal both the conviviality of communal creative practice in vernacular settings and my personal experience of economic and production pressures within the professional arts practice of *Battle for the Winds*. This method enabled me to generate rich data, within ethnographies which embraced 'the struggle to live betwixt and between theory and theatricality, paradigms and practices, critical reflection and creative accomplishment' (Conquergood, 2002: 151).

### **3:3:2: Interviewing:**

Alongside performance-as-research and participant observation, a further main method was my use of informal, semi-structured interviews. These took place in a variety of contexts, but usually after I had established a participatory relationship with subjects through shared activities. In total, I interviewed 74 participants from Seaton and Weymouth Town Carnivals, including representatives of their organising committees, float-makers, walking participants and audience members. I also conducted interviews with 30 arts professionals associated with the Jurassic Coast Arts Programme, the *Moving*

*Tides* Olympic Torch Relay procession, the Cultural Olympiad *Maritime Mix* events in Weymouth, and the *Battle for the Winds* performance which was staged to launch the Olympic sailing.

### **3:3:3: Programme of Research:**

The table below outlines the broad framework of my research, which is listed in more detail in Appendix 1. Throughout the research period, I was also engaged in participant observation, policy analysis, archival study and local history research.

<b>Date:</b>	<b>Activity:</b>
Oct-Dec, 2010	Professional Participations: Attendance at ‘carnival development’ meetings and workshops. Activate Performing Arts, JCAP, PAG
Jan- May, 2011	Initial interviews with arts professionals. Attendance at Activate ‘carnival development’ meetings and workshops. Participation, <i>Moving Tides</i> / 2012 Processions Advisory Group.
Jun- Nov, 2011	Participation, <i>Battle for the Winds</i> steering group. Interviews with <i>BFTW</i> arts professionals. Interviews with carnival arts professionals (ongoing). Participation and panel: <i>Don’t Rain on My Parade</i> Carnival Development Conference, Marine Theatre, Lyme Regis. Vernacular participations: Participation, Weymouth Town Carnival Committee (WTC). Interviews with WTC carnivalists and committee members. Participation, Seaton Town Carnival Committee (STC).
Dec 2011- May, 2012	Participation, Weymouth Town Carnival Committee (WTC). Interviews with WTC carnivalists and committee members (ongoing). Participation, Seaton Town Carnival Committee (STC). Interviews with STC carnivalists and committee members. Participation, <i>Battle for the Winds</i> steering group (ongoing).

	Participation, <i>Moving Tides</i> steering group (ongoing).
	Participation, 2012 Processions Action Group (ongoing).
	Participation, Westham Community Carnival Club, Weymouth. (WCC).
	Interviews with WCC carnivalists and committee members.
May, 2012	Participation, <i>BFTW / Cartwheelin</i> performances.
May-Jul, 2012	Participation, <i>BFTW / Cartwheelin</i> performances.
	Participation, Weymouth Town Carnival Committee (WTC).
	Interviews with WTC carnivalists and committee members (ongoing).
	Participation, Seaton Town Carnival Committee (STC).
	Interviews with STC carnivalists and committee members.
	Participation, <i>Battle for the Winds</i> steering group (ongoing).
	Participation, <i>Moving Tides</i> steering group (ongoing).
	Participation, 2012 Processions Action Group (ongoing).
	Participation, Westham Community Carnival Club, Weymouth. (WCC).
	Interviews with WCC carnivalists and committee members.
July, 2012	Participation, <i>Battle for the Winds</i> , 2012 Cultural Olympiad performances, Weymouth and Portland
	Participation, Westham Community Carnival Club, Weymouth. (WCC). Carnival preparations.
August, 2012	Participation, Weymouth Town Carnival Day, with Westham CCC.
	Interviews with carnival audience and participants, Weymouth Town Carnival.
	Participation, Seaton Town Carnival Committee (STC) Carnival preparations.
Sept, 2012	Participation, Seaton Town Carnival Day, with STC
	Interviews with carnival audience and participants, Seaton Town Carnival.

### **3:4: Negotiating 'role' in research:**

I decided from the outset that I was not comfortable with 'covert' research (Cook, 1998: 175-6) and that I would declare my purposes as 'developing an understanding of how and why people participate in carnival and how

organisations, artists and carnivalists can work together'. The drawbacks of this overt research identity were that I had to work hard to develop enough trust to tease out both the public and private opinions of subjects, to distinguish between what Goffman calls the 'front-and-back' of people's experiences (Goffman, 1968: 119).

In interviews, I tested these distinctions by preparing a set of core questions, while encouraging respondents to 'go off at a tangent, wherever the ideas take you'. These interviews, then, took the form of conversations (Feldman, 1999). Active listening allowed me to spot respondents' references to wider concepts, and to ask relevant secondary questions to elicit deeper, personal responses, often in the simple, open form of 'can you tell me more about that?' Assurances of anonymity were central to this process, particularly in professional settings, although I also faced a degree of suspicion, as the following fieldnotes reveal:

**Process memo: Weymouth, 25.7.12**

[A stage manager] reacts to a comment I make about my PhD by saying 'oh you are *that* guy.' Later, [a company member] asks 'how's the research going? Are you writing down our every move?' I sense a wariness in their comments, and I feel bracketed in the same category as the media, someone to be handled with care and a certain withholding...

**Fieldnote - carnival committee email exchanges: 3-9.11.11**

Concerns about my attendance at the next meeting have generated an e-mail debate among members, which exposes a growing conflict within the committee about the financial arrangements regarding the 2011 carnival and the primary function of the event itself. I follow the deputy chairman's advice and contact the chairman for permission to attend. He agrees, on the condition that I do not audio-record the meeting. By e-mail, another committee member raises the following concerns: *Gentlemen, in view of the likely discussions taking place on the 10th, some of which might be "lively", I do not think Jon should be present at this particular meeting.* A different committee member steps in to support my attendance. His e-mail implies that there is a conflict in the committee, and that the structure of the committee might be open to change. *Dear All. I personally don't have a problem*

*with Jon being present at this meeting. If he is doing a degree in carnival committees and community studies, surely he needs to see what makes committees tick, whether it's good or bad. Who knows, perhaps his findings might prove to be a useful template for future carnival committees and make our lives easier? At this stage I feel like I am in the middle of someone else's argument, but I also sense a really good research opportunity that I do not want to miss. I try to reassure committee members that my study is confidential and anonymised. I get a private message that exposes a wider division within the committee: Hi Jon. I didn't think that I had better reply to all on this one. I really feel for you and I realise that you are probably on a bit of a hiding to nothing. The carnival is currently being run by an amalgamation of a number of Rotary clubs and it appears to be a bit of a power struggle... I will continue to support you and I still feel that you need to be exposed to everything along the way, warts and all, if you really want a well balanced thesis. Good luck anyway!!! At this point the chairman steps in to confirm my attendance, but implies offence where none has been caused: Dear Jonathan, You are very welcome to join us on Thursday and I apologise on behalf of my committee for any offence you may have been caused, I am sure the concern was for your sensitivities, which I am sure is not an issue! We'll look forward to seeing you again and helping us to promote the future of our Carnival. With all best wishes. This further confuses the issue and exposes a rift between some members and other parts of the committee: Interesting comments, has somebody caused offence to Jonathan that the committee is unaware of?*

The above interaction with the stage manager highlights the limits that an overt ethnographic research identity can place on what is revealed by subjects in research settings. However, the overt nature of my research identity also served to expose an important internal conflict in the carnival committee. I did attend the meeting, and respected the request not to record it, although I made detailed hand-written notes. By maintaining trust with both sides, I was able to discover that this conflict derived from disagreements between committee members regarding the fundamental purpose and function of carnival in the town. The argument was to do with financial transparency and the balance between the 'entertainment function' of carnival (Georgiou, 2012) and its traditional, philanthropic purpose, as dictated by Rotary Club involvement. This was a conflict that ultimately led to the disintegration of this committee after the

2012 carnival and its re-establishment by a new set of organisers. The insight prompted by my overt research identity and derived from this e-mail chain and the meeting that followed, strongly informed my subsequent individual interviews and generated a rich source of data as to the local 'meaning' of carnival.

### **3:4:1: Negotiating 'role' in vernacular settings:**

The processes by which I negotiated vernacular participations are best explained with direct reference to field notes I made at the time:

To date I have been focusing on the participatory nature of my research with the Carnival Club, as a method for securing admission into the social world of the group... I have thus sought to demonstrate my willingness to follow the established participatory norms of the group, to show my usefulness to the shared project and to present myself as a supporter of the group and its process... I take the degree of comfort and friendliness I feel in the group: the warm welcomes, offers of tea and biscuits, inquiries into my wellbeing and that of my family, as evidence that this strategy has helped me take my place as an unthreatening participant, while at the same time allowing me to inhabit a recognised, implicit identity as a researcher.

(Fieldnote, Westham Carnival Club, 10.8.12)

On my second visit, Alice said: 'Right, I am going to give you a job.' It was immediately clear to me that this was an initiation of sorts, a test of my commitment and character; a way in which the committee, with Alice as its gatekeeper, could get the measure of me and determine whether I was made of 'the right stuff'... Over the following months, this process of admission was constituted within a cumulative range of activities: laying out tables and stacking chairs for events, serving food, washing up, collecting entry fees and sweeping the Town Hall floor. My labour (and - importantly - my positive *attitude* towards it and my enthusiasm towards carnival practice as a subject worthy of study) was quickly rewarded with permission to attend Committee meetings. It earned me admission fee waivers at Committee fundraising events, the occasional pint of beer, and introductions to key people in the carnival community for research interviews... In Carnival week itself, I was granted symbolic membership of the Committee in the form of my Seaton Carnival T-shirt. I was invited to lunch with the committee, and took part in the traditional Carnival Day 'men's' breakfast... My identity within the group was further established through my participation during Carnival Week: selling

programmes, lifting and moving equipment, putting out traffic cones, stewarding and 'helping out.' It was during this period that Lydia referred to me as 'someone who loves carnival as much as we do!' and Fraser saw fit to warn me that: 'it gets in your blood.'

(Fieldnote, Seaton Carnival Busking Competition and Street Fayre, 27.8.12)

Thus, I conducted participant observation in vernacular settings as a social activity; a shared experience. I decided early on that it required the same level of personal investment in social discourse as if I were participating as a newcomer for non-research purposes, notwithstanding the practical balancing act of 'inscribing' that discourse as research data (Geertz, 1973: 19). Further, this process allowed for the emergence of fine detail with regard to my observation of subjects' vernacular meanings and processes. In anthropological terms, I came to view my own 'resocialisation' (Emerson *et al*, 1995) as an exemplar of the processes of participation applicable to other members of the group, a view encouraged by Emerson *et al* when they say: 'members often socialise and instruct researchers just as they do any other newcomer, or their own children' (ibid: 115).

### **3:4:2: Professional challenges, professional compromises?**

A further issue arose with regard to the negotiation of my identity as both a researcher and as a professional street performer within the relatively high-stakes Cultural Olympiad performances of *Cartwheelin* and *Battle for the Winds*. As is the case with most rehearsal processes, these were not without their problems. Interpersonal dynamics, a lack of rehearsal time, limited funding and poor weather combined to make this fieldwork setting one in which I felt a developing conflict between my 'observant' participation as a researcher and my practical, professional role and reputation as an artist.

*Battle for the Winds* brought together some of the most well-established and well-respected outdoor arts companies in the region, under the auspices of the Arts Council, several local authorities and the Cultural Olympiad. As time went on, however, and conditions within my particular fieldwork setting were severely tested by a range of circumstances, I began to feel my professional reputation within this community could be at risk. A similar tension existed with regard to the potential response to my research findings from within the professional outdoor-arts community in the south west UK. Even as I write, I am concerned about the possible personal-professional implications of the fieldnotes below and the critique of professional arts practice that follows in this thesis:

**Fieldnote: 7.7.12**

More rain, as strong winds whip through the site. By the end of the improvised show we are cold and wet, and I feel like we are working as individuals rather than as an ensemble. The rehearsal process has been dysfunctional to date, and it is clear that all is not well in the group. Evie and Sam argue bitterly over what form our performance should take in these conditions. In the end a stalemate develops. Chris and I stay out of it. Melissa unwittingly suggests that Sam - a seasoned outdoor performer of 20 years' standing - just doesn't want to perform in the rain, which offends him, and he angrily states that 'this project is being really badly managed!' This offends Melissa, who is project manager. Evie, despite her role as lead artist, steps away from the conflict entirely, leaving it to her partner Owen to take Sam to one side and talk to him. Rain. More rain. In the end we agree to take a lunch break. Evie and Owen go one way, while Sam and Chris go the other. Later I find Chris and Sam in a nearby cafe. The company feels split in two...

**Fieldnote: Weymouth, 25.7.12**

I feel compelled to address the fact that, with only two days remaining, our own street show is nowhere near ready for performance and we have no agreed schedule to develop it... I speak to Evie privately, and stress the need for Owen to rehearse his role ... I tell her that I am happy to direct Owen in rehearsal for the morning if he agrees, particularly in light of the difficulties they are experiencing as a couple... I have made a critical decision about my own role in this process. I am no longer resisting the need to take creative action or to act as if I were a full participating artist on this project. My role as a researcher is taking second place to my professional standards,

and yet I am also aware that whatever happens as a result of this decision will also constitute data about the developing, dynamic situation in which I am participating... Evie agrees to rehearsal. Owen and I begin to structure the show into a routine... Evie returns at 1pm, saying she is 'tired and needs a break,' so does not want to rehearse further. Our agreed plan for a whole-group run of the routine that Owen and I have just developed is abandoned... I am disappointed. I feel like all the progress we have made today towards structuring our show has been lost.

The above fieldnote exposes the tension between my research identity and my professional role in this fieldwork setting. It also reveals the manner in which this tension can also generate rich data regarding the professional dynamics of the project.

Folding these experiences and my developing hypotheses back into interview questioning as the research progressed also led me to pose sometimes difficult and challenging questions to participants regarding the nature and effects of their practices. I also faced challenges to my own ethics and sensibilities and anxiety about the political implications of my re-constructed ethnographic accounts. I was troubled by the idea that some of the data I had gathered was 'too dangerous' for publication with regard to my own professional future. I was particularly challenged by a developing sense that the professional arts community of which I was a part tended towards a negative and subjugatory view of vernacular carnival practice. I was troubled by the apparent imbalance of social and cultural capital between vernacular and state-funded contexts. I wanted to test these hypotheses, but did not want to drop this bomb into interviews for fear that I would lose out on other data. As a result, I tended towards a tactical approach to interviewing on this point, structuring the interview in order that I could elicit detailed responses to my core questions, before introducing tougher questions towards the end in the hope that the respondent would feel confident and relaxed enough to respond openly. This is

perhaps best expressed through the following interview exchange with an arts professional, in which she exposes a personal view of her professional practice:

- JC I am just going to ask you about something that you said to me the very, very first time we met. And it goes back to something that you touched on at the beginning of the interview. I wanted to skirt past because I thought it might be too big a thing to start with. You said something to me when I came into the first meeting at [ ]. You said: 'have you come to see us all being cultural fascists?'
- Anon Did I say that?
- JC Yes. And I was really interested by that. And I thought: 'I must ask her about that'. Why did you say that to me?
- Anon Because of what I have been saying about the fact that we are deciding. We make all the decisions. I do juggle... I *battle* with this thing within myself sometimes. Like I said to you, about that thing I saw earlier last week. It is about cultural capital... We can decide. And clearly you can't trust the bloody government, so we have got even *more* responsibility now. That thing of telling people that 'this is better' or what is good for them... But it is about being aware, actually, about the potential of the power that we wield. And also I am really conscious that.. I am *doing* this to others, I am making this thing happen, a lot of the work that I do is making stuff happen for others. Whether they like it or not, almost. Whether they want it or not.
- JC That is an ethical tension in your work?
- Anon Yes, I think so.
- JC What do you imagine is the reaction from the other side of the argument? From within perhaps the cultures that are existing in, say, town carnivals, to that kind of approach?
- Anon Well I think they probably think we are a bunch of, you know, *arty farties* who think we are above them. I think some people might feel that we think that we are *superior* ...

This exchange reveals how an interview participant can put themselves at risk by revealing personal views that are in conflict with their professional culture. It also reflects Stacey's view (1988: 23) that ethnography can be a 'dangerous' research practice, in so far as:

*no matter how welcome, even enjoyable the fieldworker's presence may appear to "natives", fieldwork represents an intrusion and intervention into a system of relationships, a system of relationships that the researcher is far freer than the researched to leave. The inequality and potential treacherousness of this relationship seems inescapable.*

Notwithstanding these ethical concerns, the above exchange further reveals the degree to which the tactical structuring of an interview, combined with active listening and the development of trust through assurances of anonymity, can facilitate the revelation of a private opinion which illuminates the tensions within a subject's public, professional practice.

### **3:5: Exiting the field:**

Throughout my research I was aware of the *quid pro quo* of qualitative participant observation. This is the necessary reciprocity that derives from the agreement a researcher makes with a participating community and from the permission s/he is granted to become part of that group for the purposes of research. Participation can also lead to the development of relationships of trust and to genuine friendships with people in fieldwork settings, relationships which can challenge the objectivity of a researcher (Delamont, 2004: 209) and make exiting the field a challenge. I have already described the professional challenges I have faced in this regard. The project-based nature of the *Battle for the Winds* process described in my fieldwork had its own natural conclusion at the end of the Olympic summer of 2012 that facilitated my departure from this professional network. In vernacular settings, I adopted a slow withdrawal from community events at the end of the research period. I gradually lessened my attendance at Carnival Club and committee meetings, explaining that I was busy writing up my research. This staged withdrawal allowed me to maintain positive relationships with people. However, the deepening of these friendships during the research period has meant that I have yet to fully exit the field in Seaton. I retain a voluntary involvement with Seaton Carnival to this day, as organiser of the Carnival Busking Competition. I also have another ongoing

responsibility to the group, as a result of a clever move on the part of carnival organisers in the town on Carnival Day, 2012, as the following fieldnote reveals:

### **Seaton Carnival Day: 1.9.12:**

At the Town Hall, a large crowd has gathered for the announcement of the results and the annual prize-giving, led by Dennis. The bar is open and there is an atmosphere of release and relief among the committee that all has gone well. Sidvale CC carry off the cup for Best Overall with *Bump in the Night* and the hot air balloonists from Cousins CC win Best Walking Entry for *Up, Up and Away*. The Tesco Banana Girls win the prize for Best Dressed Collectors and *The Lion King* wins Most Colourful Entry. There are first, second and third place prizes for Walking Fancy Dress, Walking Pairs and Groups, Motorised and non-motorised Mini Floats, Youth Organisations, Comical Floats and Royalty. Everyone gets a prize of some sort, and the presentation of each cup and certificate is met with cheers and applause...

Alice steps up to add her personal vote of thanks and then, to my surprise, she calls me up to the front and introduces me to the crowd as a 'student writing a thesis on carnival.' She praises my 'hard work' organising the busking competition and helping during carnival week, and announces that the Seaton Committee would be naming a cup for 'Best Float Music' in my honour, the Jon Croose Cup, which they would like me to judge annually at Seaton Carnival...

I return to the group and Pat shakes my hand. 'Well done.' he says. Matthew has just arrived, and toasts me with his well-earned pint of beer. Rose says: 'That's a real honour. Normally you have to die before they name anything after you.' I feel a little overwhelmed. I thank them all for their help and friendship... This is a great honour, and also a shrewd move on the part of the committee in securing a final *quid pro quo* for the research access they have given me, one which also constitutes the ultimate test of my membership of the group: the fulfilment of a duty to return each year and maintain both the busking competition and the presentation of this award as part of the annual carnival, thus helping to 'keep the tradition alive.' We drink together as the crowd thins out and people start going home. Pat drains his pint. 'Right, that's it done for another year then. I'm off.' 'Me too.' says Matthew. 'Where are you off to?' asks Rose. 'I'm going to check out the pubs,' I say. 'Carnival is still going on out there and I want to see how things develop. I've still got research to do.' Matthew laughs. 'In the pubs? That's what you call research is it?'

*Quid pro quo.* I am happy to maintain my involvement in Seaton, and have organised three annual Carnival busking competitions in the town to date.

Rose's prediction that the competition would grow through repetition has been proved correct, and the above experience stands as data about the iterative nature of Carnival activity, and how that plays into notions of 'tradition' and 'heritage'. However, the effort required on my part, in terms of travel, expense and organisation means there is a tension in this long-term, long-distance relationship. I am at best a temporary, occasional member of this community, and I wonder how long I will be able to maintain my practical involvement.

### **3:6 Practical methods of data recording and inscription:**

Across these settings of carnival production, I developed a clear set of practical methods for recording and reproducing my research observations. In more formal settings, such as semi-structured interviews or committee meetings, I made detailed real-time fieldnotes and used a voice recorder to facilitate a verbatim transcript for later analysis (Bryman, 2004: 48). In less formal and more active settings of creative process, such as prop, costume and float-making sessions, rehearsals or performance, I sought to be as fully engaged as possible alongside participants in a given activity, and would record data as fieldnotes at the first opportunity after this participation. In this way I was able to inscribe observation of subjects' participation alongside reflexive writing which explored my own focused, affective and practical engagement with events and processes. In both settings, my fieldnotes would include photography, written observations of settings; descriptions of verbal and non-verbal interactions between people, and verbatim quotation. I would also record process memos, snatches of analytical thinking and the cross-referencing of events and comments with previously gathered data, or as prompts to future enquiry.

In all cases my aim was to record my data in real time or as soon as possible after observation (Emerson *et al*, 1995: 40; 60). Participation in a carnival club setting, for example, was followed by note-writing in the car before the drive home. On days when I was involved in long hours of rehearsal or performance activity (particularly during the *Cartwheelin* and *Battle for the Winds* performances) I wrote a daily research journal in the morning, where possible at lunchtime, and last thing at night, recording a chronology of events and subjects' actions and comments to make sure I had captured as much as possible of the day's encounter. On Carnival Days in Seaton and Weymouth, I used a voice recorder to capture vox-pop interviews with audience members and participants and to record my own verbal observations and feelings, as an attempt to capture both empirical data 'in-process' and the 'affective' atmosphere of carnival.

### **3:7 Processing Fieldnotes: Coding, Data Analysis, Inscription and the 're-construction of reality':**

Having assembled a messy, 'real-life' data set of transcribed interviews, audio recordings, hand-written fieldnotes, typed fieldnote tales, in-process memos, reflexive writing, documentary sources, photography and early analytical writings drawn from field encounters, I began a process of coding which drew out sets of critical themes from within my recorded data. In this I was guided by Crang's assertion (2005: 224) that 'codes provide a means of conceptually organising your materials but are not an explanatory framework in themselves'. The categories outlined below may be considered as 'etic' codes (Agar, 1980:191): 'outsider codes' that are generated by the researcher in order to gather fieldnotes in which the 'emic' or 'insider' terms and attitudes expressed

by participants reflect a particular subject or demonstrate a relevance to emerging theory (*ibid*).

**Data Analysis: Codes:**

- Vernacular Carnival Contexts
- Historical Geographies
- Power and authority
- Vernacular Carnival Economies
- Vernacular attitudes to professionalised festivity
- Research Methodologies
- Towards a Vernacular Creativity
- Non-professional attitudes to local carnivals
- Inclusion
- Symbolism and Identity
- BFTW
- Sustainability
- Affect of Carnival
- Public Space
- Spectacle
- Strategic arts development
- Art and Non-Art
- Carnival and the WHS
- Democratisation of Culture
- Instrumentality
- Community
- Participation
- Landscape, Place and Identity
- Olympics
- Symbolism and Vocabularies
- Symbolism and power
- Performance and affect.
- Identity
- Culture
- Heritage and tradition
- Carnival development
- Genealogies of participation
- What is carnival?
- Weymouth Carnival Conflict
- Professional attitudes to vernacular carnival
- Ritual and cultural performance
- Professional genealogies
- Vernacular Creativities

Following Turner (1981, in Bryman, 2004: 81) I then engaged in a process of light-touch 'analytic induction', by which I grouped referenced extracts from different field encounters into these topic categories. I re-read the data in each category and applied further analytical categorisations within each theme, copying relevant extracts as expressions within multiple categories where appropriate. This allowed me to establish connections between categories and to encounter how different subjects expressed certain meanings across categories in different contexts. From here, I sought to develop hypotheses in relation to my wider theoretical reading, and to consider the implications of my data.

### **3:7:1: From Code to Inscription:**

An example of the process by which a field diary entry has progressed through the coding process may be seen in the staged development of the following extract from Chapter 4. This example also shows how a field diary entry developed as an inscription, or narrative re-telling, in order to elucidate a theoretical assertion. This description is by no means definitive of my method, but it offers a general outline of my approach in terms of categorising material and re-presenting it within an ethnographic narrative that speaks to relevant themes, ideas and understandings as they emerged in the field.

#### **Biscuit on the Live Site:**

##### **Initial field diary entry: 24.7.12**

Biscuit from the Mutoid Waste Company. Secret gig @ the Cove, Portland. Security Man vs old school lineage of free sound systems. Biscuit 'out of place'; Blagging in' - record box. Anarchist 'respect'. Biscuit leaves. Security Guard surveillance.

This brief entry records an encounter between 'Biscuit', an uninvited interloper from the Mutoid Waste Company arts collective, and a security guard in the heavily-controlled Olympic Live Site on Weymouth Beach during the rehearsals for *Battle for the Winds*. It records only the key features of the observed interaction, but even this first record hints at my application of theory, in its description of Biscuit as being 'out-of-place' (Cresswell,1996). The entry points to Biscuit's transgression of laws of private property and festive assembly by way of the 'secret gig' and by 'blagging in' - an 'emic' term among fence-hoppers in the festival scene that means 'gaining entry without accreditation'. The diary entry articulates systems of power and structures of control to which I had become attuned by way of my attempts at developing Grounded Theory. It records Biscuit's demand for 'respect' from the structures of authority. It records Biscuit's eventual departure and the security guard's final checks to make sure he is gone.

This entry thus acted as an aide-memoire to the construction of a longer, typed narrative of the encounter that I wrote a couple of hours later. This subsequent 'fieldnote tale' (see Chapter 4, p199) recalls details of character, dialogue and setting. It also integrates my own situated knowledge and an initial analysis of the relevance of the events described.

Back at the Live Site. Sitting alongside us is a man none of us recognises: a man who does not bear the requisite wristband; an unshaven, unwashed, waistcoated, bare-armed, tattooed, middle-aged, tired-looking man with missing teeth who is taking advantage of the bandstand shade. A security guard approaches him and asks for identification.

*'Biscuit,' he says. 'I'm with Mutoid Waste.'*

The conversation goes something like this:

*'Biscuit?'*

*'Yeah, Biscuit. Mutoid Waste.'*

*'Your name is Biscuit?'*

*'Yeah, Biscuit. Do you know Mutoid Waste? Do you know who we are?'*

*'No, 'fraid not. You haven't got a wristband, so you are not supposed to be in here. This area is restricted. Wristbands only.'*

I know of the Mutoid Waste Company from Glastonbury. They are the remnants of an art-punk-traveller soundsystem crew who turn cars and machinery into dystopian sculpture environments for all night parties. Mutoid Waste are the grand-daddies of the UK free festival and illegal rave scene, veterans of the Battle of the Beanfield. They have a reputation for arriving in the dark and uninvited and have pitched their metal provocations everywhere from King's Cross to the Berlin Wall. I have no idea why they are here, at the Olympics, but in a way I'm not surprised. The Olympics is a perfect target.

*'You haven't got a wristband, so you are not supposed to be in here,' says the guard... 'I'll be back in five minutes and then you'll have to leave.'*

A couple of minutes later the security guard is back, talking into his walkie-talkie. *'No sign of him here. Must have gone off,'* he says.

The above narrative is a re-construction from memory, a 'story of what [I] learned out of the fragments [I had] at the end of the day' (Cook, 1997:181). The final stage of the development of this narrative occurred later still, with the inclusion of further research data from online news sources that suggested an additional explanation for Biscuit's presence on the Live Site that day and facilitated comment on the mainstreaming of countercultural vocabularies within the Olympic carnivals.

Weeks later, the Paralympics closing ceremony creates an online stir amongst the BFTW crew, when Wind Vessels appear in the performance, appearing to mimic the BFTW designs. Biscuit's presence at the Live Site suddenly makes sense to me. Was it a form of 'cultural espionage?' Have even the Mutoids been assimilated into the Olympic project? Are we all on the make and taking Coe's shilling?

Fieldnote: 9.9.12

20:33 BST: Here we go. And we're off. The Festival of the Flame begins with performers from the Mutoid Waste Company entering the stadium in a convoy of steampunk style vehicles. A horde of "wind gremlins" turn their wind machines on silver-clad dreamers, the guardians of the Agitos, the symbol of the Paralympics, accompanied by a dramatic soundtrack composed by David Arnold.<sup>42</sup>

---

<sup>42</sup> London 2012 Paralympics closing ceremony – as it happened. <http://www.guardian.co.uk/sport/2012/sep/09/london-2012-paralympics-closing-ceremony-live> Website accessed 2.10.12

My method, then, was to write ethnographic field data into my thesis in a range of ways: as subjects' 'emic' testimony to certain meanings and experiences; as 'affect' to set scene and convey the dynamics of energy and emotion within carnival, and as 'etic' contextual categorisation and analysis that supported the presentation of theory.

As Cook and Crang suggest, categories applied to ethnographic fieldnotes thus operate back and forth between 'emic' and 'etic' codes, as a record of participants' language and 'in viva' terminologies, as 'illustrative' data, and as a qualitative stimulus to wider thinking, rather than as a badge of 'authoritative' representation or knowledge:

We would certainly not argue for a clear distinction to be made between these two categories since we have ample experience of how difficult it can be to interpret an allegedly 'emic' categorisation when, for instance, we have suspected that it was being used ironically or was the result of how the respondents tried to present themselves to us. Thus, instead of adopting a strict emic/etic binary... we will suggest an approach which involves a general drift from emic to etic coding (in which we still consider it useful to ask questions such as "to what extent is this a participant's world view or some composite of my representation of her/his world view?"), but which is also subject to the provisos mentioned above. Thus, the move from one to the other is not taken here as being a simple or straightforward process.

(Cook and Crang, 1995:81)

The 'etic' codes applied to this extract, for example, thus placed it within the following initial categories:

- Power and Authority
- Battle for the Winds
- Public Space
- Olympics
- Symbolism and Power
- Affect of Carnival

However, Biscuit's place within the Affect of Carnival code ultimately allowed me to bring these 'etic' categories to play alongside field data from other sources, in an analytical discussion of affect within 'emic' codes of 'transgression', 'sanction' and 'structures of

control' as expressed by participants more widely. Thus I was able to place this field data within the description of 'emic' codes of carnival experience, as supporting illustrative data for the development of a grounded theory.

It was in this final phase as I conducted my detailed analysis and reconstruction of my field data that I encountered the crises of representation that afflict many ethnographers (Watson & Till, 2010: 122). I suffered anxiety about the qualitative nature of the data and the inescapable selectivity of my ethnographic research. Clearly there were things I chose to record in my data and things I did not, for whatever reason. I reassured myself by diligently incorporating a combined point of view in my analytical writing (Emerson, *et al*, 1995: 59) and by accepting my fieldnotes as 'constructions'; reading them for: 'the ways they *create[d]*, rather than simply record[ed] reality' (*ibid*: 64). Most reassuring was Didia Delyser's assertion that the exercise of writing itself constitutes a legitimate practice within qualitative research and that: 'The voices of those with whom we work, as well as the voice and interpretation(s) of the researcher, and the very telling of the tale itself – the ways those voices are conveyed – are all critical, essential to qualitative geography...' (Delyser, *et al*, 2010: 343)

### **3:8 Ethics:**

The ESRC Framework for Research Ethics (2010) establishes six key principles of ethical research which reflect the 'integrity, quality and transparency' of research design. These are: informed consent and awareness of the associated risks and benefits of participation; confidentiality and anonymity of respondents; voluntary participation and the right of participants to withdraw at will; avoidance of harm, and clarity regarding the 'independence' of research (ESRC, 2010). To ensure the voluntary nature of subjects' participation, I recruited participants primarily within their social or professional milieu by way of invitation. I met them initially in public contexts such as participatory workshops and

at pre-arranged organisational meetings or rehearsals where I had established prior permission for attendance. Formal consent was obtained by means of a written consent form which included conditions of confidentiality and anonymity.<sup>43</sup> I was initially wary of the ‘dramatisation’ of subjects that might result as a function of changing names, and the tone of fiction that this might introduce to an already highly qualitative approach. As a result I also offered participants the option of waiving their anonymity, while maintaining an ethical duty to be careful with data which might compromise them, particularly in professional contexts. Initially, my intention was to attribute data in this thesis to subjects by name subject to this consent, with further reference to their general professional position, practical, cultural or social role. However, as the research developed, particularly in professional arts development contexts, I became aware of the need to anonymise participant contributions in their entirety in order to preserve people’s privacy and to prevent any potential negative consequences which might arise from their comments. As a result, I decided to allocate a fictional moniker to each contributor, and to categorise professional contributors without reference to their specific job title or geographical location.<sup>44</sup> The consent form included information about the project, and offered subjects the right to withdraw at any time without disadvantage. Where written consent was not possible, for example during vox-pop interviews on Carnival Days, then full explanation was given, with the backup of an audio recording of this explanation and subsequent verbal consent.

In terms of the associated benefits of participation to subjects, I framed my research as a contribution to the dialogue between local cultural performance groups and the cultural intervention programmes of the Jurassic Coast Arts Programme. I also framed it as a

---

<sup>43</sup> See Appendix 4 for copy of consent form.

<sup>44</sup> See Appendix 3 for an anonymised list of research participants, alongside their fictional monikers.

contribution to archival records of participation by local people in the 2012 Cultural Olympiad and more widely to the existing archives of their local carnivals by means of oral history and photographic records. In professional contexts I presented my research as a contribution to agency-level understanding of grassroots cultural practice and as a refiguring of the debate surrounding the instrumentalities of publicly funded arts practices.

In terms of risk assessment, I considered the risks to participants to have been addressed by the standard ethical approvals procedure implemented by my College and submitted as outlined above. In terms to risks to my person, I did not consider myself to be at physical or psychological risk beyond the normal risks associated with travel to fieldwork settings.

### **3:9: Conclusions:**

The success of my attempt at developing Grounded Theory in this research was limited by my inexperience as a novice researcher. It was also challenged by the central tension within the practice between my prior, situated knowledge and the need for data to be generated by unbiased conceptual 'discovery' and analysis in the field. Heath & Cowley (2004: 142) articulate this problem clearly when they state:

A tension exists between a need to understand grounded theory by reading about it and a recognition that the novice researcher must find out "about the process of researching through learning in the process of carrying out the research" (Freshwater, 2000, p. 29).

In addition, Heath and Cowley (2004) recognise a significant divergence in the discourse of Grounded Theory between conceptual approaches (Glaser, 1978) and analytical approaches (Strauss and Corbin, 1990). The challenge of achieving rigour and detail in coding and analysis was a daunting one, troubled further by Geertz' assertion that:

Cultural analysis is intrinsically incomplete. And, worse than that, the more deeply it goes the less complete it is. It is a strange science whose most telling assertions are its most tremulously based, in which to get somewhere with the matter at hand is to intensify the suspicion, both your

own and that of others, that you are not quite getting it right. But that, along with plaguing subtle people with obtuse questions, is what being an ethnographer is like.

(Geertz, 1973: 29)

However, these qualitative methods did produce data through which I was able to theorise that the negotiated 'identity' of place during carnival reflects a significant contestation of social and cultural practice and festive aesthetics. My methods permitted consideration of the cultural performance of place at a range of scales, from the home or dwelling-place to local, regional, national and international stages. Attention to the meanings attributed by participants to their creative practice of carnival permitted a theorisation of place-identity as being largely tied to symbolic constructions of 'community' in vernacular settings and to notions of economy, 'art' or 'creativity' in cultural development contexts; processes which are largely determined as functions of relative social, economic and cultural capital (Bourdieu, 1993).<sup>45</sup>

It is important to recognise that, in this regard, my methodology produced only a snapshot of 'how national policies or issues on the public agenda are being played out in a specific place' (Valentine, 2001: 42). My creative participation, performance praxis and participant observation led to revealing encounters with the way in which carnivalesque processional performance was used as spectacle within the promotion of a specific set of cultural values and regional identities in the context of the Olympics in East Devon and Dorset. However, I do not seek to present these findings as a definitive account of these processes. Rather, I present these findings as an ethnographic framework which assists the consideration of wider cultural geographies with regard to the cultural performance of carnival. My findings explore the 'depth and detail' (Dowler, 2001: 158) of the particular experiences of a relatively small sample of individuals, and seek to facilitate a wider analysis of the interventions in local cultural performance practice which result from national policy.

---

<sup>45</sup> See Chapter Seven



Fig 22 Making session at Westham Community Carnival Club, June 2012

My ethnographic fieldwork is rendered in this thesis through a mixed methodology of performance-as-research, reflexive writing, interview and participant observation. This mixed method has allowed me to explore the degree to which carnival and processional performance as-place-making has been successfully developed as a feature of national cultural policy in the UK over the last 30 years, and how this hegemonic mode of cultural production relates to smaller-scale, non-professional carnival instrumentalities with regard to people's vernacular sense of place. More importantly, my use of this mixed research methodology in 'live,' carnivalesque fieldwork settings articulates the affect of carnival, exposes the 'front-and-back' of subjects' experiences (Goffman, 1968: 119) and suggests how carnival was enacted, embodied and contested by individuals in both vernacular and professional positions, within the climactic cultural policy context of the 2012 Olympiad. It is to this ethnography of people's affective experiences of carnival and the carnivalesque that we turn our attention in the next chapter.



## **Chapter Four:**

### **The Performativity of Carnival: Affects and Emotions; Events and Stories:**

#### **4:1 Research questions:**

- **What is carnival?**

The data presented in this chapter contributes to the wider performative discourse of carnival as outlined in Chapter 2. The chapter considers how we might conceptualise and de-construct the processional performance of carnival in the fieldwork area in order to consider its performance efficacy and the transgressive-normative paradox of carnivalesque experience.

- **How do participants experience the ‘liminal performativity’ of carnival, and how do they describe affects of ‘energy’, ‘transformation’, ‘transgression’, ‘ritual’ and ‘social drama’ within carnival and street procession?**

With reference to the above research question, the chapter also explores how participants experience carnival in an affective sense. In this chapter I seek to develop theoretical connections between ‘performativity’ as expressed within Performance Studies and the ‘event’ as described in NRT and Cultural Geography (Anderson & Harrison, 2010: 9). This data thus contributes to a wider, performance-centred analytical discourse with regard to carnival’s ability to generate simultaneous, multiple subjectivities of practice, display, place and identity (Turner, 1969; Van Gennep, 1960; Schechner, 2003; Deleuze & Guattari, 1987).

#### **4:1:1 Carnival as Liminality:**

*It was like a closely guarded secret. Locked within the box. And then at 5 o'clock the doors opened and the carnival just rushed out!*

(Neve, Arts professional, 31.10.11)

In this chapter I suggest that attending to affects of liminality within contexts of carnival and the carnivalesque experience is essential to our consideration of its function as a performativity that is generated within processional ritual in public space. 'Liminality' from the Latin *limen* ('threshold') refers to a performative state of 'between-ness' in which meaning is not fixed and where both the everyday and the transformed self are present, active and in relational flux.

The ethnographic accounts that follow speak to the capacity of carnival to foster a liminal, affective encounter between what I have hitherto described as multiple subjectivities of practice, display, place and identity. Further, this chapter suggests that it is in the affective realm that this liminal performativity develops as part of the 'ideological transaction' between performers and audience (Kershaw 1992:19), a performativity that permits the creation of a 'social constituency' (Smith, 2009) associated with the symbolic construction of 'identity', 'community' (Cohen, 1985) and 'place'.

It is important from the outset, then, to establish a conceptual and theoretical framework for the consideration of affect within people's carnivalesque experience. The ethnographic data here presented identifies distinct affective qualities within participants' experience, expressed in terms of carnival 'energy' and performative transformation, as transgression, and as ritual and social drama. The project of this chapter is also to suggest that an attention to the affective, performative qualities of carnivalesque street procession allows for a re-framing of the role of both symbolic representation and the hierarchical economy of art or meaning within these events. The chapter thus affirms the remedial, psycho-social

potential of vernacular, carnivalesque street procession within the neo-liberal condition of late capitalism.

What emerges is a political position, derived from an understanding of the affective, liminal performativity of carnival as expressed by participants. This politics cites the liminal affects of performative 'energy', ritual, transformation and transgression in carnival as rationales for an assertion of the cultural value of vernacular, celebratory street procession. The liminality of carnival serves as an iterative practice of festive occupation; one which destabilises the meaning of 'place' and 'space'. Carnival, I suggest, also challenges notions of 'public' and 'private', and asserts the value of shared space, carrying with it an implicit contestation and cultural 'resistance' to established place identities.

Throughout this chapter, I consider that the carnivalesque finds its initial vitality in the affective, pre-cognitive realm as a pre-symbolic impulse: as an affective tendency towards festive identity. These ethnographies signal the extent to which the carnivalesque operates as a desire for, and as a stimulus to, dis-inhibition in public space. They also approach the subsequent processes by which this affective impulse is translated into practice, symbolic form and expression, and how it is experienced as a performative climax on Carnival Day. The ethnographic data here presented thus supports notions of cultural democracy (Kelly, 1984) and revisits the political, Bakhtinian juxtaposition between carnival and the 'official feast' of neo-liberal carnival arts production.

*[It's all about] getting out of yourself...lifting the top of your head off.*

(Rob, Arts professional, 18.10.11)

## **4:2 Theoretical frameworks:**

### **4:2:1 Performativity:**

I walk further down the seafront and it is completely empty. The thousands of people who were here earlier on today have gone. It is like a wasteland. There are crash barriers and police traffic cones strewn around. It has the empty, liminal feeling of a place where something has happened and now is gone... just gone. It has disappeared. Gone.

(Audio Fieldnote, Weymouth Seafront, Carnival Day, 2.30am, 15.8.12.)

In this chapter I apply notions of performativity to people's descriptions of their carnivalesque experience, within conceptual frameworks which constitute a further theoretical offer from Performance Studies to Cultural Geography. Performance Studies theorists consider performativity as a conceptual development derived from post-structural linguistics, one through which we might consider how 'affect' becomes 'effect' (Austin, 1962; Searle, 1969; Derrida, 1978; Butler, 1988; Parker and Sedgwick, 1995). Performativity, then, may be considered as the effect by which a 'social reality' is constituted through the processual performance of inter-subjective experience. Further, the term performativity within Performance Studies also refers to the mode of performance itself and its plane of encounter: the experience of being 'in-performance' and of being modified by the performativity of others. In this chapter, I also assert that performativity and the carnivalesque experience share the experiential quality of a feedback loop between affect, embodiment, enactment (word and action) and the construction of social reality, a loop which draws on multiple sources and creates multiple expressions. These descriptions allow for a view of carnival as a state of 'becoming' (Whitehead, 1929) and as a festive release, a view which assists consideration of its remedial function as an inter-subjective exercise in cultural democracy.

#### **4:2:2 Affects, Events, Representations and Stories:**

The conceptual endeavour of this chapter would not be possible without reflection on the contribution that Non-Representational Theory (NRT) might make to this discourse, and a brief consideration of the 'performance turn' in Cultural Geography. Anderson & Harrison

reflect, for example on how NRT 'runs along with other turns towards performance and performativity which may be found occurring more or less contemporaneously across geography, the social sciences and humanities' (2010: 9).<sup>46</sup> I also draw here on social constructivist approaches (Geertz, 1973) in order to focus on how participants express their affective and emotional relations to the 'structure of symbolic meaning' (Anderson & Harrison, 2010: 4).

A social constructivist approach is useful in this research with regard to identifying how individual actors apply their social 'lifeworlds' (Buttimer, 1976) to the practices of carnivalesque street performance. It allows exploration of how people feel about their own social participation and the participation of others. It prompts consideration of how this participation relates to space and place, and how people experience symbolism as it is selected, controlled and manufactured. Such an approach also fosters exploration of the emotive function of history, custom, repeated practice and tradition within carnival groups, and how members experience their role in reproducing preferred vocabularies as part of a group or community. Further, it demands that we look beyond this apparently co-constructed social consent to seek individual expressions of festive identity and experience within the group: to explore what Anderson & Harrison refer to as 'the plural and contested (or at least contestable) nature of symbolic orders and the sites at which this occur[s]' (2010: 4).

However, as Anderson and Harrison also point out (2010: 5), 'the insights and critical purchase of social constructivism come at a cost', which is perhaps to 'de-carnivalise' them; to detach these expressions from affect and the immediacy of their lived experience; their 'contingen[cy] to practical contexts' (2010: 6). Further, the representational quality of this approach risks diverting us from the affective notion of 'thought-in-action' (2010: 6),

---

<sup>46</sup> See also: Butler (1990, 1993), Sedgwick (2003), Parker and Sedgwick (1995), Gregson and Rose (2000), Phelan (1993).

which is a feature both of carnival procession and of the processual nature of carnivalesque experience itself.

In addressing this tension, I seek to connect the notion of carnival as an immersive, multi-sensory mode of festive encounter with Deleuze and Guattari's concept of the rhizome, wherein the performance of space, place, identity, image, text, history, object and concept occur simultaneously as 'lines of flight' within a multi-linear, multi-dimensional dynamic (Deleuze & Guattari, 1987: 21). The carnivalesque, like the rhizome, is thus presented as a plane of encounter which effectively 'randomises' socially-constructed space, opening it up to a range of competing meanings. Thus, the carnivalesque experience is a fluctuation in which people feel the effects of its stimuli in the energetic, relational encounter they experience between their everyday and spectacular selves and those of others.

A further consideration within this relational, immanent view of carnivalesque experience is that it constitutes dynamic subjectivities which resist representation and are not contained simply within their outward symbolic expressions. This has implications with regard to how we might consider and analyse affect in this chapter and also with regard to how people express the affective qualities of their carnivalesque experience. The theoretical framework here presented therefore seeks to acknowledge the conceptual similarity of the carnivalesque moment to the 'event' as expressed in Non-Representational Theory: as 'a transforming moment that releases from the grip of the present and opens up the future' (Caputo, 2007: 6).

While this chapter seeks to approach these concepts as affective encounters within carnival practice, its foundation ethnographies reveal that participants tend to express this experience as *representation*: as 'story' rather than 'event' and as 'emotion' rather than 'affect'. Perhaps in recognition of the limitations of my conceptual approach in this chapter, it is important to distinguish 'affect' from 'emotion' and 'event' from 'story' in these

ethnographies. The former concept in each pair constitutes the primary, pre-cognitive interface of experience, while the later constitutes participants' post-cognitive, re-constructive representations. Anderson and Harrison (2010: 20) express this distinction well with regard to the 'event' as it is understood within NRT, seeing the event as: 'the escaping edge of any systemisation or economisation; the effects or affects of any 'line of flight''. While sharing the aspiration of NRT to go beyond a purely cognitive, narrative description, the inscription here presented is, perforce, similarly representational.

Edensor (2012), however, challenges this binary distinction between the representational and the non-representational, by way of a critique of the Blackpool Illuminations which highlights the 'manufacture' of affect through deliberate carnivalesque display and bodily mobility. Edensor contends that 'certain theories mystify affect by asserting that it is purely nonrepresentational, immune from analysis' (2012: 1112). Rather, he suggests, the affective and the representational may act together in illuminated processional settings. For Edensor, 'illumination uniquely blurs the boundaries between affects generated by representational and nonrepresentational qualities' (2012: 1112). This 'blurring' occurs within systems of 'flow'; within 'a temporal, rhythmic process in which a sequence of events and sensations successively provoke immersion, engagement, distraction, and attraction' (2012: 1110). In this regard Edensor thus suggests a similarity between the 'performance' of the Blackpool Illuminations and the illuminated carnivals of the fieldwork area in affective terms. He cites Böhme, (2002:6) and Anderson (2009:79) respectively to contend that 'we overlay our perception of the environment with patterns of representation' and that 'it is through an atmosphere that a represented object will be apprehended'.

Edensor's observations chime with participants' descriptions of the affective carnivalesque experience of observing and participating in illuminated carnival, as described in this chapter. Further, he usefully asserts that NRT prompts 'consideration about how different

configurations of objects, technologies, and (human and nonhuman) bodies come together to form different capacities and experiences of relationality' (2012:1105). Edensor thereby offers the researcher an opportunity to consider how 'such actors and energies emerge, relate, and are distributed differently across space and are enrolled into the social' (*ibid*). Finally, Edensor contends that this social aspect of affect, as I have hitherto suggested, is an essential feature of vernacular festivity. He encourages us to consider 'how affective experience is 'a cumulative, and therefore historical, process of interaction between human beings and place' (Kobayashi *et al*, 2011: 873 in Edensor, 2012: 1105)

In attempting to 'blur' affect and representation, then, this chapter attempts to introduce an element of carnivalesque disruption by deliberately flexing between the different temporal stages of the processual experience of carnivalesque street procession. The chapter shifts between ethnographic inscriptions of different events, namely: the town carnivals of Seaton and Weymouth and the professional street performances of *Cartwheelin* and *Battle for the Winds*. The analytic focus moves in and out of the preparatory and organisational stages of group formation, draws on data from symbol-selection and making stages, and mines the 'gathering', 'holding', 'releasing', 'performance' and 'aftermath' stages of Carnival Day and the carnivalesque street processions themselves to give a sense of the affective 'flow' of carnival (Edensor 2012). The chapter also presents fieldnotes as 'mood', 'setting' and 'atmosphere' on occasion, seeking to conjure the affective liveliness of carnival while at the same time reconstructing 'meaning' from the ethnographic data:

*Look, it is me in the front! With a big yellow jacket on!... People are excited! It is exciting! You have worked all year, maybe, in putting together whatever your entry is and suddenly it is here. And you want to do it. You can't wait!*

(Alice, Town Carnival Committee member, Seaton, 11.1.12)

Eight-year-old Dylan is dressed in a furry monkey suit and has blacked his face. He hops about, his arms swinging low, making monkey noises.

(Fieldnote, Westham CC, Carnival Day, Weymouth, 15.8.12)

### **4:3 Carnival Affects:**

#### **4:3:1 The 'Energy' of Carnival:**

*If you think you have seen chaos in your life, you haven't. The last half hour before the procession leaves is madness. No room to move. Every band parked next to the other one trying to warm up, every float trying to deafen everybody, every child running around trying to go to the toilet, every mum trying to find their child.*

(Arthur, Town Carnival Committee member, Weymouth, 28.7.11)

The above expression from a town carnival committee member is reflective of the immersive nature of carnivalesque experience, as described by participants in this research. People described this immersion as the 'energy' of carnival, within general dynamic terms such as 'chaos,' 'wildness' and 'madness,' framed within the key, disinhibitory experience of 'letting go'. In terms of self-identification, a repeated refrain from participants in vernacular contexts was that one had to be 'crazy' or 'a nutter' to do carnival, and that carnival itself was like an infection: an addictive, compulsive experience of freedom that 'gets in your blood,' as Emma describes below:

*You lose some of your inhibitions, don't you, when you are in fancy dress? ...You scream and shout and lose a few inhibitions... and you feel you get away with it then, don't you?*

(Emma, Town Carnival Committee member, Weymouth, 15.12.11)



Fig 23 Participants in fancy dress. Chickerell Carnival Club Float, Weymouth Carnival, 2012

An interview with Rebecca and Gaby, two women from the organising committee of a seaside town carnival in East Devon, reflects a consistent temporal and spatial structure for the 'energy' of Carnival Day across the ethnographic data. The women describe Carnival Day in their home town as a disruption of the normal social and spatial dynamics of place. For them, carnival is 3000 people on the streets for a one-and-a-quarter-mile procession. It is '*disruption*', '*music*' and '*pressure*'. Their account of the passage of the day is Bakhtinian: '*buzz*,' '*expectation*,' '*release*,' '*procession*,' '*flow*,' and relaxation ('*gone!*'). As the evening turns to night, they describe how the focus of the parade dissolves: into '*fairground*,' '*crowds*,' '*excitement*,' '*melee*' and '*drunkenness*'. Their description of the day traces an expressive arc from anticipation to upheaval, via inversion, transgression and the grotesque, and back to '*normality*,' wherein they celebrate the effective minimisation of this disruption by their organising committee: the minimal road closures, the effective clean-up, the correct management of crowds, assembly, parade and dispersal (Rebecca, & Gaby, Exmouth, 1.2.12).

For many participants, the experience of the carnivalesque is framed as contact with an 'exterior' energy, an affect which exists beyond their usual social experience and which

allows them the catharsis of *'going wild'*. This type of expression was common as an ambition among more radical arts professionals who were involved in street processions and outdoor carnivalesque performance. Rob's comment below, for example reflects his sense of the remedial energy of carnival as a reconnection with 'exterior' natural and social vitalities which have been diminished by modern social and economic organisation:

*There is definitely a reconnecting going on... It is about connecting with your mates, it is about connecting community, the seasons, connecting with your inner drunkard, or whatever.*

(Rob, Arts professional, 18.10.11)

This sense of 're-connection' through carnival was common within professional settings as an expression of the cultural nostalgia of the communitarian project of participatory arts, one which seeks to reflect what Frazer refers to as a 'transcendent or symbolic universe that embraces all souls' (Frazer, 1999: 75). Tony's comment below articulates this sense of the 'communitas' (Turner & Turner, 1982, 44-48) of carnivalesque energy:<sup>47</sup>

*I think basically the carnival has to spring from the community, and it has to have a centre of some kind of spontaneous expression.*

(Tony, Arts professional, 19.9.11)

Similarly, Laura articulated the 'anarchic' energy of carnival as a temporary resuscitation of 'lost' social freedoms and dis-inhibition, particularly in 'English' culture:

*I think the street [carnival] gives a sense of 'maybe we could be in Europe', you know? People leaning out of windows and calling... a bit more anarchic than the English. I am talking about the English, as in white, English, historical, that kind of colonial power. I think that is much more likely to be aligned to traditional carnival. [Puts on establishment RP accent] Because we do **do** these things, but you know, they are rather controlled, and we know the rules.*

---

<sup>47</sup> Turner describes *communitas* as: 'this moment when compatible people – friends, congeners – obtain a flash of lucid, mutual understanding on the existential level, when they feel that all problems, not just their problems, could be resolved, whether emotional or cognitive, if only the group which is felt (in the first person) as 'essentially us' could sustain its intersubjective illumination.' (1982, 44-48)

(Laura, Arts professional, 18.10.11)

These ethnographies suggest that this sense of energetic release relies heavily on the temporal structure of carnival and people's experience of the preparation and anticipation which precedes the procession itself. This anticipation, often also experienced by people as 'stress,' 'pressure' and 'hard work,' arises from a highly controlled external timetable of participation over many months. Limits of access to making spaces for non-professional, vernacular carnival in particular require significant social negotiation and place tight controls on the time available to groups for preparation, in the farmers' barns, community centres, church halls and builders' yards in which floats and costumes are made:

Stella sighs and looks skyward: 'It is really stressful. I have been working really long hours and I have been doing a lot of personal making. It is too much for me really. I'm not doing it next year – they will have to find someone else.' After the parade she says: 'I am feeling very good. I am very proud of everybody and all the work they have done. Really proud.'

(Stella, Organiser, Westham Carnival Club, Carnival Day, Weymouth, 18.5.12)

Here, Stella expresses a common experience among community carnival organisers in particular: an almost cathartic affective sense of pressure and release within carnival. Participants in the research area reported how shrinking membership in many carnival clubs led to pressures on the availability of voluntary labour, alongside strict financial economies. Performance in the final procession thus constitutes a catharsis of this pressure as 'stress' becomes excitement and release, as the fieldnote below from Westham Carnival Club suggests:

By now, the children have started to arrive for face painting and costumes in the upstairs room. There is a lively, excitable atmosphere as everyone gets ready. The teenage girls are putting on make-up and getting into their costumes, trying the large head-dresses that Maria has made and practising walking in them up and down the room.

(Fieldnote: Westham Carnival Club, Carnival Day, Weymouth, 15.8.12)

The fieldnote from Seaton, below, suggests a similar 'pressure valve' dynamic. This is an 'energy' which might be seen as a microcosm of the wider experience of carnival in public space; the effect that carnival has on a town during its performative arc from disruption, through celebration and release, towards the restoration of 'normalities' of public space:

Up to now, the carnival committee members have spoken about carnival largely in terms of 'hard work,' as 'jobs to be done,' or 'things to set up,' but as the carnival float illuminates the night, there is now a real sense of excitement in the group, a lively energy, as if before a party. Lydia and Rose dance to the music which blares from the sound system. Alice is full of smiles. 'Brilliant!' 'Lovely!' 'Well done!'

(Fieldnote: Lighting up the Float, Carnival Committee, Seaton. 30.8.12)

These ethnographies also suggest that competition between vernacular carnival groups for cups and prizes, and the tense secrecy surrounding the nature of each club's parade entry, also added to the affects of anxious excitability which fuelled energetic release in the street processions themselves. In Seaton, carnivalist and circuit judge Dennis described secrecy as a key part of the energy of vernacular carnival, one which resulted in an atmosphere of rumour and speculation that contributed to an enjoyable sense of celebratory revelation in the final parade:

*No-one knows what [you] are doing. It is a complete secret. You daren't let out of the bag what you are making. It is under lock and key. No way would you know what ... You get tittle tattlers: 'I heard what so and so are doing!' 'Do you know what they are doing?' 'They are doing this that and the other' 'Are they? They done that five year ago!' All sorts of things come out, like.*

(Dennis, East Devon Carnival Circuit Committee member, Seaton, 13.1.12)

Similarly, Seaton float builder Pat described the competitive element in carnival participation as a key part of his own affective experience. Further, he framed this within an energetic moment of dramatic revelation, generated by the appearance of rival floats in the procession:

*I want to win!...I am very competitive. I always want to be first! It don't always work, but that is what I want to do. And I must say I get angry if we don't get first on occasions... Some years ago there was a cart in the Bridgwater circuit called Ghost Ship. And it was the most wonderful thing you ever saw. It really was. And on the night of Glastonbury Carnival we stood at the end of the road. It was a foggy night, and this thing appeared out of the fog. It was unbelievable!*

(Pat, carnival float-maker, Seaton, 6.6.12)

A further element of this sense of energetic release emerges from the data within expressions of 'risk' and 'luck'. Some participants expressed the notion that by taking part in carnivalesque street procession they were putting themselves in the hands of forces larger than themselves. These forces were often framed within spatial terms, such as '*the outdoors*,' or '*the street*,' and within social terms, such as '*the council*' '*the people*', '*the rabble*', or '*the crowd*.' Such expressions focused particularly on the potential risk from the British weather and the possibility of social embarrassment or physical accident involving carnival vehicles.<sup>48</sup> A further element of the energy of carnivalesque experience lay in the ubiquity of games of chance at these events, as expressed in the following fieldnote:

*So if anyone wants to buy the last ticket, one minute! So anyone that is completing a ticket at the moment, please finish writing and we will include it in the Draw....*

(Audio fieldnote: PA announcement, Carnival Day, Weymouth, 9.59pm, 15.8.12)

Here our ethnographies reveal the bingo, lotteries, race nights, lucky-dips, raffles and prize draws that are a traditional feature of seaside town carnivals in the research area. These games form a core part of both the economies of carnival production and their redistributive function in raising money for good causes. The following fieldnote also

---

<sup>48</sup> The 2012 UK summer was the wettest in 100 years.

communicates the dramatic, temporal energy of the countdown to a carnival prize draw, as communicated to the entire Weymouth Esplanade through the carnival PA system:

*If you are about to buy sir, I would buy now! Put pen to paper, otherwise we will close the Draw. This gentleman here looks like he is writing the last ticket. One more being written here... he is feeling lucky...*

(Audio fieldnote: PA announcement, Carnival Day, Weymouth, 9.59pm, 15.8.12)

In these cases, people expressed an energetic relationship to notions of luck and risk: an excited awareness of the chance of getting soaked or sunburnt; of losing a child in the crowd, of falling off a lorry, or of winning a carnival cup, a certificate or a car:

*So ladies and gentleman, give the drum a nice big turn... Dig deep, Andy! Dig deep! I wish you all the luck in the world, ladies and gentlemen..... And we have a lady winner, whose surname is Brown!... Give her a call! .... She has just won a car! (cheers) Yeah, a round of applause! (applause) Give it another spin!*

(Audio fieldnote: PA announcement, Carnival Day, Weymouth, 10pm, 15.8.12)

Consistent within these expressions was a further affect of 'letting go': a relinquishing of individual power to the larger processes of carnivalesque chance. Participants also located this 'letting go' within their preparedness to put their bodies 'at risk' on the float lorries, through drunkenness, or on the fairground rides which are a consistent feature of seaside carnival:

The seaside attractions are in full swing, including the carnival fairground, which features Waltzers, pick-a-ticket stalls and the Oxygen 6G ride, a tall revolving structure with two capsules on either end, which hurls screaming youngsters into the air and spins them upside down

(Fieldnote: Carnival Day, Weymouth, 15.8.12)

The immersive, affective 'energy' of carnival was thus expressed by participants as one which freed them from social restraint within a highly structured temporality of anticipation, release and normative return. It was an affect which brought people into flux with 'forces' they considered to be larger than themselves and which temporarily placed them within

affects of random chance and risk. This affective experience of risk was also expressed by people in terms of their adoption of festive identity within carnival, as we explore in the next section of this chapter. Affects of performative transformation emerge from these ethnographies as a significant feature of the carnivalesque experience, as participants explain how their adopted, festive carnival identities offer them a temporary absolution from personal responsibility through the 'me-but-not-me' dialectic of performance.

#### **4:3:2 Performative Transformation:**

The yard is dark. The float is covered with a blue tarpaulin. Fraser climbs up to unhook the covers and we all grab a corner to pull them off, revealing the shadowy outline of the float beneath. Pat goes to the back of the vehicle and primes the generator. He pulls the starter cord and the engine roars into life. Dozens of light bulbs spark up immediately, illuminating the float in all its glory: a rectangular Chinese Dragon Boat with a dragon-head prow, carefully crafted thrones for the Royal Party and circular lanterns hanging from the eaves. Everyone cheers. The float is painted in rich red and gold, with Chinese characters on its sides and pillars. Behind the throne of the Carnival Queen there is a carefully stencilled dragon, chasing its tail in an eternal circle. Along the sides of the float there are pagoda-shaped lantern stands. The Dragon Head prow snarls into the night, its eyes blazing.

(Fieldnote: Lighting up the Float, Carnival Committee, Seaton. 30.8.12)



Fig 24 *Dragon Boat Float, Seaton Carnival, 2012.*

Affects of performative transformation within carnivalesque street procession rely heavily on visual and auditory elements: centred on an outward projection from the individual body that is achieved through spectacular amplifications of light, colour, size, texture, sound and behaviour. This affective experience of transformation takes form within symbolic systems that reflect people's desire to transform not only themselves, but also to reach for wider geographical associations and to disrupt the everyday meaning and function of the public spaces through which they travel. The following fieldnote describes the disruptive performativity of a carnival vehicle from within *Battle for the Winds*, for example, and the manner in which it effected a temporary transformation of the spaces through which it passed:

As we near departure, a crowd gathers. Chris is firing sounds through the PA, playing waltzes on his toy piano, making fart noises, sonar beeps and wind effects. Sam climbs to the crow's nest with his megaphone and we call for pedallers. I honk my car horn... As we pedal our Wind Vessel along the sea front, we halt the traffic and squeeze past parked cars. On the narrow prom by the beach huts, we stop and look in to these little, half-private worlds, asking cheekily for a cup of tea, or for permission to 'drive through your front room'. A group of women sit in deck chairs in front of one hut, their painted toes stretched

out in the sun. 'Mind your toes ladies!' we shout as we pass. A man reading a newspaper outside his hut pretends we do not exist. He has claimed his space and will not move for anyone, nor even acknowledge our presence. We inch by, carefully.

(Fieldnote: BFTW Dorset at Lyme Regis Fossil Festival, 4.5.12)

In vernacular contexts, the use of loud public address systems on circuit carnival floats serves as an important element of the 'energy' of carnival. Float participant Lucy described the aural transformation of town streets as one of the most important energetic features of her local carnival when she said: '*It is loud. All the rides are loud and people are screaming*' (Lucy, Carnival Day, Weymouth, 15.8.12). Loud music was also as a means by which crews used hybrid vocabularies from popular culture to project geographical transformations into public space, as the following fieldnote suggests with regard to the Chinese *Dragon Boat* float at Seaton:

Pat presses a button and music blares from the sound system, filling the night with music from 'The King and I.' Everyone cheers again. 'Well done Pat!' they shout.

(Fieldnote: Lighting up the Float, Carnival Committee, Seaton. 30.8.12)

Affects of performative transformation were also performed through the use of carnival costume and make-up, as the following field note illustrates:

Maria's four year old daughter Hannah is wearing a peacock-style harness of tall coloured canes and colourful gauzes, her face painted like a rainbow. Adults are dressed as jungle animals and one person as a cave man. Mark is dressed in his Indiana Jones outfit, complete with leather jacket, hat and bullwhip. Martha, his partner, is dressed as a flower, with multicoloured face paint and an intricate head-dress made of plastic bottles, cut to look like petals around her face. Freya wears a long flowing dress and Stella is dressed as a cat. Megan and her daughter are wearing sparkly face make-up, tight lycra dance suits and rainbow-striped leggings, with pairs of gauze fairy wings on their backs.

(Fieldnote: Westham CC, Carnival Day, Weymouth, 15.8.12)



Fig 25 'Martha' transformed. Weymouth Carnival, 2012.

In this way, individuals integrated the adaptation of their bodies with symbolic expressions that produced affects of 'identity' 'space' and 'place', both for themselves and for their audience. Through interaction with the carnival float, whether aboard the float itself or as '*mas*'-style walking performers in the streets around it, performer bodies thus become part of a mobile 'stage-set' which carries symbolic associations to fantasy, geography, environment or a particular social attitude. Amplified by the simultaneous performativity of the other transformed bodies within the procession, this performative transformation takes place within a festive occupation of public space and as part of a dynamic relationship with the carnival audience. It also relies on an inter-subjectivity between performer and audience; on public appreciation of the 'craft' of the transformation, and on the audience's transitory, affective experience of moving into the 'world' of each carnival entry as it passes.<sup>49</sup> Audiences are thus drawn into a transformed public space through their ability to

---

<sup>49</sup> See Chapter Five re BFTW float designs and their relationship to regional identities.

read, enter and participate in these mobile 'worlds' by cheering, singing, dancing and donating money.

A further element of the affect of transformation in carnival is the shared enjoyment between performer and audience in moments where participants 'break character' to reveal themselves to friends and neighbours, or when audience members spot the everyday identities which are hidden within the festive transformation of people they know. Thus, the creation of a festive identity relates to affects of personal liberation, disguise and revelation. In the following fieldnote, Molly, a local police officer, reveals both the sense of personal liberation that comes with carnivalesque acts of disguise, and the sense of *communitas* which derives from her festive participation:

*You can hide behind the costume and the face paint. It makes me proud when I am going through on that float and people are looking at me. You can think to yourself: 'Wow, I am part of this. I am part of my community'.*

(Molly, Float participant, Westham CC, Carnival Day, Weymouth, 15.8.12)

Sofia offers a further important insight when she articulates the personal sense of vulnerability she experiences during her performance of carnival:

*It can be embarrassing when your friends look at you and start laughing, but it is fun because you know that you are joining in.*

(Sofia, Float participant, Westham CC, Carnival Day, Weymouth, 15.8.12)

This vulnerability is particularly observable at the end of the preparatory phase before the main procession, when participants begin to feel the nervousness that comes with the liminality of their transition from the everyday to the festive self.<sup>50</sup> Nervousness increases as people sense the approaching energies of performance and the social implications of their performative transformation.

---

<sup>50</sup> See the later section in this chapter on Ritual and Social Drama, p189-205, for a detailed description of vulnerability within the ritual structure of liminal rites of passage.

These ethnographies also suggest that participants experience affects of solidarity, through their adoption of themed festive identities which are expressions of their membership of a carnival club or group. Stella's description of the Westham Carnival Club *Rainforest Jungle* float in the following fieldnote reflects the combination of individual contributions within the group's creative output and the solidarity which arises from equitable decision-making about the nature of transformative display:

*What we are now trying to decide is ... we need the two trees, where they can be seen... we are only going one way so one lot of people will see one tree and not the other... That does leave the pyramid back in the middle.... I was worried that people won't see it... There are lots of kids... I mean there are 24 of us going to be on this float... [Vic's] made-it-at-home tree is going to have to go near his mural, because it ties in. ... Nicole goes mad with pebbles and Vic goes mad with leaves!*

(Stella, talking about decorating the lorry, Westham CC, Carnival Day, Weymouth, 5.8.12)

A key part of this performative transformation also lies in individuals' freedom to choose and to make their own personal costume and performance within an agreed group theme, and in their sense of agency in the general decision-making process.<sup>51</sup> Within Westham CC's theme of *Rainforest Jungle* for example, individuals transformed themselves into animals, insects, explorers and plants. They built representations of trees, lost temples and waterfalls from junk materials, transforming 'rubbish' into 'art' for their lorry based float and its walking entourage.<sup>52</sup> However, the designs for people's individual contributions were highly personal. Designs reflected people's individual decisions about how they wished to transform themselves, and their self-imposed limits regarding the nature of their performance on the day. As a result each transformation bore the individual marks of its creator and achieved equal status within the final performance, with great care taken to

---

<sup>51</sup> See Chapter Seven for analysis of this participatory cultural democracy in vernacular carnival.

<sup>52</sup> See also Hawkins, H: (2010).

make sure that everyone's individual creativity was 'seen' and 'recognised' by the audience, as Carnival Club member Luke explains below:

*It is a creativity that involves all sorts of skills. You have got face painting going on, you have got dressmaking, making the costumes. You have got woodworking skills, part of the creativity of the design of the set on the lorry... the children themselves are actually here very much for the dressing up and the decorating of themselves... And the walking element is just as important for them.*

(Luke, Float participant, Westham CC, Carnival Day, Weymouth, 15.8.12)

This culturally democratic approach is a key part of the vernacular creativity of personal transformation within these town carnivals. Edensor and Millington (2009: 116) describe a similar affect from within the cultural geographies of Christmas illuminations, as a 'live and let live understanding of the ethos of festivity,' an approach which 'encourage[s] displayers to appreciate the attempts of others... to produce forms of illumination, carnival and communal rituals'. Melissa, an arts professional working in carnival development, witnesses this free-expressive transformative practice as a key part of vernacular carnival, one which produces a temporary freedom from social restraint:

*There are loads of guys dressed up as women in it, and so on...Do you know what I mean...? So maybe, in a way, there is more of that revelry and carnival atmosphere to it... And they are letting go.*

(Melissa, Arts professional, 27.9.11)

Performative transformation within carnival thus reflects a range of affects which extend from the body into public space, reflecting individual agency within group representations of chosen symbolic themes. These transformations contribute to a dynamic relationship between performers and audience, one which also transforms people's experience of public space and constitutes a festive occupation and transformation of the everyday. Almost universally, participants describe this transformation in the simplest of terms, as 'the one day of the year' when you can have 'fun' in public space, as Sofia suggests below:

*[Carnival] is just like a day when you can have fun, can't you? It is the main day of the year... Everyone celebrates it and has fun... [It is important] So they can experience the fun as well. So they are not just left out doing nothing.*

(Sofia, Float participant, Westham CC, Carnival Day, Weymouth, 15.8.12)

Thus, people place this transformative experience within a remedial function that suggests dissatisfaction with the normative rules of social life and a desire for a more colourful, noisy and energetic experience; a lived experience that exists in the transformative 'event' of the carnivalesque and which affords them transformative power and agency. Neve, for example, describes how these affects of performative transformation are experienced through colour, and are amplified by the 'live' experience of carnival:

*The colours felt really vibrant to me. I was a bit disappointed when I saw the photos, because they didn't look as vibrant in the photos as they had in amongst it.*

(Neve, Arts professional, 31.10.11)

Finally, Rob's comment below offers a neat summary of the carnivalesque affect of personal transformation, as a temporary liberation from 'normal' ways of being:

*That is what I always have wanted to do, with any event I have wanted to do, is to make people come out of themselves.*

(Rob, Arts professional, 18.10.11)

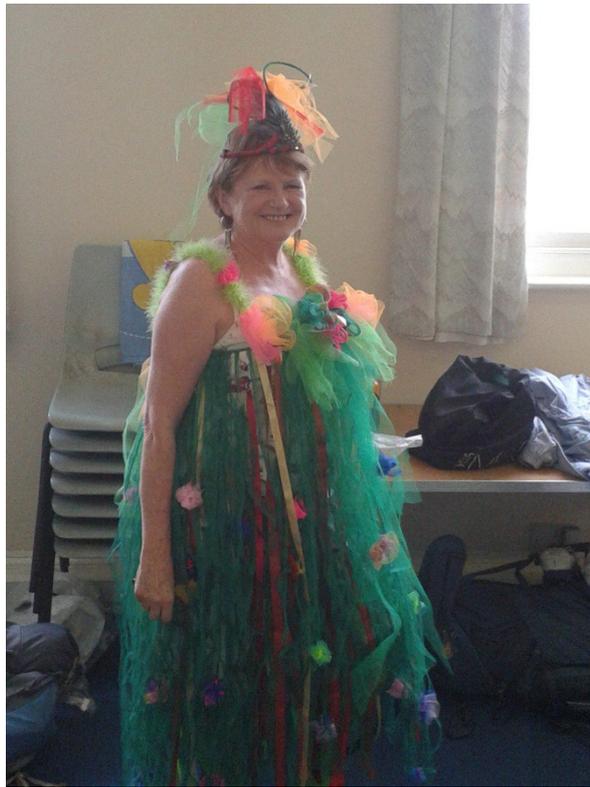


Fig 26 'Freya' transformed. Weymouth Carnival, 2012.

#### 4:3:3 Transgression:

Thus far, these ethnographies have revealed how the 'energy' and spontaneity of carnival is often described by participants as a feature of the experience of '*letting go*'; as an expression of an affective desire to escape the normative rules of social life. Participants frame this desire as a need to abandon certain aspects of social restraint, albeit in a limited way, and to experience an unfettered world that redistributes power and allows for open encounters with the 'other' within frameworks of celebratory solidarity. Affects of transgression are thus a key function within the carnivalesque experience.

Throughout the data here presented, participants express transgressive feelings in a uniformly positive sense. These feelings emerge as affects of positive empowerment through challenge to regulation; as reactions to the relationship between communities and

authority, and as attempts to appropriate space 'for the people'. The transgressive affect of carnival also finds expression here as a performative conviviality which counteracts an atomizing tendency in society: as an assertion of communal power.

Eve's comment below, for example, reflects her perceived imbalance of cultural capital between the state-funded Olympic festivity of *Battle for the Winds* and more 'ordinary' everyday contexts. It also reflects her assertion of a transgressive tendency which is a consistent feature of carnivalesque street performance, with regard to the occupation of public space:

Eve agrees that it is a shame that we will not be able to take performances to the 'ordinary' parts of town, to explore the energy of streets away from the highly controlled, official Olympic zone. Her tone is transgressive: 'We'll do it anyway!' she says.

(Fieldnote: BFTW Dorset at Lyme Regis Fossil Festival, 3.5.12)

Transgression here appears as an expression of solidarity, although participants' commitment to such a shared encounter does not appear in these wider carnival ethnographies as a utopian pursuit of notions of collective mind or expression. Rather, affects of transgression tended to be expressed within attempts by carnivalists to create 'free' space in which people can 'do their own thing, together,' as individuals or groups, often in competition with each other. Carnival thus appears as an agreement to the festive contestation of space and place as much as it is a shared symbolic occupation, one which has its own hierarchies of power, control and rule-breaking. In the comments which follow, for example, Archie, a carnival committee member, expresses the permissive licence of Carnival Day, while Sam asserts his right of freedom of movement in public space, and Tom recognises rule-breaking as an important part of the tolerance and progressive sociality of carnival:

*Let them go in there and do their own thing. ... If people are allowed to be spontaneous, that is the way to do it... People have got to be allowed to express themselves.... It is all part of the feeling for Carnival isn't it?*

(Archie, Town Carnival Committee member, Weymouth, 2.11.11)

*As long as we are roadworthy and we keep moving, they can't stop us!*

(Fieldnote: Sam, Arts professional, BFTW Dorset at Lyme Regis Fossil Festival, 3.5.12)

*You have quite a lot of rules... You can throw your hands in the air ...I mean, if you don't break a rule or two, you are not going to get anywhere.*

(Tom, Float Participant, Carnival Day, Seaton, 1.9.12)

The above comments highlight the function of carnival to create public space in which people can 'do their own thing, together,' often in competition for space, prizes or public approval. Within the transgressive affects of carnival, however, we also encounter the unsettling, the political and the 'out-of-place,' (Cresswell, 1996) alongside the joys of communal festivity.<sup>53</sup> What is shared among participants is a commitment to the performative mode of carnival itself, a commitment to the custom of 'letting go' of social norms as an expression of individual or group festive identity. This may be seen as an increasingly political stance in a society where public space is shrinking and where statutes such as the 1994 Criminal Justice and Public Order Act remain in force in the UK, limiting the possibility for spontaneous public festivity.<sup>54</sup>

Transgressions of the social rules of behaviour, of bodily display and of public space thus afford carnivalesque street procession a remedial function as a cathartic, self-contradictory, annual proclamation in relation to the 'fixed' in society. Further, Carnival Day itself provokes a social reaction within its location. As one carnivalist put it: *'There are a lot of people against carnival in the town... they say: 'Oh no, no. Carnival? No, they don't give*

---

<sup>53</sup> 'Families outraged as carnival float 'mocks Jimmy Saville victims': Bad taste row in wake of fancy dress competition' <http://www.dailymail.co.uk/news/article-2386624/Jimmy-Saville-carnival-float-Common-Riding-mocks-victims-say-families.html> Accessed 9.8.13

<sup>54</sup> For detail re legislation on festive assembly, see: Anderton (2011).

*nothing back to us. What does carnival give us?"* (Matthew, Town Carnival Committee member, Carnival Day, Seaton, 1.9.12). As such, carnivalesque street procession is inevitably an encounter with power, domination (both spatial and inter-personal) and control, as the following fieldnote tale reveals from within my ethnography of the *Cartwheelin* performances of *Battle for the Winds*:

Something happens today that takes us closer to that boundary than we are prepared for... At one point, we stop and pick up a man who pushes the boundaries of his position. Whether it is because he is drunk or naturally aggressive is uncertain, but he uses his place on the carnival vehicle to assert power over the crowd, shouting at them to 'get out of the way!' He breaks the implicit 'rules' of the vehicle by ordering me to release the brake when it is not safe to do so, by demanding that we go faster, by shouting aggressively at passers-by. Quickly we realise that something is amiss and we become passive, our performance muted until we can stop safely and change crew.

(Fieldnote: BFTW Dorset at Lyme Regis Fossil Festival, 5.5.12)

This encounter prompts observations about the affective nature of carnivalesque transgression. It reflects the spatial dominance and social power that carnival floats and their crews achieve in public space. It also demonstrates how different transgressive behaviours may be either 'in-place' or 'out of place,' even within the free-expressive practices of carnival. Carnival floats have power and use power, as spectacle and as a physical occupation of the street. However, nowhere among participants, other than in this instance, did I encounter a sense that this power was about dominance in an aggressive way. Rather, I found participants' carnivalesque occupation of the street to be about comic mock-dominance. This was often expressed through their subversive inhabitation of 'strong' festive identities such as superheroes, film stars and robots. The duality of their festive identities, the 'me-but-not-me' of them, was mostly performed as a self-deprecating satire on the nature of power itself, as carnivalist Matilda explains below:

*I think our people on the float are always very jolly, they are always very smiley... We don't get despondent if we don't win and stuff... you have seen the*

*size of our float - we are tiny, and some people's generators are the size of our float... We know we are not going to win... We are too little to win.*

(Matilda, Float Participant, Budleigh CC, Carnival Day, Seaton, 1.9.12)

The above fieldnotes allow us to consider that the transgressive challenge to social rules performed by the man on the Wind Vessel was not carnivalesque but 'anti-social' behaviour. This points us to a key condition of the mode of carnival performance and the nature of transgressive symbolism within it: that the carnivalesque is an inherently *co-operative* social mode, an agreed witnessing of competing symbolism and transgressive behaviours in public space. It is precisely through this agreement to contestation that the cultural democracy of carnival emerges, allowing a place and its people come to test, to know and to re-appraise each other. Carnival thus allows people to create a ritual, social drama of rule-breaking which promotes 'boundary interactions' between groups and individuals (Wenger, 2000) and thus articulates the rhizomatic, inter-subjectivity of place and identity.

However, this 'agreement to contestation' is not without its own boundaries. The following e-mail regarding 'political' content in the 2012 Weymouth Carnival reflects just such a boundary interaction, framed within affects of transgression in the carnival parade:

Hi. Thought I'd drop you a line - the carnival was really good this year - I was on a float and thoroughly enjoyed it again. You lot do such a good job of organising this - it was excellent. There was just one thing that I thought I should mention - we were behind the Unison float and I was somewhat concerned that they were handing out political literature and sweets to the crowd rather than concentrating on collecting money. They were actually carrying their leaflets in the collection buckets. I have concerns as this is not a direction I think the carnival procession should be going down. I would hate to see the carnival taken over for political purposes when it should be all about raising money for good causes.

(Email to Weymouth Town Carnival Committee Chairman. Subject: Carnival, sent, 23.8.12)



Fig 27 UNISON . NHS Float, Weymouth Carnival, 2012.

This email suggests affects of transgression at a political level, within a carnivalesque act of protest by the Unison trade union carnival crew against government cuts to the National Health Service. We also encounter the writer's sense of this political performance as a transgression of the 'rules' of the carnival and its perceived purpose, as 'not the direction the carnival procession should be going down'. Finally, the correspondent expresses notions of power and control, worrying that the carnival could be 'taken over for political purposes'. The correspondent thus asserts the authority of the committee in determining what are 'acceptable' and 'unacceptable' carnivalesque performances within the parade. Consideration of people's affective encounters with such structures of control is the project of the next section of this chapter.

#### **4:3:4 'Fun with Restrictions': Sanction, permission and structures of control:**

If transgression is a feature of participants' affective embodiment of the social mode of carnival, then sanction, permission and structures of control are its bedfellows, as was clearly demonstrated during *Battle for the Winds* at Weymouth, a carnivalesque

performance at the heart of the town's participation in the 2012 Olympics. Here, in the highly-controlled Olympic Live Site, the symbiosis between carnivalesque performance, counterculture, and the structures of control within state power came into sharp focus, as the following fieldnote vignette illustrates:

### **Biscuit on the Live Site:**

Back at the Live Site. Sitting alongside us is a man none of us recognises: a man who does not bear the requisite wristband; an unshaven, unwashed, waistcoated, bare-armed, tattooed, middle-aged, tired-looking man with missing teeth who is taking advantage of the bandstand shade. A security guard approaches him and asks for identification.

*'Biscuit,' he says. 'I'm with Mutoid Waste.'*

The conversation goes something like this:

*'Biscuit?'*

*'Yeah, Biscuit. Mutoid Waste.'*

*'Your name is Biscuit?'*

*'Yeah, Biscuit. Do you know Mutoid Waste? Do you know who we are?'*

*'No, 'fraid not. You haven't got a wristband, so you are not supposed to be in here. This area is restricted, Wristbands only.'*

I know of the Mutoid Waste Company from Glastonbury. They are the remnants of an art-punk-traveller soundsystem crew who turn cars and machinery into dystopian sculpture environments for all night parties. Mutoid Waste are the grand-daddies of the UK free festival and illegal rave scene, veterans of the Battle of the Beanfield. They have a reputation for arriving in the dark and uninvited and have pitched their metal provocations everywhere from King's Cross to the Berlin Wall. I have no idea why they are here, at the Olympics, but in a way I'm not surprised. The Olympics is a perfect target.

*'You haven't got a wristband, so you are not supposed to be in here,' says the guard... 'I'll be back in five minutes and then you'll have to leave.'*

Weeks later, the Paralympics closing ceremony creates an online stir amongst the BFTW crew, when Wind Vessels appear in the performance, appearing to mimic the BFTW designs. Biscuit's presence at the Live Site suddenly makes sense to me. Was it a form of 'cultural espionage?' Have even the Mutoids been assimilated into the Olympic project? Are we are all on the make and taking Coe's shilling?

(Fieldnote: BFTW, Weymouth 24.7.12)

20:33 BST: Here we go. And we're off. The Festival of the Flame begins with performers from the Mutoid Waste Company entering the stadium in a convoy of steampunk style vehicles. A horde of "wind gremlins" turn their wind machines on silver-clad dreamers, the guardians of the Agitos, the symbol of the Paralympics, accompanied by a dramatic soundtrack composed by David Arnold.<sup>55</sup>

This vignette reveals how, in true carnivalesque style, Biscuit was simultaneously in-place and out-of-place in the Olympic Carnival. His tattooed body and dirty clothing broke the symbolic rules of the Live Site and led the security guard to suspect him. His lack of wristband marked him as an outsider to the Olympic project and earned him ejection from the space. But Biscuit was also an insider, a spy, a countercultural agent provocateur working his own angle on the Olympics, exploiting the permeability of carnivalesque culture. The visibility of the Mutoids at the heart of the Paralympic Closing Ceremony was as much a challenge to the system as evidence of their assimilation into the mainstream. Carnavalesque disguise is the perfect way to sneak in under the wire, to become the Fool that speaks truth to power.

A couple of minutes later the security guard is back, talking into his walkie-talkie. *'No sign of him here. Must have gone off,'* he says.

(Fieldnote: BFTW, Weymouth 24.7.12)

Throughout my fieldwork, in both professional and vernacular settings, participants' affective relations with structures of authority and control emerged as a consistent feature of their carnivalesque experience. In Weymouth in particular, this negotiation was heightened by the presence of the Olympic sailing events in the town during the summer of 2012, and the performance of the traditional town carnival in the period between the Olympic and Paralympic competitions. Perhaps ironically, even these structures of control

---

<sup>55</sup> *London 2012 Paralympics closing ceremony – as it happened.*  
<http://www.guardian.co.uk/sport/2012/sep/09/london-2012-paralympics-closing-ceremony-live> Website accessed 2.10.12

found themselves 'performed' in procession, through the presence of officers in symbolic costume alongside the clowns and jugglers of the *Battle For The Winds* street carnival:

On all sides we are accompanied by stewards in black uniforms with hi-viz stripes and serial numbers on their backs... Victoria and Scarlet are with us, and have brought Fred the security guard and two stewards in official Olympic security uniforms, complete with radio communication ear-pieces.

(Fieldnote: BFTW, Weymouth, 26.7.12)

These ethnographies suggest the positive power of free-expression that carnivalesque street procession offers, and the way it disrupts and transforms everyday public space by '*holding up the traffic.*' However, most participants actually framed this freedom within strict, bounded systems of temporal, behavioural and spatial control. This was aptly described by one carnivalist as '*fun, with restrictions*' (George, Float Participant, Dawlish CC, Carnival Day, Seaton, 1.9.12). Paradoxically, these control systems appear to both restrict a sense of carnivalesque freedom and to facilitate it, allowing for affects of challenge, opposition, empowerment, co-option, protection, risk, safety, transgression and sanction to co-exist within carnival and street procession. Without rules to break, there can be no rule-breaking, after all.

This tacit acceptance of a bounded carnivalesque was not entirely uncontested by participants, although its contestation centred more on participants' views of who should be responsible for structures of control, rather than whether those structures were necessary. In vernacular settings, paraders, town carnival committee members and float participants alike expressed frustration at the devolution of responsibility for the practical exercise of controls on civic celebration from local authorities to voluntary carnival committees. Committee members in particular described the limiting effect this had on the nature of festivity, particularly in terms of manpower, financial liability and general expense.

Carnivalists interviewed for this study often felt that voluntary organisers were increasingly expected to ensure complete public compliance with overarching legislation regarding road closures, insurance, and the provision and licensing of procession stewards, much of which they considered to be unnecessary. Often, committee members sarcastically located themselves within the devolutionary political project of the Big Society in this context, or referred to themselves as *'people who can't say no,'* or *'people who do everything'*.<sup>56</sup> Within phrases such as *'the police won't help us anymore,'* or *'the local authority won't help'*, these committee participants asserted that they felt that responsibility for structures of control should be located within formal systems of authority. Often, they framed this as a 'traditional' feature of the participation of local authorities in celebratory civic life, one which was now in decline, as the following fieldnote suggests:

*But the more they let **us** do, the more they think we **will** do, the less **they** will do.... We have an event that we work really hard for, that runs for this town. It reflects particularly well on them, as well as it reflects on us, as well as it benefits all the local charities. The council's view is that **we** should do more and more of it. They don't actually help us with carnival on the day. I don't see lots of council people running around. There are none here, and there are none on the day running around doing things.*

(Stan, Town Carnival Committee member, Weymouth, 27.9.11, original emphasis.)

This devolutionary withdrawal on the part of local authorities was framed by many participants as a sense of loss or disappointment; within affects of isolation and insecurity. In vernacular settings, people particularly expressed what they saw as the erosion of the social contract between 'people' and 'power.' This was particularly the case for older participants. Such withdrawal was seen as evidence that participatory *'community spirit'* on the part of councils, police, and emergency services was a thing of the past, destroyed largely by economic conditions with regard to local authority spending. In this sense, it reflected the distinction between what Harvey describes (Harvey, 2007: 72) as

<sup>56</sup> Cameron and Clegg set out 'big society' policy ideas.

[http://news.bbc.co.uk/1/hi/uk\\_politics/8688860.stm](http://news.bbc.co.uk/1/hi/uk_politics/8688860.stm), Accessed 20.1.14

'developmental' and 'neo-liberal' approaches within systems of authority, where social participation by government on the one hand is replaced by contractual, economic relationships on the other. These affects of disappointment were often contained within a sense of responsibility for the effective practical delivery of carnival and its successful performance in temporal terms. They also reflected people's sense that systems of local authority were inflexible and aloof from everyday life; that they: 'don't have a sense of humour'.

In part, the call to greater participation that carnivalists made to local authorities echoed the ancient carnival affect of inversion: an invitation to the powerful to drop their authority and join the multitude on equal terms. At the same time, however, compliance with these structures of control was largely experienced by participants as fear of sanction, rather than as an agreement with the need for control in the first place, as the following comments reveal:

*Rules and regulations. You can only close a road for a certain amount of time, you have to have certain signs that say... that have to say certain things, and they have to be at a certain angle and they have to be up so many weeks in advance. You have to put signs on the road that says this road will be closed next... whatever. There has to be enough signs up. The signs have to be facing in certain directions. It is stressful thinking: 'have the right signs gone up, or has somebody decided: 'I am not taking any notice of that. I will knock that sign down and I'll go through regardless.'*

(Alice, Town Carnival Committee member, Seaton, 11.1.12)

Eventually, Pat sends me off with a friend of his in the van, to collect traffic cones from his building yard. We spend the next hour putting out 200 traffic cones along the procession route. He tells me 'Highways provide the cones free, but won't put them out for us. We have to do that ourselves. The police won't help any more either. They attend to keep the peace, but we have all had to pay to do Chapter 8 training as stewards.' I ask him what Chapter 8 training involves and he says: 'how to put out a cone, how to close a road, how to place a sign. It is common sense stuff, but it is all Health and Safety now.'

(Fieldnote: Seaton Carnival Day, Seaton, 1.9.12)

*We have to be licensed by the government to put out road cones and road signs on the public highway..... Otherwise you get some people just putting any old sign out on the road and expect it to carry legal weight. But if there is an accident, it doesn't. You can actually be in court for causing the accident. So it makes sure that you comply with the legislation.*

(George, Float Participant, Dawlish CC, Carnival Day, Seaton, 1.9.12)

George, Alice and Pat here express these rules as restrictive controls that are designed to limit carnival, that are exercised largely with regard to the use of public space, and are enforced by the threat of legal sanction. Other carnivalists believed that the withdrawal of civic authorities from positive participation in carnival led to the imposition of rules that were specifically designed to discourage the performance of carnival itself, as carnivalists Sophie, Jason and Matthew suggest below:

*There is a lot of form filling... everyone who enters has to go on courses leading up to it, so it involves time and money... it just gets a bit too much for the size of group we are.*

(Jason, Float Participant, Honiton CC, Carnival Day, Seaton, 1.9.12)

Matthew says: 'We used to have the Fire Engine down here, so the kids could climb all over it and sound the siren and so on. We did that for 30 years, with a tombola and everything, but now that the Fire Service is not based in Seaton, they don't bother coming anymore.' Sophie adds: 'The council and Highways are our biggest battles. We have had to spend loads of money on road signs telling people about road closures and diversions. They give us traffic cones, but no help to put them out like they used to. So we have to do it ourselves and we haven't got the manpower. They think that now the police aren't involved like they used to be, that somehow there will be problems, so they insist on us getting stewards who are Chapter 8 trained and then they charge us £300 per person for the training – that has cost us £900 this year! Yet in all the time we have done carnival we have never had a serious accident or any problem.' Later, Matthew says of the local authorities: 'It is almost as if they want carnival to die a death.'

(Fieldnote: Classic Car Rally, talk with Town Carnival Committee members, Seaton, 26.8.12)

Spatial and temporal controls in particular thus served to limit the period and range of festivity with regard to carnival, corralling it within certain preferred routes and within easily manageable spaces; limiting it by the week, the day and the hour. These limits, along with

venue licensing, directed the type of participation that was possible and also influenced participants' social definitions of 'what', 'where' and 'when' carnival 'is'. Another important feature of structures of control lay in attitudes towards alcohol consumption during carnival, as we shall now explore.

#### **4:3:5 Carnival and Alcohol: sobriety, 'good' drinking and 'bad' drinking:**

The police are around. They came up Alexandra Gardens and here they are now again. The police are circling the town in their patrol cars, and they are keeping an eye on everybody.... I went down to the seafront and stopped outside the *Dorothy*. There was a quiet bit of policing going on, a gentle word in someone's ear. Two drunk girls were being told not to cause any more trouble...The police cars doing circuits, going up the street, finishing the business. They drive off a bit, do a little circuit, come back. Just revolving around, outside the bars on the sea front.

(Audio fieldnote: outside Bar Banus, Carnival Day, Weymouth, 11pm, 15.8.12)

The role of alcohol in carnival and its relationship to affects of transformation, energy, release and transgression is a further important consideration within this ethnographic analysis. Alcohol is seen by many participants as part of the 'fuel' of carnival, and by others as a negative influence on carnival's normative, symbolic construction of idealised notions of community, identity and place. Thus ethnographies of alcohol consumption allow us to further frame how carnival may challenge systems of authority and push at the boundaries of spatial access, while also serving to reinforce structures of festive and social control. Arthur's comment below, for example, hints at how systems of policing with regard to carnival are closely linked to limits placed on alcohol consumption within carefully-defined areas of public space:<sup>57</sup>

*Late at night on carnival night, all the pubs along here, it is one of their busiest days of the year and they do have a habit of running beer promotions. And if people have been drinking since the procession time, well... the police are very aware of it and they have enough of a presence... The great thing about carnival*

---

<sup>57</sup> For analysis of the spatialities of alcohol consumption in British towns see Eldridge, A. & Roberts, M. (2008); Hadfield, P. (2006); Jayne, M., Valentine, G. & Holloway, S. L. (2008, 2010, 2011).

*is that it is centred around a small area... if there were to be a problem late at night after the carnival it would be within 150 yards of here and that is easy for the police to cope with, very easy.*

(Arthur, Town Carnival Committee member, Weymouth, 28.7.11)

Throughout my fieldwork, the role of alcohol in carnival was a consistent reference point among participants. Charlie, for example, talking about his involvement as a parade steward and committee member at Weymouth, recalls how one of his 'earliest recollections' of being involved in carnival was stopping an alcohol-induced fight:

*Late one evening we had problems with a couple of youths near one of the old-fashioned chairplane rides... there was a guy who was trying to dismantle at the end of the day and there were some youths hanging around who wanted to go on it. And it seemed like they had had a few... And they wouldn't take no for an answer. I came along. It was getting a little bit heated, and I said: 'sorry lads, we are taking it down. We have had a brilliant day. Let's leave it.' The guy that was trying to undo it was getting a bit fractious. They were getting fractious and I was stood in the middle.*

(Charlie, Town Carnival Committee member, Weymouth, 10.11.11)

Alcohol plays a significant role in people's experience of the 'energy' of carnival as part of the process of 'letting go,' as a lubricant to celebration and as a dis-inhibitory feature of performative transformation. The economy of alcohol also plays a significant part in the fundraising processes which support town carnivals throughout the year, at the dinners, variety nights, barn-dances and bingos that fund voluntary carnival committees. Many carnival clubs hold their regular meetings in local pubs. Historically, processional entries in town and circuit carnivals have also been closely linked to the staff and drinking communities of inns and hotels, though several carnivalists told me that the recent decline in the general UK pub trade has led to a reduction in this type of pub-based carnival entry.

Drinking also creates spatial affects within carnivalesque street procession, creating places along carnival routes where the intensity of carnivalesque experience is heightened, as Alice's comment below reveals:

*[Trouble comes] from the pubs. People that are drinking. Young people that have been drinking from earlier in the evening or they bring it with them, which is unfortunate. And then they will get a bit silly...We haven't had anything bad. There has been windows broken, one every three or four years, and we are not talking every year...The big funfair...in the car park... the young people, usually boys, unfortunately, will go to the pub or bring their bottles with them, go to the fair, and they go between one and the other. And then they will come to the procession when they have had a few, and that causes trouble. And then the police will step in. They are very good, because we know that pinch point is there [outside the George Inn] and the police will have more people around there.*

(Alice, Town Carnival Committee member, Seaton, 11.1.12)

Interestingly, participants in procession tended to locate drunkenness within the carnival audience, rather than among paraders themselves, and took the view that sobriety was a necessary feature of participation in the processions. These assertions place the sobriety of performers alongside notions of 'good' and 'bad' drinking amid the carnival audience. Sobriety among paraders also emerges from the data as an historic development within notions of 'safety' within carnival, and as a reflection of the legal structures of festive control, as the following news report from Pewsey in Wiltshire suggests:

One of the smallest carnival processions in living memory in Pewsey was marred by drunken behaviour leading to ten arrests, one of them a participant from one of the walking tableaux...The event was spoiled by what one police officer described as "drunk and stupid behaviour" leading to ten arrests, the most in recent years. The first three arrests took place right outside the village police station causing the procession start to be delayed by almost 15 minutes. One contestant was arrested after police officers confiscated alcohol he had been carrying in contravention of carnival rules and when he remonstrated further along the carnival route to Insp Andy Noble and Sgt Andy Peach he was arrested and sent to the custody centre in Melksham. Sgt Peach said: "Unfortunately there was an increase in drunken and stupid behaviour which we will not tolerate."

(News report: 'Ten arrests at Pewsey Carnival', By Nigel Kerton, Wiltshire Gazette and Herald, 20.9.10)

Conversely, arts professionals tended to cite drunken participants as evidence of a lack of artistic quality in town carnivals and as a rationale for 'carnival development.' Sobriety also emerges from this data as a feature of an arts-professional distinction between the preferred 'art' of carnival and the lowbrow grotesquery of 'popular' entertainment, as Tony's comment below suggests:

*There was scant attention to the kind of beauty of dress, or the fact that you could cover your lorry or be a bit creative with the idea of a lorry or float... it seemed that a lot of the people on the lorries were drunk.*

(Tony, Arts professional, 19.9.11)

Further, sobriety emerges from the data as a type of 'Lenten' abstinence among carnival organisers, which is ritually broken once they have successfully discharged their duties on Carnival Day, as suggested by the following fieldnote from Seaton:

Ed, a former carnival chairman and current Town Mayor, immediately tells me a funny story about how he got drunk one year after carnival and fell over and smashed his nose, a lapse which apparently precipitated his resignation from the chairmanship.

(Fieldnote: Town Carnival Committee meeting, Seaton, 2. 11. 11)

Some organisers expressed the view that alcohol consumption also constitutes a threat to carnival, leading to an increase in rules and regulation which limit the spontaneity of its festivity and damage its standing in the community. The following fieldnote shows how lorry-float driver Jack locates this concern within discourses of health and safety which have restricted the free movement of carnival performers on lorries, requiring them to be tethered at all times:

*I think it was basically to do with insurance and health and safety. Because I think they did have a couple of accidents where people fell off the trailers. A lot of people used to get pretty drunk. So obviously... I mean it is quite dangerous sort of thing...one or two fell off and it sort of put the dampers on it*

(Jack, Lorry driver. Westham CC, Carnival Day, Weymouth, 15.8.12)

Further, Rebecca and Gaby reveal below how carnival drunkenness plays into exaggerated negative media discourses about drinking in general, while an encounter with carnival committee member Scott during a street fight on Carnival Night in Weymouth shows the tension which exists between carnivalesque dis-inhibition, alcohol consumption

and carnival as a normative, symbolic construction of idealised notions of community, identity and place:

Rebecca and Gaby describe the ambivalent role of the media [which]... 'blows out of proportion' the problems they have faced with drunkenness and public order on carnival day.

(Fieldnote: Interview with Rebecca, Grace and Gaby, Town Carnival Committee members, Exmouth, 1.2.12)

I turn around and there is Scott. Scott is stood right next to me and he is saying: 'Don't write about this. You are going to make Carnival look bad.' And I say: 'Look that is not what I am about, but this is what happens, right? Sometimes this happens.' He says: 'This is about the drinking, it is not about Carnival.'

(Audio fieldnote: outside Bar Banus, Carnival Night, Weymouth, 11.30pm, 15.8.12)



Fig 28 Police arrest following a fight outside a bar, Weymouth Carnival, 2012.

This view of 'bad' drinking during carnival also reflects a tendency in these ethnographies towards the 'othering' of sections of the community, often by virtue of their age or class: the '*young males and females who perhaps have too many pints of ale*'; the '*odd few*'; the

'people [who] have been drinking since procession time'; the 'young people, usually boys' who 'go to the pub or bring bottles with them, go to the fair' and who 'come to the procession when they have had a few, and cause trouble'.<sup>58</sup> These descriptions thus reflect a hierarchy of acceptable drunkenness; a distinction between a permissible level of carnivalesque disinhibition, laughter and mild transgression and the negative drunkenness of 'young people' who occasionally cause minor damage in the town on carnival night.

By contrast, the 'good' drinking associated with carnival is often described as a key feature of its traditional success, as Alice's story below reveals:

*The carnival bands used to dress up in peculiar outfits, or funny outfits...They had a chap who dressed up as a clown in the front, and they pulled a small truck at the back, which held a cider barrel. And off of their instruments they had silver metal tankards and they would nip back, fill it up and drink, so by the time they actually got to the end of the procession they were drunk. I used to have to walk in front. And they would follow me so that they went the right way... This particular band thought it was great fun to play people up. We were going down the street and it narrowed, and I was concentrating on the fact that there were people on both sides... and suddenly people started laughing... I turned around and they had disappeared into the pub! The spectators thought that was so funny. I had to run back and go in the pub and hike them all out.*

(Alice, Town Carnival Committee member, Seaton, 11.1.12)

Thus, Alice articulates the conviviality associated with alcohol consumption during carnival, while distancing herself from its transgressive performativity. For Alice this 'good' carnival drinking is a traditional feature of festive transformation, humour and the dynamics of a positive carnival 'energy'. Alcohol, then, is part of the ritual structure of carnival, a structure we explore in the following section.

#### **4:3:6 Affects of ritual in carnivalesque street procession:**

---

<sup>58</sup> Dennis, East Devon Carnival Circuit Committee member, Seaton, 13.1.12; Arthur, Town Carnival Committee member, Weymouth, 28.7.11; Alice, Town Carnival Committee member, Seaton, 11.1.12.

So far, this chapter has reflected upon how the transformative performativity of carnivalesque street procession exists within affects of 'wild becoming' in public space. It has approached an understanding of how this performativity arises from multiple, festive subjectivities of place, meaning and identity, set within an annual framework of repeated cultural practice. Carnival in this sense approaches the iterative 'liminality' of ritual (Van Gennep, 1960); the 'period of time when a person is 'betwixt and between' social categories or personal identities (Turner, 1979, 465). The next section of this chapter seeks to briefly articulate theories of ritual performativity and social drama from within the discourse of Performance Studies, as a foundation for the analysis of ethnographic inscriptions which demonstrate this performativity within the cultural performance of carnival in the fieldwork area.



Fig 29 Torch-wading ritual, *Battle for the Winds*, Weymouth, 2012.

In his discussion of the performativity of ritual, Schechner (2003: 57) describes the transition from 'pre-liminal' to 'liminal' to 'post-liminal' states as a 'rite of passage'. This critique complements our understanding of the carnivalesque as it arises from the 'events'

described by NRT (Caputo, 2007: 6). Further, a critique of Victor Turner's definition of social drama (Turner, 1974: 37-41) allows us to explore carnivalesque street procession as a location for a symbolic, liminal performativity which contests established meanings of 'place' and the social relations from which it is constituted, placing them 'betwixt and between' any fixed meaning. In this section, I assert that the public procession of liminal festive identities in carnival allows for the multiple meaning of 'place' and identity to be witnessed and contested as ritual; to be re-integrated or re-divided in spatial, social, symbolic, economic and historic terms.

Schechner (2003: 45) locates ritual practice within the notion of 'twice-behaved, coded, transmittable behaviours' which sit on a continuum between everyday activity and highly-stylised integrations of repeated symbolic practice and play. What emerges from these ethnographies is a similarly graded view of ritual within carnivalesque street procession, from the familiar, vernacular customs of small town carnivals to the large scale ritual spectacles of outdoor carnivalesque performance. In Seaton, for example, I was admitted to an annual custom among carnival organisers, which for them was as much a significant part of the ritual of Carnival Day as it was a sound practical strategy, as the following fieldnote reveals:

Pat drives off to put out the signs around town. On his return we go for the traditional Carnival Day 'Men's Breakfast' at the Galley Cafe, where I am advised to 'eat well now, because you might not get another chance today'.

(Fieldnote: Carnival Day, Seaton. 1.9.12)

Ritual elements within carnival practice may also take symbolic form through actions which carry a performative function, such as the symbolic gathering and release of wind for the Olympic sailing during the *Cartwheelin* performances of *Battle For The Winds*:

The drumming finishes and we all cheer. A group of students step forward with a decorated willow structure inside which are balloons filled with 'captured wind.' They enact a performance in which the willow structure is crushed by stamping

feet and the balloons are burst with a long stick, releasing the wind, which we 'hoover' into our Strongbox. This part of the event feels highly ritualistic.

(Fieldnote: BFTW /*Cartwheelin*, Bournemouth, 13.7.12)

Ritual, then, is closely linked to the performativity of carnivalesque practice; to the creation of a liminal affective experience, or rite of passage, that permits the creation of a social or ideological constituency through a sense of shared purpose. This is particularly true in 'arts-carnival', wherein instrumentality is a key feature, and the theming and narrative function of spectacle is often part of a ritualistic vocabulary:

To celebrate the defeat of Doldrum, the Squibbers line up along the tide-line, filling the air with white sparks as we all blow our horns for the end of the show. Much has been made in the media of the fact that this is the first time in 400 years that the Squibbers have performed outside Bridgwater.

(Fieldnote: BFTW, Main show and aftermath, Weymouth, 28.7.12)

The Olympic ceremonial contained within *Battle for the Winds* involved large scale ritualistic performances such as the squibbing described above and the *Battle for the Winds* torch-wading. Both of these performances acted as rites of passage, designed to create a sense of positive 'communitas' within regional, national and international projections of Olympic identity, as Freya's comments below reveal:

Freya says: 'I was a torch wader in Battle for the Winds and I thought it was brilliant. It was absolutely great. I have talked to people who did it. We went down and it was wonderful, and what was good was that we had people in jeans and trainers that didn't have torches but they joined us in the water. I was so pleased because I wanted to do that as soon as I heard about it. As soon as I heard about it, I said: 'I want to do that.' It is taking part, the feeling that you are taking part. It is just an achievement. You think: 'I have actually done something for it.' It just sounded like fun, the fact that it was 2012 people doing it. It was beautiful.'

(Fieldnote: Westham Carnival Club, Weymouth, 10.8.12)



Fig 30 Bridgwater Carnival Squibbers at *Battle for the Winds*, Weymouth 2012

Closer ethnographic description of people's experiences of the temporality of carnivalesque street procession further reveals the ritual structure and function of these events. Thus, they emerge as social dramas which articulate processes of social tension, affirmation and change through a highly graduated, three-stage festive structure (Schechner, 2003). Describing the first stage of this process, Schechner articulates how, in ritual practice, participants are 'reduced to a state of vulnerability so that they are open to change' (2003: 57) As Sofia's earlier comment revealed, carnival participants in my research often described this initial liminal experience before carnival parades in terms of 'embarrassment,' 'fear,' 'nervousness' or 'looking stupid' in front of their assembled

community. Often this was as a result of the costumes they were wearing or the simple act of their participation in public display, as the fieldnote below suggests:

Finally, Stella calls us all together and we gather outside to begin our journey to the assembly point for the procession. By now the sky is clear and the sun is coming out. As we set off, the group is in high spirits. The children chatter excitably. On the way I ask them how they are feeling: 'A bit embarrassed,' says one. 'It is good to be doing something for the community' says another. 'It's to help people and you get to learn how to do carnival at the same time,' says a third.

(Fieldnote: Westham CC, Carnival Day, Weymouth, 15.8.12)

This vulnerability was particularly marked for those who occupied positions of relative authority: for Molly the police officer and Lewis the local councillor, for example. Both also saw festive participation as a ritual way of transforming their professional identities and reasserting their positions as 'locals'; as a way of puncturing notions of hierarchy and demonstrating their sense of humour, their approachability and, ironically, their 'ordinariness':

*I am nervous as hell! You have got Lewis, who is a county councillor, you have got me, who is a police officer... Standing up there you can just be really mental.*

(Molly, Float participant, Westham CC, Carnival Day, Weymouth, 15.8.12)

In his description of the second liminal stage of ritual, Schechner' suggests how participants are 'inscribed with their new identities and initiated into their new powers' (2003: 58). This process is analogous to people's experience of '*letting go*' '*letting your hair down*'; '*being on show*', '*showing off*' or '*having fun*' within carnivalesque street procession. This second stage reflects the points within carnival procession where people feel the empowerment of group assembly and begin to inhabit their festive identities, and is summed up by their descriptions of pride, liberation and achievement, as described in the fieldnotes below:

*Fab! Oh, fab! Lovely day. Absolutely fabulous. Elation. I'm feeling that buzz that you used to get when you were a teenager. It is exciting. You think: 'God!' you know. 'Is this really happening?' Yeah, fab!... It was just like: 'wow!'... same time next year!*

(Molly, Westham CC Float participant, after the parade, Carnival Day, Weymouth, 15.8.12)

*Absolutely fantastic! ... Yes it was really cool we got cheered, and loads of smiles from kids, it was brilliant!...Taking part..... Brilliant! Happy, yeah! Like we are doing something for the association... It was brilliant!*

(Megan, Westham CC Float participant, after the parade, Carnival Day, Weymouth, 15.8.12)

*We get people coming up and tapping us on the back saying 'Well done! What a carnival! Can't wait for next year!' That, to us, gives us a buzz, keeps us going.*

(George, Dawlish CC Float participant, Carnival Day, Seaton, 1.9.12)

*I am so tired now!...Really good, yeah. Yeah. ...It was lovely, really lovely. Yeah. We saw some family in the crowd, and it was great... We will probably do it forever!*

(Maria, Westham CC Float participant, after the parade, Carnival Day, Weymouth, 15.8.12)

In the last stage of ritual, Schechner (2003: 58) describes how 'actions and objects take on and radiate significances in excess of their practical use or value'. In terms of town carnival, this ritualistic element may be seen in the way in which the town is temporarily 'transformed' from its primarily economic function through the parading of symbolic objects and the display of 'home-made' craft and costume, as Martha describes below:

*Being able to create something out of what people perceive as rubbish is brilliant. I love it... how you can make things out of things that have been thrown away, and make them beautiful.*

(Martha, Westham CC Float participant, Weymouth, 10.8.12)

Further, this heightened significance is also reflected in the way the town's everyday spatialities are disrupted and challenged, particularly in terms of traffic flow and access to public space, as Arthur explains:

Carnival day is for the people. Carnival day is about the town. Everybody, everybody, the whole town visits carnival. Two o'clock on the Wednesday. The industrial estates on the outskirts of town, regardless of who or where, close at two o'clock on carnival day. It is a tradition in the town. And try and find a plumber, an electrician, you can't because they are closed, because their staff are all down here.

(Arthur, Town Carnival Committee member, Weymouth, 28.7.11)

Finally, this significance is expressed in the way in which donations are made and cups, certificates and prizes are awarded to participating groups. It is also present in the associated values of 'community' and 'celebration' which are associated with specific locations, objects and practices during the period of carnival, as Stella explains below:

*I am feeling very good. I am very proud of everybody and all the work they have done. Really proud...We got best overall, we got best vehicle, we got best costume, and we got highly commended for... I can't remember what... oh no, we got best community charity one! So I think it was highly commended for the vehicle...Not really sure... [It has all been worth doing]... It will be printed in the Echo, too...Oh we have really enjoyed it.*

(Stella, Westham CC Float participant, after the parade, Carnival Day, Weymouth, 15.8.12)

#### **4:3:7 Carnival as 'Social Drama':**

Eve's story below reflects a view of carnival as a site for social drama (Turner, 1974). Her narrative exposes carnival as a contestation of public space and place identity in which the conflict as well as the *communitas* between people-in-place may be played out. Carnival in this context becomes a symbolic battle, a clash of identities in which each asserts its right to occupy the street for a sanctioned period. By 'showing out', the participating community witnesses itself as a whole, beyond the confines of its individual social networks. The transgressive spirit of carnival allows people to assert their identity symbolically in a permissive space, where the grotesquery, juxtaposition, chaos and clash of symbols and practices is a reflection of the diversity of values and vocabularies held by people-in-place:

Eve tells me a story about her experience at the Bridport carnival prizegiving ceremony. It is a story which highlights the contestation of space and symbolism by participating groups at carnival time; in this case between the established voluntary carnival groups of Bridport and Eve's own position as a local creative

professional. 'They were announcing all the prizes, and after each one there was a huge cheer and applause. Then they announced our prize and I had to go up and get the certificate – it was just a few claps, like tumbleweed blowing through. We clearly weren't welcome.'

(Fieldnote: BFTW Dorset at Lyme Regis Fossil Festival, 3.5.12)

Eve's experience thus reflects a clear social drama which took place during the carnival procession. She felt that the public reaction to her entry was also a reflection of local feeling regarding changes in the demographics of the town, about the arrival of 'incomers' from arts and media backgrounds, and to Bridport's gentrification from an industrial working town to a 'more cultural' place. In Eve's case, this social drama was reflected in the public response to her identity as a carnival newcomer and as a professional artist. She also perceived it as a reaction to her recent takeover of a significant historic building within the town, which she was developing as a theatre space. Her carnival entry used costumes and a large mobile prop from a recent professional theatre production. While this entry was rewarded by the judges, in her view it prompted a negative reaction from other participants because it symbolised a higher level of financial and cultural capital than the smaller, vernacular entries in the parade and had perhaps been seen to crowd them out.

Through this story, we see how the social dramas of Carnival symbolism may, to a greater or lesser degree, reflect reaction and debate on issues facing a place and its people. Such tensions may also be displayed through more explicit float designs, costumes and other performance iconographies.

Such a view allows us to identify a mode of social drama within carnivalesque street performance (Turner, 1974), which Turner defines as a development in four phases, namely: '*breach*', '*crisis*', '*redressive action*' and '*reintegration / schism*.' This structure offers a useful lens for the consideration of carnival in relation to the politics of place, notwithstanding the 'flattening' effect of this theory on the rhizomatic inter-subjectivities of

festive social experience, an effect which shrink-fits this dynamism into what Schechner (2003: 67) calls: 'the shape of a Western aesthetic genre, the drama'.

Carnival's festive occupation of the street is itself a 'breach of regular, norm-governed social relations' (Turner, 1974: 37-41). Hitherto, we have established the *liminality* that carnival creates, as a disruption of public space and normative behaviour. Turner describes this liminality as 'crisis,' and further as 'a threshold between more or less stable phases of the social process'; one which 'dares the representatives of order to grapple with it'. The 'redressive action' of carnival lies in its performativity, its ability to generate *affect* and *effect* through what Turner would call 'the metaphorical and symbolic idiom of a ritual process' (*ibid*). Finally, the agreement to contestation that carnival offers within strict temporal and spatial boundaries allows disparate groups to be integrated into a wider sense of place-meaning ('re-integration') while at the same time articulating ongoing problems and difficulties within that sense of place ('schism'). Linking this theoretical understanding to our ethnographic data, the following story from Seaton also illustrates the role of carnival, in part, as social drama:

After lunch I walk with Matthew and Rose down to the Harbour for the Carnival Crabbing Competition... We talk about how carnival is part of the identity of the town. Surprisingly, Rose says: 'The Wildlife Reserve and the Tramway, that is the future identity of the town. That and Tesco's of course'... Matthew tells me a story about how the previous carnival president resigned over a committee decision to accept a £1000 donation from Tesco for the carnival during the planning phase for the new store, which he felt could be wrongly construed as a bribe.

(Fieldnotes: Carnival Crabbing Competition / Quiz Night, Seaton, 26.8.12 / 29.8.12)

The arrival of a large Tesco store in Seaton led to significant public concern about the effect that it would have on the town's recession-hit, independent, town-centre shops. For Danny, a street hawker selling garlands at the town's late summer carnival, the event had

become, in part, a site for a symbolic contest between the supermarket giant and local people, expressed through people's assertion of 'local' economic power:

*In Seaton, I have heard a lot of people ranting off about the Tesco's that came. It has killed the town apparently, because it has taken all the business, and it has knocked down the [holiday] bungalows or something that people used to come to, and eaten into business in the town. So you know it is more and more important that towns find other things, other ways of generating a bit of money. And obviously [carnival] generates money... And it is fun. And I have my little flowers to pass on to people, you know?... And I will recycle [my money] in the pub later, you know?*

(Danny, pedlar, Carnival Day, Seaton, 1.9.12)

Similarly, Isabelle expressed a view of carnival as a temporary remedy for the effect the store was having on the town, while some float crews in the procession itself made direct points about the power struggle between independent agricultural producers and supermarkets:

*At the moment I think you'll know that Seaton is struggling, especially because of the huge Tesco's that we have. But today the town has been buzzing.*

(Isabelle, Audience member, Carnival Day, Seaton, 1.9.12)

Axminster Young Farmers make political points with their *Jolly Roger* float, which features farmers begging for money and a sign saying 'Supermarket Prices Have Turned Our Milk Sour.'

(Fieldnote, Carnival Day, Seaton, 1.9.12)

Members of the town carnival committee informed me that the community was split on the issue. Some viewed Tesco as the town's potential economic saviour, as a stimulus to regeneration and as a magnet for a new, younger demographic. Others saw it as a sign of the end of the town's 'local' distinctiveness, as an appropriation of traditional areas of public space and a destroyer of the town's independent economic identities:

*I think [Seaton] has lost its way...apart from people buying houses and coming here to die... In my eyes, the best thing that has happened to Seaton in quite a long time is the arrival of Tesco!... Because it needed a kick.... When the holiday*

*camp was here... they used to bring 800 people in every seven days. All through the year... We have lost all that now... So really, long term, we need to knock it into good shape, really, to revitalise it.*

(Pat, carnival float-maker, Seaton, 6.6.12)

This social drama emerged as a significant discourse within my ethnography of the town's late summer carnival. Participants and audience made repeated reference to the effect the store was having on the town, and to the role of the carnival as a re-occupation of public space, as an assertion of 'local' ownership, and as a challenge to corporate encroachment. Tesco itself also participated in this social drama, seeking to demonstrate its community-mindedness by participating in the carnival fundraising effort for local charities:

*I think Tesco has pushed all the [carnival] crowds that way [towards the new open space in front of the store]. This place used to be five, six deep, where we are now. It seems to have all gone that way.*

(Matthew, Town Carnival Committee member, Carnival Day, Seaton, 1.9.12)

Tesco's have sent two girls in Banana costumes to collect money from the crowd.

(Fieldnote: Carnival Day, Seaton, 1.9.12)

Just as the social drama of Tesco became a feature of the carnival in Seaton, so the social drama of the Olympics in the context of a global recession became an active strand in the discourse of Weymouth Town Carnival in the summer of 2012, which took place between the Olympic and Paralympic sailing events. The following fieldnote, for example, describes the spatial impact of the Olympics on the town's seafront Esplanade, which is also the route for the town's annual carnival:

Since my last visit to Weymouth, the town has been cleaned up and altered considerably in preparation for the Olympics. The drive into town is lined with Olympic flags which proclaim Weymouth's role as part of 'London 2012' and the assertion that it is 'Inspiring a Generation.' On the Esplanade the new SeaLife Tower has been erected near the Pavilion, its pay-as-you-go elevator platform offering panoramic views of the bay. The Olympic Light Veils are also operating, casting green and purple laser light over the water in alternating patterns. The hotels all boast Union Flags and the dilapidated Victorian lamp posts along the

Esplanade have been replaced by modern alternatives in shiny aluminium. Gone are the rough drinkers. The bus stops are clean. Olympic banners line the seafront railings.

(Fieldnote, Weymouth, 15.7.12)

The following field notes articulate how the social drama of the 2012 Olympics in Weymouth centred largely on the redesign of the town's road network, the re-zoning of its public Esplanade and beach to include an enclosed Olympic Live Site, and the tight security controls imposed on the town by LOCOG. Nicole's comment from Westham Carnival Club, which follows, also highlights the degree to which different town 'identities' asserted themselves during the Olympic period:

On the seaward side of the Live Site, outside its perimeter fence, holidaymakers are swimming in the sea and lounging on the sand. Beyond the Olympic zones, Weymouth's annual seaside summer identity is in full swing. Donkeys pant in the heat, kids bounce on trampolines, Punch and Judy shows, clairvoyants and pedalo operators ply their trade, and hundreds of bodies sizzle on the sand in the unexpected heatwave, bronzing steadily between trips to the burger stands, ice cream parlours, bars and beach shops. Out at sea, in the summer haze, you can just make out the looming grey silhouette of the Navy assault ship HMS Bulwark standing guard in the Bay, in case of terrorist attack.

(Fieldnote, *Battle For The Winds*, Weymouth, 23.7.12)

As we craft, we talk. The Olympics is a regular topic of conversation at these meetings and Nicole says: 'I'm looking forward to it being over. It is for rich folks, not for locals.' I ask if she feels it has changed the town of Weymouth. 'Yes,' she says, 'and not all for the better.'

(Fieldnote, Westham Carnival Club, Weymouth, 8.8.12)

Security controls and fear of terrorist attack during the Olympics had a significant impact on planning for the 2012 Weymouth Town Carnival, as the following field note reveals:

Stan takes me to one side before the meeting and tells me he has heard there is a chance that the carnival air show may be banned by the Olympic organisers. He says MI5 and the CIA have been involved as part of the security sweep of the town and that a no-fly zone may be imposed over Weymouth. This is putting pressure on the committee to abandon the air show and revert to a more 'traditional' carnival format.

(Fieldnote, Town Carnival Committee Meeting, Weymouth 27.9.12)

In the end, Weymouth's 'traditional' carnival air show did take place, but was restricted to LOCOG and Civil Aviation Authority approved air crews. Changes to the carnival route also put local carnival clubs under pressure with regard to their use of large vehicles:

'The Olympics is getting in the way of the carnival totally,' says Stella. 'When I got the information back from the carnival committee it said that because of the Olympics they were directing everybody to go along the harbourside and under the Town Bridge to meet behind the Pavilion, in the back there. So I was back on the phone saying I didn't think that would work because we have got such a big vehicle and we're not sure it will go under the bridge. So they said they would have to arrange a special escort.'

(Fieldnote, Westham Carnival Club, Weymouth, 3.8.12)



Fig 31 Team GB Sailors lead the procession at Weymouth Carnival, 2012.

This social drama, the relationship between the town of Weymouth and the arrival of the Olympic Games, also led to a range of symbolic expressions in terms of carnivalesque street procession, both on Carnival Day and during the *Battle for the Winds* street performances which launched the Olympic sailing. On Carnival Day, the Team GB Olympic sailors took pride of place in an open-top bus that led the carnival procession through the town. Elsewhere in the parade, sporting groups were in particular evidence promoting their clubs and associations to an audience that had been primed by three weeks of sporting

proWess. As previously described, members of the local UNISON Trade Union also took the opportunity to process in protest at public spending cuts, saying:

*We are here representing the Trades Council of this area. We are supporting the NHS because of some of the activities that are going on. There is a cartel to attack NHS pay, so we are here to remind people that we love our NHS. We hope they will see a positive side to trade unionism. That there is a fun side, that we are involved in the community, that we are here to support everybody. [In carnival] you are not allowed to be political... I don't know whether it is written anywhere, but it is strongly advised. But last year we came as the Robin Hood Tax, which was great fun. I was dressed as Friar Tuck. We gave away chocolate coins, gold coins as a tax rebate to people.*

(Connor, UNISON Save the NHS Float, Carnival Day, Weymouth, 15.8.12)

Within *Battle for the Winds*, the Dorset *Cartwheelin'* crew team with whom I conducted participatory field research was explicitly engaged with this social drama. In this regard, the *Cartwheelin'* crew demonstrated the classic paradox of carnival, its simultaneous expression as a symbolic 'revolution' and as a social 'safety valve'. Within our carnivalesque street performance, we were a significant part of the cultural vocabulary by which the 'official feast' of the Olympics was celebrated and justified in the town. This vocabulary involved us in the symbolic collection and release of chosen 'wind' for the Olympic sailing events, and in celebratory street processions. It culminated in a ritual torch wading in the sea by 2012 local people, charging the waters of Weymouth Bay for the Olympic competition. At the same time, in our interactions with people on the street, we also satirised the Cultural Olympiad and used local public scepticism in the run up to the Olympics as a way of engaging with our audience, as the following fieldnote reveals:

As we process down the seafront we engage with people as we go. A song emerges, a call and response which identifies us and expresses the uncertainty of the Olympic narrative project: 'What are we doing? We're gathering the winds! Where are we taking them? We're taking them to Weymouth! Why are we doing it? We don't know! We got a call from Sebastian Coe!' Later, Sam expresses frustration at 'being a poster boy for the Olympics.' Instead, he satirises the situation, telling the crowd that Sebastian Coe has 'blown all that money on the Olympics but forgotten the most important thing for the sailing – the wind!' Thus he hints at the political and economic tensions in this Olympic

and Jubilee year and places ordinary people in role as saviours of the Olympics - it is their contribution which will be the final piece in the jigsaw. By sending up Sebastian Coe we are undermining authority. Our performative role as fools who live in the street allows us to be transgressive, to cross the boundaries of normal behaviour, to critique the grand, national project that is the celebratory summer of 2012, and for our audience to do the same.

(Fieldnote, BFTW Dorset at Lyme Regis Fossil Festival. 4.5.12)



Fig 32 *Cartwheelin'* at Lyme Regis, *Battle for the Winds*, 2012. Photo: Maisie Hill.

Thus it may be seen that carnival may act as a cultural container for the enactment of social dramas, a fact which is seized upon by participants as an opportunity to contest systems of power and authority. Turner's definition of social drama as a phased, affective process of symbolic '*breach*', '*crisis*', '*redressive action*' and '*reintegration / schism*' is supported by these ethnographies and offers a useful lens for the consideration of carnival in relation to the politics of place.

#### 4:4 Conclusions:

- **What is carnival?**

- **How do participants experience the ‘liminal performativity’ of carnival, and how do they describe affects of ‘energy’, ‘transformation’, ‘transgression’, ‘ritual’ and ‘social drama’ within carnival and street procession?**

In this chapter, participation and performance have been at the centre of an attempt to consider ‘affect’ within the carnivalesque experience: to chart people’s expressions of the affective ‘energy’, transformation, transgression, ritual and social drama of carnival and street procession. The application of notions of liminality and performativity, as a theoretical offer from Performance Studies to Cultural Geography, has here permitted a consideration of how ‘affect’ might become ‘effect’ in these carnival settings. Further, the association here presented between carnivalesque experience and the affective ‘event’ as described in NRT testifies to the value of the study and performance of carnival as part of the ‘performance turn’ in Cultural Geography (Anderson & Harrison, 2010: 9).

This chapter thus establishes a view of the carnivalesque experience as a liminal performativity that is generated in public space and that fosters an affective, rhizomatic encounter between multiple subjectivities of community, identity and place (Turner, 1969; Van Gennep, 1960; Schechner, 2003; Deleuze & Guattari, 1987). Further, these ethnographies suggest that this liminal performativity is essential to the ‘ideological transaction’ that occurs between performers and audience during carnival (Kershaw 1992:19) and is supported by ritualistic structures within the performance of carnivalesque street procession itself.

The inscription here presented of events in Seaton and Weymouth during the Olympic summer of 2012 also shows how the liminality of carnival can articulate social drama, and can permit the creation of a ‘social constituency’ associated with the symbolic construction of identity, community and place (Cohen, 1985; Smith, 2009). These ethnographies illuminate the tension between normative and transgressive tendencies within this process,

between carnivalesque 'revolution' and the 'official feast'. Thus, the performativity of carnivalesque street procession may be seen in metaphorical terms as the battle between 'Carnival' as a mode of becoming that breeds 'contingency, unpredictability, and chance' (Dastur, 2000:179) and 'Lent': the control-valve mechanism by which 'we make 'the unforeseeable foreseeable and the unrepeatable repeatable' through custom, tradition, or symbolic vocabularies of representation (Anderson & Harrison 2010: 21).

Liminality, then, emerges as a key consideration in this study. It is a constant affective tension which is highlighted in these ethnographies in terms such as '*chaos,*' '*wildness,*' '*madness,*' and '*letting go,*' alongside notions of control, authority and power. Liminality is key to our understanding of carnival as a processual 'becoming' (Whitehead, 1929), and as a performance, often fuelled and challenged by alcohol, that creates a dis-inhibitory, inter-subjective experience of 'between-ness' through the 'me-but-not-me' of individual festive transformation.

The liminality of carnival thus permits a temporary contestation of notions of identity, community and place, and opens a public space for the imagination of progressive and normative futures alike. Understanding this dynamic inter-subjectivity permits us to affirm the potential of vernacular, celebratory street procession as an exercise in cultural democracy. It permits us also to assert the cultural value of vernacular carnival as an act of contestation and cultural 'resistance' in public space. At the same time, the inscription here presented of the Olympic performances of *Battle for the Winds* permits a view of the liminal carnivalesque as an affective instrumentality within a symbolic cultural performance which was geared to the creation of a very specific social constituency, one which bound people in a ritual of shared 'local', 'regional', 'national' and 'international' experience and identity.

In both settings, immersive carnivalesque experience shares a consistent temporal and spatial structure with regard to affect, moving from anticipation to upheaval, via inversion, transgression and festive transformation, and back to 'normality'. Carnival involves an inversion of everyday social experience and seeks to reflect a 'transcendent or symbolic universe that embraces all souls' (Frazer, 1999: 75). At the same time, it relies on dramatic affects of risk and secrecy, and on spectacular amplifications of light, colour, size, texture, sound and behaviour to foster individual agencies of festive transformation. These transformations reflect people's desire to reach for wider geographical associations and to disrupt the everyday meaning and function of public space.

Affects of transgression are also key to carnivalesque experience, expressed in this research as positive empowerment through challenge to regulation; as reaction to the relationship between communities and authority, and as attempts to appropriate space 'for the people'. Carnival thus allows people to create a ritual, social drama of rule-breaking which promotes 'boundary interactions' between groups and individuals (Wenger, 2000) and thus articulates the rhizomatic, inter-subjectivity of place and identity.

### **Building the picture:**

Our final conclusion, then, is that carnivalesque street procession is a location for a affective liminal performativity which contests established meanings of 'place' and the social relations from which it is constituted. Here, I assert that the public procession of symbolic festive identities in carnival allows for the multiple meaning of 'place' and identity to be witnessed and contested as ritual; to be re-integrated or re-divided in spatial, social, symbolic, economic and historic terms. Such tensions regarding place-identity may also be displayed through explicit float designs, costumes and other performance iconographies. It

is to this consideration of carnival, in relation to the symbolic politics of place, that we turn our attention in the next chapter.



Fig 33 Walking to the procession. Westham CC members, Weymouth Carnival, 2012.

## **Chapter Five: Carnival, Place and Identity.**

### **5:1 Research Question:**

**How does carnival operate as a festive enactment of place and identity?**

Set within the context of the 2012 Cultural Olympiad, this chapter explores the relative extent to which professional and vernacular carnival practices reflect the ‘cultural politics’ of places. The data contributes to debates regarding the ‘social construction’ of place identity as a reflection of power and as a reaction to the mobilities of globalised economic investment (Harvey, 1996). It also reveals the extent to which carnival facilitates the

'symbolic construction' of place (Cohen, 1985), and how a progressive 'global sense of place' (Massey, 1997) might be facilitated by way of culturally-democratic vernacular carnival practice. The primary contribution of this research with regard to place theory is to suggest that place itself is a 'carnavalesque' concept.



Fig 34 Doldrum, a *Battle for the Winds* character 'made' from Jurassic Coast stone.  
Photo by Jim Wileman.

### 5:1:1 Theoretical Frameworks:

Place, in whatever guise, is, like space and time, a social construct... [Places are] the focus of the imaginary, of beliefs, longings and desires... They are an intense focus of discursive activity, filled with symbolic and representational meanings, and they are a distinctive product of institutionalised social and political-economic power... There is, then, a politics to place construction, ranging dialectically across material, representational, and symbolic activities... [In the face of a fierce bout of time-space compression] the security of places has been threatened... Such loss of security promotes a search for alternatives, one of which lies in the creation of both imagined and tangible communities in place.

(Harvey, 1996: 294)

Is it not possible for a sense of place to be progressive; not self-closing and defensive, but outward-looking? A sense of place which is adequate to this era of time-space compression? ... Each 'place' can be seen as a particular, unique, point of [ ] intersection. It is, indeed, a meeting place. [Places] can be imagined as articulated moments in networks of social relations and understandings... this in turn allows a sense of place which is extroverted, which includes a consciousness of its links with the wider world, which integrates in a positive way the global and the local.

(Massey, 1997: 315; 322)

The above comments by David Harvey (1996) and Doreen Massey (1997) constitute the primary critical understandings which have informed the attempt of this chapter, in which I seek to establish a view of the cultural practice of carnivalesque street procession as a festive enactment of place and identity. Harvey's articulation of the 'social process of place construction' within 'cartographies of struggle, power and discourse' (1996: 293) offers a framework for an analysis of the way in which the 'cultural politics' of places emerges from within these carnival ethnographies. It prompts us to consider the different 'versions' of place which are expressed during carnival, and how these contested expressions may reflect wider, reactionary power-processes of political and cultural economy.

Conversely, Massey imagines a progressive, 'global sense of place', in which place is conceptualised as a locus of 'flows and interconnections' between geographical locations and the people who embody them (Massey, 1997: 317). Massey's associative conceptualisation encourages an affective literacy with regard to the multiplicity of place. It constitutes place as a processual, inter-subjective expression of material, representational and symbolic links between people and their wider world, set within a particular location. Her critique offers a view of place that shares the 'agreement to contestation' and the multiple identity that we have hitherto explored in this thesis as a key part of the dynamic performativity of street carnival and procession. Place, then, by this critique, is a carnivalesque notion.

This chapter thus explores the progressive function that carnivalesque street procession can play in connecting a place to the wider world while simultaneously celebrating its local distinctiveness. Likewise, these ethnographies suggest that the performativity of carnival carries with it multiple instrumentalities with regard to expressions of identity-in-place, of place-identity, and of place-making. Carnival offers a performativity of place which Massey

might describe as the enactment of 'a particular constellation of social relations, meeting and weaving together at a particular locus' (Massey, 1997: 322).

Harvey's conceptualisation of place offers an equally useful frame for our concern with the performativity of carnival at a range of geographical scales and with the political and cultural implications of carnivalesque street performance and procession as a symbolic geography. These carnival ethnographies facilitate discussion of processes of place formation which Harvey describes as a 'locus of 'imaginaries', linked to 'institutionalisations', to 'material practices', to 'forms of 'power' and to 'elements in 'discourse'' (Harvey, 1996: 294).

At one end of this geographical scale, these ethnographies reflect local and vernacular festive occupations of public space that assert place-based notions of family, community, neighbourhood, and town. At the other, we encounter the wider symbolic geographies of the South West carnival circuit, and consider in detail the implications of *Battle for the Winds*, a state-funded street performance which asserted a particular set of regional place-identities and symbolic landscapes in the fieldwork area during the 2012 Cultural Olympiad. In this light, both vernacular town carnivals and the *Battle for the Winds* performance emerge from these ethnographies as events in which we encounter 'the selling of images of places, competition over the definition of cultural and symbolic capital, [and] the revival of vernacular traditions associated with places as a consumer attraction' (Harvey, 1996: 298).

In considering Harvey's 'cultural politics' of place, I seek to reveal processes by which institutions and arts organisations have engaged in the creation of preferred symbolic place-identities through carnival and procession in the fieldwork area. I seek to explore how these organisations have formulated symbolic expressions of place using the cultural performance of carnival, with the effect of contesting, guiding or re-affirming particular

place-identities. Further, I seek to demonstrate how state-funded cultural systems in 2012 harnessed the festive participation of the public to this end as an exercise in ideological recruitment with regard to place identity.

This discussion supports the developing argument of this thesis, that it is in the tensions between professional and vernacular carnival practice that we encounter a competition for cultural capital in relation to place-making. As such, the discussion of *Battle for the Winds* in this chapter reflects my previous historiography of the cultural policies by which the state-funded art of carnivalesque street procession in the UK has been tuned to the service of place-making, within a neo-liberal economic agenda founded on inter-place competition and driven by the demands of the 2012 Olympiad.

Further, I seek in this chapter to describe the enactment of 'place-in-performance' from within my participation as a street performer in *Battle for the Winds*, by way of an ethnographic description of its performative vocabulary. This was a vocabulary which harnessed a variety of symbolic representations of landscapes and place identities from across the UK's south-west region. The symbolic geographies of *Battle for the Winds* combined a variety of carnivalesque place-meanings, in which 'England' and the 'South West' were characterised in terms of their urban multiculturalism and their rural, historical 'rootedness and authenticity' (Relph, 1976). In this section I describe how the design palate for the performance constituted an eccentric cultural iconography of rural and urban landscapes. Further, I explore how this iconography was delivered amid a symbolic articulation of the region's contribution to British scientific, cultural and industrial world development, and presented to the world as part of a wider idealised representation of British culture and landscape during the 2012 Olympiad.

In the spirit of grounded theory, (Glaser and Strauss, 1967) this chapter thus places ethnographic data at the foreground of an analysis which re-considers theories of place as

expressed by Harvey and Massey. The chapter also briefly presents inscriptions of carnival practice which facilitate the conceptualisation of place as embodied physical and sensual experience (Thrift, 1997), as everyday practice and dwelling (Heidegger, 1971), and as materiality and landscape (Cosgrove, 1984; Jackson, 1999). Further, the chapter seeks to show how, like carnival, place is a 'symbolic construction' (Cohen, 1985: 15); a contested concept which operates on a social level and frames normative or transgressive behaviours. As the following chapter on Community also suggests, the 'symbolic construction' of place through carnival practice may be seen to frame experiences of inclusion and exclusion; of 'insiderness' or 'outsiderness'; of being 'in-place' or 'out-of-place' (Cresswell, 2004: 51).

This understanding of the contest between 'acceptable, and 'unacceptable' notions of place, as expressed through the cultural performance of carnival, is facilitated by the presentation of two carnival narratives which emerged from my participant observation in the fieldwork area. The first of these narratives describes a conflict which arose between competing vernacular and institutional processes of place-making during the Weymouth Carnivals of 2008-9. This narrative of the 'Weymouth Carnival Conflict' highlights the subjugation of vernacular carnival practice by cultural systems which were designed to reconstruct the 'official' place identity of the town in the run-up to the Olympics, and thus articulates Harvey's notions regarding the 'cultural politics' of place.

Secondly, the narrative I present in this chapter of Carnival Day in Seaton, East Devon, may be seen as a carnivalesque reflection of Massey's 'progressive sense of place'. This narrative describes a vernacular festivity which articulates the locus of connections felt by people from this rural part of the south-west UK with the wider world of popular culture and the geographies of global identity. This Seaton narrative describes how the community enacts its multiple local identities and expresses a sense of its own heritage, tradition and

conviviality as a place, while also expressing its connections to the wider world. It reveals how, during carnival, Seaton benefits from the reciprocal participation of carnivalists from other towns and adopts a wider identity, becoming part of 'East Devon' and the 'south-west carnival circuit'. Carnival is thus presented as a means by which a group of people in a small declining seaside town on the Jurassic Coast maintain both their own festive sense of place and their pragmatic social, cultural, symbolic and economic associations with the wider world. The use of narrative in this chapter also reflects Entrikin's conceptualisation of place *itself* as a narrative construction, and his assertion of the methodological benefit of a narrative approach, as a balancing of subjective and objective critiques:

..narratives of place help to redress [objective] imbalance, without camouflaging the underlying tensions between the subjective and the objective and between individual agents and the circumstances in which agents act.

(Entrikin, 1991: 307-9)

What emerges from these ethnographies is a sense of the instrumentality of carnivalesque street procession in terms of the construction of place-identity and the cultural processes of place-making. They also reveal how the creation of place-identity as a function of carnival is highly temporal in quality, bounded within time-specific performativities and the relative investment or disinvestment of social, economic and cultural capital. In the midst of carnival itself, the 'wild becoming' and 'festive transformation' of place which occurs during processional occupation serves to de-stabilise and contest public space, opening it up to symbolic re-interpretation. The clash of carnivalesque symbolism and the 'agreement to contestation' which carnival potentially represents in public space offers a highly-charged way of realising both Massey's progressive articulation of place as a dynamic locus of meanings drawn from a variety of physical locations and Conquergood's assertion (2002: 145) that place is 'a heavily trafficked intersection, a port of call and exchange'.

## 5:2 *Battle for the Winds*: Carnival and the cultural politics of place:



Fig 35 *Battle for the Winds* torch waders. Photo by Penny Piddock

A battle for the winds erupted in Weymouth Bay on Saturday as an anarchic troupe of acrobats, actors and dancers fought to banish the doldrums on the eve of the Olympic sailing regatta. Not to be outdone by London's spectacular opening ceremony on Friday, the English seaside town, that along with its near neighbour Portland is hosting the world's best sailors, staged its own extravaganza. At the end of the 'Battle for the Winds' the waters of Weymouth Bay were set alight as 2,012 people waded into its murky depths holding flaming torches above their heads. Thousands flocked to the beach to catch the show, which included disabled performers from Britain and Brazil and captured some of the carnival atmosphere more typical of Rio de Janeiro than the cooler waters of England's south coast.

(News report: Sailing - Battle of the Winds bodes well for sailors. Reuters, 28.7.12)<sup>59</sup>

The above news report about the *Battle for the Winds* 'extravaganza' at Weymouth in July 2012 captures a sense of the cultural, inter-place competition which arose both nationally and internationally during the 2012 Olympiad. This was a competition, symbolised in Weymouth through the cultural performance of street carnival and outdoor circus, which

<sup>59</sup>" <http://www.reuters.com/article/2012/07/29/us-oly-yach-opening-day-idUSBRE86R12M20120729> accessed 12.11.12

reflected a conceptualisation of place as a carefully 'constructed space' in cultural terms (Cresswell, 2004: 26).

By this account, the *Battle for the Winds* performance drew symbolic boundaries around and between places. It was not only the assertion of a 'spectacular' cultural identity for Weymouth in competition with London's Olympic opening ceremony, but was also part of a projection of regional status and of a carnivalesque, national British identity to rival Rio de Janeiro's archetypal role as the Brazilian 'home of carnival'.

*Battle for the Winds* was one of several spectacular processional events during the summer of 2012 which sought to project an image of a vibrant, theatrical street culture in the UK.<sup>60</sup> The show was a composite of seven 'episodes' from the seven county areas of the south west UK, each of which was designed to project a flavour of its own cultural history and local identity through processional street theatre. Thus, *Battle for the Winds* geared the cultural performance of street carnival towards the generation of affective, local, regional, national and international place identities, constructed through the use of spectacle and the recruitment of large numbers of people in its final, iconic, ritualistic torch-wading.

Within the fieldwork area of Dorset and East Devon, *Battle for the Winds* and its local episode, *Cartwheelin'*, were also part of a wider cultural process of place-making which had been in practice along the 'Jurassic Coast' of Dorset for some time. The designation of the UNESCO Dorset and East Devon Coast World Heritage Site in 2001 led to the establishment of the Jurassic Coast Arts Programme (2008), a public engagement strategy derived from local authority, NI 11 (DCLG, 2007) and Arts Council *New Landscapes* policy

---

<sup>60</sup> See also *Godiva Awakes* [http://www.imagineerproductions.co.uk/content\\_links/6567/view](http://www.imagineerproductions.co.uk/content_links/6567/view) and *Sea Odyssey* <http://www.theguardian.com/stage/2012/apr/17/sea-odyssey-giant-spectacular-liverpool>

streams (ACE, 2008). This programme sought to use carnival, procession and site-responsive outdoor arts in particular to raise public awareness of local geology and to redefine the area's international place-significance in both scientific and cultural terms. Melissa, a local arts development worker, describes this instrumentality below, with regard to the development of 'Jurassic Coast' carnivals and processions:

*[Our aim is to engage communities] with the Jurassic Coast through processional work... in the hope that that [will] help people engage more with the Jurassic Coast and therefore presumably have more understanding of the geology and the land.*

(Melissa, Arts professional, 27.9.11)

The designation of the Jurassic Coast as part of the UNESCO World Heritage system (and the arts programme that supported its symbolic construction between 2001 and 2012) reflect a wider 'cultural politics' of place, one that Harvey refers to as a reflection of an 'institutionalised locus of social and political power' (Harvey, 1996:320). The cultural programme of theatrical and musical performance, carnival, visual arts and community participation that supported the creation of the 'Jurassic Coast' place identity in the public imagination was a key part of this place-making endeavour. From 2008, this programme was also tuned to the service of the presentation of a wider Dorset identity, centred on the redevelopment of Weymouth and Portland as host centres for the Olympic sailing, and reflecting Harvey's further view that:

The political-economic and symbolic possibilities of place (re)construction are, in short, highly coloured by the evaluative manner of place representation... The fierce contest over images and counter-images of places is an arena of action in which the cultural politics of places, the political economy of their development and the accumulation of a sense of social power in place frequently fuse in indistinguishable ways.

(Harvey, 1996:322)

For Harvey, places are bounded in a physical sense by the construction of notional borders of spatial territory, and in a cultural sense by the social behaviours and cultural

vocabularies which are accepted or rejected within their spatial limits. Thus, the Jurassic Coast Arts Programme and its wider subsequent involvement in *Battle for the Winds*, may be seen as part of what Harvey (1996:323) describes as a ‘discursive construction of affective loyalties’ related to the Jurassic Coast place identity, to the identity of Portland as the home of the regenerative National Sailing Academy, and to the rebranding of Weymouth Bay as the coastal / maritime setting for the Olympic competition itself. Harvey views this affective process as one which is driven by means of ‘particular imageries of place [and] environment’, or through the creation of art and performance designed ‘to celebrate and become symbolic of some special place’ (Harvey, 1996:323).



Fig 36 Plesiosaur puppet, *Moving Tides*, 2012. Photo by Alan Rogers

One of the primary means by which this ‘Jurassic Coast’ place identity was asserted during the period leading up to the 2012 Olympics and during the Olympics itself was through the iconography of the *Moving Tides* children’s carnival procession in Weymouth. *Moving Tides* was part of the *Maritime Mix* of local cultural events which also included *Battle for the Winds* and the Jurassic Coast Earth Festival, and which constituted the ‘London 2012 Cultural Olympiad by the Sea’ (Rogers, 2013). Jurassic Coast iconography was central to

the performative vocabulary of *Moving Tides*, a processional event which involved hundreds of local school children, as Neve describes below:

*[The Jurassic Coast World Heritage Site] influences the themes, certainly. Last year we had a Jurassic theme... This year is Oceans of the World, which we felt was broad enough and will incorporate the Jurassic as well... [In the parade] we have seen Jurassic sea creatures, ammonites, mythological sea creatures. We have seen microscopic sea creatures, and in previous years we have had seabirds, frogs, shells.*

(Neve, Arts professional, 31.10.11)

Thus, the performance iconography of the *Moving Tides* procession, created through the use of themed costume and large sculptural puppetry, was an important part of the symbolic discourse surrounding the creation of the Jurassic Coast place identity in the run up to the Olympics. Further, as we will see later in this chapter, *Moving Tides* itself emerged from a set of policy objectives which were designed to facilitate the cultural re-development of Weymouth as an Olympic host venue, with some unexpected consequences. The 2012 *Moving Tides* procession was originally intended to be part of the Weymouth Olympic Torch Relay event, but was rescheduled due to poor weather and eventually performed as a colourful finale to the town's Olympic summer.

Thus I begin to establish the role of carnival and procession in the fieldwork area as a cultural activity geared to support institutional attempts at place-making, set between collaborative contexts of international World Heritage and the mega-event of the Olympics. Further, Harvey (1996) views place-making as a locational response to globalisation and its associated processes of material, environmental, cultural and economic change. He characterises this response as a 'reactionary' need for security of place, one that is often framed in terms of local distinctiveness or anchored in heritage-based expressions of 'rootedness' and 'authenticity' (Relph, 1976). The notion of Jurassic Coast World Heritage may thus emerge from this critique as a cultural response which seeks to establish a

'permanence' of place meaning for the area in the face of an implicit threat to its institutionally-preferred place identity (Harvey, 1996:294). Cresswell (2004: 57) explains how increasingly dynamic conditions of political economy mean that 'place' is a meaning in flux; one which alters according to the degree of reactionary investment or dis-investment exercised upon it. He describes a dynamic system in which a sense of place may be only a temporary affect: 'a conditional form of 'permanence' in the flow of space and time'. Seen in this light, the unique geology of the Jurassic Coast World Heritage Site thus becomes a rationale for cultural attempts at place-making through carnival and procession. Likewise, these cultural attempts reflect institutional resistance to development processes that might otherwise threaten the area's distinctive natural environment or cultural 'character', as the following statement suggests:

In 2001 the Dorset and East Devon Coast received the highest global recognition a natural area can receive: that of being made a World Heritage Site... With this recognition comes a duty, not just on the people of the UK and the local area, but of all the people in the world to ensure that the Site is 'protected, conserved, presented and transmitted to future generations.'

(Executive Summary, Dorset and East Devon [Jurassic] Coast World Heritage Site Management Plan, 2009-2014)

The development of the *Cartwheelin* carnival project within *Battle for the Winds* was a further part of this cultural strategy, one which sought to underpin processes of Jurassic Coast place-making within a wider assertion of regional cultural identity during the Olympics. Michael's comment below reflects the involvement of a range of institutional partners in this cultural process, and reveals the tensions which arose between competing cultural actors linked to notions of regional and sub-regional place identity:

*What [the Olympics] has encouraged is quite a lot of partnerships to come together to create participatory work, whether it is carnival or other kinds of forms... There are a number of tensions within Battle for the Winds because there is also the desire to present regional and sub-regional identities, the Cornish and the Wiltshire and the Somerset. Within the project as a whole it will be interesting to see how that plays out and whether there is a coherent narrative... I think there are common things across those sub-regional identities. Even if they are just all slightly oppositional...*

(Michael, Arts professional, 1.11.11)

Further, Michael asserts the need for the *Battle for the Winds* to contribute to the creation of an overarching 'south-west UK' place identity, as expressed through carnival practice:

*What would be wonderful would be if that project has a coherence at a bigger, overall level, and as a set of performances that have a real sense of individual identity within that. In much the same way that carnival does, that carnival can... It has a sense of being a singular experience but with a real diversity of individuality that can be celebrated within it...*

(Michael, Arts professional, 1.11.11)

As a reflection of Harvey's view of the relationship between notions of place identity, culture and political economy, *Battle for the Winds* was also part of a strategic effort by a network of professional outdoor artists from across the south-west UK to position themselves in the face of imminent cuts in state arts funding. For these artists, high-profile involvement in the presentation and cultural performance of certain versions of south west place-identity during the 2012 Olympics was a strategy for the development of local authority partnerships and investment streams for the future. This strategy reflected an increased instrumentality for professionalised outdoor arts, carnival and procession as tools for the delivery of local authority policy objectives, prompted by arts funding cuts and the global recession.<sup>61</sup> *Battle for the Winds* artist Joe expressed this strategy clearly when talking about the Quest Trust, a proposed long-term institutional outcome of *Battle for the Winds*:

*The legacy is that the Quest Trust will operate as a strategic development agency for outdoor arts in the South West as the Arts Council gets cut back. It is a professional community of artists getting together to produce more work.*

---

<sup>61</sup>" See: The Guardian: *Arts groups warned they face total loss of funding*, 12.6.13. <http://www.guardian.co.uk/culture/2013/jun/12/arts-groups-face-loss-funding>, accessed 11.7.13.

See also *Dorset Loves Arts* for a post-Olympian example of applied arts practice linked to strategic outcomes within local authority policy: <http://www.dorsetforyou.com/405154>, accessed 11.7.13.

(Joe, Arts professional, BFTW, 26.7.12)

Similarly, local authority arts officer Henry had no doubt about the importance of the Olympics as an opportunity to present a well-rehearsed cultural performance of local place identity and arts culture as a strategy for the maintenance of future local investment:

*[The Olympics] has certainly protected local funding from this authority... I think [without it] we would be far more threatened than we are at the moment. And if there is a worrying time in my life it is going to be post-Olympics. When the carnival has gone home. And I think that, combined with NI 11, has driven a whole process of organisational development. It has driven us to work over an extended period on issues about how organisations work together... Because they have to ... No one organisation would have been capable of producing anything like the programme that we are about to produce... Expectation, from virtually everyone, is that it will be the greatest show on Earth. The understanding is that in Dorset, this is our year. This is it. And if it is not good now, it never will be... 'If you don't do this, you will have lost an opportunity.'... The Arts Council is investing a lot of money in this county for next year. It is over £2million. That is a hell of a lot of money, and money we have never had before. So there is an onus on us to prove that that investment has a marked effect. And so the whole idea of legacy is principally running around my brain a lot. Because there is going to be a time when everybody packs up and goes home. And what do we do then?*

(Henry, Arts professional, 27.9.11)

Thus, we have established a view of the cultural politics of place, as expressed through the cultural performance of carnival and street procession in the fieldwork area during the Olympic year of 2012. This critique supports Harvey's view that 'the cultural politics of places, the political economy of their development and the accumulation of a sense of social power in place frequently fuse in indistinguishable ways' (Harvey, 1996:322). In the next section of this chapter we turn our attention to the performative vocabularies of *Battle for the Winds*, and how these were presented in public space as an expression of the place identity of the south west UK.

### **5:2:1 Performing the 'identity' of the South West UK during the 2012 Olympiad:**



Fig 37 'Rosie Blower' - Dorset Wind Champion, *Battle for the Winds*, Weymouth, 2012.

*What we want to do with this show in Weymouth and Portland is present the south west culture, that's what the theme of the gathering of the winds is. It is gathering wind, it is gathering voice, it is gathering breath, but it is essentially gathering the counties' identity, cultural identity.*

(Joe, Arts professional, BFTW, 15.7.11)

*It is impossible to represent a region, and even if it weren't impossible it could only be a representation, not a definition.*

(Chris, Arts professional, BFTW, 24.7.12)

The above comments highlight the inherent tensions between notions of place and cultural identity as expressed within *Battle of the Winds*, the spectacular, large-scale, outdoor performance which opened the 2012 Olympic sailing at Weymouth. The performance, staged from July 26-28, 2012, was produced by Desperate Men, a Bristol-based outdoor arts company with roots in the UK alternative theatre movement, and Cirque Bijou, a high-profile, international production company which employs a spectacular vocabulary of circus, aerialism, pyrotechnics and large-scale digital imagery. Described as an event which included 'large-scale processional devices, extreme sports and circus, street animations, installations and live music' (Desperate Men, 2011), the show sought to

'connect the Olympic sailing events, the need for wind, and classical Greek myths and legends' by telling the following story:

Aeolus, Father of the Winds, asks his son, Zephyrus, to call the Seven Winds of the South West to Weymouth and Portland. However the winds are captured by the mischievous Doldrum, who wants to steal the voice and breath of youth. The Seven Winds are rescued by an unlikely hero, who frees the voices and returns the winds.

(Desperate Men, Newsletter, Spring 2011)

The performative vocabulary of *Battle for the Winds* harnessed a variety of symbolic representations of landscapes and locations from across the UK's south-west region. Its seven sub-regional episodes, including the Dorset *Cartwheelin* project in which I carried out my participatory research as a street performer and musician, used carnivalesque iconographies which were designed to reflect particular physical, historical and cultural place-identities within this regional whole, as the following extract from the event project plan reveals:

*Battle for the Winds* incorporates seven episodes, one developed and devised in each former county area of the south-west (Cornwall, Devon, Dorset, Wiltshire, Somerset, West of England and Gloucestershire) and each setting a background to the main story, introducing key characters, and sharing the culture, stories and voices of a separate part of the region. In effect each episode shares the cultural identity of part of the south-west, interwoven into a story that contributes to the overarching narrative. In 2011 the project is being developed across the South West with seven regional artistic collaborators, young people, public and private sector partners, funders, and a core creative team. Each episode includes the design, construction and presentation of an iconic structure or vehicle (a 'cart'), a high impact, visual image that represents the culture and voice of that part of the region and of its future vitality, ensured by its young people. It is the gift (the voice, the wind) that is being offered from that corner of the south-west to ensure the success of the London 2012 Olympic and Paralympics Games sailing and windsurfing events. The iconic structure will be a "made" item, giving it appropriate scale and theatricality. The design and development of the structure, and of each episodic story line, will in some way focus on the unique locality of that part of the region.

(BFTW Project Plan 22.7.11)

To a greater or lesser degree, each episode demonstrated a further enactment of place and region by travelling through the physical landscape of its sub-region in the manner of a performative journey, articulating expressions of place along the way at local cultural

events, and combining with the other episodes for a spectacular finale on Weymouth Esplanade, as *Battle for the Winds* artist Jim explains below:

*The machines will be the main visual focus that will travel across the counties. And then they will gather, and the show will develop from that. And it is narrative, so there is a narrative that flows through all of it. The narrative that is sent to the counties is developed with the lead artists, so that will contain local stories and histories, ideas that come out of the counties. And it all fits into the overall narrative, the story, which is a very simple idea of the gathering of the wind, the Father of the Winds calling for the winds to be gathered to launch the sailing events.*

(Jim, Arts professional, BFTW, 25.7.11)

During its globally-televised finale, *Battle for the Winds* became part of a wider idealised representation of British culture and landscape, offered to the world as part of the 2012 Olympiad. The project thus relied on an explicit instrumentality with regard to the presentation of sub-regional, regional and national place-identities.<sup>62</sup> Further, the show also represented the political economies of outdoor arts production in the south west region, delivered through an iconography that included mass public participation in a ritualistic ceremony centred on the town of Weymouth, projected to a global audience:

*And I would like the torches in the sea... 2012 people in the sea, I want that to be on world television. If we can fucking get three billion people going: 'Wow! Did you see that? 2012 people in the sea at Weymouth?'... I'd like to be on the world television and people to go: 'who did that?'*

(Ben, Arts professional, BFTW, 15.7.11)

*Battle for the Winds* involved local communities within each episode as both audience and participants, within a process of ideological recruitment through cultural performance which sought to perform a sense of regional identity and also to develop and perform public support for the state project of the Olympics. As such, the show represented a negotiation between participatory free-expression and the 'official feast' (Bakhtin 1984, in Morris 1994;

---

<sup>62</sup> See: Thomas, Harvey & Hawkins (2009; 2010)

Smith, 2009; Philips, 1998) and between the cultural-democratic, participatory tendency of alternative theatre and the instrumentalism of official outdoor celebration (Kershaw, 1992; ACE, 2008). The following statistics from the *Battle for the Winds* evaluation report offer a quantitative summary of the participatory contribution made by the South West region to the national project of the Olympics:

Four years in the making, drawing in 5,000 participants and including 52 regional performances over three months throughout the South West to a total audience of 500,000...A week onsite with over 150 company and crew...and three epic days of performance at Weymouth and Portland, 26-28 July 2012, with a final show playing to an audience of 11,000... This was the South West's largest Cultural Olympiad project and a collaboration on an epic scale; the final show included: Seven companies of street theatre artists from all the counties of the South West with specially created Wind Gathering Vessels - Brand new aerial performance from a crane high above the beach... DiverseCity's company of 64 disabled and able-bodied performers from UK and Brazil, presenting *Breathe* - 212 Bridgwater Carnivalites who set the beach ablaze with the first ever Squibbing display outside Bridgwater - The awesome, primal spectacle of 2012 community participants wading into dark waters with flaming torches - A spectacular display by the Royal Marines 4 Assault Squadron, who delivered the stone-hearted Doldrum to the beach amidst flares, ships and pyrotechnics... *Battle for the Winds* was part of London 2012 Festival and Maritime Mix, the Cultural Olympiad by the Sea.

(Website: Battle for the Winds - Celebrating the Olympic Sailing) <sup>63</sup>



Fig 38 Arrival of Doldrum, with help from the Royal Navy. *Battle for the Winds*, Weymouth, 2012.

<sup>63</sup> <http://cirquebijou.co.uk/our-work/battle-for-the-winds/> Website accessed 17.7.13

The assumed cultural authority, spectacular power and logistical range of *Battle for the Winds* as a performance of south west culture and place within the wider Cultural Olympiad of 2012 is clearly expressed above. The central narrative of *Battle for the Winds*, based on Greek legend, was further designed to afford the piece an authority in classical antiquity. Through its 'rescuing of the winds' the narrative was also performative in nature and assisted in the presentation of the south west region, and Weymouth in particular, as being essential places in the national Olympic project. The public drama of *Battle for the Winds* placed the sacred Olympic sailing competition at risk in symbolic terms, becalmed by evil forces. Without the show's dramatic denouement in which evil was vanquished by the South West Wind, the sailing events could not proceed symbolically. Thus, the public drama was also a social drama of place-making, which recruited its audience to the ideological necessity of the Olympics and framed this necessity within the empowered, positive, physical materiality of the south west UK, the town of Weymouth and the wider Jurassic Coast.

As spectacle, *Battle for the Winds* also reflected discourses articulated within wider historical geographies of parades and processions, which view large-scale civic spectacle of this kind as a means by which place-based elites demonstrate and enact power and recruit people to a shared ideology (Woods, 1999; Ryan, 2007; Harvey DC *et al*, 2007). Shared membership of a cultural identity for the south west UK and, by extension, a shared sense of 'Britishness' during the summer of 2012, were clear ambitions within this event, but ones which were not without dissenting voices, even from within the project itself. The Cornish *Battle for the Winds* episode, for example, was represented by way of the Good Ship *Kernocopia*, a 100-year-old Cornish rowing gig painted in black and yellow, with a mast strung with bunting and an explosion of golden horns at its prow. The boat was pulled by a team of hempen-clad rugby players and a crew dressed in fishermen's outfits with black stripes across their eyes, in the manner of pirates. This performative carnival

vocabulary was specifically designed to assert a separatist cultural agenda for the Cornish contingent, while maintaining its participation in the wider event itself, as the following comments from a Cornish BFTW artist confirm:



Fig 39 *The Good Ship Kernocopia*, Battle for the Winds, Weymouth, 2012.

*Let's be really clear: Here in the land of Kernow we have a long list of genuine and valid reasons (historical, ethnic, linguistic, political, economic for starters...) why we do not identify with 'the South West of England', why we do not wish to be included in the cultural construction of such an artificial region and why the massive array of media, commercial, business and governmental structures dedicated to the promotion of such an administratively-convenient monstrosity is to the clear detriment of Cornwall and Cornish interests. So, our vessel did not reflect the identity of an area of 'the South West' but did reflect the identity of Cornwall! Our vessel was a sailing boat, reflecting our lengthy coastline and historical and global maritime connections. She was named 'Kernocopia' to refer to the 'Horn of Plenty', the word 'Kernow' means 'the Horn' and we wanted to celebrate the treasures of our sporting history. On her prow were 15 golden trumpets reflecting the 15 gold bezants on the Cornish coat of arms. She had six real gig oars reflecting the amazing phenomenon of the increase in popularity of that sport. We chose to trawl the annals of Cornish sporting history for inspiration and the traditional black and gold stripes of the Cornish rugby team were used throughout the design theme. The characters: Cap'n Kernow (with a wry nod to Captain America) reflecting Cornish sailing prowess from 'free-traders' through to Ben Ainslie! Corin, the legendary inventor of Cornish Wrestling, who by hurling the giant Gogmagog from the cliff created the land of*

*Cornwall; Ann Glanville, self-declared champion female rower of the World in the 1830s; Bert Solomon, first man to score a try at Twickenham and reputedly inventor of the dummy pass; Pip Staffieri, ice cream man and first stand-up surfer in Europe.*

(Stephen, BFTW artist, Cornwall, e-mail, 16.9.12)

*Battle for the Winds* emerges from this analysis as a symbolic expression of competing heritage-based place-identities and as a reflection of the competing cultural and economic power structures which supported the expression of place-meaning through carnivalesque cultural performance during the 2012 Olympics. In Cornwall in particular, the Olympic Torch Relay became the focus for acts of symbolic repression through which Cornish identity was subjugated to English and British identities, as the following news report reveals:

A Cornish MP has called on the Olympic organisers to apologise after a torch bearer had a flag of St Piran unceremoniously torn from his grasp. The demand follows criticism from nationalists that Land's End was airbrushed of its Cornish identity prior to the start of the Torch Relay. Andrew Ball unfurled the iconic flag as he approached the Tamar Bridge carrying the torch on the last leg before it left the Duchy on Saturday. A Metropolitan police officer held a corner of the flag and the pair ran for a few yards before a second bodyguard, apparently after receiving instructions through his earpiece, snatched it away. Dan Rogerson, MP for North Cornwall [said]: "To many in Cornwall, this sends out a signal that English, Welsh or Scottish identity is fine, but that Cornish identity is not to be accepted by the London-based Olympic authorities."

(News Report: MP seeks answers after Cornish flag is taken off Olympic torch runner: 25.5.12)

64

This performative rivalry between place identities was further dramatised during the *Battle for the Winds* aerial Wind Battle. During the Wind Battle, circus performers representing each of the seven 'South West Winds' fought for supremacy, suspended on ropes from a crane some 100ft off the ground, to the raucous support of their respective crews of Wind Gatherers. The following fieldnote evokes the performance of sub-regional rivalries which was a key part of the performativity of this part of the show:

---

64' < <http://www.thisisdevon.co.uk/MP-seeks-answers-Cornish-flag-taken-Olympic-torch/story-16183781-detail/story.html> > Website accessed 10th June, 2012.

We carry 'Rosie Blower', our Wind Champion, aloft through the crowd to her place in the Wind Battle. She performs a beautiful aerial routine hanging from a golden hoop before the competitive aerial Battle descends into planned chaos. Throughout we are chanting 'Dorset! Dorset!' and casting aspersions on the skill of the Wind Gatherers from other parts of the South West. It is a highly partisan piece of performance, designed to express regional rivalries in advance of a denouement that brings us all together in a more collective identity, one which centres around the successful launch of the Olympic Sailing, the symbolic integration of the *Breathe* company into the mainstream as the embodiment of the chosen 'South West Wind,' and the ceremonial Torch Wading in Weymouth Bay by 2012 local volunteers.

(Fieldnote: BFTW, dress rehearsal, Weymouth, 26.7.12)

Thus the assertion of a local distinctiveness of place through performance in *Battle for the Winds* was performed as a prelude to the assimilation of these place identities into a collective regional, then national, identity, one which was streamed to the world as the opening ceremony of the Olympic sailing.

### **5:2:2 Symbolic Geographies of *Battle for the Winds*:**

We pack the van and make the short journey to Lyme Regis, where we pitch up near the clock tower and begin assembling our vehicle. We have costumes made by students at Arts University College Bournemouth: red and white garb bedecked with fishing net, twine barnacles and seaweed; skirts striped and coloured like seaside life-rings; the knitted scarves of fishermen. Our aesthetic sits well on the Lyme Regis sea front, with the sea at our backs, the Cob stretching out like a crab claw, the long Jurassic coastline towering away to the East.

(Fieldnotes, BFTW Dorset at Lyme Regis Fossil Festival. 4.5.12)

The above fieldnotes and the fierce cultural independence expressed by the Cornish *Battle for the Winds* crew encourage us to consider the detail of the symbolic forms which were used to present notions of place and identity within *Battle for the Winds*, and the function of these presentations within the creation of a preferred symbolic geography of the south west UK. The *Battle for the Winds* street procession of July 27, 2012, in which the seven, human-powered Wind Vessels paraded along Weymouth Esplanade,

constituted the first collective public display of these symbolic place-icons. This display was extended into individual street theatre performances along the Esplanade prior to the main *Battle for the Winds* show on the Olympic Live Site, which itself featured a carnivalesque 'marketplace' of competing Wind Gatherers from the different sub-regions before the aerial Wind Battle between the seven 'South West Winds'.

Field notes from my own participation in the *Battle for the Winds* street carnival as a performer / musician, and interviews with the lead artist and makers from the seven *Battle for the Winds* sub-regional teams, reveal a distinct affective instrumentality with regard to this performance of south-west place identities.<sup>65</sup> Each carnival 'Wind Vessel' or 'cart' in the parade sought to convey historical symbolism from its locality, while also representing the 'voice' and 'cultural identity' of each region (*BFTW* Project Plan, 2011). These ambitions were embodied through participation by young people in particular, serving to recruit the audience to what Harvey refers to as a 'discursive construction of affective loyalties' (Harvey, 1996: 323). In general terms, the instrumentality of *Battle for the Winds* with regard to place making was to characterise the 'South West' in terms of its urban multiculturalism and the natural and historical 'rootedness and authenticity' of its rural places (Relph, 1976).

---

<sup>65</sup> Bristol (West of England), Wiltshire, Somerset, Devon, Dorset, Cornwall, Gloucestershire.



Fig 40 *The Severn Bore*, Gloucestershire Wind Vessel, *Battle for the Winds*, Weymouth, 2012.

Thus, the Gloucestershire vessel was a towering wave of steel pipes made by John Tucker, a vehicle described later by BFTW artist Grace as:

...an abstract 'fine art' piece of sculpture which represented a wave of energy - that wave being the Severn Bore, or a pile of logs (Forest of Dean) or the curve of a hill (Cotswolds). The aluminium tubes were tuned to enable harmonics when banged or blown (by people or the wind) which represented the harmony of nature; hill, river and forest.<sup>66</sup>

(Grace, Arts professional BFTW, e-mail, 17.9.12)

Likewise, the West of England vessel 'Vera' was a rolling steel platform bedecked with blue flags, with articulated wheels that operated in the manner of human-powered hamster wheels. Its construction included large canvas propellers on poles, a gramophone at the prow and a boiling copper beneath, reflecting the industrial history of Brunel's Bristol and the age of steam. 'Vera' also provided a platform for an ethnically-diverse troupe of *mas* performers, reflecting the influence of Caribbean carnival within the multi-culture of the city of Bristol. Its processional section included a team of dancers from St Pauls Carnival in

<sup>66</sup> The Severn Bore is a large surge wave which runs up the estuary of the River Severn in Gloucestershire during spring tides.

elaborate Caribbean carnival costumes, alongside stilt-walkers in gas masks, women in elaborate carnival dresses with tall sculptural extensions in the form of stars and suns, and children dancing the *mas*.



Fig 41 Vera, Bristol / West of England Wind Vessel, *Battle for the Winds*, Weymouth, 2012.



Fig 42 'Devon' procession, Exeter, *Battle for the Winds*, 2012.

The Devon *Battle for the Winds* vehicle, built by Mike Pattison and Forkbeard Fantasy, featured a bicycle wind turbine with a large propeller and drivers clad in eccentric, green-striped aviator uniforms. These characters led a procession of walkabout characters including a town crier, a woman on horseback, sheep, shepherds, farmers and waitresses serving gigantic Devon cream teas. The procession also included a group of blue-skinned mermaids, with seaweed dresses and galleon ship hats, reflecting the maritime and coastal culture of the county. This Devon section of the *Battle for the Winds* carnival parade relied heavily on popular West Country stereotype and constructed notions of local heritage as an easily communicable set of tropes for consumption by a wider audience. It also articulated local political controversies over green energy and environmental protection, as BFTW artist William later explained:



Fig 43 Devon Wind Vessel, *Battle for the Winds*, 2012. Photo by Clive Chilvers

There is so much opposition to Wind Turbines going up in and around Devon.....mostly because it's going to reduce the value of people's property.... The costumes of the cyclists were integral to the design. Their Flying Machine hats and Builders Bums are nostalgic references to the good old Edwardian days of seaside resorts (of which Devon has lots) and the bawdy humour (a la Donald McGill) that resided on the end of the pier.

(William, Arts professional, BFTW, E-mail:8.10.12)

The Somerset *Battle for the Winds* vehicle was a skeletal, pedal-powered steel galleon with a giant horn at its centre; a metal-framed prow and a poop deck at the rear decorated with tall red flags. Acrobats performed feats of balance on the vehicle, hanging from its frame as it moved down the street. At one point, a huge white sail was unfurled to catch the wind. The vehicle was designed to represent the agricultural history of the Somerset Levels, a wetland area drained for farmland, as maker Nicky explained:

Our Wind machine [was influenced by] Tractors and Traction Engines: Somerset is very rural, lots of both here; [It also represents a] boat: Somerset is very wet, and used to be an inland sea, then later used rivers and canals for transport.'

(Nicky, Arts professional, BFTW, 11.10.12)



Fig 44 Somerset Wind Vessel, *Battle for the Winds*, Weymouth, 2012.

The *Battle for the Winds* carnival parade thus performed a symbolic distinction between a 'heritage'-based rural place-iconography and representations of the modern, urban

multiculturalism of the South West cities. The Swindon / Wiltshire Wind Vessel, for example, drew heavily on club culture and urban circus for its performative vocabulary. The vessel was a lilac-painted rolling dance platform with a large nightclub soundsystem at its centre. On board were a live drummer and a DJ, and its processional retinue included stiltwalkers, street dancers and jugglers, unicyclists and acrobats, who danced and flipped their way along the Esplanade.



Fig 45 Swindon / Wiltshire Wind Gatherers, *Battle for the Winds*, Weymouth, 2012.

The design ethic of *Battle for the Winds* thus constituted an eccentric cultural iconography of rural and urban landscapes. This was delivered amid an articulation of the region's contribution to scientific, cultural and industrial world development, using an overall design style broadly known as 'steampunk'.<sup>67</sup> As a design style, steampunk carries with it historical affects of the British Empire, the Industrial Revolution and the Victorian age of

---

<sup>67</sup> 'Steampunk' as described by Onion (2008) 'imagines the world as it was during the early Victorian era... The steampunk aesthetic was initially found in fiction, but has moved into film, graphic novels, music, and practices of vernacular craft.' Onion further asserts that: 'a desire to regain a human connection with the machine world underlies the work of steampunk practitioners... steampunk seeks to restore coherence to a perceived 'lost' mechanical world.' Onion, R. (2008)

scientific discovery which were central to the wider symbolic construction of 'Britishness' during the Cultural Olympiad.<sup>68</sup> In the fieldnote below, *Battle for the Winds* artists Adam and Jim convey the attraction of this aesthetic with regard to the presentation of notions of a specifically 'English' place history and heritage:

Adam comments on the design brief, saying 'we want it really English!' For him, a lot of UK street theatre has a predominantly French design ethic. As a reaction to this, the design brief has to draw on English iconography, from the era of the Edwardian inventor to *Withnail and I* and *Quadrophenia*. Weymouth's identity as a seaside town is 'uniquely English' a fact that should be celebrated in the designs, he says. Jim continues this theme, describing the theatrical world of the BFTW piece as one of 'pre-industrial eccentric scientists, who pushed the boundaries of our knowledge'. To this end he imagines influences from the contraptions of Heath Robinson and the era of 'dangerous experiments'. For Jim it is not important that the design of the show is in any way 'historically specific' but rather that it carries the flavour and atmosphere of this ephemeral sense of English eccentricity. ... The huge Wind Vessels that will 'gather' the wind for the Olympic sailing bring 'heritage and history' to the project, marking the anniversaries of the Titanic, Scott of the Antarctic and Punch and Judy through their associative symbolism.

(Fieldnote: BFTW Creative Meeting, Bristol, 11.10.11)

At a more local level, *Battle for the Winds*, also incorporated Jurassic Coast World Heritage in its narrative and design brief. This incorporation was focused on the pantomime villain character Doldrum, who represented the local stone of the Isle of Portland, as the following field note reveals:

The character of Doldrum is a direct reflection of the physical nature of the Jurassic Coast and its earth, rock and natural materials. Cara explains that Doldrum 'has history embedded in his costume;' that he 'comes from the earth' and is made of 'layers of sediment and rock.'

(Fieldnote: BFTW Creative Meeting, Bristol, 11.10.11)

The overall performativity of the *Battle for the Winds* iconography was therefore an articulation of selective local place-meanings within a wider assertion of the centrality of

---

68 Danny Boyle's opening ceremony for the 2012 Olympics, entitled *Isles of Wonder*, included *Pandemonium*, a long section featuring Brunel and the Industrial Revolution.

south-west regional identity to English 'Britishness.' Further, this south-west 'English' identity lay itself within the performance of a broadly-established, historic, imperial 'British' place-meaning: a view of Britain as the foundation stone of cultural, industrial and scientific progress and innovation for the rest of the world. As such, *Battle for the Winds* played its part in an international projection of what Harvey would describe as the 'coercive power of competition between places' (Harvey, 1996: 298), an attempt described below by UK Prime Minister David Cameron in the wider context of the 2012 Olympics:

*This will be the year Britain sees the world and the world sees Britain. It must be the year we go for it ... The coming months will bring the global drama of the Olympics and the glory of the Diamond Jubilee. Cameras and TV channels around the planet will be recording these magnificent events. It gives us an extraordinary incentive to look outward, look onwards and to look our best: to feel pride in who we are and what – even in these trying times – we can achieve.*

(David Cameron, New Year Speech, 2012)<sup>69</sup>

Nowhere was this affective, symbolic construction of place and identity within *Battle for the Winds* more powerfully performed than in the combination of vernacular place-tradition, rite-of-passage, theatrical spectacular and cultural-political economy which coalesced around its final, mass torch-wading ceremony in the waters of Weymouth Bay. The following fieldnotes speak for themselves in this regard, offering a sense of the 'front-and-back' of this performativity of place (Goffman, 1968: 119), its implicit and explicit instrumentalities:

The Squibbers line up along the tide-line, filling the air with white sparks as we all blow our horns for the end of the show. Much has been made in the media of the fact that this is the first time in 400 years that the Squibbers have performed outside Bridgwater, but, as predicted by many in the company, the Torch Wading steals the show as the symbolic heart of the event, providing iconic images which bounce around the world's media within moments of its performance.<sup>70</sup> 2012 people recruited from the general public walk slowly into the sea carrying

---

<sup>69</sup> Website: <https://www.gov.uk/government/speeches/2012-new-year-message-from-david-cameron>, accessed 16.1.12.

burning torches, wading waist high in the water, lighting the bay with a flickering multitude of fire. Windsurfers and rowing gigs manoeuvre in between the torch bearers, as the finale procession draws the crowd from the Live Site along the beach singing Tim Hill's anthem: '*Let us dream, dream of the ocean. Let us dream, dream of the sea.*' It is a poignant moment, a ritual charging of the water, a performative act which officially opens the Olympic sailing events. We stand at the water's edge with our huge flags, the band playing, our voices raised in song. The crowd on the promenade behind us cheers in support as tiny waves lap at our feet. Slowly, the torch waders dip their lights in the water and the show is over. The audience begins to drift away.

(Fieldnote: BFTW, Main show and aftermath, Weymouth, 28.7.12)

There is a significant and very specific legacy created by this proposed project... This legacy will have an impact on southwest outdoor celebrations for many years to come. The project will demonstrate that the region has the collaborative ability, capacity and skills to produce large-scale outdoor work, creating future demand for work of this scale and increasing capacity to produce it.

(*Quest Voyage* Summary, original outline, 22.10.10)

### **5:3 Place as a Contested Symbolic Construction:**

Comments such as the one above also demonstrate the strategic political economies and cultural politics of place-making. I have also discussed how institutional actors within these 'cartographies of struggle, power and discourse' (Harvey, 1996: 293) may co-opt the festive participation of members of the public as an exercise in ideological recruitment with regard to place. Here we encounter the notion that within place-'meaning' there also exists an institutionally preferred cultural vocabulary of place.<sup>71</sup> Similarly, we understand from Harvey that cultural place-vocabularies achieve degrees of 'permanence' in public space according to the relative social, cultural and economic capital of the people involved. The version of place which achieves 'permanence' in a given location also reflects the practical and social demands of its cultural production and people's attitudes towards the places in which they live, in relation to the wider world (Harvey, 1996). Harvey further articulates this

---

<sup>71</sup> See also Poole (2009) for a fascinating account of the manipulation of place identity through cultural practice in Oaxaca, Mexico.

power imbalance as a reflection of the 'place-anxiety' which arises due to the 'time-space compression' generated by globalised capitalism:

We worry about the meaning of place in general and of our place in particular when the security of actual places becomes generally threatened... Those who reside in a place (or who hold the fixed assets in place) become acutely aware that they are in competition with other places for highly mobile capital...The upshot has been to render the coercive power of competition between places for capitalist development more rather than less emphatic and so provide less leeway for projects of place construction that lie outside of capitalist norms...

(Harvey, 1996:298)

A key question therefore arises in this research as to the nature of the cultural contest which exists between different 'readings' and 'performances' of place, as expressed through carnival and procession in the fieldwork area. These ethnographies support the view that in some cases the creation of preferred symbolic place-identity through carnival and procession may constitute an attempt to maintain the status quo with regard to place-meaning.<sup>72</sup> Alternatively, organised place-making may seek to harness the customary cultural performance of carnival to support processes of change, or to contribute to the construction of preferred identities for particular places, such as the 'Jurassic Coast' or the 'South West UK'. Place, then, is a highly contested 'symbolic construction' (Cohen, 1985: 15).

The designation of the 'Jurassic Coast' World Heritage site offers a framework through which to consider this contestation of place-meaning in the context of carnival and procession. This consideration is presented by way of prelude to two carnival narratives from the fieldwork area which allow us to reflect upon the 'progressive sense of place' proposed by Massey (1997) and the consequences of cultural development processes which do not offer 'leeway for projects of place construction that lie outside capitalist

---

<sup>72</sup> See also Woods (1999) and Ryan (2007) for historical geographies of the use of pageants and parades as an idealisation of identity, heritage and hierarchies of social organisation.

norms' as Harvey puts it (Harvey, 1996: 298). It begins with a brief fieldwork tale, below, which establishes a foundation for the conceptualisation of place as a contested narrative.

At the beginning of my research, prompted by the 'carnivals strand' of the Jurassic Coast Arts Programme (2008), I set out to explore the degree to which town carnivals in the fieldwork area included specifically 'Jurassic Coast' iconography in their processional events. The answer, outside the professional carnival development contexts linked to the World Heritage Site itself, was: hardly at all. Interview responses from vernacular carnivalists to my questions about the Jurassic Coast as an inspiration for carnival symbolism quickly revealed that the very notion of the 'Jurassic Coast' as a place identity was a contested issue. Town Carnival Committee chairman Stan expressed this contestation best when he said:

*[I don't think carnivals] really recognise the Jurassic Coast. It was something that somebody came up with somewhere... It became a World Heritage Site and people went: 'oh that's nice.' It is dramatic. It is used in a lot of PR campaigns and so on...*

(Stan, Town Carnival Committee member, Weymouth, 15.12.11)

Stan thus locates the creation of the 'Jurassic Coast' place identity firmly within an implicit power-structure which lies outside his personal experience of the locations to which it refers. The following fieldnotes offer further confirmation of this disjuncture. The first describes the home of Alice, a Seaton carnivalist, but was written as an expression of my own developing research understanding of the 'Jurassic Coast' place identity:

Alice lives in a, modest, tidy bungalow above the town of Seaton, at the western end of the Jurassic Coast. From her doorstep there are views to the East across the Axe Estuary to the wooded hillsides of Hawksdown, Axmouth and Dowlands, which sit on 200-million-year-old Triassic rocks above the Undercliff National Nature Reserve. To the South, the sea is framed in morning haze between Bindon headland and the 70 million-year-old Cretaceous chalk cliffs of Beer. The town of Seaton is downhill from Alice's bungalow, down Harepath Lane to Queen Street and the pebble beach: a cluster of rooftops in the lifting mist. This

morning the landscape here is at its epic, romantic best. The River Axe snakes to the sea, a silver ribbon below, shining in winter sunlight.

(Fieldnote: Interview with Alice, Town Carnival Committee member, Seaton, 11.1.12)

Here, I render Alice's home in terms of its setting within an area of geological significance, which itself is the foundation of the place identity of the 'Jurassic Coast'. Two days later, local carnivalist Dennis described the same area to me in totally different terms:

*All those cliffs you are talking about, from here to Lyme Regis, that was our play park. When we was allowed to collect birds eggs and things like that... We knew that as Elephant's Graveyard and Landslip... You used to be able to pick crab apples, sloes, wild strawberries. And the only way you could tell the time was when you felt hungry, so you went home.... But [the fossils and geology and stuff like that] we knew nothing about that.*

(Dennis, East Devon Carnival Circuit Committee member, Seaton, 13.1.12)

Likewise, Weymouth carnivalist Charlie framed the Jurassic Coast place identity as a cultural construction linked to tourism, rather than as an inspiration for vernacular carnival symbolism:

*I think in terms of carnival the Jurassic Coast plays absolutely no part. But I think as a town the Jurassic Coast is very important. It attracts other people to the area... I think the two are part of the same place, but they don't intertwine... I think they attract different people.*

(Charlie, Town Carnival Committee member, Weymouth, 10.11.11)

Lastly, in the fieldnote below, Exmouth carnivalists Rebecca, Grace and Gaby offer a further articulation of the disconnection between the place-making instrumentalities of the Jurassic Coast Arts Programme (JCAP) and vernacular symbolism in their town carnival:

Neither Rebecca nor Gaby see much connection between the content of their carnival and the Jurassic Coast, beyond 'a couple of dinosaur entries'. Grace says Exmouth 'doesn't make a fuss about being at the start of the Jurassic Coast'... Rebecca says: 'I don't think if you came to any East Devon carnivals you could say 'this is because they are based in the Jurassic Coast''. Both are surprised to hear that the JCAP has a carnival strand, an indication that the JCAP carnival development and outreach strategies have not reached grassroots level.

For Massey: 'If it is now recognized that people have multiple identities then the same point can be made in relation to places. Moreover, such multiple identities can either be a source of richness or a source of conflict, or both' (1997: 321). The comments above express this multiplicity of place in no uncertain terms. With regard to the degree to which the symbolic construction of place identity may be contested within carnival practice, what emerges from these ethnographies is an understanding that it is in the tensions between professional and vernacular carnival that this conflict is played out most visibly as a competition for cultural capital in relation to place-making.

### **5:3:1 'In-place' and 'out-of-place' vocabularies of carnival:**

This competition is most clearly expressed within arts-development contexts by way of a reductive othering of 'local', vernacular carnival practices as excessively 'narrow' symbolic expressions of place, as the following chapter of this thesis seeks to assert in more detail. This reduction occurs alongside a contrasting affirmation of professional carnival practice as an exemplar of artistic creativity and as an expression of a more global, multicultural identity. Arts professional Tony expresses these sentiments below:

*In general from what I have seen of carnivals in the south west: Bridgwater, Weymouth, Swanage, Exmouth, Devizes... there is a struggle to look outwards to other realities, other cultures, other situations and embrace what is there. There is a kind of resistance to it, by saying: 'No. We are from the south west. This is the way we do our traditional carnivals.' ... in terms of admitting new influences, new ideas... People aren't actually looking back at their own traditions either and saying: 'Well why is that a tradition?' You know? 'Why in Weymouth are we so set on the idea of motorised vehicles? Why in Bridport do we do fireworks, or why do we burn that electricity and use that illumination? Where does that illumination idea come from?' It's just the history. When you understand the history of tradition, and the fact that it might have come from circumstances which were pertinent at the time but which are no longer pertinent now then you can change tradition... bringing in ideas from Jamaica, or Trinidad, or Rio, or Valencia ... You see scant evidence of that really... It is putting possibilities in front of people and saying: 'Have you thought about doing it like that?' That is part of my work as an educator.*

(Tony, Arts professional, 19.9.11)

Tony's comments reflect an orthodoxy within carnival arts development which has developed over the last 40 years in the UK. Within this orthodoxy, carnival arts have become, in part, a state-funded tool for the promotion of a globalised, inter-cultural identity.<sup>73</sup> Carnival development also operates as a remedy to the misplaced notion that carnivalesque art, skill, vibrancy and spontaneity are distinctly 'un-English' qualities. Thus, carnival and spectacular outdoor street processions offer a remedial tool by which social institutions can promote place-identities which reflect communitarian notions of social cohesion, dynamic creativity, internationalism and cultural expertise, through the use of professionalised arts practice, as Melissa suggests below:

*I think we don't have a culture of that kind of Mardi Gras kind of carnival and we don't have that kind of celebratory dance on the streets, and children aren't brought up with that kind of culture, I don't think, in England. It is very... still that British reserve. You don't go and shout and dance on the streets. So I think... if you are going to have members of the community involved in it, in order perhaps to have them feel more comfortable about their involvement they need to have that [professional] facilitation.*

(Melissa, Arts professional, 27.9.11)

The effect of this process in the fieldwork area in 2012 was to concentrate economic and cultural capital in the hands of professional carnival artists working to a distinct set of instrumental, Olympic place-making agendas. With the exception of the participation of the Bridgwater Carnival Squibbers in *Battle for the Winds*, this approach also served to subjugate local, vernacular carnival vocabularies run by non-professionals outside the recognisably multi-cultural contexts of the south-west cities. The following fieldnotes suggest the degree to which vernacular carnivalists were considered a source of free labour for 'artist-led' Olympic float-building, but subjugated in terms of the suitability of their popular carnival aesthetics as a representation of place.

---

<sup>73</sup> See Chapter Two.

Alice tells me: 'A few years ago they decided to set up a meeting for all the local carnivals to discuss the Olympics. And two of our people went to the meetings... And then suddenly this woman appeared one evening to come and look at the float and we said to her about taking the float to the parade... And she said: 'oh no'... Completely a slap in the face, in a way. I said: 'so the majorettes are not invited?' 'Oh no'".

(Alice, Town Carnival Committee Member, Seaton, 11.1.12)

Pat says: 'We thought what she was asking us to do was to build a Seaton float that would go to Weymouth and go in their Olympic parade. That was what we thought originally. Then this lady turned up and that wasn't the case at all. They had substantial funding from some source, and along with other people from other areas and other clubs - carnival clubs, that is – we would build a float that then would enter into the Weymouth parade. But in our case it wasn't feasible. Because as you well know, we are working hard to get our own entry for our own carnival...

(Pat, carnival float builder, Seaton, 6.6.12)

Fraser says: 'It was a bit of a farce really. We wanted to get involved, and we were going to take a float on the theme of Rio, but then it turned out they didn't want *our* float, they wanted us to help them build *theirs*. I just haven't got the time to do that, what with looking after our float and all the other things I do in town.'

(Fraser, Town Carnival Committee member, Seaton, 2.11.11)

Vernacular carnival vocabularies may thus be seen to interfere with state-preferred processes of local, regional and national place-making by presenting alternative versions of place, ones that are 'out of place' (Cresswell, 2004). These vernacular expressions of place through carnival also tend to employ a popular aesthetics which troubles what Edensor and Millington refer to as:

...prevalent assumptions that beauty is transcendent and self-evident, and 'good taste' can only be identified by those with the capacity to discern it, whereas those unable to accord with such judgements are aesthetically and morally deficient... In addition, assumptions about social backwardness are apt to extend into assertions that the lowly working class are 'excessively white – offensively and embarrassingly white' (Haylett, 2001: 355) and further, unlike the cosmopolitan middle class, are 'emblematically racist' (p. 356) and parochial.

(Edensor and Millington, 2009: 106)

In the fieldwork area, this reductive othering of vernacular carnival practice was evident within several arts-development systems. Here, vernacular community carnivals were described variously by arts professionals as follows:

*The antithesis of everything I would want from a carnival.*

(Tony, Arts professional, 19.9.11)

*X-Factor on the back of a lorry...visually quite poor.*

(Jessica, Arts professional, 27.10.10)

*A little formulaic. I think more time could be spent in saying: 'let's refresh this'...  
To say: 'what actually is this necessarily saying about this town that is different  
to the next town?'*

(Faith, Arts professional, 27.9.11)

Such comments subjugate the creative vocabularies of vernacular festivity and point to the function of arts development within the discourse of the democratisation of culture. This is the idea that a preferred set of elite values defines notions of art and creativity, and that careful control should be exercised over cultural capital in order to promote certain aesthetic values and practices (as legitimate expressions of place). This guiding principle, embodied in the Arts Council's slogan *Great Art for Everybody*, means that state funding and local authority assistance is directed into a shrinking set of arts-development monopolies and guided towards preferred practices and practitioners. At the same time, strict legal controls over the festive use of public space, rising insurance costs, licensing restrictions and the forced devolution of civic responsibility and liability into the hands of voluntary organising groups serve to restrict popular, vernacular carnival practices which may challenge the 'versions' of place that state-funded, professional carnival development seeks to create.

Thus, we encounter a contestation of cultural performance vocabularies with regard to place-meaning, with popular, vernacular celebratory practices on the one hand, and the state-sponsored use of carnival 'arts' for instrumental purposes on the other. A further distinction between vernacular and non-vernacular carnival practice in this regard lies in the relative degree to which explicit place-symbolism is generated in such performances, with the express intention of asserting a particular place-identity or meaning.



Fig 46 *Swantasia*, Dawlish CC, Seaton Carnival, 2012.  
Photo: Somerset and Wessex Carnival Photographs.

In vernacular carnival settings, place and symbol may be closely linked, as was the case with the Dawlish *Swantasia* cart at the 2012 Seaton Carnival, which represented the iconic swans for which the town is well known. However, other vernacular carnival entries make no such specific reference, preferring associative symbols, often from popular culture, which suggest, rather, the general affective character of a place and its people. These implicit place associations coalesce around how the carnival entry reflects participants' creative abilities and their sense of community, self-satire and fun, rather than around any

direct symbolic representation of geographical place, as the following comment from a Westham carnivalist suggests:

*I think [the float] shows that the community has worked hard, that it has got ideas and imagination, and that it wants to share what it can do with the rest of Weymouth.*

(Lewis, Float participant, Westham CC, Carnival Day, Weymouth, 15.8.12)

Seaton's own 2012 float, for example, was *Year of the Dragon*, a reproduction of a Chinese Dragon Boat. This entry demonstrated the attention to cultural detail and reproductive craft skills of its Seaton makers and their relationship to the wider world, rather than any symbolism specific to the town itself. It may be said, therefore, that place symbolism in carnival may be 'explicit' or 'implicit'; the 'explicit' acting to reference place-specific symbols while the 'implicit' acts as an associative metaphor; as an affective representation of a place and its people.



Fig 47 Seaton's *Year of the Dragon* carnival float, under construction, 2012

The instrumentalities of professional, state-funded, artist-led cultural performances, while not without affective metaphor, are performed much more explicitly in their place-symbolism, as the following fieldnote from the Dorset *Cartwheelin* project within *Battle for the Winds* suggests:

Blow, Winds, Winterbourne wheezes, Shaftesbury shivers and Symondsburys sneezes. Blow, Winds, Brimblecombe blusters, Bovington belches and Gillingham gusters.

(Fieldnote: Dorset place names in song, *BFTW / Cartwheelin* rehearsals, Bridport, 11.5.12)

The following further fieldnote also reflects the processes by which a sense of place may be woven into performance as an explicit instrumentality within carnivalesque street procession. It also suggests the degree to which history and politics may serve to satirise a preferred notion of place within carnivalesque street performance:

Chris plays a tune on the fiddle, and lyrics immediately begin to burble in my head. The trope is an easy one – a Scottish folk tune, half-familiar, easily predictable, perfect for popular consumption. I allow the words to form freely, moving from gobbledegook into some kind of poetry; the demands of articulating place, Dorset identity, narrative and storyline filtering through the lyric... *My Grandad's from Scotland, but I am from Dorset... Going down to Weymouth to set the breezes free!* Chris places an accordion in my hands, an instrument I am unfamiliar with, and teaches me a single chord which adds a rhythmic, folksy drone to the song. He changes the lyric '*I am from Dorset*' to '*I live in Dorset*'. We are all incomers, after all, and can't pretend to be local. A chorus emerges: *Set the breezes free in the sails of the sail boats, riding the waves, oh set the breezes free!* We begin fooling, linking local food, place-name and purpose, habit and history, self-satire, comedy and character: *My Grandma likes haggis, but I like a Dorset Knob, once I had a proper job, set the breezes free.*<sup>74</sup> The next few lines reference longstanding local industrial ties with the Royal Navy and marine weapons development. They also nod to a sense of family lineage which underpins our characters as Dorset Wind Gatherers: *My Uncle Geller, he was a funny feller, died in the propeller of a Naval submarine. My Aunt Jane she was a proper hurricane, came from Piddlehinton on a pedal-powered machine.* Finally, we reference recent Olympic disputes in Weymouth to reflect a sense of the everyday working person in the face of a larger power: *I wanted a windmill but I got a bypass, they built me a roundabout, set the breezes free...*

---

74 'A Dorset Knob is a hard dry savoury [biscuit](#) which is today made by only a single producer, [Moores Biscuits](#), in [Morcombelake](#) four miles west of [Bridport](#) in the west of the county of [Dorset](#) in [England](#).' Source: [http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Dorset\\_Knob#cite\\_note-BBClocal-1](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Dorset_Knob#cite_note-BBClocal-1)

(Fieldnote: *BFTW / Cartwheelin* rehearsals, Bridport, 15.5.12)

As with the performative place-vocabularies expressed through the Wind Vessel designs for *Battle for the Winds*, the above description of explicit place-symbolism within carnivalesque street performance demonstrates the highly specific place-making instrumentalities of state-sponsored carnival arts. In preparation for the discussion of vernacular creativity which follows in the next chapter, let us now briefly consider the implications of a conflict of interest which arose between this explicit instrumentality and local 'non-productive' vernacular carnival in Weymouth during 2008-9. Further, let us turn our attention to the 'progressive' sense of place symbolised by vernacular carnival in Seaton, East Devon, one which challenges the reductive 'othering' of vernacular south west carnival as too 'narrow' an articulation of place identity.

### **5:3:2 The Weymouth Carnival Conflict:**

During the course of my fieldwork, one particular narrative emerged which highlighted the tension between vernacular and development-led processes of place-making within carnival. This story centres on Weymouth, where for more than 50 years the annual, one-day carnival in this particular 'bucket-and-spade' seaside town has involved a procession of community groups and large-scale lorry-based floats, followed by an air-show and a fireworks display.<sup>75</sup> In 2007, the longstanding Round Table carnival committee announced its desire to hand over the event. Organisational responsibility was devolved to the Weymouth Community Volunteers (WCV), a small community development charity. This group soon found itself caught between competing public agendas within which the

---

<sup>75</sup> (Arthur, Town Carnival Committee member, Weymouth, 28.7.11)

carnival, and its function as a cultural representation of the town, was judged by local authority-led institutions to be in need of change.

Interviews with key players in this narrative expose the degree to which the traditional form of the Weymouth Carnival was seen by the WCV's new local authority agency partners to be lacking the 'right kind' of creativity with regard to content and community participation. With their funding conditional on agency partnership, the WCV came under pressure to change the format of the procession. At the same time, local authority policy agendas, the 2005 announcement of the London 2012 Olympiad (including Weymouth and Portland as the sailing venue) and the recent designation of the Jurassic Coast as a World Heritage Site also came into play to influence carnival content and approach. Cultural change was on the agenda for the town as part of a process which would ultimately lead to its re-branding as a venue for the 2012 Olympic sailing events. One committee member from the period said:

*It was felt that it was time for change and it should be more like the European carnivals, dancing in the street, mad Mardi Gras, Notting Hill, big costumes... There was a suggestion that there should be an artistic approach ... and the green thing... that was the angle that was pushed to us as a committee to consider... and as a committee we had to more or less do what we were told.*

(Alex, WCV member, Weymouth, 16.1.12)

These changes prompted significant conflict between the different communities of the town. A decision to remove lorry-floats from the carnival parade became a particular focus. Campaigns were set up on facebook, and the comments boards of the local newspaper website became full of impassioned argument on the issue. In 2009, local disputes gained national media attention when *The Daily Telegraph* reported a 'politically correct' proposal to replace the 'old-fashioned' Carnival Queen competition with an award for a 'community

champion'.<sup>76</sup> This pressure for change reflected a wider public sector policy context during that period. By 2008, carnival had become a focus for community engagement across a host of policy agendas nationwide. A local authority member said:

*There had been a huge shift through New Labour in lots of ways, and one of the ways obviously was this 'tick-box' society. And both in terms of what the schools agenda was and also what the political agenda was, carnival really ticked the boxes... In terms of the National Indicator 11 Engagement in the Arts, there were cash rewards that came down to Dorset County Council from central government if we could prove that we had increased engagement with the arts... If you can say that you involved 2000 people in something and 100,000 people watched it ... then that ticks all the boxes for them as well. So there is a big inclusive agenda.*

(Tony, Arts professional, 19.9.11)<sup>77</sup>

Coupled with environmental sustainability targets, these public agendas led to the decision to remove the traditional lorry-based floats from the parade. To promote community participation in the new 'walking' carnival, the Community Volunteers were encouraged to organise carnival workshops at the Town Hall run by an internationally-renowned professional carnival arts company. These were successful in terms of widening the kind of artist-led community participation that the agencies preferred.

In terms of creative content, the recent designation of the Jurassic Coast as a World Heritage Site was also an influence. Educational qualifications in carnival making and design were established at the Further Education College, and the symbols of the newly-designated World Heritage Site offered a creative carnival iconography of ancient ichthyosaurs and marine creatures to which College students were asked to apply their talents. A local authority member described this influence as a 'top-down' decision by

---

<sup>76</sup> <http://www.telegraph.co.uk/news/uknews/5023023/Scrapping-of-Weymouth-carnival-queen-reversed-after-public-outcry.html>

<sup>77</sup> See Chapter Two for an analysis of the implications of NI 11 for state-funded street carnival and procession.

public sector partners, among them the Arts Council, the Jurassic Coast Arts Team, Dorset County Council and the Borough Council. These partners:

*... wanted to highlight the Jurassic Coast... to animate the story in some way ...  
So we took those as themes for our carnival.*

(Tony, Arts professional, 19.9.11)

However, these top-down, agency-level changes were fundamentally disconnected from the existing participating communities within the town's carnival and, in banning the lorries, the WCV and its agency partners had publicly rejected their aesthetic forms and structures of participation. As a result they met with serious public opposition. The reaction in the town was dramatic. The Community Volunteers found themselves caught in a conflict between the cultural and economic interests previously associated with the Carnival and the agency-led, instrumental movement to introduce changes to its form, purpose and structure. A vitriolic and determined local press campaign by carnival traditionalists demanding reinstatement of the lorry floats was a major factor in the eventual decision of the Community Volunteers to step down from carnival. Admitting defeat, a local authority partner added:

*In a way you have got to listen to that. Actually that is the voice of the community and in an ideal world it is the community that owns the carnival.... it is bottom-up not top-down. It is not political will that runs a carnival. A successful carnival comes from the grassroots.*

(Tony, Arts professional, 19.9.11)

While a local carnival veteran and former committee member stressed that:

*Weymouth Carnival has always been about the procession. The procession is Weymouth Carnival. It is something that the whole town is proud of, OK? I keep saying that, but it is true. It is a very... it is not... it is not too **artsy**... it is not too **arty farty!**.. To coin a phrase...it is a no-nonsense parade.*

(Arthur, Town Carnival Committee member, Weymouth, 28.7.11, original emphasis).

In 2010 the Community Volunteers gave up control of the Carnival and handed it back to a committee which was made up in significant part of pre-2008 carnival organizers. The lorry-based floats were quickly reinstated, to local fanfares. The Community Volunteers had found themselves at the centre of a bitter competition over who controlled the cultural identity of the town, one which affects their local relationships to this day. Meanwhile, the agencies that instigated the disruptive changes abandoned their support for the town carnival, moved on and created *Moving Tides*, a separate, artist-led procession for schoolchildren at a different time of year, which ultimately became a well-funded part of the Olympic celebrations in the town.<sup>78</sup>

Withdrawal of agency funds has meant that this town's original Carnival has lost the successful creative workshop programme which supported its walking entries during 2008-9, a programme which was the original objective of the Community Volunteers, who wanted to open the event up as a convivial, celebratory opportunity for members of their wider community. One WCV committee member said:

*I don't think it would be right for us to do a float now whether we wanted to or not, because of how they have branded us. Walking entries maybe... or design, it would be good to show what we could do. We will still help out as and when, if we are asked... If we didn't laugh about it, we'd cry.*

(Alex, WCV member, Weymouth, 16.1.12)

#### **5:4 Progressive and carnivalesque notions of place:**

While Harvey (1996) outlines the 'reactionary' instrumentality of place-making which asserts 'authenticity' through customary practices and the promotion of the 'spatially local,' Doreen Massey offers an alternative, progressive sense of place which challenges those 'introverted obsessions with heritage,' which are 'a retreat from the (actually unavoidable)

---

<sup>78</sup> <http://www.maritimemix2012.co.uk/event/6/Moving-Tides,-part-of-London-2012-closing-celebrations/>

dynamic and change of real life' (Massey, 1997: 319). Rather, she conceives of place as a positive, dynamic locus of connections between a physical location, its inhabitants and the wider world. For the purposes of this thesis, Massey, and Lucy Lippard (1997), allow us to develop an alternative view of place which is rhizomatic and carnivalesque; one which shares the agreement to contestation which we have hitherto explored as a key part of the dynamic performativity of street processions. Carnival and a progressive sense of place may therefore be seen as parts of a wider performativity, in which people create that radical '*singular experience but with a real diversity of individuality that can be celebrated within it*' (Michael, Arts Council SW, Exeter, 1.11.11).

[place is] 'latitudinal and longitudinal within the map of a person's life....temporal and spatial, personal and political.. each time we enter a new place we become one of the ingredients of an existing hybridity, which is really what all 'local places' consist of.'

(Lippard, 1997: 5-7)

Further evidence emerges from the data which suggests the progressive function that carnivalesque street procession plays in connecting a place to the wider world and its role as a symbolic articulation of place as a 'locus' of multiple identities. This is particularly evident in the seaside towns of the fieldwork area, where the summer season sees public space devoted to the needs of 'outsiders' who are visiting on holiday. Here, carnival processions serve to involve these visitors as audience and to provide a processional spectacle as a tourist attraction, while at the same time offering a display of 'local' culture and constituting a symbolic occupation of public space by people who live in the town year-round, as the following comments reveal:

*I think [carnival] says that we are trying to appreciate our visitors... but it is done in such a way that it is not just aimed at the visitors, it is also aimed at the locals. So it is to try and say thank you to both sides. Trying to say: 'we have got a wonderful town here. We have got a wonderful beach. Here is some entertainment for you, but it is not just for you, it is for us as well.'*

(Charlie, Town Carnival Committee member, Weymouth, 10.11.11)

*I think it is nice for the people of the town to get together on something that the majority of people enjoy and like to take part in... It is good for people outside to come and see what Seaton is like, how it has grown, how it has modernised. I think it is a good PR for the town... I would like it to say: 'Look at us, we are as good as the larger towns. We are a good community that pulls together and can put on performances, carnivals, shows, whatever and be of an equal footing... We are as good as you.'*

(Alice, Town Carnival Committee member, Seaton, 11.1.12)

For these women [carnival] is an exercise in 'inclusivity' and 'diversity', an event that seeks to appeal to people from 'all walks of life'. It is a display of 'citizenship' and membership of the community, set within the competitive framework of the East Devon circuit... Rebecca and Gaby also express the now-familiar rationales of 'continuity' and 'tradition' which surround carnival... Their talk also opens up an interesting discourse about 'locals and incomers' and exposes a sentiment that this type of carnival is a 'West Country thing'. The women see carnival as an assertion of 'local' status, participation and pride, and also as a gateway through which 'incomers' can join the community. [Rebecca] sees this commitment as important to the maintenance of local tradition, a way of combating the 'throwaway society' and the 'dilution' of continuous cultural practice in communities... Between them, [the town carnival, district circuit and regional circuit] constitute a regional carnival community... a 'community within itself' where 'people respect you.'

(Fieldnote: Interview with Rebecca, Grace and Gaby, Town Carnival Committee members, Exmouth, 1.2.12)

The open vocabularies of vernacular town carnival in Dorset and East Devon, particularly with regard to walking entries and the cultural reciprocity which exists between circuit towns, thus reflect a progressive celebration of the multiplicity, mobility, interconnectedness and dynamism of people-in-places. At the same time, these events enshrine a parallel participatory framework which reinforces a reassuringly local, traditional continuity of practice and constitutes a more conservative notion of place. These vernacular events have an open-door policy with regard to public participation and offer a free choice of themes, while also offering traditions with regard to certain types of participation: the tableau floats and illuminated carts which are a recognisable feature of south-west carnival culture outside its major cities, for example. Interestingly, however, many of the arts professionals that I interviewed recognised only the latter aspect of this

dynamic, preferring to view vernacular carnivals as conservative, closed events run by hard-to-reach communities:

*From an artistic point of view you look at that - let's take Bridgwater Carnival – you look at that and you think: 'There is so much more we could do with that'. Because it is very fixed and it has not been allowed to evolve.*

(Eve, Arts professional, 23.9.11)

#### **5:4:1 Seaton Carnival Day:**

My second story is about Carnival Day in Seaton, a seaside town in East Devon. Here the self-funded, late-summer parade challenges the subjugating, reductive 'othering' of vernacular carnivals, and demonstrates an alternative creativity: one in which the community enacts its multiple identities, expresses its sense of its own heritage, tradition and conviviality as a place, and expresses its connections to the wider world. It also reveals the extent to which local people view the creative freedom and cultural democracy of small-town carnival as a remedy for the normative pressures imposed upon them by officialdom and the neo-liberal economy.



Fig 48 Before the procession. Street hawkers at Seaton Carnival, 2012.

The procession is the main event of Seaton Carnival Week, which also includes Bingo, a Murder Mystery Night, a Variety Night, Classic Car Show, Busking Competition and *Battle of the Brains* Quiz. Carnival Week events bring over 1000 people to the threatened Town Hall, which residents have fought hard to save from developers who want to turn this civic space into apartments. From lunchtime on parade day, the sleepy town starts to get busy, as people arrive early to secure a parking space and claim their vantage points along the route. The energy of the town changes: a seaside town in decline, populated by elderly retirees, is transformed into a place of excitement and expectation, full of festive locals, holidaymakers, families and children:

By five o' clock, carnival floats from neighbouring towns have started arriving. The fairground is open. The Esplanade is lined with lorry-based floats, their crews fixing light bulbs, getting into costume and preparing for the parade. The air is filled with music, from the *thump-thump-thump* of the fairground to the clash of pop hits playing from the float PAs as they line up on the sea-front.

(Fieldnote, Carnival Day, Seaton, 1.9.12)

Interviews with the float crews reveal a significant unity of purpose, and reflect a shared discourse of local fundraising, civic pride, localism and tradition, framed within a shared celebration of place. They speak of the intergenerational role of local families in maintaining the continuity of carnival practice. They expose the networks of local support for carnival, from the farmers who allow free use of barns and sheds for the construction of floats, to the businesses who provide materials and sponsorship in exchange for advertising in the parades, to the friends and neighbours who stitch costumes and build props in garden sheds and garages. They talk about the risks and liabilities of carnival organisation, and growing restrictions on the festive use of the highway. For these carnivalists, excluded from the preferred aesthetics of the arts development agenda, carnival is a place-based identity based on notions of fun, friendship, community and conviviality. They talk about 'community spirit', about 'bringing people together' and about 'having a good time.' They represent their towns in the wider community, idealising them as places where people 'pull together', 'look after each other' and 'know how to have fun.' These carnivalists describe their longstanding, annual participation as part of a reassuring sense of tradition and self-reliance for communities in the face of social and economic change:

*Well I have been doing it 18 years. And my family, all my uncles and aunties, they have been doing it for 30-40 years. So I suppose for me it is in the blood a bit. But saying that, it is just fun. We are entertainers, that is what we are, we are, like, on-the-road showmen really, and we just go around and we entertain people. And we just enjoy it. We like seeing people enjoying their selves... Carnival Night they do let their hair down and the town does go wild... They enjoy theirselves. We get people coming up and tapping us on the back saying 'Well done! What a carnival! Can't wait for next year!' That, to us, gives us a buzz, keeps us going.*

(Float Participant, Dawlish CC, Carnival Day, Seaton, 1.9.12)

*Life. It is a way of life. In reality, I can't remember... I can't remember a life without carnival... It is a family thing, an extended family... So it is nice really for us to come down here to help to keep the Circuit going, and then a lot of the*

*people, a lot of clubs from this circuit then travel up to our circuit... People appreciate it... The craft of it... Yeah. And the way it is put together. It is no oil painting, but then who said art has to be an oil painting? Art can be pretty much whatever you want it to be. If you look at the reactions from the crowd tonight, ultimately there is an appreciation there. Otherwise why would the crowd be there?*

(Float Participant, Ilminster CC, Carnival Day, Seaton, 1.9.12)



Fig 49 Majorettes at Seaton Carnival, 2012.

At eight o'clock, the parade sets off, led by the Seaton Majorettes in their brilliant white outfits and UV twirling batons. The home-made Walking Entries behind them include a stilt-walking Wasp Robot, a Guardian Angel with huge illuminated wings, a tiny kid in a decorated go-cart and an elaborate, purple-clad Phantom of the Opera. There are eight-year-old Flower Fairies with toadstool dresses, Brownie troupes dressed as characters from *Alice in Wonderland*, stiltwalkers dressed as Ice and Fire, and two youngsters in Edwardian flying gear who look like they are in the baskets of Montgolfier-style hot-air balloons, complete with moustachioed ground crew. Tesco's supermarket has sent two girls in Banana costumes to collect money from the crowd for local charities.

(Fieldnote, Carnival Day, Seaton, 1.9.12)



Fig 50 Walking Participants at Seaton Carnival, 2012.  
Photo: Somerset and Wessex Carnival Photographs.

Next it is the turn of the big floats, among them *Bump in the Night*: a zombie-filled graveyard with spooky trees. There is a reproduction of *the Lion King* with elaborate costumes, zebras... and lions. *Cold Chills* boasts a frozen scene with penguins, snowmen and a snow sled pulled by white horses. Dawlish CC have produced *Swantasia*, a celebration of their town's iconic Black Swans. Axminster Young Farmers make political points with their *Jolly Roger* float, which features farmers begging for money and a sign saying 'Supermarket Prices Have Turned Our Milk Sour.' *Bollywood Dreams* boasts a reproduction of the Taj Mahal, and the *The Indian Collection* is an exotic boudoir with cushions, elephants and mandalas, inhabited by incongruous, blonde, sari-clad teenage girls.

(Fieldnote, Carnival Day, Seaton, 1.9.12)



Fig 51 *Bump In The Night*, Seaton Carnival, 2012.  
Photo: Somerset and Wessex Carnival Photographs.



Fig 52 *Lion King*, Seaton Carnival, 2012.

Photo: Somerset and Wessex Carnival Photographs.



Fig 53 *Cold Chills*, Seaton Carnival, 2012.

Photo: Somerset and Wessex Carnival Photographs.



Fig 53 *Supermarket Prices Have Turned Our Milk Sour*, Seaton Carnival, 2012.

Photo: Somerset and Wessex Carnival Photographs.



Fig 54 *The Indian Connection*, Seaton Carnival, 2012.  
Photo: Somerset and Wessex Carnival Photographs.

This clash of symbolic representation may be seen as a carnivalesque reflection of Massey's 'progressive sense of place'; as a festive transformation which articulates the locus of connections felt by people from this rural part of the south-west UK with the wider world of popular culture and the geographies of global identity. Their celebratory appropriation of the symbols of other places and their reciprocal welcoming of carnival crews from other towns reflects an openness towards wider culture within vernacular, south-west town carnival which is often misunderstood, overlooked or ignored by the professional arts community.<sup>79</sup>

---

<sup>79</sup> An alternative critique sees this appropriation itself as a manifestation of oppressive cultural othering. See: hooks (1984)

In the audience, we find a shared identification of carnival as a remedy to the socio-economic decline of the town, one which presents a positive place-image to outsiders, reinforces notions of community in the face of corporate encroachment and gives people a chance to connect with each other:

*The atmosphere is brilliant. So the carnival is a really worthwhile thing... It is traditional... I'm 62 and I can remember having carnival, growing up... And I think it is lovely. It is something that brings everybody together.*

(Isabelle, Audience member, Carnival Day, Seaton, 1.9.12)

*[Carnival is important to the town because] it gives them a bit of business, makes money. And it is fun... It is somewhere to bring the kids and everything like that... It makes a lot of people happier... There is a lot of people you haven't seen for a while will come down, who ain't come out for ages... I just bumped into a couple of lads I ain't seen for the last four of five months... saying 'hello' and everything like that, and I ain't seen them for yonks. It does make a difference. Carnivals make a lot of difference to the town.*

(Ron, Audience member, Carnival Day, Seaton, 1.9.12)

*I think [carnival] shows the character of the people in a town... How good they are, if you like... It brings people together ... The businesses all making money, and making a living, and holidaymakers joining in as well... You don't want it to stop, these things. They are part of our heritage aren't they?*

(Jacob, Audience member, Carnival Day, Seaton, 1.9.12)

The streets are full of balloon sellers, whistle sellers and hawkers selling plastic toys for the children. As well as offering an opportunity for extra trade to established local business, Carnival also brings an alternative, temporary economy to the town, made up of mobile, independent traders and the travelling fairground. As I walk the street, I meet Danny, a street pedlar selling garlands of paper flowers. For Danny, the carnival brings together money, alcohol, community, fun, celebration and charity in a transient experience that illuminates the tension between the 'official' and the 'non-official', the 'in-place' and the 'out-of-place'.

*I have come here to see the carnival and to sell a few of these. Beautiful flower garlands... If I make a bit of money I will chuck something into the pot for the carnival committee. [Carnival] brings the town alive... if you don't have a carnival they should have some day when the town sort of celebrates itself. Yeah?... It is fun, isn't it?... I went to Dawlish carnival and I said: 'Give me a sticker, I want to be an official vendor!'... You fit in, you fit in... Look, this week I have been to a funeral... So I am living ... enjoying it. Seizing the day, enjoying the day, and yeah, you have to deal with bureaucracy and pedlar's licenses and all that sort of nonsense. You get moved on if you are a busker. But essentially, you know, if you don't enjoy the day, why bother? ... If I sell 50 of these I'll be happy.*

(Danny, pedlar, Carnival Day, Seaton, 1.9.12)

The floats snake through the crowd, who cheer from the pavements. The music is extremely loud. You can feel the heat from the dozens of light bulbs that illuminate the floats as they go by. The procession is at once brash and noisy and fine and delicate, with moments of home-made artistry set alongside the kitsch and commercialism of shop-hired fancy dress and re-packaged, popular culture. The crowd is five-deep in places, the floats up to 60ft long. At the end of the parade the floats disappear into the darkness, parking up along the Esplanade. One by one, the generators are switched off, the light bulbs extinguished and the participants change out of their costumes and back into their everyday clothes. Outside the Hook and Parrot, the British Legion Band plays a few tunes and the Seaton majorettes do one last twirl, as the crowd begins to disperse and the bars and pubs start to fill with drinkers.

(Fieldnote, Carnival Day, Seaton, 1.9.12)

In his sermon, the Methodist minister makes a strong link between the carnival and notions of community in the town, as well as referring to the role of the carnival committee in promoting a positive image of Seaton. His comments reinforce Alice's earlier comment about Seaton suffering from a negative image as 'the poor relation' to other towns in the area, when he says: 'Let us give thanks for the hard working people who help to make a strong community in Seaton, proving that Seaton is not a town in decline, but one which is working for its future.'

(Fieldnote, Carnival Week Songs of Praise Service, Seaton, 26.8.12)

The Seaton committee, its participants and audience view carnival as a representation of *themselves*, a reproduction of their individual, place-based cultural values and practices as part of a wider community of place: the carnival circuit. On procession night, when it benefits from the reciprocal participation of carnivalists from other towns, Seaton

simultaneously adopts a wider, carnival circuit identity, becoming part of 'East Devon' and 'the south west.' Carnival is therefore a means by which a group of people in a small declining seaside town on the Jurassic Coast maintain both their own festive sense of place and their pragmatic social, cultural, symbolic and economic associations with the wider world.



Fig 55 Walking Participants at Seaton Carnival, 2012.  
Photos: Somerset and Wessex Carnival Photographs.

These small-town carnivals, often dismissed by the creative class as lacking creativity, artistic quality and cultural value, emerge from these ethnographies as a culture in which culturally democratic notions of 'community spirit' and participation in local life are maintained by longstanding vernacular genealogies of festive production. These events enact and perform places, offering representations of the local, and non-local; the regional, national, and international; the real and the imagined identity. Excluded from access to the cultural capital reserved for the preferred vocabularies of the professionalised aesthetic elite, they achieve this empowerment within an autonomous, reciprocal, remedial conviviality; within a grounded aesthetics and an enduring sense of tradition and custom. Vernacular carnivals such as these offer alternative versions of places, and challenge the

place-identities preferred by the 'official feasts' of arts-development led carnival and procession (Bakhtin, 1984).

## **5:5 Conclusions:**

What emerges from these ethnographies is a clear sense of the instrumentality of carnivalesque street procession in terms of the construction of place-identity and the cultural processes of place-making. They also reveal how the creation of place-identity as a function of carnival is highly temporal in quality, bounded within time-specific performativities and the relative investment or disinvestment of social, economic and cultural capital. In the midst of carnival itself, the 'wild becoming' and 'festive transformation' of place which occurs during processional occupation serves to de-stabilise and contest public space, opening it up to symbolic re-interpretation. This is a feature of carnivalesque street procession which is recognised in arts-professional contexts as part of the radical genealogy of countercultural processional practice: the way that carnivalesque street performance can: 'change the way you see a place' (Jessica, Arts professional, 27.10.10) or 'emotionally move people to suddenly see a place in a different way' (Joe, Arts professional, BFTW, 15.7.11).

*It is a cliché now... linking people with place... (laughs)... It is funny... all those sort of ...all those things and phrases like 'linking people with place' and 'partnership working across the ecology' and 'the theatre ecology of the landscape'... There are all these words, there is this lexicon you know?... It shows what influence artistic thinking has on society, you know? It takes a few decades for it to percolate through, but it is all there.*

(Ben, Arts Professional, BFTW, 15.7.11)

Comments such as this acknowledge the historically countercultural attempt by artists to challenge hegemonic codes of social behaviour with regard to place through participatory processional practice (Kershaw, 1992). In the long term, however, the effect of this effort

appears to have become predominantly normative, tied to instrumental notions of place, art and creativity within state-funded cultural-development contexts. Ironically, many professional artists I spoke to felt challenged by the popular aesthetics and long-term strength of 'community' represented by vernacular carnival settings in the south west UK.

Clearly, the traction of place-identity as presented through cultural performance is largely determined as a function of the relative social, economic and cultural capital of the people and organisations involved (Bourdieu, 1993). The warning of this thesis is that professionalised, artist-led processes of place-making through cultural performance have been increasingly assimilated by a neo-liberal agenda which is based on inter-place competition and preferred notions of society, art, creativity and culture. This is not to say that professional artists have become simple propagandists for preferred notions of place, as is evidenced by the degree of cultural subversion which existed within the *Battle For The Winds* performance, particularly at the level of the street. The effect of this tendency to assimilation, however, is that once-radical practices of participatory festive occupation are in danger of being tuned solely towards the cultural idealisation of places and the service of hegemonic interest, while subjugating embedded, vernacular practices which might contest middle-class aesthetic values and offer a grassroots challenge to these preferred notions of place.

### **Building the picture:**

In Chapter 4 I asserted that carnivalesque street procession is a location for an affective liminal performativity that contests established meanings of 'place' and the social relations from which it is constituted. I suggested that the public procession of symbolic festive identities in carnival allows for the multiple meaning of 'place' and identity to be witnessed and contested as ritual, and to be re-integrated or re-divided in spatial, social, symbolic,

economic and historic terms. The affect of carnival, its function in terms of carnivalesque 'energy' and performative transformation, as transgression, and as ritual and social drama, serves to destabilise place meaning and open it up for reinterpretation.

With this conceptualisation in mind, we have seen in Chapter 5 how the destabilisation of place-meaning during carnival, and the resulting tensions that arise regarding place-identity, may be displayed through explicit float designs, costumes and other performance iconographies. We have encountered the polarisation which may occur between 'official' and 'unofficial' symbolic constructions of place in professional and vernacular carnival settings respectively.

An alternative to this polarising process perhaps lies in the offer that carnival itself makes to society, as a *simultaneity* of multiple expressions with regard to place and identity. The symbolic melee of carnival offers a location in which a place and its people can witness each other in diversity, whether through state-sponsored arts practice or through vernacular, autonomous group and individual festive transformation.

This thesis is therefore building a picture of carnival in which the vital component to this witnessing is *simultaneity of transformation*, within an event that all participants recognise as 'carnival' itself: as the temporal period of the year designed specifically for this purpose within a place; as the focus period for an agreement to the contestation of place-meaning and identity. As Kertzer asserts 'simultaneity of symbolic action' is key to the efficacy of cultural performance, whether as an assertion of 'symbolic rites in common' which 'link the local with the national and international' or as 'revolutionary' acts by groups and individuals within the 'parading of symbolic objects and occupation of hierarchical areas of social space' (1988: 22-24). The clash of carnivalesque symbolism and the agreement to contestation which carnival potentially represents in public space offers a highly-charged way of realising both Massey's progressive articulation of place as a dynamic locus of

meanings drawn from a variety of physical locations and Conquergood's assertion (2002: 145) that place is 'a heavily trafficked intersection, a port of call and exchange.'

Such an analysis allows us to consider 'place' as a 'symbolic construction' (Cohen, 1985); as a container concept for a range of individual and collective experiences and interactions. It also permits the analysis of carnival as a cultural performance that promotes a diversity of such 'symbolic construction' in any given location, as the following chapter regarding carnival and community explores.

## Chapter Six: Carnival and the symbolic construction of Community:

### 6:1 Research Question:

**How does carnival practice operate as a cultural container for the symbolic construction of 'community' (Cohen, 1985)?**

This chapter contributes to the conceptual discourse of community by considering how community is imagined and identified by people through their carnival symbolism and practice. The chapter seeks to unpick people's engagement with systems of social recruitment (Carey & Sutton, 2004; Silk, 1999; Newman *et al*, 2003; Kay, 2000) and the organised creativity of communities of practice (Wenger, 2000). It also engages with people's encounters with the affective, carnivalesque experience of 'communion' or 'unity in diversity', (Carey & Sutton, 2004; Rose, 1997b, Nancy, 1991) and their performance of alternative forms of social organisation as a challenge to normative structures (Kelly, 1984; Silk, 1999). The chapter also seeks to explore the tension between philosophical communitarianism and notions of cultural democracy (Silk, 1999; Frazer, 1999; Kelly, 1984) as expressed within professionalised and vernacular carnival practices respectively. Most importantly, it offers evidence in support of Cohen's assertion, below, that carnival is a process by which 'community' is constructed and performed in symbolic terms:

Such categories as justice, goodness, patriotism, duty, love, peace, are almost impossible to spell out with precision...But their *range* of meanings can be glossed over in a commonly accepted symbol – precisely because it allows its adherents to attach their own meanings to it. They share the symbol, but do not necessarily share the meanings. Community is just such a boundary-expressing symbol. As a symbol, it is held in common by its members; but its meaning varies with its members' unique orientations to it. In the face of this variability of meaning, the consciousness of community has to be kept alive through manipulation of its symbols. The reality and efficacy of the community's boundary – and therefore of the community itself – depends on its symbolic construction and embellishment.

(Cohen, 1985: 15)

Notions of 'community' and 'community spirit' emerge from these ethnographies as important features of people's experience within carnival and procession. The experience and performance of 'community', and the generation of a sense of social cohesion or

ideological, moral or ethical constituency through cultural practice, are key features within the various instrumentalities of this type of cultural performance (Frazer, 1999; Silk, 1999). Like the notion of 'place', however, the meaning of the term, 'community' is highly contested and finds expression in a variety of forms (Frazer, 1999). These range from geographical, location-based notions of community (Rose, 1997a; Silk, 1999) to communities of socio-cultural practice, economic activity, and authoritarian or communitarian social organisation (Wenger, 2000; Frazer, 1999).

Cohen's comment above, (1985:15) renders community as an affective, symbolic construction, as a boundary of meaning which reflects the dynamic social relationship between individual and 'group' identities. Community, like carnival, is also a temporal condition, ranging from the fleeting, spontaneous unity of *communitas* (Turner & Turner, 1982: 44; Carey and Sutton, 2004), to more rooted, vertical symbolic notions of long-term community and 'tradition' which may be constructed and re-affirmed through iterative cultural practice (Wenger, 2000; Frazer, 1999; Rose, 1997).

In order to establish a clear analysis of the multiple interpretations of community expressed in these ethnographies by people participating in carnival, parade and procession, it is therefore necessary to deconstruct and categorise their notions of community. In so doing, I seek to bring this data alongside the theoretical literature of community, with a particular focus on Performance Studies and Community Arts practice (Carey & Sutton, 2004; Clements, 2011; Jermyn, 2001; Kay, 2000; Newman *et al*, 2003).

In particular I seek to explore the tension between philosophical communitarianism and notions of cultural democracy (Silk, 1999; Frazer, 1999; Kelly, 1984) and to link these approaches to geographies of community which contest the very validity of the term itself (Rose 1997a&b; Nancy, 1991). In these geographies, we encounter a call for a deeper, progressive understanding of the multiple, affective relationship which exists between

individual and collective experience. It is my hope that the following critique of carnival and the performance of the carnivalesque might provide a vehicle towards such an understanding.

### **6:1:1 The conceptualisation of 'community':**

Perhaps the most salient issue within theoretical debates regarding community is that it is a relational concept. Community, perforce, reflects the relationship between the individual and the group, between the 'singular and the plural' (Nancy, 1991). Scholars including Cohen (1985) Rose (1997), Frazer (1999) and Silk (1999), have challenged the validity of the very attempt at conceptual analysis with regard to the term. Frazer (1999) in particular suggests that this analysis should be limited to a strict reading of 'the relevant terms in use'. For Frazer (1999: 60), 'community' may only be approached by methods which can 'show something of the layers of meaning - the relevant connotations' of its conceptualisation in a very particular situation. Ethnography, the participant observation of praxis, offers just such a framework. Silk points out that the relationality of community means that it is a notion constructed by individuals 'in the context of power relations and 'difference"' (1999: 5), while Frazer contends that community 'coexists within an ideology...with which it theoretically interacts' (1999: 53-54). Thus, any expression of community which we might encounter within these ethnographies is inevitably partial; informed by social and political relations between the individual and the shifting group experiences which are encountered by that individual at micro and macro scales:

for Marxists 'community' means an unalienated social formation - a group of individuals equally situated vis-à-vis one another, integrated by relations of solidarity, reciprocity, and cooperation, united by shared goals, beliefs, and a common material situation. By contrast, conservatives think of 'community' as a hierarchically organized human group, integrated by obligations, united by an orientation to a common tradition, common set of institutions, and so on.

(Frazer, 1999: 53-54)

Notwithstanding the challenge of conceptual analysis with regard to community, certain key considerations emerge from the discourse which might allow us to frame an analysis of how 'community' is performed, expressed and experienced by people within these ethnographies of carnival practice. Silk links community to notions of philosophical and political communitarianism which debate 'the extent to which community is, or should be, a moral force' (Silk, 1999: 5). This is a position we see clearly reflected within the rationales of both arts development programmes and the redistributive social intentions of charitable carnival committees. This position prompts us to consider the ethical value systems that carnivalists express through their employment of the term.

Boundary is a further key issue, and one through which Cohen (1985) frames community as an entirely *symbolic* construction. For Cohen, community is an expression of the individual's dynamic creation of meaning in relation to others and to the wider world, rather than as an expression of any fixed organisational or social structure. Cohen's articulation of the fluidity and permeability of boundaries of meaning offers a view of community that is analogous to Geertz' concept of 'webs of significance' (Geertz, 1975:5). For Cohen, 'community' is the place 'where one acquires culture'; it exists only through our construction of, perception of, and interaction with, boundaries of meaning (Cohen, 1985: 15). Similarly, culture, like community, is 'continually in process' and has 'neither deterministic power nor objectively identifiable referents ('law')' (Cohen, 1985: 17). In this sense, community, like place, is a carnivalesque notion. Cohen's essential, fundamental contribution to our understanding of the community is that, like culture, it '[is manifest] in the capacity with which it endows people to perceive meaning in, or to attach meaning to, social behaviour' (ibid). Seen in this light, Carnival Day emerges from these ethnographies as just such a ritualised expression of 'boundary interaction' between different communities in shared and contested public space. Carnival is a place where people 'acquire culture' and witness the multiplicity of identity which constitutes 'community' itself.

While the term 'community' assumes a positive ethos of togetherness and shared experience, its fundamental boundary also frames positions of insider-ness and outsider-ness; of the 'in-place' and the 'out-of-place' (Cresswell, 2004: 51). Frazer points out, for example that positive associations of communitarianism, its 'reciprocity and mutuality, sharing, [and] affective consciousness', can belie boundaries and exclusions which may encompass extreme positions of 'hostility', 'criminality', 'indifference to the suffering of outsiders' and 'the prevention of exit by disadvantaged insiders' (Frazer, 1999: 82). Frazer also points out how a moral notion of 'community' can act as a coercive pressure towards certain normative aesthetics and behaviours; as 'exhortations to individuals to form the very 'community' whose existence is (in some sense) presupposed' (ibid). Community, then, is not an ethically neutral term, nor an exclusively positive one, but, rather, a symbolic experience which is founded on notions of boundary (Cohen, 1985). This understanding is a further prompt towards the developing argument of this thesis, that there exists in carnival practice a boundary tension between vernacular and professionalised instrumentalities. It is through this framework that we may explore the competition for cultural capital which exists between 'acceptable' and 'unacceptable' carnival vocabularies and the communities that employ them.

Smith (MK, 2013) further distils the theoretical debate on community to offer a framework for the analysis of people's use of the term. Following Willmott (1986; 1989), Lee and Newby (1983), Crow and Allen (1995), and Cohen, (1982; 1985), Smith deconstructs expressions of community to consider notions of spatiality and place, of shared interest or practice, and to consider community as an affective experience of attachment, expressed as 'community spirit'.

It is in relation to this latter, ephemeral, notion that carnival and carnivalesque processional performance might offer a both a critique and a method with regard to our encounters with

the dynamic multiplicity of what Cohen refers to as 'imagined' communities or 'communities of meaning' (Cohen: 1982; 1985). These ethnographies reveal the ways in which carnivalists 'construct community symbolically, making it a resource and repository of meaning, and a referent of their identity' (Cohen 1985: 118). Similarly, within the organisational and aesthetic structures of carnival production we encounter the boundaries of social capital which exist between competing professional and vernacular communities of creative practice. This understanding allows us to consider how carnival filters people's relative 'perception[s] of the vitality of [their] culture' as they marshal aesthetic frameworks in pursuit of 'a kind of connectedness that transcends the mundane and concrete tangle of social relationships' (Smith, MK: 2013).<sup>80</sup>

In summary, this chapter considers carnivalists' expressed notions of community through a series of categories. These include people's definitions of community in terms of boundary, practice, identity, space and place and their experience of community in terms of values, affects and the carnivalesque experience of 'singular-plurality' (Nancy, 1991:29). The chapter considers how community is imagined and identified through symbolism. Throughout, we reflect upon the instrumentalism of community: its expression in terms of participation and agency, as an exercise in power and as a negotiation with regard to social and cultural capital. Notwithstanding these categories, it is important to state that community is, perforce, symbolised across these boundaries, and is experienced by people as a dynamic, relational interaction between them. As such, it is rarely expressed as a singular notion that can be unpicked from the data. 'Community' is itself carnivalesque, a fact that is reflected in the shifting structure of its analysis within this chapter.

---

<sup>80</sup> <http://www.infed.org/community/community.htm> Website accessed 23.12.13

Crucially, I aim to consider the ethical questions which arise from people's expressed notions of community; the degree to which groups and individuals are included or excluded from this notion within the culture of carnival in the fieldwork area, and the ethics of cultural development projects which regard 'community' as a positivist goal within their work.

My aim is to ground this theory firmly within ethnographic accounts from my fieldwork. I do so in order to highlight the relational aspect of community as a notion and to reflect the inevitable partiality of any conceptual analysis of the term. Likewise, as Cohen suggests, I aim to be mindful of the 'vanity' which exists in attempts to define community, preferring to adopt the view that:

...the only valid procedure is to explore how the concept is used; ... to examine its use in a number of contexts... by 'members of a group of people who a) have something in common with each other, which b) distinguishes them, in a significant way, from the members of other putative groups'.

(Cohen 1985: 12)

## **6:2 Boundary, Inclusion and Exclusion:**

The impulse to community often coincides with a desire to preserve identity and in practice excludes others who threaten that identity.

(Young, 1990: 12)

Iris Marion Young thus articulates a fundamental aspect of the concept of 'community': that it is a bounded identity founded on exclusion. Rose (1997) also cites scholars such as Stuart Hall, David Harvey and Doreen Massey who, in attempting to re-define the possibilities of 'community' suggest that:

...it may no longer be possible to use the term ['community'] in a radical political project. While the specifics of their arguments vary, all these writers are agreed that it is the ways in which 'community' constructs the distinction between its members and non-members that are intolerable for radical politics... The different other, placed beyond the bounds of community, becomes a source of both fear and fascination: condemned and idealised, needed and negated, always exoticised, it is only ever represented through the fantasies of those inside the borders of the same. The marginalised other is denied its own difference by this construction of community.

(Rose, 1997: 185)

In this section, then, we turn to the ethnographic data to establish how notions of community are bounded in this way, how these boundaries are expressed and how they are negotiated and transgressed within the cultural practices of carnival in the fieldwork area. We also look to people's encounters with the socio-spatial dynamics of carnival, and to their experience of the carnivalesque as a multiplicity; as a locus of identities which works across these boundaries and offers an alternative, radical enactment of 'community'. Such a position reflects Rose's view that a progressive sense of community reflects 'an extraordinary diversity of social identities and [their] over-determined, contingent intermediations' (Rose, 1997: 185). In this sense, 'progressive community' may be seen to be 'carnavalesque', and carnival, like progressive notions of community, may be seen to produce:

...a spatiality of identity which... is not a territory but a multi-dimensional matrix of mobile, fusing axes of identity within which individuals are complexly, contingently, multiply and contradictorily positioned.

(Rose, 1997: 185)

The organisation of carnival itself may act to contest the boundaries of community, identity and power. The following fieldnote from a town carnival committee meeting in Seaton, Devon, reveals how different communities may compete for 'community' identity through festive practice:

Negotiation around use of the Town Hall [during Carnival Week] is also a factor. Matthew says that *Seaton's Voice*, the new Town Hall committee, have been so successful in rescuing it from developers and are applying such a full programme of events and such a rigid business model that 'it is taking space away from other community groups.' Sophie says: 'They should be promoting *all* community events on their programme, not just their own.'

(Fieldnote, Seaton Town Carnival Committee, 2.5.12)

This short extract encompasses a host of boundary issues with regard to the performance and cultural expression of community in this small town, centred on access to its Town Hall during Carnival Week. This local authority-owned venue, laden with its own history of community occupation and symbolism as the town's primary, public cultural space, was rescued from conversion into private flats following a 'community' protest campaign, a campaign which articulated the boundaries between 'local' people, the council, and outside commercial 'developers'. This campaign, in which Carnival Committee members took part, led to the creation of *Seaton's Voice*, a group set up to manage the venue for 'the community' of Seaton. However, the boundaries of identity generated by this group, in terms of its cultural programme, its control of festive space and its structures of economy and participation, are also in tension with other 'communities' who claim partial, symbolic ownership of the Town Hall and demand access to it. Matthew and Sophie's final comments suggest that there is no single 'community' in Seaton, but rather it is multiple, and diverse.

A further example from Seaton reinforces this point. In response to my question about whether there existed other groups in the town which ran events that sought to occupy significant areas of public space, committee member Matthew revealed the extent to which different groups used the symbolic festive space of the Esplanade to compete for community membership and participation:

*The Air Ambulance Week has started up recently, in the second week of August. They do a lot of similar things to us, which is a bit unfortunate, really. They have a lorry with a stage on it, a street market, classic cars... Very similar to carnival. I am chairman of carnival next year and I want to invite them to a meeting to make sure we are not duplicating too much. It's a problem. You want to have new things each year, otherwise it gets stale. People don't bother to buy the programme, because they know what will be happening if it is the same every year. We are going to talk to the yacht club, to try to get a canoe race going. We had a cycling event here as part of the Tour of Britain and we thought maybe we could get kids out on their bikes for carnival, and have BMX displays, like they did. There are loads of kids around here with remote control cars – we thought*

*we could have an RC Drag Race. You have to keep the traditions but you have to have new stuff too.*

(Matthew, Seaton Town Carnival Committee member, 2.5.12)

Matthew's comments further reveal the structures of negotiation which exist between groups with regard to festive content and fundraising activities, the 'vocabulary' of festivity particular to the town, and the need to balance 'tradition' with novelty in order to maintain these cultural activities in the long-term.

As a temporary refiguring of public space and of the 'meaning' of place identity, Carnival Day simultaneously disrupts and reinforces such 'community' boundaries while also creating idealised, 'imagined' communities (Cohen, 1985). These are expressed as value distinctions between 'locals' and 'visitors'; between 'supporters' and 'opponents' of carnival, wherein carnival itself is presented as an imagined community of people which embodies 'community spirit' through civic participation and which lays claim to certain values, as the following comments suggest:

*I think a lot of the locals do try to get involved. But there does seem to be an element there that decry it. Whatever you do, be it a carnival or a circus or a pop performance or anything like that, they will say: 'why do we want it? I don't want that in my town. Why do I have to have visitors? Why have people coming down to our beach?' You will get that element whatever. But I think the majority of people do enjoy it. It is something they look forward to.*

(Charlie, Town Carnival Committee Member, Weymouth, 10.11.11)

Charlie points at the local boundaries between carnival as a 'majority' imagined community, and the 'minority' of people who live in the town but who characterise carnival's appeal to visitors and its disruption of public space as a negative experience, as an invasion of their 'community' space. Alice, a carnival committee member from Seaton, articulates a similar boundary, within a value judgement that suggests that all 'local' people

*should* support carnival, regardless of this disruption, as an annual expression of their community membership and civic participation:

*I cannot believe the mentality, the attitude of locals, I suppose. There are people who come along who say: 'We want to go on the seafront'. You say: 'I am ever so sorry it is Carnival day, it is closed'. 'Oh, no, we want to park on the front.' And you say: 'I am ever so sorry, but no.' And you have then got locals who live along the front... They say: 'I live on the front.' And you say: 'Pardon' and you move the signs and let them through. This last year I had... There was a 'road closed' sign out and I was standing in the other side, in the gap. And the car came up the road and indicated to pull in, so I went over to speak to him and he said: 'bloody Carnival!' And he kept going and ran over the end of my foot! And that is a local! I leapt back and there was no damage done, but the thing is, he's local. For 45 years they have known that there is a Carnival on one evening, or a procession, on one evening a year.*

(Alice, Town Carnival Committee Member, Seaton, 11.11.12)

This value judgement is part of the creation of an idealised, imagined carnival community, in which *everyone* participates and has shared membership, and through which they demonstrate certain moral and ethical values, among them the ability to put one's personal needs aside in the service of the wider community. This was neatly expressed to me when I arrived to book in at a campsite for Seaton Carnival Week in 2013. Seeing me in a Seaton Carnival Committee T-shirt, the attendant asked me, a stranger, to courier a set of office keys to her colleague on the other side of the site, saying: 'If you are carnival, then you are honest.'

Carnival 'communities', professional and vernacular, thus often lay claim to a remedial, nostalgic sense of 'community spirit', one which they see as a boundary between themselves and a declining sense of social and civic responsibility in society in general, as the following comment reveals:

*I think where carnival takes place you need to have a community. I think carnival is a ...if you like it is an indicator that there is still community spirit in that town. So where you have got carnivals you have still got a community.*

(Float participant, Seaton Carnival Day, 1.9.12)

Similarly, Martha, a procession participant, sees carnival as a way of asserting a 'local' community boundary in the face of outside pressures, locating her participation within a moral value system which reaffirms local identity:

*[Carnival]... is for the locals. Everything else here is always about tourists or outsiders or something like that. Carnival is there for the people of the town. It is for locals, for everyone to come and have a look at. It gets very busy on carnival day. Very busy... it doesn't matter how much you do or how little you do. It is the input.*

(Martha, Float participant / maker, Westham Carnival Club, Weymouth, 10.8.12)

While organised carnivals do create a structure for this kind of community participation, they may also exclude certain social groups from their primary modes of expression by virtue of their aesthetic or structural forms: these being the carnival floats, the main processions, or the civic rituals which tie them to their developmental history, for example. These boundaries are often transgressed by a wider notion of 'carnival' itself, by the carnivalesque participation of other groups operating within carnival's temporal period, but outside its formal systems of 'community' participation.

The 'arts' carnival, such as *Moving Tides* in Weymouth or *Battle for the Winds*, for example, limits participation to professional arts leaders and performers and their associated, co-opted 'community' groups, all of whom perform their membership of an 'arts' community within a co-ordinated set of aesthetic forms. Similarly, town carnivals have a set of agreed symbolic structures and a point at which the organising committees have completed their programme and consider carnival to be 'over'.

It is precisely at this point, once these boundaries have reached their temporal conclusion, that other forms of carnival emerge, and excluded groups express their own 'community'

identities, often by way of vernacular festivity, street and house parties, and in the pubs and nightclubs of the night-time economy, as the following fieldnotes reveal:

It is midnight. With carnival 'over' as far as the committee is concerned, I set out to explore the wider expression of carnival festivity in the town. The question arises that if the committee identifies carnival as a reproduction of its own festive vocabulary and values, then how are other groups in the town tonight engaging in the same process under the banner of 'carnival?'

The fairground is already empty, its audience of families and children having departed soon after the procession. The now-deserted streets of the procession route are strewn with overturned road cones, as if a great, energetic force has blown through the town. As I walk down to the Esplanade, I can hear the thump of music from the Hook and Parrot and the Vault Bar; the noisy sound of conversation from the outdoor terraces of the town's two seafront pubs, both of which are packed with drinkers. The demographic has changed again; the bars are full of mostly 25-40 year-olds who have been invisible to me in Seaton up to now. It is clear that, by this time of night, 'carnival' in Seaton means dancing and alcohol.

Suddenly, the streets are full of young people. At the Grove nightclub, there is a queue stretching out into the car park and the clientele is younger still. I talk to Max (19) Jacob (18) and Daniel (17) about carnival and what it means to them. Daniel says: 'it's a chance to come out and hook up with friends.'

The Grove is the only nightclub in town, but Jacob, who works there, tells me no-one from the carnival committee has ever approached them to seek their involvement in running events for younger people. 'That said, carnival is good for the Grove – the takings tonight will keep them open for another couple of months,' he says.

Daniel says: 'If you gave me a budget I could put a stage outside the club here and put stuff on, and give half the profit back to the committee. With facebook and that, we could get a few hundred people here easy. It would be something for the youth, and it would give us a chance to take responsibility and do something to be proud of.'

Max (21) has been to Notting Hill carnival and expresses his support for a carnival structure that allows different parts of the community to take their place in the event: '[Notting Hill] is great, they have the children's parade and the family parade in the daytime, and then the block parties after hours, it's all about bringing it home. We could have a beach party [for Seaton Carnival], but the problem is they would never let you do it.'

(Fieldnote, Seaton Carnival Day 1.9.12)

These comments from Daniel and Max suggest that because they perceive that carnival is identified, defined and controlled by a certain section of the community in Seaton

(particularly with regard to the use of public space), they feel that other groups in the town, such as young people, are excluded from participation and only get access to the streets when the preferred symbolic activity is finished. For these young people, 'community' within carnival is a festive mode which can only start in earnest once it has finished for other people, leaving them free to celebrate within the alcohol and dance-focused vocabulary of the early-hours, night-time economy. For Evie (18), out on Carnival Night with her boyfriend before his departure for an Army tour of duty in Afghanistan, this 'reclaiming' of carnival is a transgression, a reaction to her exclusion, and an assertion of her own 'community' of young people:

Carnival is for kids, families and old people. It's shit, really, the same thing every year. We only come out at night. If we had an opportunity we could run a street dance event or something and loads of young people would come to that. All the young people follow the carnival from place to place. You visit your mates when it is carnival. We'll be in Sidmouth next weekend – it's an excuse for a party, isn't it?

(Fieldnote, Seaton Carnival Day 1.9.12)

Evie thus reveals that, despite her disdain for the structural vocabulary of the carnival circuit, carnival itself does offer her 'youth community' a framework for festivity and a mode of celebration. Carnival here emerges as a dynamic flow of contested community expressions in public space, in which the boundaries between notions of community - temporal, practical, cultural and symbolic - are tested, re-affirmed, blurred, altered and transgressed.

These ethnographies also expose the degree to which carnival operates to articulate 'community' identities which are linked to specific geographical and locational boundaries, and to areas of public space within those boundaries. Carnival, in both professional and vernacular contexts, may also be seen to reflect wider, spatially-extended community networks which include district, circuit, and regional identities within shared 'communities

of practice' (Wenger, 2000). It also operates as a recruitment of local people into certain shared visions of community identity and location, as the following comments from Exmouth carnivalists suggest:

Rebecca and Gaby also express the now-familiar rationales of '*continuity*' and '*tradition*' which surround carnival and the voluntary labour of the '*committed minority*' that organise it each year through its committees and fundraising activities. Both women are born and bred in Exeter. Their talk also opens up an interesting discourse about '*locals and incomers*' and exposes a sentiment that this type of carnival is a '*West Country thing*'. The women see carnival as an assertion of 'local' status, participation and pride, and also as a gateway through which 'incomers' can join their community. Moving from Exeter to East Devon, Rebecca responded to a call for marshals at Exmouth Carnival. She sees this commitment as important to the maintenance of local tradition, a way of combating the '*throwaway society*' and the '*dilution*' of continuous cultural practice in communities, especially given the advancing age of most local carnival committee members and a sense of '*apathy*' towards carnival among sections of the general public. Rebecca expresses sympathy for people from other parts of the country who don't have this type of carnival event in their own communities.

(Fieldnote: Rebecca and Gaby, Carnival Committee Members, Exmouth, 1.2.12)

Again, we encounter the remedial, communitarian, moral framework in which carnival acts to build community in the face of what participants perceive as the social atomisation of 21<sup>st</sup> Century life. In its most 'local' expressions, the community of carnival may be seen to operate in some ways as a boundary of cultural resistance to economic, demographic and physical change within a geographical location, and the decline of carnival may be seen, as Rebecca sees it, as symptomatic of a decline in longstanding, local 'community'. Carnival also serves to maintain certain customary processional routes within public space, which have been regularly re-negotiated and re-affirmed as expressions of enduring community occupation and cultural practice. In this sense, we may see carnival practice as a restraining influence on hegemonic power; as a set of socio-cultural boundaries that must be negotiated if change is to happen; as a 'community' which must

be addressed as part of the consultative process towards the restructuring of social and physical conditions. Carnivalists Dennis and Pat express this sentiment with regard to their own home town as follows, offering highly geographical and locational contexts for their sense of carnival and community:

*It is a commitment to people. We lasted ten years at Moridunum [Carnival Club]. And it just ended up with me and Pat. We never had no help. It just was too much for us, we couldn't do it... We were community-minded, see? It was in our blood to do this... So many estates are being built in this little town, which is people who knows nothing about the town, coming here to retire. They haven't got a clue. And when I got to meetings in the Town Hall, open meetings, you have got these people criticising: 'we ought to do this, we ought to do that.' And I have openly said: 'If I wanted this town to be like Birmingham, I wouldn't have moved to Seaton. I would stop in Birmingham, so I suggest you go back to Birmingham.'...*

(Dennis, East Devon Carnival Circuit Committee member, Seaton, 13.1.12)

*Carnival is a thing that is done by very local people... because we have grown up with it. I mean, Dennis is local, and he married his wife and she became involved in carnival. They are part of the Moridunum, an important part. My wife is a Seaton person, I have been involved in carnival... My son is now doing it. And we have always grown up with carnival, so I suppose we like to keep it ticking over if we can... Earlier on I was saying about Colyton, where there is a much better community spirit. That is because there are more local families. Whereas Seaton has grown and spread and there are not too many local families still in Seaton... Because it has got so big, and there are so many people coming in from outside, we don't have the community spirit that they do in Colyton.*

(Pat, carnival float builder, Seaton, 6.6.12)

The primary communitarian position embodied by carnival participants is that they demonstrate a long-term continuity of cultural practice within their community; that they show out each and every year as a sign of their continuing occupation of space, society and culture. It is in this way that participating groups assert 'local' status and their right to contest for ownership of the streets on Carnival Day. It is also perhaps for this reason that they contest the rights of newcomers, remotely-funded arts professionals or short-term, arts-development schemes to participate in these events, greeting them with half-hearted

applause until such time as they have demonstrated the continuity and commitment required to be considered reliably 'local'; a part of the identity of the place itself.

Paradoxically, the power of carnival to create such strong, symbolic and affective associations with bounded notions of community and place is also the reason why it is harnessed as a catalyst for change in particular locations. Carnival can unsettle the meaning of physical locations and operate as a cultural forum for their contestation, while also offering a vehicle for customary practice in community which acts over time to define a place within certain symbolic and cultural terms.

The following comments from Stella, a community Carnival Club organiser, articulate the tensions between these different symbolic versions of locality and community. She reflects how the Carnival Club attempts to present a certain image of community and location through processional symbolism, in the face of scepticism from other 'communities' within its geographical location:

Stella's early comments about her community are revealing. She immediately confronts the 'outsider' prejudice against the area and sees the carnival float as a way of presenting a positive image of the neighbourhood and as a vehicle of change. This year the group has received £1600 funding from Synergy Housing, a local housing association which is building new, affordable homes in the area as part of a £4.3m redevelopment programme. I later read in the Dorset Echo that the Synergy development has caused some conflict in the community over the compulsory re-location of some elderly residents from their longstanding social housing. Stella says: 'People in Westham can be a bit suspicious, even of the Carnival Group. It is hard to get them involved in things. They see the funding from Synergy, or that it is held in the church, and they assume it is all run by the council, or it is a religious thing.'

(Fieldnote: Westham Community Carnival Group, Weymouth, 6.1.12)

Molly, a local police officer and float participant, sums up the way in which carnival practice brings idealised projections of geographical location and 'community' identity together in public space, in a way which confronts the symbolic boundaries between different places

and groups of people. For Molly carnival presents both a real and an imagined community into public space, while at the same time offering community membership to all:

*I have got my Mum and Dad here, I have got my brother, my sister, all of my nieces, loads of cousins, all scattered around Westham...I think that it sends a message that we are positive. Westham has had a bad reputation in the past... because it is a council estate. People always go: 'Oh, social housing!' or 'Council'. And it does, it rubs through. If you don't own your own property and you are council, there is still a bit of stigma attached to it. Its: 'I'm renting from Magna,' 'Well you can't be working.' And it's wrong... [In carnival] you have got kids, you have got councillors, you have got working mums, you have got a touch of everybody here who is involved. And we open our arms up and welcome anyone, from any background, any race, anything at all, to come and enjoy it and have a really good time... It makes me proud when I am going through on that float and people are looking at you. You can think to yourself: 'Wow, I am part of this. I am part of my community. That is Westham; that is my community'.*

(Molly, Float participant, Westham CC, Carnival Day, Weymouth, 15.8.12)

Molly symbolises carnival as an imagined community in which all can participate. Thus, she sees carnival as a cultural 'performance' of an idealised, inclusive community which mediates against perceived community boundaries. For Molly, carnival integrates Westham into the wider identity of Weymouth in a manner which challenges its negative geographies of low economic or employment status and the 'moral' community which alienates single parents or those in social housing. It is to this communitarian instrumentality of carnival that we turn our attention in the next section of this chapter.

### **6:3 Communion, Togetherness and Attachment:**

*More widely, I think it is about doing things together. It is being part of communities that are doing things together; that take part in things together and discuss things together. So it is kind of against that current trend to stay in your house, watch TV and not communicate with anyone. It is about communication. Communication of ideas, working together, being inspired, those kind of values.*

(Tony, Arts professional, 19.9.11)

Tony here expresses a view that the 'current trend' within modern life leads to the atomisation of the individual. He suggests that carnival practice offers a psycho-social remedy to this perceived decline in the communal experience of 'togetherness'. For Tony, carnival offers an opportunity for shared practice: 'doing things together' and 'working together' and improved 'communication of ideas' between individuals; a chance to 'discuss' things; an improved relationship between the individual, the group and society as a whole. His language thus assumes a lack of such experience in modern society and is structured within communitarian solutions to the problem of social exclusion. It reflects participatory arts approaches which seek to encourage people to 'take part' in certain types of cultural activity as a remedy.

By contrast, Tony also identifies certain negative cultural practices as 'other' to this ideal of communion and attachment. His negative view of 'staying in your house', for example, suggests that 'community' implies mobility and access to public space. He suggests that people who lack community 'watch TV' rather than 'being inspired' through shared creative practice. Thus he places community, and carnival, within a scale of social and cultural 'values' and offers his own community, that of carnival 'arts' practice, as a means of addressing a perceived lack of community in society as a whole.

Similarly, Alice, a town carnival committee member, articulates her attachment to community in highly affective terms when talking about Carnival Night, as the following comments reveal:

*Obviously you are going to get all the locals coming to watch. All right, you get probably 1000 people from outside coming in, but the majority in that area are locals, and they are out to have a good time. They are enjoying what they are watching, they are clapping, they appreciate the band, and everything, and everyone is having a great time. And they are supporting, that is what I like about it... Children on their shoulders, getting in the road and marshals leaping in to drag them out of the way... People open up their windows and sit in the windows with a glass of whatever and watch. The retirement home which is half*

*way down that street bring chairs out and all the old people are brought and put in chairs and blankets to watch it go past. They love it!*

(Alice, Town Carnival Committee member, Seaton, 11.11.12)

Alice's assertion that carnival brings out 'all the locals' is the symbolisation of an imagined community in which *everyone* from Seaton participates, without dissension. Carnival, community and town identity are synonymous in Alice's mind; the performance of carnival is a unifying performance of local status.

Thus, like Tony, Alice's view of carnival also creates boundary notions of 'inside' and 'outside'. While Alice welcomes 'outsiders' to carnival as an exercise in civic hospitality and as part of her perception of the town's membership of the wider carnival circuit community, she reserves the convivial, affective benefits of communion and attachment for her 'local' community as she symbolises it. She does this in part by tying these experiences to specific areas of public space, to the balconies of the parade route along the town's main street and the doorstep of the retirement home. Here, Alice describes 'local' people in 'local' spaces, sharing experiences of 'a good time'; of 'enjoying' 'clapping' and 'appreciating'. They do so within her projection of a moral framework for community which includes care for the old and for the very young, in a protective space which is mutually 'supporting' and which suggests a reversal of the declining communal values of the 'outside'. Alice thus symbolises carnival as a vehicle for 'local togetherness' which produces what Frazer (1999: 75) refers to as 'the connection ... between community and *Communitas*: the transcendent or symbolic universe that embraces all souls'. Effectively, for Alice, carnival *is* community: a 'site for the realization of communion...the meeting with another, soul to soul' (*ibid*).

This assertion of carnival as a community symbolised by conviviality and mutual social support was a frequent feature in my interviews with circuit carnivalists. Interviews with the

float crews at Seaton saw them repeatedly express the view that carnival is a shared 'identity'; a 'way of life' based on notions of fun, friendship, community and conviviality. They talked about 'community spirit', about 'bringing people together' and about 'having a good time.' They considered themselves to be representing their towns in the wider community, presenting them as places where people 'pull together', 'look after each other' and 'know how to have fun,' while at the same time engaging in reciprocal festivity with their neighbours: an exercise in what Wenger (2000: 233) refers to as 'boundary interaction'. Through their float building and display in the parades they sought, and received, recognition of their craft and construction skills, of their 'attention to detail' and of their organisational ability in getting the floats together. To an extent, the parades were viewed as symbolic demonstrations of the health of their communities in this regard, totems through which people could feel 'included', 'inside' and 'together'. Carnival thus creates a boundary of community participation around these people, where visible display and mobility in public space are important assertions of 'community' itself. On Carnival Night, these practices are shared with a further sub-division of community: between the 'performers' of community who articulate its symbolism and the 'spectators' who ratify it through their observance and support, legitimising it with admiration, cheers, applause and the donation of money, as the following comments suggest:

*It makes [people] feel part of the community when they lead their local carnival and they get to see all their friends and family... carnival is about entertaining the spectators.*

(Matthew, float participant, Topsham CC, Seaton Carnival Day 1.9.12)

*The community support it, and that. Getting towards the winter months, especially, everyone tends to hide behind the curtains and stay in. If the weather is nice, it is nice to come out on a nice, crisp, cold evening and if it is dark it is best when it is illuminated. It brings people out.*

(Jason, float participant, Honiton CC, Seaton Carnival Day 1.9.12)

Carnival thus emerges from these ethnographies as a symbolic expression of community in which everyday social roles are blurred and in which, we hope, the carnivalesque suspension of our usual modes of social interaction will allow us to meet each other 'soul-to-soul' (Frazer, 1999: 80). By bringing different communities into public space in a symbolic assertion of their own identities, but within a temporary membership of a wider 'carnival community', carnival creates a mode of being which rises 'above mundane and material conditions' (ibid). Carnival thus allows us to perform what I would term an 'agreement to contestation' with regard to community. It allows us to symbolise a reversal of our fear of what lies beyond the boundaries of our own 'communities' and to adjust our 'boundaries of meaning' with regard to others. While carnival also reasserts symbolic boundaries of practice or culture through the forms with which we choose to represent ourselves, at the same time it allows us to encounter others and include their difference within a transcendent re-imagining of a co-operative, communal society. This utopian vision was eloquently expressed by an audience member at Weymouth Carnival during a street interview:

*You see a lot of people, you enjoy yourself... Good fun. No wars, no arguments. Everybody's happy... And being together, Yeah.*

(Audience member, male, 50's, Weymouth Carnival, 15.8.12)

If we accept carnival as a symbolisation of community, then its condition as a temporally-bounded, carnivalesque and imaginative exercise renders it firmly at 'the affective level and at the level of fantasy' (Frazer, 1999: 83). As such, the 'community' of carnival is an 'imagined' community, an experience which is 'both euphoric and fleeting' (ibid) expressed by participants in ephemeral terms such as 'community spirit' or 'energy'. Carnival offers 'one night a year' when people can experience of this kind of transcendent affective community, rising beyond the normal rules of social interaction.

Paradoxically, the structures of social participation within carnival, and the carnival clubs, committees and communities of practice which support them, are also palimpsests of normative social organisation, which offer bounded, symbolic structures of 'community' participation for their members throughout the rest of the year. As Frazer explains:

It is also important to underline the fleeting and elusive nature of community. When the euphoria subsides what people are left with is the stuff of social life—networks of concrete social relations of exchange, trust or its absence, obligations and duties, friendship, uncertainty... Some groups are better integrated and organized than others, some have more potent holdings of material and symbolic resources than others - that is, some are better able to achieve cohesion and some measure of agency.

(Frazer, 1999: 84)

The performance of carnival, then - itself a symbolisation of community - is constituted through the ongoing activities of what Wenger (2000) refers to as 'communities of practice'. Adopting Wenger's view, we see these multiple communities of practice reaching their annual climax in a ritual, shared, festive occupation of public space; one which creates a 'container' for 'social learning' and 'modes of belonging' (Wenger, 2000: 225-246). Carnival thus provides an experience of 'boundary interaction'; an experience of what Cohen and Geertz respectively would term 'culture' or 'webs of significance' (Cohen, 1985: 15; Geertz, 1975:5), and an encounter with the interaction between 'singular' and 'plural' identity (Nancy, 1991). It is to the nature of these communities of practice that we turn our attention in the following section of this chapter.

#### **6:4 Communities of Practice:**

Carnival emerges from this critique as a potential for both a highly-progressive, diverse experience of community and culture and a highly reactionary one. In its processional climax, it may be viewed as a ritual witnessing of the multiplicity of communities of practice in a place, within an overarching mode of belonging which is itself destabilised by the

transformative, carnivalesque nature of the performance. The paradox of carnival, however, is that, within this progressive destabilisation, 'community' and its associative symbolism are simultaneously contested and reaffirmed through such 'boundary interactions'. Further, within carnival the individual is also engaged in a dynamic, relational negotiation between personal and social experience.

Wenger's idealised subdivision of the nature of communities of practice seems simplistic in this context, but nonetheless offers a structural framework for our analysis of the ethnographic data in this research. Wenger sees communities of practice as reflecting the following qualitative elements:

*Engagement*: doing things together, talking, producing artefacts....*Imagination*: constructing an image of ourselves, of our communities, and of the world in order to orient ourselves, to reflect on our situation and to explore possibilities... [and] *Alignment*: making sure that our local activities are significantly aligned with other processes so that they can be effective beyond our own engagement.

(Wenger, 2000: 228)

The following fieldnote from my first visit to Seaton Town Carnival Committee goes some way to exposing the way in which this particular community of practice reflects Wenger's structural definitions. At the same time, through its descriptions of individuals in terms of their extended, performed identities within carnival practice and the wider 'communities' of Seaton, it demonstrates the 'boundary interactions' which are a core feature of our social experience:

The committee begin to arrive: Steve, the carnival president; Christian, committee treasurer, who is married to Lydia, the committee secretary;; Sophie, mother of Fraser and wife of Pat, the float-makers, who organises the carnival queen competition; Matthew, Lydia's dad, and his wife Rose, who 'picks up whatever extra jobs need doing'. Local district councillor Ed is also present, as are Lions Club and British Legion stalwart Esme and local Classic Car Club secretary Vic, for whom we all have to speak loudly and clearly on account of his deafness. As the group confirm members' jobs for the 2012 Carnival Week events, the negotiative process between the committee and other organisations in the town begins to emerge. Alice reports that *Seaton's Voice*, the community association which runs the Town Hall, has lost all details of the dates and times

that Lydia had provisionally booked for carnival events. Ed reports that a couple of local charity organisations have applied for licenses for independent street collections during Carnival Week, in competition with the committee's own fundraising efforts. 'That's a bit naughty!' says Alice. Ed says he will look into it and see if he can persuade them to change their dates. *Seaton's Voice* have also refused permission for the committee to offer bottles of wine as prizes at the Carnival Quiz Night, because last year's winners opened them straight away and *Seaton's Voice* did not make enough money at their bar. Alice says she will talk to them about this and work out a solution...

(Fieldnote: Seaton Town Carnival Committee, 1.2.12)

The above fieldnote reveals how each participant embodies a range of identities within 'community' notions of family, profession, practice and interest and how these identities 'engage, imagine and align' themselves (Wenger, 2000: 228). It is also a reflection of the way this researcher has imagined this community through participant observation; an exposure of my partial understanding of these complex individuals and their chosen social vocabularies; a reflection of the fact that 'community' is a symbolic construction, at best an *interpretation* of meaning (Cohen, 1985:17).

This is a key point when considering the vocabularies of practice through which 'community' is expressed during carnival. As we will see in the next chapter, it is one which allows us to de-centre our view from the positivist, aesthetic, tendency of carnival arts-development programmes and to re-focus it on a wider set of vernacular cultural forms within carnival. The following fieldnote, also from Seaton, offers a prelude to this later discussion:

#### Carnival Bingo:

The Town hall is packed for Bingo Night – over 100 people sit together at long lines of trestle tables set perpendicular to the stage, their Bingo cards and raffle tickets in front of them. The bar is open and doing a good trade. On the stage there is a small table with the Bingo machine on it, a functional, no-frills tombola machine that dispenses coloured, numbered balls. Our caller for the evening is John, a grey-haired man in his 70s, who calls each number through his microphone. The lively audience is mostly female and elderly, with a smattering of men who look to be above retirement age and a few children here and there drinking fizzy drinks through straws. A happy-looking, intergenerational group of

Asian women - an elderly woman, mother and two small girls - is conspicuous in this sea of white faces.

I have never played Bingo before, a fact which draws some amused surprise from Rose, and from Fraser, Anna and Fran, their 11 year-old daughter. Fran works on her colouring book with felt tip pens as we play. The women quickly explain the rules and keep an eye on me as we play the first few games, until I have got the hang of it. The atmosphere is full of concentration and shared understandings, with group exclamations at certain numbers. '22, two little ducks,' calls John. 'Quack! Quack!' replies the audience. 'Doctor's orders: number nine!' calls John. 'Cough Cough!' the audience replies... Anna tells me she has been playing Bingo at carnival since she was 4 years old: for over 30 years.

(Fieldnote, Seaton Carnival Bingo Night, 25.8.12)

This fieldnote reveals how Carnival Bingo acts as a shared festive vocabulary within Seaton Carnival Week. Here, Bingo constitutes a festive 'community of practice'; a 'boundary interaction' that ultimately led to me being admitted to the community itself.

As a newcomer, I found Bingo to be a carnivalesque mixture of collective experience and individual competition, an intense concentration on the numbered card which led to moments of group congratulation and simultaneous personal disappointment when someone else called 'House!' My experience at this boundary led me to see Bingo Night as a frame through which this community enacted part of its shared cultural vocabulary within Carnival Week, reaffirming itself through participation in a predictable, annual event, the structure of which was known to all present.

Bingo was a culture that was foreign to me, but one into which I was being quickly admitted. During my upbringing, my aspirational parents discouraged me from traditional working-class pursuits, of which Bingo was considered to be one, in the pursuit of what they saw as a more 'cultured' middle-class identity. Thus, I did not view Bingo, necessarily, as 'culture'. However, my important experience at Seaton was to understand that Bingo is part of carnival culture in the town. In Seaton, it is an essential, inclusive feature of the social process of Carnival Week, one through which this community of practice builds its

sense of togetherness and moves towards the spectacular expression of its multiple identity that is its Carnival procession. Participation in Bingo was an important 'boundary interaction' (Wenger, 2000) with regard to my general participation in carnival in Seaton, a rite of passage which afforded me temporary membership of the Seaton Carnival community of practice.

Wenger offers us a clear understanding of the importance of such boundary interactions as a feature of cultural participation and social learning. (2000: 228). He locates them as 'social containers' for sets of 'competences' which may be communicated in order for people to develop reciprocal practice and social understanding. For Wenger, the social competence developed through such interaction is constituted by 'a sense of joint enterprise' in which 'to be competent is to understand the enterprise well enough to be able to contribute to it' (Wenger, 2000: 228). Further, Wenger describes how to be considered 'competent' is to hold a position as a 'trusted partner' within 'norms and relationships of mutuality' (*ibid*). Finally, Wenger views boundary interactions as locations where people offer access to their 'shared repertoire of communal resources – language, routines, sensibilities, artefacts, tools, stories, styles etc' (*ibid*). 'Competence' for Wenger, arises from an individual's access to this repertoire and from their ability 'to use it appropriately' (*ibid*). Wenger's conceptualisation thus offers not only a conceptualisation of how the different communities of practice constitute carnival as a whole in Seaton, but also a culturally-democratic ethical model for the institutional practice of community engagement through carnival practice.

Carnival in Seaton, then, is a palimpsest of cultural vocabularies. This is a fact which might be in part obscured by the spectacle of its ritual, processional climax, which takes a more immediately recognisable, aesthetic form as a 'carnival' parade. Like the parade, however, these supporting vocabularies are delivered by a variety of communities of practice,

reflecting their preferred cultural forms and activities. They are part of a co-ordinated accumulation of cultural activity, within a staged process which helps to create a 'head of steam' behind the spectacle of Carnival Night. At this point, a wider notion of 'community' is symbolised. Perhaps the most important factor is not the *form* that these staged contributions take, whether they are 'art' or 'non-art', instrumental or 'non-productive' (Edensor *et al*, 2010: 11), but the very *fact* of their enactment, which is itself felt as a reassuring demonstration of 'community' for certain people in a particular place.

The following fieldnote from Seaton further illustrates this point. As part of my participation in the Town Carnival I offered to organise a musical busking competition. This offer reflected my own community of practice as a street musician and was an attempt to add to the festive atmosphere in public space on Carnival Day. As a newcomer and non-local, organising the busking competition proved a difficult endeavour, as I discovered that I lacked the 'community' - proximity, contacts and local social capital - to be able to recruit a significant number of participants. On the day of the Carnival Crabbing Competition, I expressed my anxiety to Rose. Her response led me to reflect upon the time and space which are necessary in order to establish such a repeated festive community of practice in a particular place:

#### Crabbing Competition:

Down at Axmouth Harbour the crabbing competition is already underway, sponsored by Seaton Tackle Shop, which is situated next to the Harbourmaster's office. Families line the harbour wall as children dangle their lines into the water. The children fish amid the stacks of inkwell and parlour pots which are stored between tides on the quayside by local crabbers and lobstermen. They energetically swing their weighted lines into the muddy water below. The harbour is full of carnivalesque noise: the happy cries of the children as they pull up a 'big-un' or get nipped on the finger; expressions of disgust at the slimy baits; the shouted warnings of adults to kids who go too close to the edge. Sailboats and fishing dinghies bob on the water in the yacht basin, cables ringing against masts in the light wind. The Tea Caddy cafe is doing a brisk trade in teas, burgers and Mars bars. Lydia and Christian have been organising proceedings so far, and we sit and have tea for a while. Lydia tells me there are

26 entrants in all. Rose says the crabbing competition is an 'old favourite' during Carnival Week.

I mention to Rose my nervousness about the new busking competition, for which I am responsible as part of carnival, particularly in the light of the poor weather forecast, which promises heavy rain for the next couple of days. Rose's re-assurance reveals the importance of certain events as *repeated practices* within the wider framework of the week: 'Most new things go poorly to start with until they get established and people start coming back for them each year,' she says.

(Fieldnote, Seaton Carnival Week Crabbing Competition, 28.8.12)



Fig 56 Seaton Carnival Week Crabbing Competition winners, 2012

Carnival Week events, therefore, reflect the relative vitality of iterative communities of practice. These symbolic communities are contested by levels of public interest and participation, and the need for their practices to offer a return on their initial economic investment and to contribute to carnival funds and local good causes.

This incident confirmed to me that Carnival Week in Seaton, and likely elsewhere, is a collection of individual communities of repeated festive practice, which are only loosely coordinated by the committee. Each of these practices has developed because people want

to participate in it, not necessarily because of any financial viability in the first instance. Practices become viable as participation grows, through an increased number of entry fees and the sponsorship of businesses or organisations keen to be associated with a successful, popular event, until they become 'part of carnival' within its agreed temporal period.

Rose's reassurance was largely directed at my financial concerns regarding the busking competition, which arose from my desire to create something for the committee which 'washed its own face' financially. Her comment revealed, however, that what was most important about my contribution was that I should be prepared to *repeat* it until such time as it became self-sustaining and created its own community. What was important was that I demonstrated a commitment; that I offered people a framework, a continuity of participation in carnival. In the course of my association with the committee, I became aware that this degree of commitment was seen as a reflection of my character in terms of my 'community spirit'; of my status as 'new blood' and as an 'honorary local', and of my suitability for membership of the community of practice that is Seaton Carnival. The busking competition attracted only three entries, fewer in its second year in 2013, but, for those who participated, it was perhaps an experience of temporary 'community'. Importantly, my stewardship of it brought me into contact with the notion of the carnival 'community' as being based upon a system of moral values, which was itself founded on customary, iterative practice, expressed, importantly, through a *range* of cultural vocabularies.

#### **6:5 'Community' and 'Carnival' as moral values:**

When considering how these carnivalists express social, moral and ethical values within notions of 'community' and 'community spirit', it is important to recognise from the outset

that 'community' is a *value* in itself, one which refers to 'a set of social and moral relations and ties that inhere between members, and between members and non-members' (Frazer, 1999: 78). These ethnographies suggest significant similarities of expression with regard to the notion of community. However, it is important to note that these value judgements reflect the unique relations of meaning which exist between the individual and the group. They are here presented as a reflection of individual orientations to social experience, rather than as a suggestion of any universally-shared ethical or moral code among participants.

Further, we do well to remember Cohen's view (1985: 228) that, while people might view certain institutional or participatory structures – the Carnival Club, Carnival Committee, Carnival Arts Project, Float Crew or even the Carnival Procession itself – as 'containers' or 'sites' for certain moral and ethical values, these structures themselves are not inherently ethical or moral. They do not, of themselves, produce these values. Rather, our 'symbolic construction of community' (Cohen, 1985) renders these frameworks as relational sites in which we experience boundaries of meaning between ourselves and others. Within these interactions we make our own interpretations of their relative moral dimension by virtue of our individual agency. As a result, it is not my claim that the following data proves or disproves any moral or ethical dimension to any particular social structure or practice. Rather, I offer these ethnographies as demonstrations of how a selection of individual participants in carnival symbolise social and moral meanings and values through their participation; how their individual values condense into the 'commonly accepted symbols' of community, and of carnival itself (Cohen, 1985: 15).

Smith (MK, 2000) identifies reciprocity as a key moral value within notions of community. Reciprocity emerges from these ethnographies as a value which operates in a range of ways, however. The following interviews with members of Weymouth Town Carnival

Committee, for example, reflect the fact that it is run by a philanthropic business community that seeks to raise money for local good causes. In this case, reciprocity is a reflection of relative economic power between individuals and groups, and the redistributive, philanthropic, moral requirement that the wealthy should support the poor. Archie's comments below clearly express these notions of reciprocity, within frameworks of moral philanthropy:

*I have led a fortunate life, let's put it that way. I worked hard and I did quite well. I was never rich, but I was always OK... And I thought I really should try and do something for the community... I knew a few people down here. A few were Rotarians, and as soon as they heard that I was moving down, they got me to join... Fundraising and community was my thing... And they were very keen to keep Carnival going... I like community. Of all the charities that I raise funds for and support I much prefer community-orientated ones... it was merely to put something back. And of course when you do that you get a buzz from it as well, don't you? You do something good for somebody and you think: 'yeah, that is good'. That encourages you to do another one, doesn't it? And that was it. It is just putting something back...*

(Archie, Town Carnival Committee Member, Weymouth, 2.11.11)

Archie's value system for carnival reflects his sense of relative good fortune in life and the moral compulsion he feels to reciprocate by helping out on Carnival Day to create a social entertainment and to raise money for others. Archie's early experiences of 'putting something back' were as a volunteer working with homeless people. His moral engagement with 'community' thus reflects his experiences of 'boundary interaction' with people from disadvantaged backgrounds (Wenger, 2000). Archie symbolises another community when he locates this philanthropic, reciprocal value system within the institution of the Rotary Club, where he discovered a community of practice based on a value of charitable 'joint enterprise' (Wenger, 2000: 228). Finally, he expresses the affective, personal experience of satisfaction he achieves through these various encounters with community: the 'buzz' he gets from 'putting something back'.

Archie's fellow committee member Luke expresses a similar view, which constructs community in what Frazer (1999: 53-54) refers to as a 'conservative' model; as 'a hierarchically organized human group, integrated by obligations'. Luke naturalises this model of community, and hence his own position within the hierarchy, as an inherited moral value which he symbolises through carnival:

*It is in my DNA. It was from 1970, when I got introduced to carnival. We are doing all this work... And you think about it logically, why would anybody who is working very hard in business, hasn't got the time in the day, in many cases, to spare for your own wife and your own business and your own family, find time to go out and do things like carnival? You do it because you are raising money...And you always know that you are in a fortunate position yourself. You have had some great moves in life, good fortune. You have a lot of fun while you are doing it, don't get me wrong, we are not all going out there in halos. We are having a lovely time, but raising money. And there is nothing nicer. In my year, for argument's sake, I bought the hospital a portable defibrillator. Funding was difficult in those days.*

(Luke, Town Carnival Committee Member, Weymouth, 15.12.11)

Luke's expression of his reciprocal civic duty as an organiser of carnival is founded in his 'fortunate position', which has been earned through 'all this work'. Thus, he legitimises his economic and social power through philanthropic activity; redistributing wealth and resources to people less fortunate than himself while at the same time reinforcing his social position and generating a sense of personal achievement and moral value.

Committee member Charlie also locates his involvement within his awareness of the hierarchical, yet reciprocal relationship between business and community. However, he subordinates this within a primary view of carnival as an expression of communal fun:

*I continue to get involved because I enjoy it. A: At the back of your mind you know you are raising money for charities. B: you are providing entertainment for the crowds, for the people of the town. You are putting something back. That is how I look at it. I am putting something back into the town. I make a living from the town, indirectly. So it is putting something back, putting something into charity.*

(Charlie, Town Carnival Committee Member, Weymouth, 10.11.11)

Emma expresses a more pragmatic view which exposes the 'contract' of charity; the economic self-interest which is also served by acts of philanthropy:

*We moved to Spain and then came back here. And from the day I arrived I phoned Round Table and said: 'we have just opened a business, what can we do?' Because I feel that you should be involved, and you should put something back in. [It is part of the contract that you have with your customers] And with the town. To sit back and say: 'take, take, take, brilliant day, good takings?' I think it is wrong. I think it is a community event... I just felt that, yes, I should put something back in... I still think there are a lot of good people in Weymouth, who don't necessarily do anything for carnival, but still come along and support carnival and enjoy carnival. And I think that in the last couple of years it has shown that it is back to what it was and how actually the town people wanted it to be, part of their community as a highlight. And for businesses to look forward to making money.*

(Emma, Town Carnival Committee Member, Weymouth, 15.12.11)

The above comments establish a clear social and moral framework for these people's involvement in carnival activity: a value of reciprocal 'duty' founded on their sense of their relative entitlement and social position within a 'conservative' model (Frazer, 1999, 53-54).

Self-sacrifice, the positioning of one's own needs as subordinate to the needs of the wider 'community' emerged as a further recurring moral value within these ethnographies. This was particularly observable in non-professional, vernacular carnival settings where it was enacted through voluntary labour or the donation of practical resources. Self-sacrifice also emerges here as a practical tactic for admission to community, as a demonstration of one's commitment to its joint enterprise, and, ironically, as a source of personal status within a group, as the following personal fieldnotes reveal. I begin with a brief analysis of my own position as a researcher seeking to win trust and gain admission to carnival communities in order to participate in their shared activity:

By now I am competent at assembling the trailer. Demonstrating my willingness to work, technical skill, and my ability to follow Owen's lead is an important rite of passage towards joining this company, in parallel with serving 200 plates of fish and chips and clearing tables at the Seaton Carnival AGM. This feeling is confirmed when Owen says: 'You're good, Jon, all over it. You're one of the family.' Here, admittance to the community relies upon notions of equally-shared

labour; taking an active, but subordinate, role until one has proved oneself; valuing the practice of others even if it is in contrast to one's own practice.

(Fieldnote, BFTW Dorset at Lyme Regis Fossil Festival, 4.5.12)

The above fieldnote, from my early participation in the *Battle for the Winds* performances, reflects a wider pragmatic approach I encountered among carnivalists with regard to establishing the 'tolerance, reciprocity and trust' which Smith (MK, 2000) identifies as 'core values within the notion of community'. Smith cites Walzer (1997:11) in defining tolerance as 'an openness to others; curiosity; perhaps even respect, a willingness to listen and learn'. This is demonstrated in the above fieldnote by my attempt to 'follow Owen's lead' and my willingness to work at Seaton in a menial capacity. Further, my commitment to 'equally shared labour', to 'proving myself' and to 'valuing the practices of others' reflect Putnam's description (2000) of generalised reciprocity as an implicit contract based on self-sacrifice, where one implies that:

'I'll do this for you now, without expecting anything immediately in return, and perhaps without even knowing you, confident that down the road you or someone else will return the favour'. In the short run there is altruism, in the long run self-interest.

(Putnam, 2000, in Smith, MK, 2000)

In submitting myself to the group, personified here by Owen and the Seaton Committee, I am also displaying 'trust', described by Smith as 'the confident expectation that people, institutions and things will act in a consistent, honest and appropriate way' (Smith, MK 2000). It is this trust which allowed my membership of community to develop through iterative co-operation. My personal reward for these tactics of boundary interaction was Owen's grant of admission to the community of the *Battle for the Winds* company, when he said: 'You're one of the family'.

This community of trust may also be symbolised through the voluntary contributions made by local groups with regard to the staging of carnival itself. This is an act of reciprocity which carries with it the trust that their efforts will be rewarded with a share of the collected public contribution of money.

*We advertise for any charity that wants help, and they all know to write in... We then have all the helpers... the charities that helped us are guaranteed some money.*

(Arthur, Town Carnival Committee member, Weymouth, 28.7.11)

In Weymouth this trust was shaken in 2011 by a severe reduction in the amount of money distributed to local charities who had supported the event with their voluntary manpower.

As one carnival committee member put it:

*You think of carnival day. We don't run it ourselves. We run it with the help of little organisations of Boy Scouts, Girl Guides, Age Concern... We need them to be down there! We need them to be here selling our programmes, selling our draw tickets. They are the manpower in this town that allow us to put stalls out all over the place. And they do it secure in the knowledge that on carnival day we are going to raise money and we are going to write them out a cheque for £100 or £200. And to them that is a lot of money. Not a lot of money to us, but to them it is a lot of money. To their organisation. They do it for that reason. To be involved in carnival and to have a contribution out of the proceeds. If you allow that idea that if we only raise £50 it is still a success, that is the most dangerous statement to be allowed to have any credence at all.*

(Luke, Town Carnival Committee Member, Weymouth, 15.12.11)

Luke thus articulates the conditionality of self-sacrifice, trust and reciprocity which forms part of the producing community of carnival in Weymouth. A reduction in the economic benefits available to each contributing community of practice is seen to have a ripple effect in terms of their motivation to sacrifice their time and energy to support the event. Luke sees this as a potential threat to the trust that exists between the committee and its supporters and uses this trust as a rationale for the maintenance of fundraising structures which have been threatened by the rising costs of the 'entertainment function' of the carnival (Georgiou, 2012).

The above field data offers an understanding how self-sacrifice emerges as an experience of community, as a tactic for membership and as a source of personal status within these communities of carnival practice. In voluntary settings in particular, self-sacrifice in terms of voluntary labour was seen by many as a badge of 'community spirit', as the following data suggests:

*There are a lot of very committed people who have done this. Stella especially...Not only the hours, but she has put the stress in. I wouldn't want to be her in that respect! (laughs) It hasn't all happened in one place. People have done a lot at home and brought it in...I think the ethics is ... like I said before, it is community and socialising.*

(Martha, Float participant / maker, Westham Carnival Club, Weymouth, 10.8.12)

Matthew and Sophie talk about the 'hard work' of carnival in terms which blend a range of motivations and experiences. Their comments, and those of the wider committee, convey an altruistic notion of civic duty, community and local identity - expressed through the use of phrases such as: 'its gets in your blood' and 'community spirit' - alongside notions of self-sacrifice - ('can't say 'no'', 'someone's got to do it', 'doing your bit', or 'keeping tradition alive'). It is clear that they feel they are committed to this 'hard work' in the remedial interest of a town that they feel is declining in aspects of its communal life which they *themselves* experience as 'community' – namely, participation in the carnival itself.

(Fieldnote, Seaton Carnival Week, 28.8.12)

In the above field data, the 'community spirit' of carnival organisers is characterised within positive values of 'hard work', 'commitment', 'stress', 'altruism' and 'civic duty'. These values reflect the fact that, for many participants, the maintenance, organisation and successful enactment of the cultural performance of carnival is symbolised as a social contract between individuals and their wider society. Carnival practice is thus valued as a mutual responsibility to which people submit themselves in the interests of 'community and socialising' and as a preservation of wider value-symbols of community itself, such as togetherness, interaction between young and old, and cultural reciprocity, as Martha's comments below suggest:

*Where else do you get schoolkids doing artwork with [older people]? I am 51, I wouldn't like to say how old everyone else is, but... It is intergenerational. Very much so. You are still working towards a goal and it is still a community thing.... We have a lot of older people that might not get involved in certain things. Like Vic. He has come along and he has got experience in other things. And he may have said: 'Well you know, I can't do anything.' And we say: 'Yes you can because you have got this experience'. And interacting with youngsters, so they don't think: 'You are just an old fool.' [The kids have really good respect for his knowledge.]... And that is something that we don't have in our society these days. Respect for each other. Especially for the intergenerational thing. Adults are scared of children and children don't respect adults.*

(Martha, Float participant / maker, Westham Carnival Club, Weymouth, 10.8.12)

For many people, carnival is a significant point in the festive year, which also expresses genealogies of participation that extend over several generations and decades within family groups, social clubs and organisations. The following fieldnote suggests that these values coalesce around the idealised, imagined 'identity' of the community 'carnivalist', one which embodies a sense of social responsibility within the archetype of the 'licensed fool'.

Carnival is 'in the blood' and requires a certain type of personality. You have to be 'mad' or a 'nutter' to do it. You have to respect the law but 'bend the rules' on occasion. These carnivalists often describe themselves as 'showmen' and 'entertainers,' whose annual participation offers a reassuring sense of tradition and self-reliance for communities in the face of social and economic change.

(Fieldnote, Seaton Carnival Day, 1.9.12)

The above comments expose a further expression of social 'value' within carnival practice, which is the link between notions of philosophical communitarianism, cultural democracy, and a sense of carnival as a diverse, relational expression of individual participation and agency. As an exercise in communitarianism, carnival offers what Frazer calls:

... certain practices and actions - the common handling of the commons, governance by particular rules and principles... Communitarians tend to emphasize the temporal continuity of these 'communities' - one important thing that is shared is a past and a future, past generations and future descendants

(Frazer, 1999: 67)

This sentiment is particularly pertinent to the rationales for state-funded carnival arts programmes, which are founded on instrumental notions of social inclusion and cohesion and the development of a democratised shared culture. An important part of this sentiment, particularly in professional carnival arts contexts, is the manner in which people express individual values in accordance with the structural rationales for their communities of practice. Tony, for example, an arts professional working within the symbolic frameworks of the 2012 Cultural Olympiad, thus claims 'Olympic' values as the ethical foundation of his carnival arts practice:

*There is an Olympic set of values. And some of those are in there, like determination and courage and inspiration...they fit obviously.*

(Tony, Arts professional, 19.9.11)

Similarly remedial communitarian values of social inclusion, conviviality and shared resources inform Heidi's professional, participatory, carnival arts practice:

*And what I would say about the whole thing, as well, is about the environment of where we were working. Where people would come, there was a sofa and we would make sure there was coffee and biscuits and things. There were all different elements of the community coming together. And they were talking together and working together. And it was convivial. And the result of the whole project was conviviality and warmth. And I really feel that that has been injected into the community on a small scale and we have got that out of it.*

(Heidi, Arts professional, 1.10.11)

These instrumental approaches would appear to be in conflict with our earlier assertion that 'structures do not, in themselves, create meaning for people' (Hamilton, in Cohen, 1985: 8-9). The articulation of values such as these, within professional, participatory and 'community arts' practice, instead reflects the philosophical and political communitarianism which informed the development of state arts policy between 1997 and 2003 in particular. In this context, community is considered to be 'an entity: a group of people or an institution

or series of institutions' (Frazer, 1999: 67) through which certain values might be 'created' or 'learned' through the democratisation of culture, as Craig explains:

Through the arts we might argue to promote 'a view of community development based on tolerance and human dignity, on needs and not greed, on creative inter-dependence rather than destructive competition'.

(Craig, 1998: 5)

Interestingly, in vernacular carnival contexts this communitarian sentiment is expressed, rather, in terms of a social communion achieved through the simultaneity of people's culturally-democratic participation and individual creative agency, as the following comment from an East Devon carnivalist reveals:

*I think carnival is possibly the best event for any community. Just to get everybody out on the street to join in and work together... everyone is just in their own little group now. They are not really there for the bigger society, like, you know? I think carnival is very important in trying to get everybody together like that... The big thing about carnival is that anybody really can take part. Whether it is a little, tiny family group, or a local organisation, or a group of people who want to get together and put on something a bit bigger for carnival, like a more professional type entry...*

(Float participant, Seaton Carnival Day, 1.9.12)

While recognising the atomising tendency of modern society, and the role of communitarian cultural performance as an antidote to this decline in communal consciousness, this carnivalist also identifies the importance of a range of scales of participation in carnival. In so doing, he also underlines the culturally-democratic freedom of each individual or group to determine its own symbolic expression. Thus carnival offers a site for the symbolic construction of multiple communities at a range of scales, from the 'little, tiny family group' to the 'local organisation'. This participant also thus articulates notions of participation and agency, key features of the cultural democracy which allows carnival to emerge as a progressive symbolisation of community.

## 6:6 Conclusions:

This chapter has considered carnivalists' expressions of the concept of 'community' from a range of theoretical perspectives, perhaps the most important of which is Cohen's assertion that 'community' is a 'boundary-expressing symbol... held in common by its members; but [whose] meaning varies with its members' unique orientations to it' (Cohen, 1985: 15). As such, the 'symbolic construction of community' within carnival practice allows people to condense a range of individual values and meanings into a variety of commonly-understood 'containers' and 'practices', while at the same time maintaining an identity which is 'singular-plural' (Nancy, 1991), itself an important feature of cultural democracy.

This critique of carnival practice therefore suggests that community is a relational value, which while it may be expressed through shared activity or social structure, is not 'created' or 'produced' by any institutional, social or organisational instrument. Rather 'community' is experienced as the individual's orientation to 'boundaries of meaning' which arise from encounters with others (Cohen, 1985). As we will explore in the following chapter, this view has significant political implications with regard to the democratisation of culture within professionalised carnival arts practice and with regard to cultural democracy and agency.

Kelly (1984: 50) asserts, for example, that:

It is an act of oppression, therefore to attempt to 'work with' a community as part of a directive, professionalised role, since this will impose an externally manufactured shape and direction upon community which people will be invited to accept as their own, and encouraged to act upon as if it were their own.

(Kelly, 1984: 50)

In this chapter, we have also encountered the potential of carnival to offer a symbolisation of a progressive, radical sense of community. This symbolisation occurs insofar as the cultural performance of carnival simultaneously enacts a multiplicity of communities in public space. Carnival thus creates an agreed location for 'boundary interaction' between

these multiple symbolisms and communities of practice (Wenger, 2000), through which we might 'acquire culture' through our encounters with others (Cohen, 1985: 15).

Further, we have explored the notion that 'community' is itself carnivalesque. The carnivalesque nature of community arises from its multiplicity of meaning, its dynamic temporality and its symbolisation as 'webs of significance' (Geertz, 1975:5) which are continually in-process. Carnival may thus be seen to 'perform' community, just as 'communities' perform carnival. Carnival and community alike symbolise a diversity of meanings and moral values: among them reciprocity, tolerance, trust and self-sacrifice (Smith, MK, 2000).

### **Building the picture:**

In Chapter 4 I asserted that carnivalesque street procession is a location for an affective liminal performativity that destabilises notions of 'place' and the social relations from which it is constituted. I explored participants' affective experience of this destabilisation by way of their expressions of notions of carnivalesque 'energy' and performative transformation, of transgression, and of ritual and social drama. In Chapter 5, I explored how the destabilisation of place-meaning and identity during carnival, and the professional-vernacular tensions that arise from this, were displayed through explicit carnival float designs, costumes and other performance iconographies during the Olympic summer of 2012. Importantly, I suggested that the vital component to a culturally democratic witnessing of Massey's 'progressive' sense of place is a *simultaneity of transformation* within a shared temporal period that all participants recognise as 'carnival'.

In Chapter 6 I have linked Massey's concept of place as 'locus' and notion of the multiple 'symbolic construction' of place within carnival to Cohen's parallel theory with regard to 'community'. The ethnographies presented in this chapter expose the exclusive tendency

of 'communities of practice' and reveal how members self-identify within boundaries of aesthetics, politics, identity, place, value and affect. They show how community is imagined and signified through preferred symbolism, reflecting varying degrees of instrumentalism and individual participation and agency. They reveal how carnival can symbolise community both as an act of resistance through cultural performance and as a vehicle for change, as people seek to meet each other 'soul to soul' (Frazer, 1999: 75).

What emerges is the view that it is the *fact*, rather than the *form* of carnival practice which is vital to culture. Carnival's potential as a 'container' for progressive community, both as a re-enforcement and as a re-negotiation of identity and place, lies in its simultaneous enactment of a multiplicity of symbolic expressions of community and their associated practices. What is important is that, during carnival, public space is opened to allow participation by all-comers, and to permit their symbolisation of community as they see fit. Hence, the decentralisation of our preoccupation with the aesthetic form of carnival becomes an essential consideration with regard to 'carnival development', as we will explore in the next chapter.

Frazer offers a neat summary to this discussion when she distils the concept of community itself to the notion of 'sharing'. Frazer suggests that 'community', 'trust' and 'political power' are goods which are 'collectively produced' and 'can have the quality of augmenting, not diminishing, with use' (Frazer, 1999: 80).

This notion, that carnival is a ritual 'sharing'; an exchange of the diverse symbolism of 'community' itself, and one which 'augments [community] with use', is fundamental to many of the expressed rationales I have encountered for its cultural performance. It is as central to the notion that carnival may act to preserve and protect parts of a community against outside threats as it is to the notion that carnival is a progressive witnessing of community that opens a place up to change and to the world. It is a key understanding

within instrumental approaches which use carnival to 'build' social cohesion and to ideas that carnival promotes cultural diversity.



Fig 57 The Committee, Seaton Carnival, 2012

'Sharing' however, implies the equal distribution of power within cultural practice, an equality of social and cultural capital between actors, and a freedom of participation, aesthetic expression and organisational agency among participants. Such are the building blocks of a truly carnivalesque enactment of community and place through the cultural performance of carnival, and the foundations for the discussion of a vernacular approach to creativity which forms the project of the next chapter.

## **Chapter Seven: Towards a Vernacular Creativity:**

### **7:1: Research Questions:**

- **What are the distinctions between ‘vernacular’ and non-vernacular carnival creativities?**

In this chapter, I seek to discover the relationships that exist between vernacular and professionalised carnival and the attitudes that differently-positioned participants express with regard to these distinct practices. I seek to consider the effect that state-funded cultural performance has on the vernacular practice of carnival and vice versa, and the tension which exists between vernacular and non-vernacular practice in terms of power, cultural capital and access to public space.

The data presented in this chapter contributes to a growing alternative discourse of ‘vernacular creativity’ that seeks to ‘rethink the cultural economy’ and to challenge Floridian instrumentalities of neo-liberal cultural development (Daskalaki & Mould, 2013; Edensor *et al*, 2010; Edensor & Millington, 2009; Florida, 2002; Fox-Gotham, 2011; Gibson & Kong, 2005; Haylett, 2000; Landry, & Bianchini, 2007; Miles, 2005; Miles & Paddison, 2005; Shaw, 2013). Likewise, it informs the debate surrounding the tension between ‘productive’ carnival, which is embedded within the social and economic instrumentalities of the state or other governance organisations, and ‘non-productive’, or ‘vernacular’, carnival: which occurs as a cultural performance of place and identity outside such development processes, and may act as a challenge to normative agendas.

- **What is the history of cultural policy development with regard to carnival and procession in the UK?**

This chapter frames this debate, in part, through a wider critique of the decline in the identity politics of carnival and procession over time and its assimilation into policy-led approaches with regard to post-industrial economic regeneration, social policy and political and philosophical communitarianism. Crucially, the chapter exposes a tendency towards the subjugation of certain types of vernacular practice in professionalised carnival contexts.



Fig 58 *Cartwheelin'* at Lyme Regis, *Battle for the Winds*, 2012. Photo: Maisie Hill.

### **7:1:1 Vignette: Lyme Regis Fossil Festival. 3.5.12 to 7.5.12:**

The Lyme Regis *Fossil Festival* is a festivity designed to reinforce the town's newly-minted place identity as the 'birthplace of geology'. It features partnerships between Lyme Regis Development Trust, the Natural History Museum and the Jurassic Coast World Heritage Site, and coincides with the launch of the *2012 Earth Festival* and the beginning of the *Battle For The Winds* narrative which will launch the Olympic sailing at Weymouth in July... It is a beautiful, bright sunny day and the crowd is in festive mood. We jump aboard

our Arts Council-funded, five-seater, pedal powered carnival 'windgathering' vehicle and process along the sea front...

We play with passers-by. We get people to lick their fingers and hold them in the air to 'catch the wind for the Olympic sailing'; we ask children to blow up balloons, old ladies to puff into pipes... Eventually we turn and pedal back towards the Marine Theatre, where we are the entertainment for the official launch event of the *Fossil Festival*, the *2012 Earth Festival*, and *Battle For The Winds*. We struggle up the hill towards the venue, arriving at the medieval archway, beyond which are gathered the Press and the expectant assembled dignitaries. We enter the archway in full vocal pomposity, only for our vehicle to become jammed under its low ceiling. It is a moment of civic farce. After what seems an age of comic indecision, we struggle out backwards into the road, our triumphant entrance scuppered by this unexpected height restriction...

At midday we are called to a meeting in the Guildhall with the other performers who are scheduled to participate in the 'Emergence of Doldrum', an afternoon procession and beach show which will launch *Battle for the Winds*. We have half an hour for this briefing, the budget does not allow for more detailed rehearsal. In the end, the Emergence performance feels under-rehearsed and last-minute... The performance is outdoor pantomime, with moments in which lines are forgotten and the show seems rough at the edges. The band, independently powerful in procession, doesn't quite know when to play to support the dramatic action...

Our contribution is entirely improvisational, a public work-in-progress. The work is un-finished, and yet, by virtue of its place in the state-funded project of the Cultural Olympiad it has been afforded the status of art, within an imperative which combines performativities of regeneration, geology, history, civic participation, national celebration and social cohesion as part of the 2012 Olympics.

## **7:2 Fieldnote, Westham Community Carnival Club, 14.8.12:**

On Stella's instruction, we move a few boxes up into the attic and then go downstairs to the main community hall, where a space the size of the lorry has been marked on the floor. Mark tells me it measures 40ft by 10ft. The props have been arranged inside the outline of the trailer. There are leaves and branches made from recycled carrier bags; hummingbirds from plastic bottles; flowers, rocks, a waterfall, a lion, and floral pebbles all made from re-used materials: bubble wrap, bin bags, tape and papier mache. There are finely crafted flowers made from foam, and huge, Rio-style head-dresses stacked against the wall. Assembled like this it is easy to see why Westham's creativity earned it first prize in the carnival last year. The level of creativity is high, each person offering their individual ideas to the piece as a whole, with other props still being finished in front-rooms around the neighbourhood. This model of organisational practice is a harnessing of vernacular creativity which also reflects the notion of community cohesion through arts practice, with an old fashioned cultural democracy at its centre.



Fig 59 Making session at Westham Community Carnival Club, 2012.

### 7:3 Theoretical frameworks:

As the above fieldnotes reveal, the Cultural Olympiad of 2012 offered a unique context in which I was able to observe and compare the vernacular practices of town carnivals at Weymouth and Seaton alongside my participation in the state-funded street carnival performance of *Battle for the Winds* which opened the Olympic sailing events at Weymouth. The project of this chapter is to reflect upon the recurrent distinctions I encountered in these ethnographies between notions of the ‘professional’ and ‘non-professional’ carnivalist; between ‘art’ and ‘non-art’, and between ‘vernacular’ and ‘non-vernacular’ carnival creativities.

These ethnographies suggest that the divergent practices of professionalised and vernacular street carnival in the fieldwork area constitute mutually-exclusive modes of cultural production. They highlight the Bakhtinian paradox which exists within carnival; the contest between the ‘official feast’ and ‘vernacular’ carnival expression with regard to the

performative, symbolic representation of place, community and festive identity. They also highlight the tension which exists between vernacular and non-vernacular practice in terms of power, cultural capital and access to public space, one which suggests a need for the 'rebalancing' of the cultural and creative economy.

In the first substantive section of this chapter I consider how culture-led processes of creative economy and place-regeneration have become critical influences within institutional aspirations for carnival, and within place-based cultural strategies of public engagement. Here, I consider academic and policy debates regarding the creative and cultural economies of arts-development and public engagement through cultural performance. Importantly, my analysis supports a growing alternative discourse of 'vernacular creativity' that seeks to 'rethink the cultural economy' in the interests of cultural democracy, as Edensor *et al* suggest:

The challenge for cultural policy beyond an instrumental recuperation of 'art' as an economic resource must be to develop a more reflective and inclusive position regarding the value of everyday or more vernacular forms of creativity, for as Gibson and Kong [2005: 544] insist, for many, 'participation in cultural activities is initially driven not by career development motivations, but by a personal desire to engage with the affective, emotive, cathartic dimensions of creative pursuits.'

(Edensor *et al*, 2010: 14)

In tune with this alternative discourse of 'vernacular creativity', I seek here also to consider the effects that the hegemony of state-funded cultural performance has on vernacular practices of carnival. These are the carnivalesque expressions of 'everyday, popular culture' which are at odds with the instrumentalities of neo-liberal cultural development and which do not share its preferred aesthetics or structures of participation. I do so to add my own voice to those who warn about the diminishing public space which is now available to people for spontaneous, 'non-productive' festivity in the context of globalised late capitalism (Edensor *et al*, 2010: 11).

In the next section of the chapter, I draw on data gathered during my fieldwork which illuminates how these instrumentalities are experienced and enacted within the professionalised 'artist-led' practice of carnival. My interviews with arts professionals serve here to unpack the discourse of creative economy in the context of carnival, and to show how arts professionals in the fieldwork area tended to construct a discourse of cultural power which centred on hierarchical notions of 'art'. Analysis of these interviews suggests that, in so doing, arts professionals also tended to subjugate vernacular carnival within the lesser notion of 'creativity' and via a denigration of its use of an aesthetic which is drawn from popular culture. Further, these interviews suggest that the aesthetics, identity politics and progressive ethics of Caribbean carnival and processional alternative theatre practice have been assimilated into a set of preferred, instrumental carnival vocabularies which are promoted through 'arts development' structures. In this section I contend that these vocabularies now serve as a normative 'democratisation of culture' which is enacted through arts-development or public engagement processes.

In the next section of the chapter, I turn, by way of contrast, to ethnographies of my participant observation at Seaton Town Carnival and within the Westham Community Carnival Club which participates in Weymouth Town Carnival. I do so in order to explore the aesthetics and participatory structures of vernacular carnival practice and to offer a hearing for the marginalised voices of vernacular carnivalists. Importantly, within these participatory ethnographies of carnival practice, we encounter vernacular carnival's progressive function as a culturally-democratic process, one which permits, includes and imagines diverse forms of social organisation. We also observe the primacy of qualitative outcomes of conviviality and cultural agency in these contexts and encounter participants' experiences with regard to the subjugation of their practice. These ethnographies thus serve to challenge the subjugation of vernacular carnival (its aesthetics in particular) by arts professionals. They also permit us to present vernacular practice as a wider challenge

to the democratisation of culture and the notion of carnival 'art' itself. Further, they allow us to draw comparisons between vernacular carnival practice and the political ethics of inclusive, culturally-democratic community arts practices from the 1970s and 1980s. These comparisons will later permit us to re-imagine progressive structures for the maintenance of 'vernacular' carnival practice alongside the instrumentalities of arts-development and public engagement through cultural performance.

### **7:3:1 Vernacular Creativity and the Creative Economy:**

The notion of 'vernacular creativity' is central to my attempt to analyse these carnival ethnographies with reference to academic and policy debates surrounding the contested geographies of the 'creative economy'.<sup>81</sup> The concept of vernacular creativity similarly informs any distinction we might make here between 'official' and 'un-official' festivity. Likewise, it informs distinctions between 'productive' carnival, which is embedded within the social and economic instrumentalities of the state or other governance organisations, and 'non-productive', or 'vernacular', carnival: which occurs as a cultural performance of place and identity outside such development processes (Edensor *et al*, 2010: 11).

Scholars such as Edensor *et al* (2010), and Edensor & Millington (2009) present 'vernacular creativity' as a subjugated element within the academic discourse of the creative economy. The nature of vernacular creativity in this context might also be understood through an assertion of its juxtaposition to established discourses of 'cultural economy'; to the 'creative classes' and the 'creative industries' (Landry and Bianchini, 1995; Landry, 2000; Florida, 2002).

---

<sup>81</sup> (Daskalaki & Mould, 2013; Edensor *et al*, 2010; Edensor & Millington, 2009; Florida, 2002; Fox-Gotham, 2011; Gibson & Kong, 2005; Haylett, 2000; Landry, & Bianchini, 2007; Miles, 2005; Miles & Paddison, 2005; Shaw, 2013)

In my view, the key distinctions between 'vernacular' and 'non-vernacular' carnival creativities lie in their differing degrees of cultural agency for participants; in their aesthetic vocabularies and relative range in terms of cultural capital, and in the relative importance each affords to qualitative or quantitative outcomes. For the purposes of this thesis, I also seek to associate vernacular creativity with Kelly's notion of 'cultural democracy' (Kelly 1984); framing it as a diverse, carnivalesque expression of cultural agency which arises outside 'official' systems of culture and their participatory structures. These 'official' systems and structures are represented in this thesis by state-funded arts-development or carnival-development processes. By contrast, I suggest, these state-funded processes represent the 'democratisation of culture' (Kelly, 1984). As such, they assume a cultural and aesthetic authority and tend to situate themselves within the flattening, 'improving' neo-liberal agenda of global multiculturalism, as part of a cultural process of class-making. Similarly, Gibson and Kong cite Pratt (1997b; 4-5) in asserting that the instrumental function of government support for art and culture as a tool of creative economy leads to a distinction between 'high' and 'low' culture, wherein only the former is 'deemed appropriate for subsidy' (Gibson & Kong, 2005: 555).

By contrast, the notion of 'vernacular creativity' emerges from the alternative discourses of creative and cultural economy as a symbolic construction which is constituted freely by people using a 'bricolage' of popular aesthetics. By this account, vernacular creativity produces a culturally-democratic performativity, rather than a transcendent democratisation of preferred 'culture'. Edensor *et al* (2010: 10) frame this performativity as a means by which 'ordinary people' perform their own places as 'a site of assurance, resistance, affect and potentialities'. For these scholars, vernacular creativities are 'part of a range of mundane, intensely social practices grounded in a variety of everyday practices and places' (*ibid*).

As we turn to the ethnographies which have informed this analysis, a further distinction which emerges between vernacular ('non-productive') and non-vernacular ('productive') creativities lies in the relative importance each affords to qualitative and quantitative outcomes. Edensor *et al* (2010: 9) describe the 'non-productive', qualitative outcomes of vernacular creativity in terms of the 'social and sociable'. They cite Willis (1993) to locate vernacular creativity within a 'grounded aesthetics' which is 'embedded in sensation, fun, desire and festivity rather than synonymous with the 'cerebral, abstract or sublimated quality of beauty' (2010:10). Further, these scholars define non-productive creativity as distinct from economic instrumentality, reflecting 'affectual and sensual qualities' which produce 'community cohesion, neighbourhood identity, self-worth, sociality, conviviality or the production of economies of generosity' (Edensor *et al*, 2010:11). These scholars offer a further, useful, parallel critique from their study of Christmas light displays when they state that:

While tastemakers might favour certain colours, shapes and proportions, displays privilege conviviality, neighbourliness and festive pleasure... informants emphasize that this is a time when shared doxic values of celebration, giving and friendliness should be prioritized:

(Edensor & Millington, 2009: 114)

Similarly, Gibson *et al* (2010) develop the notion of the qualitative non-productivity of vernacular creativity as a challenge to Floridian notions of cultural economy, locating it in moments where:

[Communities] come together for fun or to celebrate a shared passion, and subsequently [marshal] often limited resources within their towns and villages in order to make a festival happen...creativity through ingenuity and action, rather than in artistic output, per se.

(Gibson, *et al*, 2010:97)

These scholars establish a view of vernacular creativity which reflects the carnivalesque nature of cultural democracy and the individual creative agency of participants (Gibson, *et al*, 2010:100-101). While the vernacular creativity of town carnivals does reflect economic

instrumentalities with regard to local charitable fundraising and business advertising, a key distinction here between 'productive' and 'non-productive' creativities lies in the degree of identification of their aesthetic and cultural forms as 'art' and, therefore, as 'product'. This identification may lie within the branding of a carnival event as a professionalised 'art-object' within a wider economic process of place-making, for example, as was the case with *Battle for the Winds* at Weymouth.

Alternatively, as these ethnographies suggest, participants within vernacular creativities do not generally identify their creativity as 'art', regardless of its aesthetic forms or values, nor are they afforded this status by the gatekeepers of the cultural economy. Markusen (2010: 185) likewise identifies vernacular creativity within a range of activities which are 'distinguished by their expression of community values and their inclusion of many participants' and which offer a challenge to 'the individualised and professionalised creation or reproduction of art or culture by experts detached from a community frame of reference'.

The 'authority of expertise' attributed to the artist working in-community derives in part from the policy frameworks which have informed the development of publicly-funded participatory arts practice as a remedial function in society. The 2001 Jermyn Report: *The Arts and Social Exclusion* established policy rationales for the instrumental use of arts practice in community settings as a reflection of the political communitarianism of New Labour. The report drew on a Social Exclusion Unit definition of social exclusion as 'exclusion from social relations' (Jermyn, 2001: 4) and as:

a shorthand term for what can happen when people or areas suffer from a combination of linked problems such as unemployment, poor skills, low incomes, poor housing, high crime environments, bad health and family breakdown.

(Cabinet Office, 2000, in Jermyn, 2001: 2).

These definitions have had significant implications with regard to professional attitudes to community creativity within state-funded, participatory carnival arts practice. In this context, they serve to establish hierarchies between different types of community, their cultural, economic and social practices and the degree to which individuals are deemed to be 'creative' or 'uncreative', 'in-place' or 'out-of-place' with regard to normative, communitarian ideas surrounding social and cultural participation:

As Haylett (2003) suggests, a state of being uncreative is redefined as a problem for the state to deal with. Creativity in this context becomes a discursive weapon to further problematise non-middle class values and peoples.

(Edensor *et al*, 2010: 7)

Haylett offers an example of an analogous cultural process at work within white, working-class communities in the UK in particular, as a result of the policies of 'social inclusion' introduced by New Labour in the late 1990s (Haylett, 2000). Within the context of welfare reform and its associated cultural 're-education' of the post-industrial working class, Haylett identifies a distinct cultural process of 'identity (re)construction' towards a democratised culture and its preferred aesthetics, a process which begins with the subjugation of existing, vernacular cultural practices by way of negative public critique. Her critique of this process suggests an attempt to dissipate 'vernacular' cultural identities within the white working class as part of the 'production of the modern social'. For Haylett, the end product of this process of acculturation is 'envisaged as [the construction of] modern subjects for a modern nation', and 'is meant to fit the cultural economy of late capitalism and leave behind its postwar counterpart' (Haylett, 2000:354). Haylett's critique resonates with the social inclusion agendas of arts development work in carnival which may tend to subjugate 'non-arts' cultural performance practices, as the following section of this chapter seeks to explore.

#### 7:4 The Art and Non-Art of Carnival: 'creativity' and 'acceptable' aesthetics:

Throughout my research, I encountered clear value distinctions between notions of 'art' and 'creativity' on the part of arts professionals and vernacular carnivalists alike. In many cases, the term 'art' in carnival contexts was reserved for processional elements (in this case carnival floats, performances and costumes) which were produced by, or under the supervision of, recognised professional artists. These artists, and their supporting professional administrators, represent the 'creative class' of carnival; mostly freelancers, operating within state-funded networks of cultural and arts development and their associated economic and social instrumentalities (Florida, 2002). By contrast, 'creativity' emerges from these interviews as a subordinate term, reserved for non-professional contexts, as the following comment suggests:

*I think everything is pretty creative. I think that all of those carnivals up and down the coast are massively creative... But that is not the funding model of the arts.*

(Holly, Arts professional, 14.11.11)

In contrast to the popular aesthetics which characterises vernacular town carnival in the south west UK, arts professionals tended to identify the 'art elements' of carnival as those which were produced by paid, professional artists working 'in community'. These 'art' elements were usually cohered around a particular unifying theme or narrative for a procession, as reflected in the 'Jurassic Coast' and maritime themes of *Moving Tides*, or the themes of regional and sub-regional history and identity presented within the *Battle for the Winds* Olympic sailing narrative, for example. The effect of this identification was to create a situation in which carnival itself was considered an art form, but only some of those who practice it were considered (or considered themselves) to be artists.

The following interview comments suggest the degree to which arts professionals tended to exclude vernacular carnivalists from the artist identity. Henry, a local authority arts officer, makes a clear distinction between the art-form of carnival and the communities of 'non artists' who practice it, for example:

*You are always conscious that carnival is a world sitting there which is about the arts, technically, and in reality, but has always sat outside... ....Well it has certainly sat outside my brief as an arts development officer... And then you begin to think that actually this is an art form isn't it? Why is it that it seems to sit in its own little world?... It strikes me that the world of carnival as it exists is driven by people who would not necessarily see themselves as arts people.*

(Henry, Arts professional, 27.9.11)

Similarly, Laura's comment below makes a clear value distinction between themed, professional 'arts' practice in carnival, which she identifies as 'rehearsed', 'spectacular', 'surprising', 'ironic' and 'anarchic', and vernacular carnival practice, which is 'safe' and lacks 'nuance'. She also hints at the competition for cultural capital that exists between professional and 'traditional' vernacular carnival practice:

*There is a kind of formula with British traditional carnivals... quite clear parameters. You either do a tableau, or you do something slightly comedic, where you maybe... black up... Or you do something which doesn't ...which hasn't any nuance... Whether it is pirate theme, or an exotic island setting... There is no irony in it... There is no doubt about it... There is nothing that makes you wonder or feel surprised...*

*Whereas the creativity within an alternative approach, I think, is to do with imagination and taking this out of what you expect it to be, into something else... Audiences need to make sense of something... A theme, rather than a narrative. Visually it has to be very big and bright... One of the things about traditional carnival is that they would regard that they have got really good set-builders and their costumes are really good... So I think it has to match that. Basically if it is an alternative there has got to be something different about it, which has got to do with the colour, the irony, the visual spectacle, the hint of anarchy or 'woah, what is going to happen here?' ... You need to feel that this is really... rehearsed...know it is good.*

(Laura, Arts professional, 18.10.11)

In these interviews, arts professionals thus tended to locate carnival 'art' exclusively within professional production frameworks. These frameworks themselves reflected the work of specific local networks of producing artists working 'in-community', and their supporting arts-funding and arts-development organisations. The result is a professionalised 'community of practice' (Wenger, 2000) which exercises influence over the preferred aesthetics of carnival production. Such networks enjoy a status which Kelly would refer to, from a Marxist perspective, as a 'radical monopoly', defined as:

The convergence of professional self-interest... and the resulting centralisation of production and decision-making [in which] one industrial production process exercises an exclusive control over the satisfaction of a pressing need, and excludes non-industrial activities from competition.

(Kelly, 1984: 74)

Reflecting this exclusion, vernacular carnival practices were often rendered by arts professionals using the devaluing term 'creativity'. This term served as a container for negative aesthetic value judgements and the view that notions of technical achievement were a primary concern over 'artistic inspiration' in vernacular carnival contexts, as the following comments suggest:

*I think the motivating force for the engagement of, particularly the blokes, in carnival is around: 'let's do something technically demanding'...Technically the floats in Somerset are phenomenal, absolutely phenomenal... I would never call those people un-creative. Unless you were talking about the ideas behind it... It seems to me that, yes some of the ideas are... I suppose what one would call...Not un-creative but un-original... the subject matter might be totally uninspiring. I saw a depiction of Robin Hood on a vast float which was stunning ...It was a tableau, nobody was moving...The technical craftsmanship which had gone into building the set, the lights was beyond compare. It was stunning. But it was Robin Hood!*

(Henry, Arts professional, 27.9.11)

Henry's comment above is typical of a discourse through which 'creativity' emerges from these interviews as a subjugated symbolic construction, one which particularly reflects the vernacular use of common tropes and popular aesthetics in carnival. This popular cultural

vocabulary was largely described in negative terms by arts professionals as being ‘brash’, ‘tacky’ or too derivative of commercial culture and TV, and as distinct from preferred, democratised forms of carnival ‘art’, such as Caribbean, ‘European’ or alternative theatre practices, for example.<sup>82</sup>

The reservation of the term ‘creativity’ for vernacular practice therefore also reflected an aesthetic value judgement. Further, it framed the professional creative class, by contrast, as cultural gatekeepers within what Edensor *et al* refer to as ‘an explicit, reconfigured version of the old hierarchy between ‘high’ and ‘low’ cultures’ (2010: 7), as Jessica’s comment below reveals:

*Well you can say it's not... that it's not artistic and it's not creative, but actually I think that there is a danger there. Actually that is a bit unfair because there is a creative element to it and the individuals who create things: floats or, or ... sometimes they are walking, do create something, they, you know, whether they create dance for majorettes or whether they, you know, interpret the X Factor on the back of a float, that's creative in a sense. But it is difficult to say why that is creative but we don't like it, if you like, in a rather kind of arty way, and why something else is better.*

(Jessica, Arts professional, 27.10.10)

Jessica’s comment, and Laura’s comments above, reflects a class-making tendency by which vernacular carnival practice is subjugated as ‘bad taste’ (Edensor & Millington, 2009: 109). Laura expresses a personal tension with regard to this uneven distribution of cultural capital, when she says:

*We are deciding. We make all the decisions. I do juggle... I battle with this thing within myself sometimes... It is about cultural capital. We can decide. And clearly you can't trust the bloody government, so we have got even more responsibility now. That thing of telling people that 'this is better' or what is good for them. But it is about being aware, actually, about the potential of the power that we wield.*

(Laura, Arts professional, 18.10.11)

---

<sup>82</sup> Several arts professionals distinguished between ‘English’ carnivals and more ‘artistic’, ‘European’ forms, by which they meant those found on the European mainland, particularly in Germany and in southern France, Italy and Spain.

Ruby's further comment below reinforces the idea of a distinction between carnivalesque cultural democracy and the official democratisation of preferred culture in this regard:

*Because we are funded by the Arts Council, I suppose we have to ensure that we are meeting their idea of art... It is about quality and how do you assess quality, and what we see as quality.*

(Ruby, Arts professional, 27.10.10)

Graded references to 'creativity' in vernacular contexts also served as terms used by arts professionals to describe 'local', community-centred structures of carnival participation or organisation, as opposed to the aspirant national and international geographies of professional, agency-led approaches. One particular state-funded micro-bursary scheme for carnival development in the fieldwork area was specifically designed to encourage 'artists and individuals' to view professionalised carnival and outdoor arts practice elsewhere in the UK and abroad in order to inform their subsequent 'locality-focused work' related to the Jurassic Coast World Heritage Site.<sup>83</sup>

The conditions of this micro-bursary located the source of this creative improvement firmly outside East Devon and Dorset, as 'skills not readily available in the sub-region'. Further, it located such expertise exclusively within professional structures of state-funded, professional arts process which were accredited 'by a recognised body - for example the Arts Council, ISAN, etc.' Thus, the micro-bursary process tended to subjugate non-professional, vernacular practices in the fieldwork area. At the same time, paradoxically, it served to import national and international practice as an aesthetic framework for the articulation of artistic responses to the 'local' landscape of the East Devon and Dorset 'Jurassic Coast' World Heritage Site.

Thus, we may see how vernacular practice can be subjugated as part of a policy-led cultural exercise in national and international place-making. The implication, I would assert, is that established vernacular carnival practice has no part to play in this

---

83 *A New Perspective – Micro Bursaries for artists and Communities*. Activate Performing Arts, 2010.

internationalised 'local' identity. 'Creativity' as a term was often used to effect the exclusion of 'local', vernacular town carnival practices and aesthetic vocabularies from the status of 'art' which would afford them the privilege of state support.

Employment of the term 'creativity' was further derived from a functional distinction made by arts professionals between 'art' and 'entertainment' within carnival practice. Michael's comment below articulates the boundaries between these imagined communities of carnival practice: the artist community that 'makes you think' and the non-artist carnivalists who simply 'entertain':

*I think you have to create some kind of framework for understanding what the arts experience is. I think from an Arts Council perspective we are about supporting arts experiences. We are not as an organisation fundamentally going to be about supporting participatory experiences... And that then means that there are elements of some kinds of carnival that are a close fit with what we would see as meeting the goals and priorities in achieving great art, and some that aren't... Artistic quality is not the point of some of those projects and events. They are entertainments.... You could arrive in Weymouth, as I did last summer, look at the carnival and go: 'this is of really poor quality.' It is not an arts experience, in the sense that good arts experiences should tell you something about the place, or the world, or the way you look at it, and make some sort of change in that...*

(Michael, Arts professional, 1.11.11)

These interviews suggest a value judgement among participants which separates the 'creativity' of vernacular carnival from the 'art' of professionalised carnival development and performance practice. The issue of professionalism itself thus becomes an important feature with regard to the notion of cultural capital within instrumentalities of carnival 'development' and with regard to the influence of the 'creative class' on vernacular carnival practice, one which I now seek to analyse within the ethnographic data.

*I am really conscious that I am doing this to others, I am making this thing happen... Whether they like it or not, almost. Whether they want it or not... I think they probably think we are a bunch of, you know, arty farties who think we are above them. I think some people might feel that we think that we are superior ... So the challenge for us as professionals is for people to see the*

*value in the work that has been done, on the basis that we all benefit. And that you wouldn't want just anybody fixing your car would you? Any old cowboy?*

(Laura, Arts professional, 18.10.11)

Laura's comment above, for example, expresses a common ethical anxiety among arts professionals with regard to their cultural power and the 'top-down' structures which are inherent to the democratisation of culture. However, she also reinforces the hierarchical notion of the value and the authority of the professional artist with regard to cultural expertise, suggesting that the professional artist is not just 'any old cowboy'. The implication of her comment is that vernacular practice lacks equivalent value and is located within a geography of deficiency. In the following fieldnote extract, arts worker Lily expresses a set of post-Jermyn instrumental rationales which are founded on similar perceptions of difference and socio-cultural exclusion:

*We have this connection with doing carnival which really reflects life in [our town] in some way. Earlier, people were talking about connecting with landscape and place. And the [ ] project is all about connecting with the people ... building bridges between different communities ... and celebrating the town, its past, its present and its future... I am really interested in the community and community building and the arts and sustainability... I also joined the carnival committee, the town carnival committee. So I was sort of coming from the sense of joining something that for me was perhaps not my community initially. I am much more a part of the creative community. And there is this sort of division, there has been certainly between these two communities. And I was interested in finding ways that we could connect. And so what has happened is that we have created a processional entry that has become a part of, and integrated into, [our town] Carnival. And we are working together in a kind of partnership, really, which has been really successful.*

(Lily, Arts professional, 1.10.11)

Lily sets a clear distinction between her self-identification as a professional artist within the 'creative community' and her identification of the carnival committee, which was 'not her community'. Lily further locates carnival practice within a wider structure of geographical 'place' and within a celebratory process of place-making which reflects the professionalised policy preoccupations of state-funded processional performance and

carnival. This process includes policy areas such as heritage and development: the town's 'past, present and future'. Her comments reflect the communitarian political project which informs her professional position, expressed through her use of terms such as 'integrated' and 'partnership.' This usage reflects professionalised notions of carnival arts as a social 'process', within policies that facilitate the role of the cultural performance of carnival as a feature of regenerative place-making.

Kelly (1984:52) is critical of such attitudes. For Kelly, the professional assumption of a 'lack' of cultural practice in non-professional contexts assumes vernacular deficiency. Thus, it hinders 'the possibility of participating in groups which are confident and competent, and whose competence and confidence are the starting points for action' (*ibid*). This inherent contradiction: this tension between cultural democracy and the democratisation of culture and their distinct communities of cultural and aesthetic practice, was recognised by arts professionals in the course of my research in a variety of ways, as the following comments suggest.

Joe, for example, articulates the notion of preferred aesthetics and characterises town carnivals within a community that is resistant to change:

*[Town carnival committees say]: 'we are this, we do this'. Whereas working, perhaps, with other artists or with other community groups you can say: 'yes, you do do that, but it would be nice to do it in this way, maybe in a slightly different way.'*

(Joe, Arts professional, BFTW,15.7.11)

Faith envies the community engagement of vernacular town carnival, criticises its aesthetics and articulates the boundaries of practice which exist between professional carnival artists and non-professional carnivalists. At the same time, she recognises that these boundaries require sensitive negotiation:

*If you look at some of the carnivals that happen in the towns across Dorset, the huge community engagement and the huge amount of resource that is put into that, [is something which] a lot of the arts organisations could learn from...But I am not sure about the heritage of some of that work anymore. It has become a little formulaic and I think more time could be spent in saying: 'let's refresh this'... They have a kind of set way of working, to varied degrees of success in terms of engagement of certain community members, I would say... But what you are not necessarily getting in there is a creative thread. There is no narrative. And that cohesion...The last thing we want to do is to go into a community and tell them how to run their carnival. I think if we are going to engage with carnival members it is about saying: 'Did you know that there are other things out there? Did you know that you could do this or you could do that?... We know that people are very... Around their carnivals people are very... It is something they have invested in for a very long time so one has to be very, very mindful of that and sensitive to that.*

(Faith, Arts professional, 27.9.11)

Nevertheless, the professional project of carnival persists in the idea that non-professional practice is somehow lacking the 'right kind of creativity'. Henry distinguishes between community custom and community 'aspiration', and articulates a boundary which subjugates vernacular 'English' carnival practice as conservative and lacking the exotic spirituality of the Brazilian carnival, for example:

*From my point of view it is about the aspiration beyond community or within community, if you like... Brazilian carnival, traditionally, seems to be about aspiration... there is a spiritual element to Brazilian carnival that is deeper than the depiction of scenes... That may be exposing a fault line in English culture... And we have a problem I think. Well, we have a challenge... It is about that sense of wanting your community to continue. And what is it that symbolises that? It strikes me that here is a qualitative difference between [just] wanting something to continue and having an aspiration.*

(Henry, Arts professional, 27.9.11)

Michael seeks to recognise the relative value of professional, artist-led carnival forms and non-professional carnival, while at the same time maintaining a clear boundary between their communities of cultural practice. His distinction also reflects discomfort at the idea that professionalised 'artistic' practice might be forced on people in any way:

*It is almost easier to say what [town carnivals] are not participating in, what they are not going for. What they are not going for is an arts experience. What they are going for is to be a significant part of the community on a day, at a moment, that changes the nature of that community experience and the experience of living in that community... From where I sit I would say that there is no sense of that not having some sort of value, it is just a different set of values.... [And] I would definitely recognise an issue with trying to impose, or to support artistic practice being parachuted into any kind of community participation or experience.*

(Michael, Arts professional, 1.11.11)

Eve locates herself firmly within a professional 'arts' community that is distinct from its wider community, while at the same time recognising her need to demonstrate membership within the civic life of that community as a tactic for professional survival. She recognises the importance of long-term engagement in civic life as a demonstration of local identity, and frames her professional participation within notions of competition, in which she recognises her preferred, professional status in terms of cultural and artistic capital:

*We just put it in [the carnival] because we thought: 'well let's support the carnival; it will be great fun to do; it is not going to cost anything, it will profile-raise for us.' We do need to link to our community very strongly... Absolutely, and say: 'look at our good work'... But of course, of course, there are people who have been in that carnival for years and who don't want some theatre company coming along and winning the £50 prize for the best walking entry from them. And is that fair? You know? We are a professional company, of course it is a beautifully built thing. We haven't made it out of tissue paper the night before, or whatever. So is that fair? For us to compete with them? And I don't know if it is. Because it is a competition.*

(Eve, Arts professional, 23.9.11)

These interviews also suggest that the value distinctions made between professional and non-professional carnival practice reflect the degree to which the outcomes of professional arts instrumentalities 'tend to be in the form of cultural economies - new areas of consumption trading on cultural identities - rather than a regeneration of local cultures' (Miles, 2005: 895-6). Further, as Evans suggests, the pressure for 'difference', 'change'

and 'development' which accompanies such policy-driven, professional arts practice can result in situations in which 'the creative class (and [the] underlying innovation-knowledge-science-city mantra) is crowding out the community ([the] working or ordinary, implicitly 'non-creative') class' (Evans, 2010:20).

Based on the evidence of these interviews it is my assertion that the policy structures which inform professional carnival arts development result in the creation of a preferred carnival aesthetic which fits a largely middle class, multicultural symbolic framework. The public space available to the popular aesthetics of 'non-productive' vernacular carnival, therefore, comes under pressure, by virtue of its 'lack of fit' with the associated aesthetics of state-funded policy. These interviews suggest that, in many ways, the aesthetics of carnivalesque cultural practice have become a battleground for the debate surrounding professionalised art and vernacular creativity in public space.

Culture Secretary Maria Miller's recent comments to arts executives suggest that the publicly-funded arts sector will increasingly be working in the service of notions of cultural and creative economy, within normative structures which, as Gibson and Kong suggest, ignore 'the extent to which culture is a mishmash of contradictory forces and shifting battle lines between dominant and marginalized voices' (Gibson & Kong, 2005: 552):

We must hammer home the value of culture to our economy. When times are tough and money is tight, our focus must be on culture's economic impact... Culture is perhaps the most powerful and compelling product we have available to us... British culture and creativity are now more in demand than ever before... The world clearly thinks this is a commodity worth buying into... The potential for culture to play a central role in driving growth goes far beyond its direct economic impact. I would argue that culture should be seen as the standard bearer for our efforts to engage in cultural diplomacy, to develop soft power, and to compete, as a nation, in both trade and investment.

(Miller, 2013)

This focus on the economic and political instrumentalities of state-funded cultural performance, of which carnival proved a significant strand during the 2012 Cultural Olympiad, has implications for the future sustainability of vernacular carnival practice.

Ironically, it also ignores the value of vernacular carnival as a site for progressive cultural democracy and individual artistic practice, qualities which form the social rationales of much of the current professionalised, state-funded carnival practice in the UK. It is to these qualities that we turn our attention in the following section of this chapter.

### 7:5 The vernacular (non?) art of carnival:



Fig 60 *Jungle Flower*, Westham Community Carnival Club, 2012.

My interviews with arts professionals expose the value distinctions that are made between professionalised ‘art’ and vernacular ‘creativity’ in carnival settings. As we now turn to consider ethnographies of vernacular carnival, we encounter the degree to which they reveal the structures of cultural democracy and the progressive artistic agency that

vernacular carnival affords to participants, an understanding that might prompt us to rethink notions of carnival 'art' and 'non-art'.

These ethnographies also suggest the degree to which vernacular carnivalists have internalised their cultural subjugation and may act to contest it through their own carnival practice, outside the publicly-funded structures of cultural development. Comments from Carnival Club member Stella suggest that she has assimilated this value distinction with regard to her own carnival participation, for example, locating her carnival activity firmly within an illegitimate community of practice:

I mention plans for the *Moving Tides* event. Stella's response highlights the difference she perceives between her own carnival practice and the achievements of this funded, artist-led process. 'They are *proper* carnival people. We are hoping they might share some of their props and costumes with us,' she says.

(Fieldnote: Westham Community Carnival Group, 13.1.12)

Similarly, town carnival float makers Pat and Hugh struggle to view their own practice as 'art':

*I wouldn't consider myself an artist... An artist is a person who can think outside the box, if you like... This year's entry was just an idea in my head. I went online and built from there... An artist has an idea, they get a picture in their minds. And they turn it into reality. With craft, and skill, and those things... I think this is just a case that I have the skills to do it. I can envisage in my mind's eye what I want to do. So yes, OK... It is a creative process... Most certainly. Because as you build you create, and then when you see the finished item, you have created it.*

(Pat, carnival float builder, Seaton, 6.6.12)

*Is it Art?.. I think it is art, I would have said, but you would never see yourself as an artist. But to be fair, when you look at the finished article that has been created, you have to accept the fact that what goes into building it... that there is an art to it, isn't there, really? So in a sense, but it is not a term that generally anyone involved in carnivals thinks of themselves, as an artist.*

(Hugh, carnival float builder, Seaton Carnival Day, 1.9.12)

This tension is also reflected in the attitudes of vernacular carnivalists towards ‘artist-led’ carnival, as the following fieldnotes suggest:

As we work on our props together, Maria complains about ‘Olympic Arts projects that are hovering up all the money. It means there is none left for voluntary groups. You don’t have to get *paid* to do it, you can just do it yourself, but all this professional stuff makes people think that you need a degree before you can make anything – it puts people off.’

(Fieldnote, Westham Carnival Club, 3.8.12)



Fig 61 Making butterflies. Westham Community Carnival Club, 2012.

Maria’s comments reveal a sentiment that contests the role of the professional artist as ‘creative expert’. She also contests the radical monopoly of arts production that funded organisations enjoy, in terms of its possible negative effect on vernacular creativity. For Maria, who identifies herself as a ‘creative person’ who runs participatory craft sessions in her own community on a voluntary basis, the professional sector acts to withhold resources from non-professional contexts and can disempower people from their own

process of artistic expression.<sup>84</sup> Maria thus suggests a problematic implication of policy-driven carnival arts development: that people may only be able to experience well-resourced artistic creativity by placing themselves in instrumental settings, under outside, professional tutelage, where the creative agenda is not of their own making.

A further implication is that carnival practice becomes located, in the popular imagination, exclusively within state-funded definitions of 'art'. It is therefore further distanced from vernacular practice. Consequently vernacular carnivalists tend not to see 'arts' activity as analogous to their own practice. Nor do they necessarily see 'arts' activity as a practice worth supporting as a 'good cause' by way of donations from within their own redistributive economies. The 'art' of carnival may thus be seen to exist in competition with vernacular practice and may become something that 'the government should pay for', as the following interview exchange with town carnival committee member Archie (A) illuminates:

- A [The local arts officer] is going to have all of these children dressed up for the [local arts carnival]. [But he] doesn't come to us and say: 'I have got 60 kids here and can we walk [on carnival day]?' Of course they can! We don't have a problem with that! But we won't give him any money to make it happen. Do you see what I mean?
- JC What is it about? Is it the fact that [he] works for the local authority and therefore the local authority should be paying for him to do what he does?
- A In a nutshell, yes. I would agree to help them to be involved in Carnival, but not to pay wages to somebody else...
- JC If they said: 'can we have some money for making costumes or making a float? We are going to work with kids on the local estate?'
- A No. But we would make a donation to the kids who are on the estate. For something that they wanted directly. There is no good in giving £500 to a charity and it is frittered away in administration and wages to people to come in and show them how to do something. That is money down the drain... Because supporting cultural activities will invariably cost us money. And we won't do that. It is the government that is there to do that. Or they are there to raise their own money through whatever means they can.

---

84 Interestingly, other members of the Carnival Club referred to Maria, in positive terms, as 'the artist of the group' by virtue of her craft skills.

(Archie, Town Carnival Committee member, Weymouth, 2.11.11)

Archie's comments suggest the extent to which, as Gibson & Kong (2005: 548) point out, the instrumentalities of arts practice within state-funded rationales of cultural and creative economy can lead to situations in which 'cultural projects are not consensual strategies but contested terrain'. An interview with vernacular carnivalist Martha also highlighted this tension, as the following transcript suggests:

*Well I started off a long, long, long, long time ago doing playschemes, running playschemes and doing the art side of that... I did a design degree... I was an illustrator, an archaeological illustrator, and when we came down here one of the first projects I did was the Spirit of the Sea carnival for the kids... The Spirit of the Sea was an Aim Higher project... [I was employed to assist in the workshops]. We were paid very little to do three months of work culminating in a set of 5 day workshops and a procession. My feelings about it are that it was all a little exploitative. That also applied to the carnival course... I felt as though it was set up to garner ideas from the attendees for other agendas. There was a carnival course that was started by the College. But I quickly realised that, well...I'd end up teaching it, or end up putting in most of the ideas and then getting very little back out of it. So I thought: 'well, no. I don't want to do that'... All the art that has been here [for the Olympics] is by someone else, from somewhere else. There is a lot of talent here, as we can see, that has gone unrecognised and will go unrecognised. [The professional arts community] is a bit of an old boys' network really in a way...*

*The Westham carnival group on the other hand was a completely different story. It was an honour to have been asked to take part. A lot of commitment by a few people to make a community statement, with little funding but a lot of passion. Jed, Stella's son, said: 'We need some people to come and help us at Westham.' And so we said: 'Oh, yes, we'll come along.' And we have really enjoyed it... I think it is worth doing because it shows that it is not just professionals that can produce lovely things. There is some amazing stuff being created here... a lot of really good artistic skills from people who wouldn't say they were artists. That is the beauty of it. There are kids doing it. Mums doing it, there's Grannies and Grandads doing it. It's everybody doing it. It is not just elitist. It is for the people... I think the ethics is ... like I said before, it is community and socialising... It is intergenerational. Very much so. And everything they do is valid. It gives them validation to say: 'I made that!'*

(Martha, Carnival Club member, 10.8.12 & 21.11.12)

Martha identifies community participation as her reason for joining the arts playschemes of the late 1970s and, latterly, the Carnival Club. She cites 'non-productive', 'non-

professional' outcomes of social generosity, reciprocity and conviviality as her primary motivations. She also reveals, however, that she has a professional interest in participating in civic events, as a means of showcasing her work as an artist and illustrator to a perceived network of professional arts providers. Her involvement with arts-development process has left her feeling alienated from the professional scene, however, which she views as an exclusive 'old boys' network' that favours certain artists above others and values imported, professional cultural product above local vernacular culture. Martha's talk reveals her experience of being excluded from this network, alongside her sense that that communities and artists such as herself are often used as free labour or as co-opted performers within wider instrumentalities.

The above comments highlight how the professionalised instrumentality of state-funded carnival arts production may reinforce the distinction in people's minds between an artist identity, which is exterior to themselves, and a lesser notion of their own 'creativity'. Thus, carnival arts 'development' may serve to concentrate cultural capital in the hands of the 'creative class'. As was the case with Weymouth Carnival in 2008-9, such subjugation may reflect top-down pressure on communities to adopt structures of festive cultural production that are not their own. It may lead to direct cultural competition between professional 'arts carnivals' and established vernacular events in the same places: such as arose between *Moving Tides* and Weymouth Town Carnival, for example.<sup>85</sup> Vernacular carnival practice, perforce, becomes squeezed into shrinking areas of public space and is offered less access to the local authority and agency-level funding, co-operation, permissions and support which are granted to professional arts 'product', as the following fieldnote suggests:

As we talk, I ask Rebecca and Gaby for their reaction to the notion that town carnivals are not primarily viewed as *arts* events by local authorities and the arts

---

<sup>85</sup> See Chapter Five.

sector, but rather as exercises in community organisation, and are therefore not eligible for production support. Rebecca's reaction is clear and illustrates her frustration at the apparent hierarchy with regard to notions of art: 'I don't know what the Collins Dictionary says is the official definition of art...but if you see a float... some people see it as entertainment, some see it as a beautiful creation. Isn't that art? The creation of something beautiful?'

(Fieldnote: Rebecca and Gaby, Carnival Committee Members, Exmouth, 1.2.12)

What also emerges from these vernacular ethnographies, as Rebecca's comment above illuminates, is a sense that the notion of 'art' is itself carnivalesque, and is experienced through a diverse set of inter-subjectivities. Vernacular carnival practice, expressed through a culturally-democratic appropriation of popular aesthetics, may thus act as a direct challenge to hegemonic notions of art and the democratisation of culture, and as an exercise in cultural agency, as the following fieldnote suggests:

Dennis shows me pictures from 40 years of float building. 'That, there, was *Hello Dolly*, that one... 1988', he says. 'Everyone in their costumes, and the sailor boys... That one there was *Singing In The Rain*... We were a big competitor. We took trophies out of Taunton, Chard. We used to compete against Sid Vale. We used to beat 'em on several occasions... Our best season was with *Cossacks*...' He shows me a picture of a huge float designed to look like a pack of giant playing cards, with human beings as the picture cards. 'That is *Royal Flush*,' he says. 'This here: Hearts, Clubs, Diamonds, Spades. The roof was shaped like that. This was static. You had King and Queen... all humans, see? The ladies made these costumes. They used actual velvet for these costumes, nearly £1000. And you had Jacks, all the picture cards. The Aces was off here in a group. The music - they thought I was mad - I was in charge of electronics and that sort of thing and I chose Handel's *Water Music*. Fireworks. And it really went well with that cart ... People used to say to us, visitors: 'What are you doing next week then? What are you entering next week?' I would say: 'It takes nearly a year to do that!'

(Dennis, East Devon Carnival Circuit Committee member, 13.1.12)

Dennis' comments suggest the 'non-productive' processes of vernacular carnival production in the fieldwork area. He reveals the manner in which vernacular practice lays claim to public space and engages audiences and participants through a popular aesthetics. Dennis' practice reveals the literate 'bricolage' of 'high' and 'low' culture found in vernacular settings: the juxtaposition of *Hello Dolly* and *Singing in the Rain* with

Handel's *Water Music*, for example. He refers to the costume making 'ladies' who represent community-centred networks of cultural production. Most importantly, perhaps, Dennis celebrates the cultural capital he gains from his participation; the conviviality and 'economies of generosity' (Edensor *et al*, 2010:11) he has experienced during 40 years of float-building within the reciprocal geographies of the East Devon Illuminated Carnival Circuit.



Fig 62 Making session at Westham Community Carnival Club, 2012.

These ethnographies trouble the notion that vernacular carnival practice achieves only the lesser status of 'creativity' and is thus in need of 'development'. They suggest how vernacular carnival, in itself, may offer a genuinely participatory arts experience, in the manner by which, as Clements asserts, participatory arts can:

... challenge the numerous structural barriers that affect engagement whether associated with class, age, gender, ethnicity, cultural knowledge or even the mythology that creativity is elitist and about special people. [Participatory arts] can also be envisaged as a radicalising process

which engenders transformation and emancipation as it can encourage resistance, democracy and citizenship.

(Clements, 2011: 19)

This analysis thus asserts the similarity between vernacular carnival practice and the values of the radical community arts tradition which developed in the UK in the late 1970s and 1980s. Martha's narrative above reflects Evans' developmental history of community arts practice (2010). This history charts how participatory practice was assimilated from the radical, cultural democracy of the 1970s arts centre movement into the professionalised arts and regeneration strategies and the post-Jermyn, New Labour social inclusion policies of the 1980s and 1990s. Martha's story reflects what Evans sees as a steady disconnection of 'arts participation' from vernacular practice, to a point in which it sits today as an 'instrumentalisation of culture in social and sustainable development policies' (Evans, 2010: 26). Martha's assertion that the Carnival Club, by contrast, represents 'a lot of commitment by a few people to make a community statement, with little funding but a lot of passion', reflects the distinction she makes between vernacular and professional practice. It also articulates the potential politics of vernacular practice as a challenge to the democratisation of culture.

In articulating this politics, Kelly (1984: 54) asserts art is an entirely 'ideological construction', the shifting definition of which reflects the dominant socio-cultural structures of power. 'Art' in this context is a term used to 'bestow an apparently inherent value onto certain activities and the products resulting from those activities, while withholding this value from certain other, similar, activities' (Kelly, 1984: 54). Kelly suggests that this 'political' definition of art and culture deliberately masks the universal nature of arts practice itself; the fact that artistic expression is a commonly-held human attribute:

The process by which this happens is profoundly political...It is the result of some groups being more powerful than others; of some groups being in the position to gain access to the levers of

power which is denied others...[it] is almost entirely concerned with an ability to engage the interest and approval of those agencies which have achieved a *de facto* power to license activities, or classes of objects, as art; and almost nothing at all to do with any specific 'value' in the activity itself.

(Kelly, 1984: 54)

These vernacular ethnographies suggest that aesthetics, and the distinction between 'high' and 'low' aesthetic cultures, is central to the political, symbolic construction of 'art' by the powerful. Martha's comments reflect a similar sentiment to that encountered by Edensor and Millington (2009) during their engagement with Christmas light displays. In this context, vernacular practice, expressed through a popular aesthetic, reflected:

an insistence upon the right to display, in the face of those who would regulate their activities, a sense that they would battle to uphold their cultural rights

(Edensor & Millington, 2009: 112)

Similarly, the following fieldnote about a vernacular carnivalist's choice of carnival costume demonstrates that the accessibility of this popular aesthetic is an important participatory aspect of vernacular carnival practice, one which also reflects a highly-developed level of individual artistic agency:



Fig 63 'Mark' as Indiana Jones. Westham Community Carnival Club, 2012.

Mark has been thinking about costumes. He has been to the Party Shop on the corner, where they have 'just about everything'. He has tried on a Strongman outfit, but preferred their *Indiana Jones* costume, complete with leather jacket, hat and bullwhip, so he chose that one. 'I think it will fit the jungle theme, and it goes well with the Lost Temple feeling of the pyramid,' he says. Stella says: 'The costumes have to be easily recognisable to the audience, so they know straight away what it is about.'

(Fieldnote, Westham Community Carnival Club, 8.8.12)

Mark's choice of *Indiana Jones* costume is his own artistic decision, in keeping with the theme of the float. He is considering his costume in terms of its visual imagery, and in terms of the expected audience response and narrative accessibility of the costume within the 'Lost Temple' element of the carnival float. This symbolic narrative centres on a miniaturised Mayan ziggurat that he himself has built from wood and cardboard and painted during many hours of voluntary, unpaid participation in Carnival Club making

sessions. Mark has artistic agency in this process and is seeking a qualitative artistic outcome through his decision-making.

During this participant observation at Westham Carnival Club, Stella's comment about the need for the float to be 'understandable' to its audience framed the group's use of popular aesthetics as a highly literate artistic decision. The Westham float was, in effect, a mobile theatrical set, which had a very short time-frame in which it might be 'read' by the audience as it passed in procession. The float had to be readable 'in-the-round', from all sides, and thus required detailed consideration of audience sight-lines in its layout. As a result, the group decided to rely on popular imagery to get their meaning across, drawing on a themed popular aesthetic that they knew would be easily held in common with their audience.



Fig 65 Making session at Westham Community Carnival Club, 2012.

Thematically, the active plan for the Westham float was for it to be instantly recognisable as a jungle, with all the standard tropes of an 'exotic' aesthetic drawn from popular TV, film and literature. The float featured jungle plants, hummingbirds, snakes, a lion, a Lost Temple, a King Kong gorilla, Kipling-esque explorers, kids dressed as animals, a waterfall, palm trees, vines, creepers and a lake. Stella and the group knew that their efforts would

be judged by the public on the degree to which they reproduced these tropes effectively; the degree to which the float 'looked like it was supposed to look'; the manner in which it brought its audience quickly to a common understanding and appreciation of its themes. 'Humour', 'fun', and 'energy' were also important features here, alongside the degree to which group members were prepared to, as Stella said: 'make ourselves look silly.' In one of our first meetings she suggested that the float would also operate to gently satirise the reputation of her predominantly working class neighbourhood as an edgy social 'jungle'



Fig 64 Dressing the lorry. Westham Community Carnival Club, 2012.

The popular, participatory aesthetics of this group are thus clearly distinct from professionalised hegemonic notions of 'art'. Their choice of tropes sits in an aesthetic realm which is viewed as 'brash', 'commercial' and 'tacky' by many arts professionals; as reproductive of existing 'low' cultural forms rather than original in its inspiration. Nonetheless, this vernacular practice clearly embodies 'artistic' critical thinking with regard to the relationship between symbolic form and meaning and between performance and audience. The creative process of the group reflects a culturally-democratic, 'non-

productive' creativity. This is a process which fosters individual artistic agency and produces qualitative outcomes of conviviality, shared symbolism and mutual recognition, through the representation, adaptation and satirisation of a commonly-understood popular culture. These ethnographies of vernacular cultural performance and practice contest the authority of the professional arts sector to define artistic carnival practice in purely aesthetic terms, and further locate that definition within structures of cultural power, as Kelly suggests:

The term *art*, then, does not describe a set of activities, but a framework within which certain activities are placed, and the distinctions which are maintained between 'art and non-art' are part of the dominant structures of our 'social organisation'.

(Kelly, 1984: 57)

These ethnographies suggest how distinctions between 'acceptable' and 'unacceptable' aesthetics have become a key issue with regard to carnival development and the use of professionalised carnival arts as a technique of public engagement. We have seen how the literate appropriation of aesthetic forms drawn from popular, commercial culture may be subjugated within the practice of non-professional vernacular carnivals, to the extent that their symbolism is defined by arts professionals as being of 'poor quality', as 'depressing' or as simple 'entertainment'.

By way of challenge to these hegemonic assumptions, here we might frame the Westham carnival Club's use of popular aesthetics, rather, as an active, intelligent artistic choice and as a demonstration of participatory agency towards a series of 'non-productive' arts instrumentalities. Similarly, Edensor and Millington cite Miller (2006) in their deconstruction of the role of popular aesthetics in parallel vernacular practices, related to carnivalesque Christmas light displays:

The incorporation of comical elements of popular culture is about the production of homeliness, a communicative quality that 'has a positive role in the formation of sociality and is by no means relegated to being the other to good taste' (Miller, 2006: 246).

(Edensor & Millington, 2009: 113)

Ironically, such qualitative outcomes: creative empowerment, social engagement and intergenerational cultural activity among them, are themselves often cited as the social justifications for the much of the public funding of professionalised arts practice 'in community'. The production process through which these aims were achieved in Westham was culturally democratic. Once the theme had been agreed, individual members had complete freedom to design and make their own contribution to the group effort, using whatever symbolism they chose. In this context, notwithstanding individual efforts to make art objects which were as accurate, beautiful and well-constructed as possible, shared artistic process and freedom of self-expression were considered to be more important than a unity of aesthetic form, as the following fieldnote tale suggests:

I drive down the hill and over the causeway to my next research encounter, a drop-in at the regular Friday night making session of Westham Carnival Club. This week the extent of their cultural capacity is retirees Freya and Nicole and a 14-year-old girl named Jess, who are making butterflies from scrap materials, beads and wire. Freya offers me a cup of tea. I sit with them for the next two hours, making a wire-framed butterfly to add to their carnival float, swapping stories and listening in on local gossip. These volunteers have spent the weeks since my last visit cutting leaf shapes from reclaimed plastic supermarket bags to form the jungle for their Rainforest-themed lorry entry in the 2012 Weymouth Town Carnival. Freya proudly shows me the mountain of coloured foliage they have created, and the cardboard models they have made of a gorilla and a lion, held together with tape and ready for painting. Freya points me in the direction of the donated box of colourful fabric scraps and beads and says: 'go ahead, make whatever you want.'

We sit around the trestle table, cutting, threading and gluing. Stories flow in about bits of the Rainforest float that are being made in sheds and front rooms elsewhere in the community: trees from cardboard and the sewing of costumes. Janice, Jess' mum, arrives with a donation of curtain material and plastic rods for construction. As we craft, we get to know each other, become more familiar and share a sense of hope and mutual encouragement that when carnival day comes our efforts will be a positive thing for the wider community. 'Make it however you like,' says Freya. 'However you want to make it, that is fine.' I am proud of my butterfly when it is done. It feels good to think something I have made will be part of the float on carnival day.

(Fieldnote, Westham Community Carnival Club, 16.3.12)



Fig 60 *Butterfly*, Westham Community Carnival Club, 2012.

This participatory process thus involved a high degree of individual artistic agency, creating symbolic forms which sought a direct connection with the audience. Over the weeks, members of the Carnival Club expressed a clear set of principles when discussing the effect they wanted the float to have on its audience. In addition to its recognisable theme and popular symbolism, it became clear that the group felt their float would be judged partly on the degree of effort that had gone into its construction; the way it demonstrated the commitment of the group to produce a well-made and attractive float for the benefit of the whole town on carnival day, as these fieldnotes suggest:

Craft skill is another important element. Much of the fine detail in the construction of the props will be seen only by the official judges who examine the float before the actual parade. The loving detail in the tiny hummingbirds, butterflies and dragonflies, for example, will be all but invisible to the audience at the roadside. They are, however, an essential part of the craft skill that the judges are looking for; a measure of the time, effort and ingenuity that has gone into their construction. Another important feature of the work is that it uses recycled materials. Palm trees are made from industrial cardboard tubing, leaves from old plastic shopping bags, hummingbirds from plastic drinks bottles. Materials have been garnered from the Dorset Scrap Store facility in nearby Dorchester, through long term personal collection by members or by donation from local contacts. For the larger pieces, such as the palm trees and the waterfall, it is important to the group that people in the audience firstly recognise

the image, then look again and see that it is actually made of everyday objects that have been creatively transformed. I do not, however, get the sense that this recycled aesthetic is the result of an environmental agenda, or is in any way intended as a 'message' to its audience in a didactic sense. It is as much a feature of economic necessity as of artistic intention.

(Fieldnote, Westham Community Carnival Club, 8.8.12)

## **7:6 Conclusions:**

This carnival fieldwork contributes to a small, but growing, alternative discourse within the critical geographies of the creative economy, one which asserts the value of grassroots 'vernacular creativity' and which highlights its subjugation by neo-liberal, Floridian processes of professionalised, culture-led place-regeneration and economic development (Florida, 2002; Landry, & Bianchini, 2007). These ethnographies suggest that 'art' in carnival development contexts is largely defined by arts professionals in the south West UK in terms of its location within professional modes of production which themselves reflect a distinct, preferred carnival aesthetic. This aesthetic derives, as we have seen earlier in this thesis, from the influence of Caribbean and South American carnival within policy contexts of multiculturalism, and from the commodified processional practices of alternative theatre within contexts of social inclusion (Jermyn, 2001) and participatory arts (Clements, 2011).

Outside this definition, within the 'vernacular' fieldwork contexts of the Gunpowder circuit and the philanthropic seaside carnival tradition of the south west UK, my research suggests that vernacular carnival practice reflects a more 'mainstream' aesthetic, drawn from popular, commercial culture. This observation supports wider critiques which locate vernacular creativity within a 'non productive' appropriation of popular forms through festive processes that permit a high level of individual creative agency (Edensor & Millington, 2009). My interviews with arts professionals in the fieldwork area suggest that

this alternative, popular carnival aesthetic is subjugated in terms of its acceptability within publicly-funded arts projects.

These ethnographies further suggest that vernacular carnival aesthetics may be seen to contest the current preferred definition of carnival 'art'. Close study of vernacular carnival practice in the fieldwork area demonstrates that it reflects long-term family genealogies of carnival arts practice in community. This observation challenges the view held by a significant number of arts professionals interviewed for this study: that England lacks the deep, communally-held, socially-embedded 'folk' practice of carnival which is associated with southern Europe, the Caribbean or South America, for example.

Ironically, these ethnographies suggest that the vernacular carnival practice of the fieldwork area in fact also demonstrates many of the same functional approaches as once-radical 'community arts' practice, the funding of which is now reserved for professional artists (Evans, 2010, Kelly, 1984, Clements, 2011). These include its culturally-democratic creative decision-making, its qualitative outcomes of conviviality and cultural empowerment, and its recognised social efficacy in terms of promoting creative participation and artistic process.

### **Building the picture:**

In Chapter 4 I asserted that carnivalesque street procession is a location for a affective liminal performativity that destabilises notions of 'place' and the social relations from which it is constituted. This grounded theory of liminality within carnival practice allowed us to explore, in Chapter 5, how the destabilisation of place-meaning and identity during carnival may be displayed through competing carnival float designs, costumes and other performance iconographies. In Chapter 6 I linked Harvey's 'cultural politics of places',

Massey's concept of place as 'locus', and the notion of the multiple 'symbolic construction' of place within carnival, to Cohen's parallel theory with regard to the symbolic construction of 'community'. This allowed me ultimately to suggest that *simultaneity* of transformation across communities of practice, within a universally-recognised temporality of 'carnival', might offer a 'container' for a progressive enactment of community and a re-negotiation of identity and place through the opening of public space to all-comers. This suggestion prompted consideration of participants' notions of the 'art and non-art' of carnival, in particular within the professionalised, hierarchical structures of the state-funded democratisation of culture. The attempt of Chapter 7 has been to call for a decentralisation of our preoccupation with the aesthetic form of carnival and for a wider recognition of the 'art' of vernacular practice.

The further attempt of the Chapter has been to un-pack the distinctions we encounter in these ethnographies between notions of the 'professional' and 'non-professional' carnival practitioner; between carnival 'art' and 'non-art', and between carnival 'artist' and 'non-artist'. This attempt is in some ways a return to, and a reflection on, the central Bakhtinian paradox of carnival: its dual function as a carnivalesque symbolic revolution and as a normative social safety valve.<sup>86</sup> It is my contention that the status of state-funded carnival practice as a cultural instrumentality within the contested geographies of place-making and the 'creative economy' renders this debate highly pertinent with regard to cultural democracy and the availability of public space for 'non-productive' vernacular festivity.

These carnival ethnographies have suggested that key distinctions exist between 'vernacular' and 'non-vernacular' creativities with regard to carnival practice. This contest centres on value distinctions between 'art' and the (lesser) 'creative' vernacular use of popular aesthetics. Thus, it effectively reproduces class-based distinctions between 'high'

---

<sup>86</sup> (Bakhtin, 1984; Morris, 1994; Roach, 1993; Eagleton, 1981; Sales, 1983; Stallybrass and White, 1986; Lunacharsky, 1931; Gluckman, 1965)

and 'low' culture (Edensor *et al*, 2010: 7). The result, I would argue, is the subjugation of vernacular carnival practice, by virtue of the assumed cultural authority of state-funded professional artists and the 'radical monopoly' of their supporting arts development organisations in terms of cultural (and economic) capital (Kelly, 1984: 74).

These ethnographies also suggest the importance of 'non-productive' (qualitative) outcomes among carnival practitioners in vernacular settings. These ethnographies serve to expose the degree to which vernacular carnival practice generates, rather, what Edensor & Millington (2009:117) refer to as 'values of festive spirit, conviviality, generosity and community'.

In summary, this chapter thus offers both a warning and a proposed remedy with regard to the inequality of cultural capital that is afforded to vernacular carnival practice in the firework area. The remedy, in my view, depends on a re-engagement with notions of cultural democracy within the professional arts sector and a challenge to the 'authority of expertise' currently enjoyed by the 'creative class' of state-funded professional artists. It also centres on the recognition of vernacular carnival as a legitimate arts practice, one which permits the funded support of vernacular carnival practice alongside the instrumentalities of arts-development and public engagement through cultural performance.

Edensor *et al* (2010: 6) rightly point out that: 'the implication persists that differently positioned social groups lack the necessary creative skills, cultural tastes and competencies to effectively operate within the creative economy'. These ethnographies of vernacular carnival practice challenge that implication. The challenge for the professional arts sector with regard to carnival and vernacular cultural performance in general, is therefore, to recognise that:

an understanding of vernacular and everyday landscapes of creativity honours the non-economic values and outcomes produced by alternative, marginal and quotidian creative practices, and has the potential to move us toward more holistic, diverse and socially inclusive creative city strategies.'

(Edensor et al, 2010: 1)

Finally, as a prelude to the recommendations outlined in the conclusion to this thesis, I offer Miles' concept of 'radical vernacularism' as a rallying call to arts development organisations involved in carnival arts production:

A radical vernacularism would involve artists, like radical planners, handing over the means of production to participating groups and individuals whose tacit and intellectual knowledges are given equal status to those of professionals.

(Miles, 2010: 59)

## Chapter Eight: Thesis Conclusions:

### 8:1: Responses to the Research Questions:

#### What is carnival?

**How do participants experience the 'liminal performativity' of carnival, and how do they describe affects of 'energy', 'transformation', 'transgression', 'ritual' and 'social drama' within carnival and street procession?**

At the beginning of this thesis, I explored the Bakhtinian notion of the '*Battle Between Carnival and Lent*': a conceptualisation of carnival as a continual struggle between freedom and restraint. These ethnographies have revealed how the paradoxical, liminal performativity of carnival generates considerable instrumentalities towards its use as a vocabulary for normative symbolic constructions of place-identity (Roach, 1993; Eagleton, 1981; Sales, 1983; Stallybrass and White, 1986; Lunacharsky, 1931; Gluckman, 1965). It is this efficacy that has led to the assimilation of countercultural carnival vocabularies from the Caribbean diaspora and from processional 'alternative theatre', into programmes of political, economic and cultural regeneration and place-making in the UK since the 1980s (Kershaw, 1992; Mason, 1992; Dabydeen, 1988; Hall, 2002; Micklem, 2006). These programmes have effectively harnessed the creative vocabularies of identity politics and the counterculture within participatory frameworks that are based on the devolution of carnival culture into neo-liberal contexts of global multiculturalism, inter-place competition and the cultural 'marketplace'.

However, we have also seen in this thesis that 'carnival' is a highly contested concept that is enacted through a range of active performance traditions throughout the fieldwork area. The ethnographies presented in this thesis reveal the dynamic inter-subjectivity of carnivalesque experience; its liminal performativity; the affective 'betwixt and between' state (Smith, 2009; Conquergood, 2002) that permits the symbolic construction and

deconstruction of place, identity and social constituency. We have seen in Chapter Four how participants express this liminality through a range of frames: as the 'energy', transformation, transgression, ritual and social drama of carnival and street procession. We have seen how they perform dramatic affects of risk, secrecy and revelation, and how they apply spectacular amplifications of light, colour, size, texture, sound and behaviour to foster individual agencies of festive transformation. These ethnographies also suggest that this performativity supports the 'ideological transaction' which may occur during carnival, a transaction that finds form in the rituals and social dramas (Kershaw, 1992:19; Turner, 1974) that illuminate the tensions between normative and transgressive versions of identity, community and place.

This thesis asserts, then, that Carnival is a performance of the 'cultural politics' of places. Carnival offers an annual performative framework for the symbolic construction and deconstruction of 'community', 'culture' and 'place' (Cohen, 1985). The evidence of this thesis suggests that equitable, vernacular, carnivalesque access to public space is therefore essential to a healthy, reflexive society (Miles, 2010). It asserts that carnival and procession generate opportunities for the performance of a progressive sense of place; sites in which people can simultaneously create and contest their connections to the wider world.

### **How has carnival been conceptualized, constructed and performed in the fieldwork area over time?**

This thesis has positioned the vernacular carnival practices of the South West UK and the professionalised artist-led Olympic carnival of *Battle for the Winds* within a broader set of historical geographies of processional culture in the British Isles. These geographies

include a range of practices, from marches geared to the display of religious, political or ethnic identity, to trades processions, historical pageants and philanthropic civic parades. They include seasonal festivities linked to folk-culture, protest marches and carnivalesque demonstrations and the contemporary use of procession and carnival within socially-engaged participatory arts practice, such as Jeremy Deller's *Procession* (2009). The thesis has contributed to this under-developed area of geographical scholarship by focusing on the key cultural influences which have shaped the processional vocabularies of the case studies in question, namely the illuminated 'Guy Fawkes' circuit carnival of Seaton, the carnivalised philanthropic procession of the seaside resort of Weymouth and the multicultural, arts-led approaches of *Battle for the Winds*.

### **What is the history of cultural policy development with regard to carnival and procession in the UK?**

This thesis argues that 20 years of arts policy in the UK has professionalised and 'de-radicalised' carnival arts practice, within functions of post-industrial regeneration, public engagement, ideological education and as a vocabulary for the 'creative economy'. This process, I argue, relies in part upon the very value distinctions between carnival 'art' and 'non art' that I articulate in Chapters Five and Seven. The narrative of the 2008-9 Weymouth Carnival Conflict, in particular, shows how such distinctions can have a subjugating effect on vernacular, 'out-of-place', 'non-productive' and 'non-professional' processional culture. This thesis, therefore, frames professionalised, artist-led carnival as an instrument for public engagement with the 2012 Olympics. It also frames this professionalised practice as a vocabulary for public engagement with the place identity of the south west UK and its Jurassic Coast World Heritage Site, and contrasts this instrumentality with the vernacular creativities of un-funded, small town carnivals and their

alternative performances of 'place'. Carnival festivity, then, is both an exercise in freedom and a tool of power.

### **How does carnival operate as a festive enactment of place and identity?**

As we saw in Chapter Five, David Harvey's articulation of the 'social process of place construction' within 'cartographies of struggle, power and discourse' (1996: 293) offered a strong framework for my analysis of this 'cultural politics' within carnival. In particular, my inscription of the Olympic performances of *Cartwheelin* and *Battle for the Winds* revealed how carnival was geared to the performance of specific symbolic geographies of 'local', 'regional', 'national' and 'international' place-identity. These geographies were displayed through explicit float designs, costumes and performance iconographies which carried a symbolic sense of 'place', such as the regional teams of Wind Gatherers, the Jurassic character of Doldrum, the Bridgwater Carnival squibbing and the ritual torch wading in the waters of Weymouth Bay.

*Battle for the Winds* was an impressive theatrical carnival for the launch of the Olympic sailing in Weymouth, full of energy, entertainment, surprise and subtle subversion. At street level, it was driven by acts of comedy, acrobatics, invention and imagination, and was performed in the free-expressive carnivalesque spirit of festive anarchy and transgression. Spectacle like this, however, is also about power; both the theatrical power of the performance itself and the social, economic and political power of those who commission it. *Battle for the Winds* was many things. For the artists involved, it was, to quote Kershaw (1992:147), 'a prudent political tactic used to stay in oppositional business *and* a craven accommodation to the status quo'. As such, *Battle for the Winds* was a strategic survival effort by arts professionals seeking to link together in the face of massive cuts in state arts funding. It was also a demonstration of cultural and creative power by local authorities, a

celebration of certain south west UK identities (but not others), and a recruitment of communities and participants in the grand cultural project of the Olympics. Crucially, *Battle for the Winds* was part of a collage of British place identity which was presented to the rest of the world on a massive scale during the summer of 2012, intended to influence a global audience of millions with regard to their idea of Britain as a 'place'. This analysis chimes with Harvey's critique of inter-place competition within the neo-liberal conditions of globalised late capitalism (Harvey, 1996). It frames the state-funded, carnivalesque cultural performance of preferred vocabularies of places as a locational reaction to the pressures created by time-space compression and the destabilising mobility of economic investment and disinvestment in a global economy.

By way of contrast, we also saw in Chapter Five how vernacular town and 'circuit' carnivals may be re-framed as sites which produce symbolic constructions akin to Massey's progressive 'global sense of place' (Massey, 1997: 317). Seen in this light, the participatory structures and popular aesthetics of small town carnivals, particularly those involved in wider geographical carnival 'circuits', reflect a locus of symbolic 'flows and interconnections' between different geographical locations and peoples (Massey, 1997: 317). A key part of the dynamic performativity of this type of street carnival and procession is that it creates a sense of place that includes an 'agreement to contestation' within its simultaneous symbolic enactment of multiple identities.

Place, by this critique, is a carnivalesque notion which is not tied to any particular aesthetic form or explicit iconography of geographical location. Rather, multiple 'versions' of place are constructed during vernacular carnival, and a diversity of associative symbols, often drawn from popular culture, are used to suggest the broad affective character of places and their different groups of people. These implicit place associations coalesce around how carnival entries reflect participants' creative abilities and their sense of community,

self-satire and fun, rather than around any direct symbolic representation of geographical place, necessarily. It may be said, therefore, that place symbolism in carnival can be 'explicit' or 'implicit'; the 'explicit' acting to reference place-specific symbols, while the 'implicit' acts as an associative metaphor; as an affective representation of a place and its people.

### **How does carnival practice operate as a cultural container for the symbolic construction of 'community' (Cohen, 1985)?**

Likewise, Cohen's conceptualisation (1985: 15) of the 'symbolic construction of community' supports the understanding that develops in this thesis with regard to participants' experience of 'singular-plurality' within vernacular carnival (Nancy, 1991:29). It also allows for a view of 'community' and 'place' as boundary-expressing symbols which are 'held in common... but [whose] meaning varies with [ ] members' unique orientations to [them]' (Cohen, 1985: 15). Chapter Six explored how vernacular carnival practice in particular allows people to condense a range of individual values and meanings into a variety of commonly-understood 'containers' and 'practices'. This high level of agency with regard to the 'performance' of festive identity is itself an important feature of participatory cultural democracy.

The critique presented in Chapter Six also established the view that, like 'place', 'community' is a relational value; one that cannot be 'created' or 'produced' by any institutional, social or organisational instrument (Kelly, 1984:50). Rather 'community' and 'place' are experienced within carnival in terms of the individual orientations to 'boundaries of meaning' that arise from our carnivalesque encounters with others and with 'altered' everyday physical space (Cohen, 1985). Carnival creates an agreed location for implicit and explicit 'boundary interaction' between multiple symbolisms and communities of

practice (Wenger, 2000); a site in which we might 'acquire culture' through our interactions with other people (Cohen, 1985: 15).

### **What are the distinctions between 'vernacular' and non-vernacular carnival creativities?**

This thesis contributes to a growing alternative discourse within the critical geographies of the 'creative economy'; a discourse that asserts the value of grassroots 'vernacular creativity' and the competences of those engaged with it (Daskalaki & Mould, 2013; Edensor *et al*, 2010; Edensor & Millington, 2009; Fox-Gotham, 2011; Gibson & Kong, 2005; Haylett, 2000; Miles, 2005; Miles & Paddison, 2005; Shaw, 2013; Waitt & Gibson, 2013). By extension, this thesis also seeks to challenge the exclusive provision of arts-based subsidy for carnival as a vocabulary for neo-liberal instrumentalities of economic regeneration and competitive, symbolic place-making.

Crucially, these ethnographies assert the importance of alternative, 'non-productive', qualitative outcomes among carnival practitioners in vernacular settings. They expose the degree to which vernacular carnival practice generates what Edensor & Millington (2009:117) refer to as 'values of festive spirit, conviviality, generosity and community'. At the same time, my critique of 'artistic' practice in vernacular settings serves to challenge the 'authority of expertise' that is currently enjoyed by the creative class of state-funded professional carnival artists. It tests the very notion of 'professionalism' in carnival settings and seeks to dismantle the binary distinction between carnival 'art' and 'non-art' that I encountered in professional settings during my fieldwork.

What emerges from this thesis is the view that it is the *fact*, rather than the *form* of carnival practice which is vital to culture. What is important is that, during carnival, public space is

opened to allow culturally-democratic participation and to permit multiple, sometimes oppositional, symbolisations of community. This thesis, therefore, challenges the preoccupation with the aesthetic form of carnival in professional 'carnival development' contexts, a preoccupation that derives from the political communitarianism of arts policy, harnessed to neo-liberal instrumentalities of social and economic participation. Rather, we begin to imagine the equal distribution of power within the cultural performance of carnival. We imagine an equality of social and cultural capital between actors, and a freedom of participation, aesthetic expression and organisational agency among participants. These are the ethical positions within culturally-democratic traditions of participatory community arts that allow us to begin to 're-think' the cultural economy with regard to carnival.

It is clear that the critical tension between cultural democracy and the democratisation of culture lies at the heart of this thesis in terms of its politics. In Chapter One and Chapter Seven, I presented the view that the state-sponsored democratisation of culture constitutes carnival 'art' as a hierarchical tool for the delivery of social policy (Shaw, 1987:131-2). This cultural hierarchy is largely enforced by means of the conditional distribution of state arts-funding for preferred carnival vocabularies, and through the professionalization of carnival 'artists'. It is also maintained through the exercise of legal controls on vernacular festivity concerning rights of festive assembly, licensing, health and safety, insurance, road closures and the compulsory registration and training of carnival organisers and marshalls.

Advocates for cultural democracy, including myself, challenge the authority of the state with regard to practical definitions of carnival 'art' and its preferred aesthetics (Kelly, 1984: 50). In some measure, this thesis has sought to detach the 'efficacy' of carnival (Kershaw, 1992) from its aesthetic forms, and to focus on the geographies of carnival's liminal,

affective performativity (Turner, 1969; Van Gennep, 1960; Schechner, 2003; Deleuze & Guattari, 1987). However, as a challenge to what emerges from these ethnographies as orthodox thinking in some professionalised carnival arts development circles, this thesis also demands value and recognition for the popular aesthetics of vernacular carnival practice in the fieldwork area. Far from dismissing vernacular practice as the 'non-art' of carnival, I suggest we should re-consider it as a vibrant example of participatory cultural democracy in arts practice.

Vernacular carnival offers a potentially radical challenge to the hegemonic conceptualisations of community, culture and place that are expressed by the 'creative classes' (Landry and Bianchini, 1995; Landry, 2000; Florida, 2002). These ethnographies locate the proto-radicalism of vernacular carnival within the symbolic challenge that it presents to the professional orthodoxies of cultural place-making. In particular, they centre on the 'bricolage' aesthetic of vernacular carnival (Edensor *et al*, 2010), and on participants' conscious, literate re-appropriation of the symbolic forms of popular, commercial culture to their own purposes, as we saw with regard to Mark's *Indiana Jones* costume.

We have seen in this thesis how culturally-democratic carnival practice may be subjugated by the democratised aesthetics of carnival arts development programmes. Crucially, these ethnographies point to the resulting inequalities of economic and cultural capital within the diverse carnival culture of the fieldwork area. My subsequent assertion is that people in vernacular contexts deserve wider access to the cultural 'means of production' with regard to the performance of carnival in public space (Miles, 2010). Currently, I would suggest, preferential access to public space is reserved for professionalised carnival 'art', within cultural systems of 'national celebration' and the performance vocabularies of neo-liberal mega events such as the Olympics. The implication of this insight is that a more equitable

distribution of arts funding is necessary between 'professional' and 'non-professional' carnival contexts.

## **8:2 Contribution to Knowledge:**

This thesis seeks to contribute to a relatively underdeveloped discourse surrounding the geographies of processional culture in the UK. It seeks to demonstrate how performance studies and qualitative, ethnographic cultural geography approaches can be combined to shed light on the performativity of carnival and its role in the cultural performance of place and social identity. Throughout this thesis I have reflected upon how the performance 'efficacy' of carnival (Kershaw, 1992) permits the symbolic construction and deconstruction of 'community' and destabilises the meaning that turns 'space' into 'place' (Cresswell, 2004). The basic attempt of this thesis has been to show how people 'perform' places in different ways through carnival and procession. Consequently, I have brought together notions of liminal performativity from within Performance Studies (Turner, 1969; Van Gennep, 1960; Schechner, 2003; Deleuze & Guattari, 1987) and discourses of 'place' from within Cultural Geography (Massey, 1997; Lippard, 1997; Harvey, 1996). The association made in Chapter Four between carnivalesque experience and the liminal 'event' as described in NRT also firmly locates the study and praxis of carnival within the 'performance turn' in Cultural Geography (Anderson & Harrison, 2010: 9).

Throughout this thesis we have seen how ethnographic, participatory performance-as-research can be applied as a methodological tool in 'live' carnivalesque fieldwork settings. Performance-as-research and ethnographic participant observation allowed me to articulate the affect of carnival, to expose the 'front-and-back' of subjects' experiences

(Goffman, 1968: 119) and to suggest how carnival is enacted, embodied and contested by individuals in both vernacular and professional settings. Crucially, I have asserted the affinity between this qualitative methodology and the historic methods of radical, participatory community arts practice (Kelly, 1984). Participant observation and immersive community arts practice share an 'intensive' engagement (Harre, 1979) with individual and group experiences of creative 'process' (Kelly, 1984: 137). They rely heavily on long-term participation in developing cycles of vernacular cultural production, within specific communities of creative practice. At the core of each practice is what Kelly (1984: 137) refers to as a 'recognition that there is a process of co-authorship, of collectivity, underlying *all* creative activities'. This notion of co-authorship is central to the recommendations that follow with regard to carnival 'development', and to the encouragement of future encounters between vernacular and non-vernacular carnival practice.

The further contribution of this thesis is to suggest that the liminal performativity of carnival, itself, constitutes a radical offer to society. Carnival offers a site for multiple expressions with regard to place and identity. It is a performance through which people can witness each other 'in-place', and engage in 'boundary interactions' (Wenger, 2000) with symbolic constructions of place and community that are different to their own, whether through state-sponsored arts practice or through vernacular, autonomous festive transformation. One of the most positive spin-offs of *Battle for the Winds*, for example, has been the ongoing dialogue between Bridgwater Guy Fawkes Carnival and the Quest Trust Olympic legacy organisation for outdoor arts in the south west UK, a dialogue which led to the reciprocal participation by *Battle for the Winds* wind vessels in the 2012 Bridgwater Carnival parade.

This thesis further asserts that a vital component of this witnessing is *simultaneity* of festive transformation (Kertzer, 1988), within an event that all participants recognise as

'Carnival' itself. In Chapter Five I considered how vernacular carnival practice was subjugated by arts-development instrumentalities in Weymouth between 2008 and 2010. The history of the *Moving Tides* procession also reflects the cultural competition which arose between rival carnival processes in the town in the run up to the Olympics, and the subsequent, unequal distribution of state arts funding. Conversely, integration of vernacular and non-vernacular carnival practice within a simultaneous occupation of public space, as is beginning to happen with Arts Council support in Bridgwater, offers a progressive method for the performance of multiple versions of place, identity and community.

Miles' concept of 'radical vernacularism' (2010: 59) offers a rallying call to organisations involved in carnival arts development, urging them to '[hand] over the means of production to participating groups and individuals whose tacit and intellectual knowledges are given equal status to those of professionals'. Thus, this thesis calls for the active redistribution of economic, social and cultural capital in a manner that permits the funded support of vernacular carnival practice alongside the instrumentalities of arts-development and public engagement through cultural performance. During Carnival, the streets should belong to everybody.

'Carnival' emerges from this critique as a temporal period which may be organised specifically as a focus for the expression and contestation of multiple place-meanings and identities. As Kertzer asserts (1988: 22-24): 'simultaneity of symbolic action' is key to the efficacy of cultural performance, whether as an assertion of 'symbolic rites in common' that 'link the local with the national and international', or as 'revolutionary' acts by groups and individuals within the 'parading of symbolic objects and occupation of hierarchical areas of social space'. Further, Shohat and Stam (1994: 306) point to the liminality of carnival as an affect that 'suspends hierarchical distinctions, barriers, norms, and prohibitions, installing

instead a qualitatively different kind of communication based on free and familiar contact'. Thus we imagine a culturally-democratic, carnivalesque experience which may *include* instrumentalities towards the democratisation of culture, but is not defined, controlled, or dominated by them. Rather I assert, as Lawlor (1993: 3) suggests, that Carnival has 'no bouncers at the door, no guards at the gate: it lets everyone and everything in'. As such, the cultural performance of Carnival that I imagine in the following recommendations is detached from any preferred aesthetic form. Rather, it relies on simultaneous, inclusive participation, and permits a range of instrumentalities from a range of vernacular and non-vernacular contexts.

### **8:3 Recommendations:**

In the fieldwork area at the time of writing, the title 'Carnival' is most widely associated with vernacular cultural performances. Given the inequalities of economic, social and cultural capital that exist between vernacular and non-vernacular carnival contexts, it is my assertion that this cultural fact places a responsibility on funded organisations to integrate themselves into existing, vernacular carnival practice, rather than vice-versa, as a demonstration of their active community membership.

It is my view that a key principle for an ethical, culturally-democratic approach should be that 'development' work must not undermine the existing aims of vernacular carnival committees or serve to establish competing carnival processions that benefit from higher levels of public funding. Rather, participation by funded organisations should be managed in an unconditional way that seeks to 'add to' and not to 'change' the foundations of the existing carnival culture of any particular place. The benefits of this principle are that vernacular carnival contexts might thus receive levels of unconditional 'professional' support that have hitherto been denied to them, particularly with regard to extra events, funded labour, access to local-authority cultural marketing resources and the management

of public space. Likewise, arts organisations and other institutions, in taking their place as members of the community alongside everyone else, gain 'local' status and are relieved of the liberal guilt that is associated with 'parachuting' art into vernacular contexts in a manner which devalues or seeks to alter vernacular carnival culture.

Representation for institutions within carnival parades thus becomes a simple matter of standard participation: the preparation of a float or walking section; the payment of admission fees and procession on the day itself alongside other entrants. It is my view that a proportion of the cultural and economic capital of arts organisations and institutions that seek to use carnival as a vocabulary for the delivery of policy or public engagement should also be directed in support of a range of further vernacular instrumentalities. These could include:

- Contributing to hire and licensing costs for the general use of public halls, meeting rooms, function rooms and outdoor spaces during Carnival.
- Promoting self-programming micro-venues as above, with professional technical production support.
- Contributing to local fundraising during carnival, in order to facilitate economic returns for participating vernacular groups and venues and to create a sustainable festive Carnival economy.
- The provision of spectacles as a stimulus for audience development and vernacular participation in Carnival.
- Permissive (free) licensing for domestic celebrations and street parties during Carnival.<sup>87</sup>

---

87 The Royal Wedding of 2011 prompted Prime Minister David Cameron to make a similar suggestion: 'David Cameron has urged the public to ignore council "pen-pushers" - and to go ahead and throw royal wedding street parties. The Prime Minister hit out at red tape and bureaucracy and urged people to celebrate, as he would be in Downing Street... Mr Cameron dismissed any attempts by local authorities to force people into compiling rafts of paperwork for their party... "These pen pushers and busybodies are completely wrong. They have no right to stop you from having a party. "Let me put it like this: I am the Prime Minister and I am telling you if you want to have a street party, you go ahead and have one."

<http://news.sky.com/story/848459/pm-pen-pushers-cant-stop-your-royal-party>

Accessed 14.4.2014

- Dressing public spaces and procession routes for Carnival with flags, banners and illuminations via participatory arts projects.
- Encouraging genuine site-specificity through cultural performances that are non transferrable, by-place and for-place.
- Focusing education and participatory workshops for props and costumes on the Carnival procession, in order to boost walking entries and float making.
- Participating in circuit carnival to develop local cultural exchange and reciprocity.
- Using local arts infrastructures to support Carnival marketing and publicity.

#### **8:4 Last words:**

This thesis has analysed ethnographic data gathered during participant observation within two vernacular town carnivals in East Devon and Dorset during 2012 and within the professional *Battle for the Winds* street performance that was staged as part of the *Maritime Mix* programme of the 2012 Cultural Olympiad at Weymouth. The thesis presented qualitative perspectives with regard to the cultural performance of carnival in the fieldwork area, in order to analyse the ‘performativity’ of carnival in these contexts: how it enacts and embodies a range of instrumentalities with regard to notions of community, culture and place.

The thesis has unpacked the ‘performance efficacy’ of carnival within the wider political and cultural landscape of the UK in the early 21st century, and has revealed the increasing influence of institutional policy on its aesthetics and cultural performance. By way of contrast, the thesis has also asserted the value of vernacular carnivalesque street performance as a contestation of hegemonic notions of ‘art’, ‘place’ and ‘culture’. The ethnographies of both vernacular and professional carnival practice presented in the thesis have shown how the instrumentalities of carnival are employed as cultural performances and as symbolic constructions of place, power and policy. These ethnographies reveal the contradictory ‘efficacy’ of carnival: how it functions both as a symbolic expression of a

progressive, rhizomatic sense of place and also as a normative performance of vertical symbolic power and place-identity.

The thesis has offered a cultural geography of carnival as praxis in the south west UK, locating it within specific geographical, historical and socio-cultural contexts which have developed since the late 19<sup>th</sup> century. It has also offered a productive contribution to the emerging dialogue between Cultural Geography and Performance Studies through its analysis of the performativities of participants' affective, carnivalesque experience: an analysis which articulates how people ritualise and perform the multiple boundaries between individual and community identities through carnival. Further, the thesis has considered the means by which people present and enact particular symbolic representations of place and identity through their carnival performances, both in professional and non-professional contexts.

The thesis has framed these ethnographies within a critique of carnival practice that reflects the contested geographies of the 'creative economy'. It has demonstrated how culture-led processes of policy enactment are increasingly critical influences within carnival and arts development in rural and small-town contexts and within place-based strategies of public engagement. Further, the thesis has considered the effects that this hegemony has on 'vernacular' practices of carnival, adding a further voice to those cultural geographers who warn about the diminishing public space which is now available to people for spontaneous, 'non-productive' carnival festivity in the context of globalised late capitalism and 'applied' culture.

It is my hope that the qualitative understanding which arises from these ethnographies will offer a foundation for the renewal of processes that bring arts practice and cultural democracy together. These are imagined processes that support, rather than compete with, vernacular expressions of local festive culture, and that thereby develop 'a concept of

vernacular art whereby we respond continually to local demand... generating a social poetry of a high order within a very specific community context' (Fox, J. in Kershaw, 1991: 249).

## Bibliography

- Abrahams, R. (1981) Shouting Match at the Border: The Folklore of Display Events, in Bauman, R. and Abrahams, RD. (eds.) *And other Neighbourly Names: Social Process and Cultural Image in Texas Folklore*, Austin: University of Texas Press: 303-321.
- ACE (2008) *New Landscapes: Outdoor Arts Development Plan 2008-2012*, London, Arts Council England.
- Adorno, T. (1978) On the social situation of music. *Telos*, 35: 128-164.
- (2001) *The culture industry: Selected essays on mass culture*. Hove, Psychology Press.
- Adorno, T. & Horkheimer, M.
- (1972 [1944]) *Dialectic of Enlightenment*, trans. Cumming, J. New York: Continuum Books
- Adorno, T. & Rabinbach, A.
- (1975) Culture industry reconsidered. *New German Critique*, 12-19.
- Agar, M. (1980) *The Professional Stranger. An Informal Introduction to Ethnography*. New York, Academic Press.
- Amkpa, A. (1993) Floating signification, *Hybrid*, 3: 5–6, in Nurse, (1999): 677.
- Anderson, B. (2009) Affective atmospheres. *Emotion, Space and Society* 2, 77–81
- Anderson, B. & Harrison, P.
- (2010) *Taking-place: non-representational theories and geography*, Farnham, Ashgate.
- Anderton, C: (2011) Music festival sponsorship: between commerce and carnival, *Arts Marketing: An International Journal*, 1:2:145-158.
- Ansorge, P. (1975) *Disrupting the spectacle: five years of experimental and fringe theatre in Britain*, Pitman, London.
- Aronowitz, S. (1981) *The Crisis in Historical Materialism: Class, Politics, and Culture in Marxist Theory*, Praeger, New York, in Limón J E. (1983): 37
- Artaud, A (1938 / 1993) *The Theater and Its Double*, Victor Corti, trans. London: Calder.
- Audit Commission
- (13/4/10) 'NI 11 Engagement in the arts,'  
<http://www.audit-commission.gov.uk/localgov/audit/nis/Pages/NI011engagementinthearts.aspx>

Website accessed 14<sup>th</sup> March, 2011,

- Austin, J. L. (1962) *How to do things with words*, Cambridge, MA: Harvard UP.
- Bachelard, G. (1994) *The Poetics of Space*, trans. Maria Jolas, Boston, Beacon Press.
- Bain, A. (2010) Creative suburbs. Cultural 'popcorn' pioneering in multi-purpose spaces. In Edensor, T., Leslie, D., Millington, S., & Rantisi, N. (eds) (2010). *Spaces of Vernacular Creativity: Rethinking the Cultural Economy*. Routledge. London.
- Bakhtin, M (1981) *The dialogic imagination: Four essays*. University of Texas Press.
- (1984) *Rabelais and his world*. Bloomington, Indiana University Press.
- (1986) *Speech genres and other late essays*. trans. by Vern W. McGee. Austin, Tx: University of Texas Press.
- Bakhtin M & Voloshinov V
- (1994) Freudianism: A Critical Sketch, in Morris P. (ed) *The Bakhtin Reader: selected writings of Bakhtin, Medvedev and Voloshinov*, London, Arnold: 45
- Barba, E. (1979) *The Floating Islands*, Holstebro, Denmark, Odin Theatre Forlag. In Cohen-Cruz, J. (1998) *Radical street performance: an international anthology*, London, Routledge: 187.
- Baudrillard, J. (1983) *Simulations*. Paul Foss, Paul Patton and Philip Beitchman, trans. New York: Wiley, Blackwell.
- Baxter, J. & Eyles, J.
- (1997) Evaluating qualitative research in social geography: establishing rigour in interview analysis. *Transactions of the Institute of the British Geographers* 22(4), 505-25.
- Beeman, W. (1993) The Anthropology of Theater and Spectacle, *Annual Review of Anthropology*, 22: 369-393
- Bell, C. and Newby, H.
- (1971) *Community Studies*, London: Unwin.
- Bender, B. (1992) Theorising Landscapes, and the Prehistoric Landscapes of Stonehenge, *Man, New Series*, 27:4: 735-755.
- Benjamin, W. (1968) The Storyteller: Reflections on the Works of Nikolai Leskov, in Arendt H. (ed.) *Walter Benjamin, Illuminations*, New York: Harcourt, Brace & World: 83-109.
- Berger, J. (1968) The nature of mass demonstrations, *New Society*, 1:1: 754-755.

- Berleant-Schiller, R.
- (1991) Hidden places and Creole forms: naming the Barbudan landscape, *The Professional Geographer*, 43: 92–101
- Bhabha, H. (1994) *The Location of Culture*, London, Routledge, in Nurse, K (1999) Globalization and Trinidad Carnival: diaspora, hybridity and identity in global culture, *Cultural Studies*, 13: 4: 676.
- Blumer, H. (1937) Social psychology. In: Schmidt, E.P. (Ed.), *Man and Society*. Prentice-Hall, Englewood Cliffs, NJ.
- Boje, D M. (2001) Carnavalesque Resistance to Global Spectacle: A Critical Postmodern Theory of Public Administration, *Administrative Theory & Praxis*, 23: 3: 431-458.
- Böhme G, (2002) The space of bodily presence and space as a medium of representation”, in Hård, M., Lösch, A., Verdicchio, D. (eds). *Transforming Spaces: The Topological Turn in Technology Studies*.
- Borda, J. (2002) The women’s suffrage parades of 1910–1913: Possibilities and limitations of an early feminist rhetorical strategy. *Western Journal of Communication* 66.1: 25-52.
- Bourdieu, P. (1993) *The field of cultural production: essays on art and literature*. Randal Johnson (ed.) Cambridge: Polity Press.
- Browne K. (2007) A party with politics? (Re)making LGBTQ Pride spaces in Dublin and Brighton. *Social & Cultural Geography* 8(1): 63-87.
- Brecht, S. (1988) Peter Schumann’s Bread and Puppet Theatre, *The Drama Review*, 14: 30: 44-90.
- Bridgwater (2012) <http://www.bridgwatcarnival.org.uk/history.php>, Accessed 6.8.13
- Bristol, M. (1985) *Carnival and Theater: plebeian culture and the structure of authority in Renaissance England*, New York; London, Methuen.
- Bryman A. (2001) *Social research methods*, Oxford, Oxford University Press.
- Buff, R. (1997) Mas in Brooklyn: immigration, race and the cultural politics of carnival. In Adjaye and Andrews, (eds.) *Language, Rhythm, and Sound: Black Popular Cultures into the Twenty-First Century*, Pittsburgh, PA: University of Pittsburgh Press: 221–40.
- Bull, J. (1984) *New British political dramatists: Howard Brenton, David Hare, Trevor Griffiths and David Edgar*, London, Macmillan.
- Burgess, J., Limb, M. & Harrison, C.M.

- (1988) Exploring environmental values through the medium of small groups. 1: Theory and Practice. *Environment and Planning A*, 20: 309-26.
- (1988) Exploring environmental values through the medium of small groups. 2: Illustrations of a group at work. *Environment and Planning A*, 20: 457-476.
- Burrow, E J. (1911) *The official guide to Seaton and district 1910-1911: including a map of the district and 14 illustrations*. Burrow, Cheltenham.
- Buttimer, A. (1976) Grasping the dynamism of lifeworld, *Annals of the Association of American Geographers*, 66: 277–292.
- Butler, J. (1988) Performative acts and gender constitution: An essay in phenomenology and feminist theory. *Theatre Journal*, 40: 4: 519-531.
- (1990) *Gender Trouble*, London: Routledge.
- (1993) *Bodies that Matter*, London: Routledge.
- Campbell, S. (1988) Carnival, Calypso, and Class Struggle in Nineteenth Century Trinidad. *History Workshop*, 26: 1-27.
- Carey, P. & Sutton, S. (2004) Community development through participatory arts: Lessons learned from a community arts and regeneration project in South Liverpool, *Community Development Journal*, 39: 2: 123–134
- Carlson, M. (1996) *Performance: a critical introduction*, New York, Routledge.
- (1989) *Places of performance: the semiotics of theatre architecture*. Ithaca; London, Cornell University Press.
- Caputo, J. D. (2007) *The weakness of God: A theology of the event*. Bloomington; London, Indiana University Press.
- Carter, J. & Masters, D. (1998) Arts and the Natural Heritage. *Scottish Natural Heritage Review* (109)
- Caven, B (2013) *Families outraged as carnival float 'mocks Jimmy Savile victims'*. Daily Mail, 8 August, 2013.  
<http://www.dailymail.co.uk/news/article-2386624/Jimmy-Saville-carnival-float-Common-Riding-mocks-victims-say-families.html>  
 Accessed: 11.11.13
- Chrisman, NJ.

- (1976) Secret societies and the ethics of urban fieldwork. In Rynkiewicz, MA; Spradley, JP. (eds.) *Ethics and Anthropology: Dilemmas in Fieldwork*, New York, Wiley and Sons: 135-47.
- Clapp, S. (14/05/06) 'Jumbo lands in the middle of the city,' <http://www.guardian.co.uk/stage/2006/may/14/theatre1>. Website accessed 14th March, 2011,
- Clark, K. & Holquist, M
- (1984) *Mikhail Bakhtin*. Cambridge, Mass; London. The Belknap Press of Harvard University Press.
- Clements, P. (2011) The Recuperation of Participatory Arts Practices. *International Journal of Art & Design Education*, 30:1: 18-30.
- Clifford N. & Valentine G
- (2003) *Key methods in geography*, London, Sage.
- Cloke, P., Philo, C., Sadler, D.
- (1991) *Approaching human geography*, London, Chapman.
- Cohen, A.
- (1980) Drama and politics in the development of a London Carnival, *Man*, 15: 65-87
- (1982) A polyethnic London Carnival as a contested cultural performance, *Ethnic and Racial Studies* 5: 23-41
- Cohen, A. P.
- (1982) ed. *Belonging. Identity and social organization in British rural cultures*, Manchester: University of Manchester Press, in Smith ,MK.
- (2001) *Community*, Encyclopaedia of Informal Education. <http://www.infed.org/community/community.htm>  
Website accessed 23.12.13
- (1985) *The Symbolic Construction of Community*, London, Tavistock (now Routledge).
- Cohen-Cruz, J. (1998) *Radical street performance: an international anthology*. London: Routledge.
- Conquergood, D. (2002) Interdisciplinary Interventions and Radical Research, *TDR / The Drama Review*, 46: 2: 145-156.
- Cook, I. (1998) Participant observation, in Flowerdew, R. and Martin, D. eds. *Methods in human geography*. London, Harlow: 127-50.
- Cook, I. & Crang, P.
- (2004) Doing ethnographies. In Cook, I.J., Cloke, P., Crang, P., Philo, C., Goodwin, M. and Painter, J. (eds.) *Practising human geography*. London, Sage: 169-205.
- Corbin, J. & Strauss, A.

- (1990) *Basics of Qualitative Research: Grounded Theory Procedure and Techniques*. Sage, Newbury Park, London.
- Cosgrove, D. (1984) *Social formation and symbolic landscape*, London, Croom Helm.
- Cottrell, M. (1992) St. Patrick's Day Parades in Nineteenth-Century Toronto: A Study of Immigrant Adjustment and Elite Control', *Histoire Sociale/Social History*, 5,49: 57–73.
- Craig, G. (1998). Community development in a global context. *Community Development Journal*, 33:1: 2-17. In Kay, A. (2000) Art and community development: the role the arts have in regenerating communities. *Community Development Journal*, 35:4: 414-424.
- Craig, H. (1914) The Corpus Christi Procession and the Corpus Christi Play. *The Journal of English and Germanic Philology* 13, 4: 589-602.
- Crang, P. (1992) The politics of polyphony: reconfigurations in geographical authority. *Environment and Planning D: Society and Space*. 10:5: 527 – 549.
- Creswell, JW. (1998) *Qualitative inquiry and research design: choosing among five traditions*. London, Sage Publications.
- Cressy, D. (1989) *Bonfires and bells: national memory and the Protestant calendar in Elizabethan and Stuart England*, Berkeley and Los Angeles: University of California Press.
- Cresswell, T. (1996) *In Place/Out of Place: Geography, Ideology and Transgression*, University of Minnesota Press.
- (2004) *Place: a short introduction*. Malden, MA; Oxford, Blackwell.
- Crow, G. and Allan, G.
- (1994) *Community Life. An introduction to local social relations*, Hemel Hempstead: Harvester Wheatsheaf, in Smith, MK. (2001) *Community*, Encyclopaedia of Informal Education. <http://www.infed.org/community/community.htm> Website accessed 23.12.13
- Dabydeen, D. (1988) Man to pan. *New Statesman & Society*, 26: 40–41, in Nurse, K (1999) Globalization and Trinidad Carnival: diaspora, hybridity and identity in global culture, *Cultural Studies*, 13: 4: 675.
- Daniels, S. (1985) Arguments for a humanistic geography, in R J Johnston (ed) *The future of geography*, London, Methuen.
- Daskalaki, M. & Mould, O.

- (2013) Beyond urban subcultures: urban subversions as rhizomatic social formations. *International Journal of Urban and Regional Research*, 37:1: 1-18.
- Dastur, F. (2000) Phenomenology of the event: Waiting and surprise, *Hypatia*, 15:4:178-189.
- Davis, C. (1954) Field techniques. In James, P. and Jones, C. (eds.) *American Geography, Inventory and Prospect*. Syracuse, Syracuse University Press for the AAG.
- Davies, E. & Pugh B (2011) Performing Mystery Plays in 21st-century York, in Rogerson, M. (ed) *The York Mystery Plays: Performance in the City*, York Medieval Press.
- DCLG (2007) National Indicator 11. In *The New Performance Framework for Local Authorities & Local Authority Partnerships: Single Set of National Indicators*. London, HM Government.
- DCMS (2008) *NI 11 DCMS Technical Note*  
[http://www.culture.gov.uk/images/publications/Technical\\_Note\\_NI11\\_FINAL.pdf](http://www.culture.gov.uk/images/publications/Technical_Note_NI11_FINAL.pdf)  
 Website accessed 14<sup>th</sup> March, 2011,
- Dean. A. (2003) *Street arts: a user's guide*. Independent Street Arts Network, London.
- Debord G (1983) *Society of the Spectacle*. Detroit, Black and Red.
- De Cruz, C. (2005) *An Open Letter to Participants, Münster, Internationale Street Arts Konferenz*  
<http://www.open-air-theater.net/htcms/de/konferenz-2005/feedback.html>.  
 Website accessed 8<sup>th</sup> February, 2011,
- De Groot, J. (2012) 'I am not a trained historian. I improvise.' Interview with Jeremy Deller. *Rethinking History* 16,4: 587-595.
- Delamont, S (2004) Ethnography and participant observation. *Qualitative research practice* (2004): 217-229.
- Deleuze, G., & Guattari, F.  
 (1987) A Thousand Plateaus. *Journal of Interdisciplinary History*. 19: 657. University of Minnesota Press.
- Delyser, D. (2010) *The SAGE handbook of qualitative geography*, London, SAGE.
- Derrida, J (1978) *Writing and difference*. Translated [from the French] by Alan Bass. London: Routledge & Kegan Paul.

- Dodd, L. (2008) *Parades, Pickets, and Prison: Alice Paul and the Virtues of Unruly Constitutional Citizenship*. *JL & Pol.* 24:339.
- Dorset CC (2000) *Nomination of the Dorset and East Devon Coast for inclusion in the World Heritage List*. Published by Dorset County Council on behalf of Dorset County Council, Devon County Council and the Dorset Coast Forum.
- Dowler, L. (2001) Fieldwork in the trenches: participant observation in a conflict area. In Limb, M. and Dwyer, C. (eds.) *Qualitative methodologies for geographers: issues and debates*. London: Arnold: 153–64.
- Driver, F. (2001) *Geography militant: cultures of exploration and Empire*. Malden, MA, Blackwell.
- Eaglestone, R. (2006) The Sultan's Elephant, *Contemporary Theatre Review*. 16:4: 523-524.
- Eagleton, T. (1981) *Walter Benjamin: or towards a revolutionary criticism*. London: Verso Editions: NLB.
- Edensor T (2010) Walking in rhythms: place, regulation, style and the flow of experience. *Visual Studies*, 25.1: 69-79.
- (2012) Illuminated atmospheres: anticipating and reproducing the flow of affective experience in Blackpool" *Environment and Planning D: Society and Space* 30, 6, 1103 – 1122.
- Edensor, T & Millington S:
- (2009) Illuminations, Class Identities and the Contested Landscapes of Christmas, *Sociology*, 43: 103-123
- Edensor, T., Leslie, D., Millington, S., & Rantisi, N. (eds.)
- (2010) *Spaces of Vernacular Creativity: Rethinking the Cultural Economy*. London, Routledge.
- Edgar, D. (1988) *The second time as farce: reflections on the drama of mean times*. London, Lawrence & Wishart.
- Eldridge, A., & Roberts, M.
- (2008) A comfortable night out? Alcohol, drunkenness and inclusive town centres. *Area*, 40: 3: 365-374.
- Emerson, R. M., Fretz, R. I., & Shaw, L. L.
- (1995) *Writing ethnographic fieldnotes*. Chicago, University of Chicago Press.
- England, K. (1994) Getting personal: reflexivity, positionality, and feminist research. *The Professional Geographer*, 46:1: 80-91.

- Entrikin, J. (1991) *The betweenness of place: Towards a geography of modernity*, in Barnes, T. and Gregory, D. (eds.) *Reading Human Geography*. London, Arnold: 299-314.
- Escobar, A. (2001) Culture Sits in Places. Reflections on Globalism and Subaltern Strategies of Globalization. *Political Geography*, 20: 139-174.
- ESRC (2010) 'Framework for Research Ethics (2010)' [http://www.esrc.ac.uk/\\_images/Framework\\_for\\_Research\\_Ethics\\_tcm8-4586.pdf](http://www.esrc.ac.uk/_images/Framework_for_Research_Ethics_tcm8-4586.pdf)  
Website accessed 6<sup>th</sup> May, 2011,
- Evans, G. (2010) Creative spaces and the art of urban living. In Edensor, T., Leslie, D., Millington, S., & Rantisi, N. (eds) (2010) *Spaces of Vernacular Creativity: Rethinking the Cultural Economy*. London, Routledge.
- Eyles, J. & Smith, DM.  
(1988) *Qualitative methods in human geography*. Cambridge, Polity Press.
- Falk, F. (1977) Bread and Puppet: Domestic Resurrection Circus. *Performing Arts Journal*, 2:1: 19-30.
- Featherstone, M. (1991) *Consumer Culture and Postmodernism*. Thousand Oaks: Sage.
- Ferraby, R. (forthcoming) *Stone Exposures: Geobiographies of Stone on the Jurassic Coast* (2011-2014). University of Exeter.
- Fiske, J. (1991) *Understanding popular culture*. London, Routledge.
- Flowerdew, R. and Martin, D.  
(2005) (eds.) *Methods in human geography*. London, Harlow: 127-50.
- Florida, R. L. (2002) *The Rise of the Creative Class*. Basic Books.
- Foddy, W. (1993) *Constructing questions for interviews and questionnaires: theory and practice in social research*. Cambridge, Cambridge University Press.
- Foucault, M (1979) *Discipline and punish: the birth of the prison*. Harmondsworth, Penguin.
- Foucault, M and Miskowiec, J.  
1986) Of Other Spaces: Utopias and Heterotopias. *Diacritics*, 16.1: 22-27.
- Fox, J. & Gill, S. (1985)

Welfare State International: Seventeen Years on the Streets, *The Drama Review*: 29:3: 117-126

Fox, J. (1991) *A Plea for Poetry*. London, National Arts and Media Strategy Unit.

(2002) *Eyes On Stalks*, London, Methuen.

Fox-Gotham, K.

(2011) Contrasts of Carnival, Mardi Gras Between the Modern and the Postmodern, in Kivisto, P. (ed.) (2011). *Illuminating social life: classical and contemporary theory revisited*. Pine Forge Press.

Frazer, E. (1999) *The Problem of Communitarian Politics: Unity and Conflict*, Oxford: Oxford University Press.

Gardiner, M (1993) Ecology and Carnival: Traces of a "Green" Social Theory in the Writings of M. M. Bakhtin. *Theory and Society*, 22: 6: 765-812

Geertz, C. (1973) Thick Description: Toward an Interpretive Theory of Culture. In Lincoln, Y.S. & Denzin, N.K. (eds.) (2003) *Turning Points in Qualitative Research: Tying Knots in a Handkerchief*. AltaMira Press

(1983) *Local knowledge: further essays in interpretive anthropology*. New York, Basic Books.

Georgiou, D (2012) *The Drab Suburban Streets Were Metamorphosed into a Veritable Fairyland': Spectacle, Ritual and Festivity in the Ilford Hospital Carnival, 1905-1914*  
<https://historyspot.org.uk/podcasts/sport-and-leisure-history/drab-suburban-streets-were-metamorphosed-veritable-fairyland> , Accessed 9.8.13

Gibson, C., Brennan-Horley, C. & Walmsley, J.

(2010) Mapping vernacular creativity: the extent and diversity of rural festivals in Australia. In Edensor, T., Leslie, D., Millington, S., & Rantisi, N. (eds.) (2010) *Spaces of Vernacular Creativity: Rethinking the Cultural Economy*. London, Routledge.

Gibson, C & Kong, L

(2005) Cultural economy: a critical review. *Progress in Human Geography*. 29: 541-561

Giddens, A. (1984) *The Constitution of Society: outline of the theory of Structuration*. Cambridge, Polity Press.

Gilbert, M. (1994) The politics of location: doing feminist research at 'home'. *The Professional Geographer*. 46: 90-96.

Gilroy, P. (1987) There Ain't No Black in the Union Jack: The Cultural Politics of Race and Nation. In Jackson, P. (1988) Street life: the politics of Carnival, *Environment and Planning D: Society and Space*, 6: 2: 213

- Glaser, B. (1978) *Theoretical Sensitivity*. Sociology Press, Mill Valley, CA.
- Glaser, BG. & Strauss, AL.  
(1967) *The discovery of grounded theory: strategies for qualitative research*. Chicago, Aldine.
- Gluckman M (1965) *Custom and conflict in Africa*. Oxford: Blackwell.
- Goffman, E. (1968) *Asylums: essays on the social situation of mental patients and other inmates*. Harmondsworth, Penguin.
- Goheen, P. (1990) Symbols in the Streets: Parades in Victorian Urban Canada. *Urban History Review*, 18: 3: 237–243.
- Gooch, S. (1984) *All together now: an alternative view of theatre and the community*. London, Methuen.
- Gosling, T (1991) *Around Seaton and Sidmouth in old photographs*, Stroud: Alan Sutton.
- Gregson, N., & Rose, G.  
(2000) Taking Butler elsewhere: performativities, spatialities and subjectivities. *Environment and Planning D*, 18: 4: 433-452.
- Grimes, R. (2002) *Deeply into the Bone: Re-Inventing Rites of Passage*. University of California Press.
- Gunn, S. (2000) *The Public Culture of the Victorian Middle Class: Ritual and Authority and the English Industrial City, 1840–1914*. Manchester and New York: Manchester University Press.
- Gutzmore, C. (1993) Carnival, the state and the black masses in the United Kingdom. In James and Harris, (eds.) *Inside Babylon: The Caribbean Diaspora in Britain*, London: Verso.
- Hadfield, P. (2006) *Bar wars: contesting the night in contemporary British cities*. Oxford: Oxford University Press.
- Hall, F. (2002) *Strategy on Street Arts*. London, Arts Council England.
- Hammersley, M. & Atkinson, P.  
(1995) *Ethnography: principles in practice*. London, Routledge.
- Haraway, D. (1988) Situated knowledges: the science question in feminism and the privilege of partial perspectives. *Feminist Studies*, 14:3: 575–599.
- Harré, R. (1979) *Social being: a theory for social psychology*. Oxford: Blackwell.
- Harrison, M. (1988) *Crowds and history: mass phenomena in English towns, 1790-1835*. Cambridge University Press.
- Harrison-Pepper, S.

- (1990) *Drawing a Circle in the Square: Street Performing in New York's Washington Square Park*. Jackson, Miss. University Press of Mississippi.
- Harvey, D. (1996) From Space to Place and Back Again, in *Justice, Nature and the Geography of Difference*. Cambridge: Blackwell.
- (2007) *A brief history of neoliberalism*. Oxford: Oxford University Press.
- Harvey, DC (2014): Heritage and scale: settings, boundaries and relations. *International Journal of Heritage Studies*
- Harvey, DC (et al) (2007) Parading the Cornish subject: Methodist Sunday schools in West Cornwall, c. 1830-1930, *Journal of Historical Geography*, 33:1: 24-44.
- Harvey, S. (1998) Marching for the Vote: Remembering the Woman Suffrage Parade of 1913. *The Women's History Resource Guide*, Washington, DC, Library of Congress.
- Hawkins, H: (2010) [Turn your trash into... Rubbish, art and politics. Richard Wentworth's geographical imagination.](#) *Social and Cultural Geography*.11: 8:12: 805-827.
- Haylett, C. (2001) Illegitimate Subjects? Abject Whites, Neoliberal Modernisation, and Middle Class Multiculturalism. *Environment and Planning D: Society and Space*. 19:3: 351–70.
- Heath, H. & Cowley, S (2004) Developing a grounded theory approach: a comparison of Glaser and Strauss. *International Journal of Nursing Studies*: 141-150.
- Heidegger M (1971) *Building, dwelling, thinking. Poetry, Language and Thought*. New York, Harper and Row.
- Hernandez-Ramdwar, C. (1996) De-coding Caribana: the contradiction of a Canadian carnival. Caribbean Studies Association, XXI Annual Conference, San Juan, Puerto Rico. In Nurse, (1999): 677.
- Herrman, P. (2000) *Playing With Fire: Arts on the Streets of Manchester*. Manchester, Manchester International Arts.
- Hetherington, K. (1998) *Expressions of Identity: Space, Performance, Politics*. London, Sage.
- Hill, L. & Paris, H. eds.

- (2006) *Performance and Place*. Basingstoke, Palgrave Macmillan.
- Hilton, J. (1987) *Performance*. Basingstoke, Macmillan.
- Hobsbawm, E. & Ranger, T.  
(eds.)(1983) *The invention of tradition*. Cambridge, Cambridge University Press.
- Hoggett, P. ed. (1997) *Contested Communities: experiences, struggles, policies*. Bristol: Policy Press
- Holden, J. (2008) *Democratic Culture: Opening up the arts to everyone*. Demos.
- Holloway, J. & Kneale, J.  
(2000) Mikhail Bakhtin. *Thinking Space*, 9: 71.
- Holman Jones, S.  
(1998) "Kaleidoscope notes": writing women's music and organizational culture. *Qualitative Inquiry*, 4: 148-177.
- Holstein, J. A., & Gubrium, J. F.  
(1997). Active interviewing. In Silverman, D. (ed.) *Qualitative research: theory, method and practice*. London, Sage. 113-129.
- Hooks, Bell (1984) *Feminist theory: from margin to center*. Boston, MA, South End Press.
- Howes, D. (1991) Sense and non-sense in contemporary ethno/graphic theory and practice. *Culture*. 11: 51-62.
- Howison, D. & Bentley, B.  
(1960) The North-West Morris: A General Survey. *Journal of the English Folk Dance and Song Society*: 42-55
- <http://www.loc.gov/loc/lcib/9803/suffrage.html> Accessed 3.9.14
- Hunt, A. (1976) *Hopes for great happenings: alternatives in education and theatre*. London, Eyre Methuen,.
- ISAN (2003) *UK Street Arts: The next step forward*. London, ISAN
- Itzin, C. (1980) *Stages in the Revolution: political theatre in Britain since 1968*. London, Eyre Methuen.
- Jackson, JB. (1999) *Landscape in Sight: Looking at America*. Yale University Press.
- Jackson, M. (2001) *In search of Chunky Dunsters: a cultural strategy for the South West*. Culture South West.
- Jackson, P. (1988) Street life: the politics of Carnival, *Environment and Planning D: Society and Space*. 6:2: 213–227.

(1992) The politics of the streets: A geography of Caribana, *Political Geography*. 11:2: 130-151.

(2001) Making sense of qualitative data. In Limb, M. and Dwyer, C. (eds.) *Qualitative methodologies for geographers: issues and debates*. Arnold, co-published in the U.S.A. by Oxford University Press, London, New York: 199-214.

Jameson, F. (1984) *Postmodernism or, the Cultural Logic of Late Capitalism*. Durham, NC: Duke University Press.

Jarman, N (1998) Regulating rights and managing public order: Parade disputes and the peace process, 1995-1998. *Fordham International Law Journal*: 22, 4: 1414-1439

Jayne, M., Valentine, G., & Holloway, S. L.

(2008) Geographies of alcohol, drinking and drunkenness: a review of progress. *Progress in Human Geography*. 32: 2: 247-263.

(2010) Emotional, embodied and affective geographies of alcohol, drinking and drunkenness. *Transactions of the Institute of British Geographers*. 35:4: 540-554.

(2011) *Alcohol, drinking, drunkenness: (dis)orderly spaces*. Farnham: Ashgate.

Jermyn, H. (2001) *Street Arts and Circus: A Snapshot: Size activities & relationship with the funding system*. London, Arts Council England.

Jowell, T. (14/6/06) 'Speech by Culture Secretary Tessa Jowell to the IFACCA World Summit on Arts & Culture, Newcastle Gateshead,' [http://webarchive.nationalarchives.gov.uk/+http://www.culture.gov.uk/global/press\\_notices/archive\\_2006/IFACCA\\_speech.htm?properties=%2C%2C%2C&print=true](http://webarchive.nationalarchives.gov.uk/+http://www.culture.gov.uk/global/press_notices/archive_2006/IFACCA_speech.htm?properties=%2C%2C%2C&print=true)  
Website accessed 17<sup>th</sup> March, 2011,

Juneja, R. (1988) The Trinidad Carnival: ritual, performance, spectacle, and symbol. *Journal of Popular Culture* 21:4: 87-99.

#### Jurassic Coast Arts Programme

(2007a) *The Jurassic Coast Arts Project* (2008 – 11). ACE, Grants for the Arts Project Proposal.

(2007b) *The Jurassic Coast Arts Strategy*.

(2008) 'How to Get Involved,' [www.eastdevonaonb.org.uk/.../HowToGetInvolved\\_JurassicArts\\_jul08.doc](http://www.eastdevonaonb.org.uk/.../HowToGetInvolved_JurassicArts_jul08.doc)

Website accessed 17th March, 2011

(2010a) *Planning a Festival of Carnivals*. Agenda document.

(2010b) *Planning a Festival of Carnivals*. Break-Out Group notes.

Katz, C. (1996) The expeditions of conjurers: ethnography, power and pretence. In Wolf, D.L. (ed.) *Feminist dilemmas in fieldwork*: 170-85

- Kay, A. (2000) Art and community development: the role the arts have in regenerating communities. *Community Development Journal*. 35:4: 414-424.
- Kelly, O. (1984) *Community, art and the state: storming the citadels*. London, Comedia.
- Kelly, O, Lock, J & Merkel, K  
(1986) *Culture and Democracy: The Manifesto*. London, Comedia and The Shelton Trust.
- Kershaw, B. (1991) King Lear's King Lear: radical Shakespeare for the nuclear age. *Critical Survey*, 3:3: 249-259.  
(1992) *The politics of performance: radical theatre as cultural intervention*. London; New York, Routledge.
- Kertzer, D (1988) *Ritual, politics and power*. New Haven; London: Yale University Press.
- Kirshenblatt-Gimblett, B. and McNamara, B.  
(1985) Processional Performance: An Introduction. *The Drama Review*, 29:3:2-5.
- Klein, B. (1992) Between the bums and the bellies of the multitude: civic pageantry and the problem of the audience in late Stuart London. *London Journal*. 17:18–26.
- Kobayashi, A., Preston, V. & Murnaghan, A.  
(2011) Place, affect, and transnationalism through the voices of Hong Kong immigrants to Canada. *Social and Cultural Geography*, 12: 871–888.
- Koerner, JL. (2004) Unmasking The World - Brueghel's Ethnography. *Common Knowledge*. 10.2: 220-251.
- Kotarba, J. (1998) Black men, black voices: the role of the producer in synthetic performance ethnography. *Qualitative Inquiry*. 4: 389-404.
- Kristeva, J. (1980) *Desire in language: A semiotic approach to literature and art*. New York: Columbia University Press, in Boje, D. (2001: 449).
- Labov, W. (1972) *Sociolinguistic Patterns*. Oxford: Blackwell
- Landry, C. (2000) *The Creative City: a toolkit for urban innovators*. London, Earthscan Publications.
- Landry, C. & Bianchini, F.  
(1995) *The Creative City*. London: Demos.

- Landry, C., & Bianchini, F.  
(2007) *Creative cities. A Toolkit for Urban Innovators*. London, Earthscan.
- Larsen, S. S. (1982) The Glorious Twelfth: the politics of legitimation in Kilbroney. *Belonging: Identity and Social Organisation in British Rural Cultures*. 278-291, in Cohen, A. (1985: 57)
- Laurier, E (1999) Geographies of talk: 'Max left a message for you. *Area*, 31:1: 35-48.  
(2003) Participant Observation. In Clifford N. & Valentine G (eds.) (2003) *Key methods in geography*. London, Sage: 133-147.
- Lawlor, C. (1993) The world turned upside down. *Hybrid*, 3: 2-4. In Nurse (1999): 679.
- Lee, D. & Newby H.  
(1983) *The Problem of Sociology: an introduction to the discipline*. In Smith, MK. (2001) *Community*, Encyclopaedia of Informal Education. <http://www.infed.org/community/community.htm>  
Website accessed 23.12.13
- Ley, D. (1974) The black inner city as frontier outpost: images and behavior of a Philadelphia neighbourhood. *Monograph Series*, No.7, Washington, D.C.: Association of American Geographers.
- Ley, D. and Mountz, A.  
(2001) Interpretation, representation, positionality: issues in field research in human geography. In Limb, M. and Dwyer, C. (eds.) *Qualitative methodologies for geographers: issues and debates*. Arnold, co-published in the U.S.A. by Oxford University Press, London, New York : 234-247.
- Limb, M. and Dwyer, C.  
(2001) *Qualitative methodologies for geographers: issues and debates*. Arnold, co-published in the U.S.A. by Oxford University Press, London, New York.
- Limón J E. (1983) Western Marxism and Folklore: A Critical Introduction. *The Journal of American Folklore*. 96: 379: 34-52.
- Lingis, A. (1994) *Foreign Bodies*. London, Routledge.
- Lippard, L. (1997) *The Lure of the Local: Senses of Place in a Multicultural Society*. New York, The New Press.
- Lloyd, S. (2002) Pleasing Spectacles and Elegant Dinners: Conviviality, Benevolence, and Charity Anniversaries in Eighteenth-Century London. *Journal of British Studies*. 41, 1: 23-57

- Lombardi-Satriani, L.  
(1974) Folklore as Culture of Contestation. *Journal of the Folklore Institute*. 2: 99-121.
- Lukes, S (1977) *Essays in social theory*, London, Macmillan.
- Lunacharsky, A (1973) On Literature and Art. In Clark, K. & Holquist, M (eds.) (1984) *Mikhail Bakhtin*. Cambridge, Mass; London: The Belknap Press of Harvard University Press: 313.
- Mac Giolla Choille, B  
(1975) Dublin Trades in Procession, 1864. *Saothar* 1.1: 18-30.
- Manning, F. (1983) Carnival and the West Indian diaspora. *The Round Table*. 286: 186–96, in Nurse (1999): 676.  
  
(1990) Overseas Caribbean carnivals: the arts and politics of a transnational celebration. In Lent, (ed.) *Caribbean Popular Culture*. Bowling Green, OH: Bowling Green University Popular Press: 20–36. In Nurse (1999): 676.
- Marcus, G.E. (1998) *Ethnography through Thick and Thin*, Princeton University Press.
- Marcus, L. (1989) *The politics of mirth: Jonson, Herrick, Milton, Marvell, and the defense of old holiday pastimes*. University of Chicago Press.
- Marcuse, H. (1964) *One Dimensional Man*. In Limón J E. (1983) Western Marxism and Folklore: A Critical Introduction. *The Journal of American Folklore*, 96: 379: 34-52.
- Markusen, A. (2010) Challenge, change and space in vernacular cultural practice. In Edensor, T., Leslie, D., Millington, S., & Rantisi, N. (eds.) (2010) *Spaces of Vernacular Creativity: Rethinking the Cultural Economy*. London, Routledge.
- Marston, S. (1988) Public rituals and community power: St Patrick's Day parades in Lowell, Massachusetts, 1841–1874. *Political Geography Quarterly*. 8: 255–69.
- Mascia-Lees, F  
(2011) Aesthetic embodiment and commodity capitalism. In: *A Companion to the Anthropology of the Body and Embodiment*, Wiley-Blackwell, 3-23.
- Mason, B. (1992) *Street theatre and other outdoor performance*. London; New York, Routledge.
- Mason, J. (1996) *Qualitative Researching*. London: Sage.
- Massey, D. (1997) A Global Sense of Place. In Barnes, T. and Gregory, D. (eds.) *Reading Human Geography*, London, Arnold. 315-323.
- Mattingly, D. J. and Falconer-Al-Hindi, K.

- (1995) Should women count? A context for the debate. *The Professional Geographer*. 47: 427–435.
- McDowell, L. (1992) Doing gender: feminism, feminists and research methods in human geography. *Transactions of the Institute of British Geographers*. 17: 399–416.
- McGrath, J. (1981) *The Cheviot, the Stag and the Black, Black Oil*. London, Methuen.
- (1990) *The bone won't break: on theatre and hope in hard times*. London, Methuen.
- McLean, H E. (2010) The politics of creative performance in public space: towards a critical geography of Toronto case studies. In Edensor, T., Leslie, D., Millington, S., & Rantisi, N. (eds) (2010). *Spaces of Vernacular Creativity: Rethinking the Cultural Economy*. London, Routledge
- McMillan, M. (1990) *Cultural Grounding: Live Art and Cultural Diversity: Action Research Project*. London: Arts Council of Great Britain. In Nurse (1999): 677.
- Micklem, D. (2006) *Street Arts Healthcheck*. London, Arts Council England.
- Miles, M. (2010) Art goes AWOL. In Edensor, T., Leslie, D., Millington, S., & Rantisi, N. (eds) (2010) *Spaces of Vernacular Creativity: Rethinking the Cultural Economy*. London, Routledge.
- Miles, R. (1978) Between Two Cultures? The Case of Rastafarianism. *Working Papers on Ethnic Relations*, 10, Research Unit on Ethnic Relations, Social Science Research Council, Bristol. In Jackson, P. (1988) Street life: the politics of Carnival, *Environment and Planning D: Society and Space*. 6: 2: 213.
- Miles, S. & Paddison, R.
- (2005) The Rise and Rise of Culture-led Urban Regeneration. *Urban Studies*. 42: 5-6: 833-839.
- Miller, D. (2006) Things that Bright Up the Place. *Home Cultures* 3(3): 235–49. In Edensor, T and Millington S: (2009) Illuminations, Class Identities and the Contested Landscapes of Christmas. *Sociology*. 43: 113.
- Miller, M. (2013) *Testing times: Fighting culture's corner in an age of austerity*. <https://www.gov.uk/government/speeches/testing-times-fighting-cultures-corner-in-an-age-of-austerity>, Accessed 26.4.13.
- Mohammad, R. (2001) 'Insiders' and/or 'outsiders': positionality, theory and praxis. In Limb, M. and Dwyer, C. (eds.) *Qualitative Methodologies for Geographers: Issues and Debates*. London: Arnold: 101-120.
- Morgan, D.L. (1997) *Focus groups as qualitative research*. London: Sage.

- Morris P. (ed) (1994) *The Bakhtin Reader: selected writings of Bakhtin, Medvedev and Voloshinov*. London, Arnold
- Nancy, J. L. (1991) *The inoperative community* (Vol. 76). U of Minnesota Press.
- Newman, T., Curtis, K., & Stephens, J.  
(2003) Do community-based arts projects result in social gains? A review of the literature. *Community Development Journal*. 38:4: 310-322.
- Nunley, J. & Bettelheim, J.  
(1988) *Caribbean Festival Arts*. In Nurse, K (1999) Globalization and Trinidad Carnival: diaspora, hybridity and identity in global culture. *Cultural Studies*. 13: 4: 675.
- Nurse, K (1999) Globalization and Trinidad Carnival: diaspora, hybridity and identity in global culture. *Cultural Studies* 13: 4: 661-690.
- O'Leary, P. (2008) Processions, power and public space: Corpus Christi at Cardiff, 1872-1914. *Welsh History Review*, 24,1: 77-101.
- Onion, R. (2008) Reclaiming the machine: an introductory look at steampunk in everyday practice. *Neo-Victorian Studies*. 1.1: 138-163.
- Oppenheim, A (1992) *Questionnaire design, interviewing and attitude measurement*. London, Pinter.
- Owusu, K. (1986) *The Struggle for Black Arts in Britain*, Comedia, London. In Jackson, P. (1988) Street life: the politics of Carnival. *Environment and Planning D: Society and Space*. 6: 2: 216
- Parker, A. & Sedgwick, E.  
(1995) *Performativity and Performance*. New York; London, Routledge.
- Parr, H (2001) Negotiating different ethnographic contexts and building geographical knowledge: empirical examples from mental health research. In Limb, M. and Dwyer, C. (eds.) *Qualitative Methodologies for Geographers: Issues and Debates*. London, Arnold. 181-195.
- Pearson, M. (2001) *Theatre/archaeology*. London, Routledge.
- Pearson, MP., Pollard, J., Richards, C., Thomas, J., Tilley, C., Welham, K., & Albarella, U.  
(2006) Materializing Stonehenge: The Stonehenge Riverside Project and New Discoveries. *Journal of Material Culture*. 11: 227.
- Perry, M. (1967) *The Jarrow crusade: protest and legend*. Sunderland : University of Sunderland Press.

- Phelan, P. (1993) *Unmarked: The Politics of Performance*. London: Routledge.
- Philips, D. (1998) Carnival and Control: the commodification of the carnivalesque at Disneyland. In Ravenscroft, N; Philips, D and Bennett, M, (eds.) *Tourism and Tourist Attractions*. LSA publications. 75-83.
- (1999) Bakhtin, the carnivalesque and the theme park. In Crouch, D. (ed.) *Leisure Practices and Geographical Knowledge*. London, Routledge.
- Poole, D. (2009) Affective Distinctions: Race and Place in Oaxaca. In Walkowitz, D.J and Knauer L. M (eds.) *Contested histories in public space: memory, race, and nation*. Durham [NC] Duke University Press. 197-225.
- Pratt, A.C. (1997b) The cultural industries sector: its definition and character from secondary sources on employment and trade, Britain 1984-91. *Research Papers in Environmental and Spatial Analysis*, no. 41, London: London School of Economics, 3-31. In Gibson, C. & Kong, L. (2005) Cultural economy: a critical review, *Progress in Human Geography*, 29(5): 541–61.
- Pratt, G. (2000a) Focus Group. In Johnston, R.J. et al. (eds.) *The Dictionary of Human Geography*. Oxford, Blackwell.
- Pred, A. (1984) Place as Historically Contingent Process: Structuration and the Time-Geography of Becoming Place. *Annals of the Association of American Geographers*. 74:2: 279–297.
- Probyn, E. (2003) The spatial imperative of subjectivity. In K. Anderson, M. Domosh, S. Pile, & N. Thrift (eds.) *Handbook of cultural geography*. London: Sage. 290–299.
- Prosser, E. (1961) *Drama and religion in the English mystery plays, a re-evaluation*, Stanford [Calif.] Stanford University Press.
- Punch, S. (2001) Multiple methods and research relations with young people in rural Bolivia. In Limb, M. and Dwyer, C. (eds.) *Qualitative methodologies for geographers: issues and debates*. London, Arnold. 165-180
- Putnam, R. D. (2000) Bowling Alone. The collapse and revival of American community. New York, Simon and Schuster. In Smith, MK. (2001) *Community*. Encyclopaedia of Informal Education. <http://www.infed.org/community/community.htm> Website accessed 23.12.13.
- Rantisi, M. & Leslie, D. (2010) Creativity by design? The role of informal spaces in creative production. In Edensor, T., Leslie, D., Millington, S., & Rantisi, N. (eds) (2010) *Spaces of Vernacular Creativity: Rethinking the Cultural Economy*. London, Routledge.

- Read, A. (2006) The Elephant in the Street. *Contemporary Theatre Review*, 16:4: 522-523.
- Relph, E. (1976) *Place and placelessness*. London, Pion.
- Ricoeur, P. (1971) The model of the text: meaningful action considered as a text. *Social Research*. 38: 529-62.
- Roach, J. (1993) Carnival and the Law in New Orleans. *The Drama Review*. 37: 3: 42-75
- Rogers, A (2013) *Maritime Mix, London 2012 Cultural Olympiad by the Sea*. Evaluation Report: Weymouth and Portland 2012 Operations Team.
- Rootes, C. & Saunders, C.  
 (2007) *Demonstrations of Democracy: The Make Poverty History and Stop Climate Chaos Marches*. Paper prepared for the Workshop on 'Democracy in movements: conceptions and practices of democracy in contemporary social movements' European Consortium for Political Research, Helsinki, 7–12 May 2007. Centre for the Study of Social and Political Movements, University of Kent at Canterbury.  
[www.kent.ac.uk/sspsr/polsoc/](http://www.kent.ac.uk/sspsr/polsoc/) Accessed 3.9.14
- Rose, G. (1997a) Spatialities of 'community', power and change: The imagined geographies of community arts projects. *Cultural Studies*. 11:1, 1-16  
 (1997b) Performing Inoperative Community: The space and the resistance of some community arts projects. In *Geographies of Resistance*. New York, Routledge. 184–202.  
 (2000) Geography and psychoanalytic theory. In Johnston, R.J., Gregory, D., Pratt, G., Watts, M. (eds.) *The Dictionary of Human Geography*. Oxford, Blackwell. 653–655.
- Russo, M. (1986) Female Grotesques: Carnival and Theory. In T. de Laurentis, (ed.) *Feminist Studies/Critical Studies*. London, Macmillan.
- Ryan, D. (2007) 'Pageantitis': Frank Lascelles' 1907 Oxford Historical Pageant, Visual Spectacle and Popular Memory. *Visual Culture in Britain*. 8: 2  
 (1999) Staging the Imperial City: The Pageant of London, 1911. In Driver & Gilbert (eds.), *Imperial Cities: Landscape, Display and Identity*, Manchester: Manchester University Press, pp. 117-135.
- Ryan, M (1989) The American Parade: Representations of the Nineteenth Century Social Order. In Hunt, L. *The New Cultural History* Berkley: University of California Press, pp. 131–152.
- Rylands, F. (forthcoming) *Entanglements of creative practice and policy: Art-Science collaborations along the Jurassic Coast World Heritage Site* (2012-15). University of Exeter.

- Said, E. (1978) *Orientalism: western representations of the Orient*. London: Routledge and Kegan Paul.
- Sales, R (1983) *English literature in history, 1780-1830: Pastoral and politics*. New York, St. Martin's Press.
- Sauer, CO. (1924) The survey method in geography and its objectives. *Annals of the Association of American Geographers*. 14:1:17-33.
- Schama, S. (1995) *Landscape and memory*. London, HarperCollins.
- Schwarz, M. (2010) *Interim evaluation report on the Jurassic Coast Arts Programme*. Dorset and East Devon Jurassic Coast World Heritage Team.
- (2011) *Creative Coast: Final evaluation report on the Jurassic Coast Arts Programme*. Dorset and East Devon Jurassic Coast World Heritage Team.
- Schechner R. (1995) The street is the stage. In *The future of ritual: writings on culture and performance*. London; New York, Routledge, 45-93.
- (2003) *Performance studies: An introduction*. London; New York, Routledge.
- Schumann, P. (1968) The Bread and Puppet Theatre. *The Drama Review*, 12:2: 62-73.
- Scully, V (1962) *The earth, the temple and the gods*. New Haven, Yale Univ. Press.
- Seamon D (1980) Body-subject, time-space routines and place-ballets. In *The human experience of space and place*. London, Croom Helm.
- Searle, J. R. (1969). *Speech acts: An essay in the philosophy of language* (Vol. 626). Cambridge University Press.
- Sedgwick Kosofsky, E.
- (2003) *Touching Feeling: Affect, Pedagogy, Performativity*. Durham, NC, Duke University Press.
- Shank, T. (1977) The Welfare State Theatre. *The Drama Review*. 21:1: 3-16.
- Shaw, K. (2013) Independent creative subcultures and why they matter. *International Journal of Cultural Policy*.19:3: 333-352.
- Shaw, R. (1987) *The arts and the people*. London, Cape.
- Shohat, E. & Stam, R.
- (1994) *Unthinking Eurocentrism: Multiculturalism and the Media*. London: Routledge: 304. In Nurse, K. (1999) Globalization and

Trinidad Carnival: diaspora, hybridity and identity in global culture. *Cultural Studies*. 13: 4: 666.

Sibley, D. (1995) *Geographies of exclusion: society and difference in the west*. London: Routledge.

Silk, J. (1999) The dynamics of community, place, and identity. *Environment and Planning A*, 31:1: 5-17.

Simpson, R. (2008) Arthurian Pageants in Twentieth-Century Britain. *Arthuriana*, 18:1: 63-87

Slocum, R., Wichhart, I., Rocheleau, D. and Thomas-Slayter, B .

(1995) *Power, process and participation: tools for change*. London, Intermediate Technology Publications.

Smith, MK. (2001) *Community*, Encyclopaedia of Informal Education. <http://www.infed.org/community/community.htm> Website accessed 23.12.13

Smith, P. (2009) Theatrical-political possibilities in contemporary procession. *Studies in Theatre and Performance*. 29:1: 15– 31.

Smith, S. (2000) Performing the (sound)world. *Environment and Planning D: Society and Space*., 18:5: 615–637.

Smith, S.J. (2001) Doing qualitative research: from interpretation to action. In Limb, M. and Dwyer, C. (eds.) *Qualitative methodologies for geographers: issues and debates*. Arnold, Co-published in the U.S.A. by Oxford University Press, London, New York. 23-40.

Squibbs, P.J. (1982) *History of Bridgwater*, revised and updated by John F. Lawrence. Chichester, Phillimore.

Stacey, J. (1988) Can there be a feminist ethnography?." *Women's Studies International Forum*. Vol. 11. No. 1. Pergamon.

Stallybrass, P & White, A.

(1986) *The politics and poetics of transgression*. London, Methuen.

Stourac, R. and McCreery, K.

(1986) *Theatre as a weapon: workers' theatre in the Soviet Union, Germany and Britain 1917-1934*. London, Routledge & Kegan Paul.

Sutton, A. (1959) *A Story of Sidmouth, and the villages of Salcombe Regis, Branscombe, Sidbury and Sidford*. Exeter: Townsend.

Tallon, AR. (2007) Carnivals and Regeneration. *Town and Country Planning*. 76: 256-260.

Thomas, N.J., Harvey, D.C., Hawkins, H.

(2009) Creating the region: Networking the region. In *Networks of Design*. Brown Walker Press / Universal Publishers. 427-434.

(2010) The geographies of the creative industries: scale, clusters and connectivity. *Geography*. 95: 14-19.

Thomas, N.J., Ryan, J.R.

(2010) Durbars, spectacle and landscapes of performance. In Codell JF (ed.) *Power and Dominion: Photography and the Imperial Durbars of British India*. Prestel Publishers for the Alkazi Collection.

Thompson, E. (1978) Folklore, Anthropology and Social History. *Indian Historical Review*. 3: 247-266. In Limón J E. (1983) Western Marxism and Folklore: A Critical Introduction. *The Journal of American Folklore*. 96: 379: 34-52.

Thompson, E. (1992) Rough music reconsidered. *Folklore* 103.1 3-26.

Thrift, N. (1996) *Spatial Formations*. London, Sage.

(1997) The Still Point: resistance, expressive embodiment and dance. In Pile, S. and Keith, M. (eds.) *Geographies of Resistance*. London, Routledge. 124–151.

Tilley, C. Y. (1994) *A phenomenology of landscape: places, paths, and monuments*. Oxford, Berg.

Travis, JF. (1993) *The Rise of the Devon Seaside Resorts, 1750-1900*. Exeter, University of Exeter Press.

Tresidder G (1992) Coronation Day celebrations in English towns 1685–1821: elite hegemony and local relations on a ceremonial occasion. *British Journal for Eighteenth Century Studies*, 15: 1–32.

Tuan, Yi-Fu.

(1974) Space and place: humanistic perspective. *Progress in Geography*: 6: 213. In Barnes, T. and Gregory, D. (eds.) *Reading Human Geography*. London, Arnold. 300.

(1977) *Space and Place: The Perspective of Experience*. London, Arnold.

Turnbull, M. (1973) Attitude of government and administration towards the 'Hunger Marches' of the 1920s and 1930s. *Journal of Social Policy* 2, 2:131-142.

Turner V (1969) *The ritual process: structure and anti-structure*. London, Routledge & K. Paul. In Schechner, R. (2003) *Performance Studies: An Introduction*. London, Routledge. 57.

(1974) *Dramas, fields, and metaphors: symbolic action in human society*. Ithaca, NY, Cornell University Press.

(1977) Variations on a theme of liminality. In Moore, Sally F., Myerhoff, BG. (eds.) *Secular Ritual*. Assen, Van Gorcum.

(1979) Frame, Flow and Reflection: Ritual and Drama as Public Liminality, *Japanese Journal of Religious Studies*. 6:4:465-499

(1986) *The anthropology of performance*. New York, PAJ Publications.

Turner, V & Turner, E:

(1982) Performing Ethnography. *The Drama Review: TDR*. 26:2: 33-50.

University of Exeter

(2010) *School of Social Sciences and International Studies Ethics Guidelines*

<https://intranet.exeter.ac.uk/socialsciences/ethics/Ethics%20guidelines.pdf>

Website accessed 6<sup>th</sup> May, 2011

Valentine, G. (2001) At the drawing board: developing a research design. In Limb, M. and Dwyer, C. (eds.) *Qualitative Methodologies for Geographers*. London: Arnold. 41-54.

Van Gennep, A.

(1960) *The rites of passage*. Chicago, University of Chicago Press. In Schechner, R (2003) *Performance studies: An introduction*. London; New York, Routledge. 50-51

Walton, J K. (1983) *The English seaside resort. A social history 1750-1914*. Leicester University Press.

Walzer M (1967) On the role of symbolism in political thought. *Political Science Quarterly* 82: 191-205.

(1997) *On Tolerance*, New Haven: Yale University Press. In Smith, MK. (2001) *Community*. Encyclopaedia of Informal Education. <http://www.infed.org/community/community.htm> Website accessed 23.12.13

Ward (1950) *Guide to Lyme Regis and the Dorset and Devon borderland including Charmouth, Bridport, West Bay, Axminster, Seaton, Sidmouth etc: with a special section for motorists*. 10th ed. London, Ward, Lock & Co. Ltd.

Warren C. (2000) Writing the Other, Inscribing the Self. *Qualitative Sociology*, 23:2: 183-199.

Watson, A., & Till, K. E.

(2010). Ethnography and participant observation. *The Sage Handbook of Qualitative Geography*. London, SAGE. 121-137.

Watson, I. (1993) *Towards a Third Theatre*. London, New York, Routledge.

Waitt G. & Stapel, C.

(2011) 'Fornicating on floats'? The cultural politics of the Sydney Mardi Gras Parade beyond the metropolis. *Leisure Studies*. 30:2: 197-216 .

(2005) *Finding Voices, Making Choices: creativity for social change*. Nottingham, Educational Heretics Press.

Weinbren, D

(2006) Beneath the All-Seeing Eye: Fraternal Order and Friendly Societies' Banners in Nineteenth- and Twentieth-Century Britain, *Cultural and Social History - The Journal of the Social History Society*, 3, 2.

Weissengruber, E

(1997) The Corpus Christi procession in Medieval York: a symbolic struggle in public space." *Theatre Survey* 38.01: 117-138.

Wenger, E.

(2000) Communities of Practice and Social Learning Systems. *Organization*. 7: 225-246.

Whitehead, A.

(1929/1962) *The aims of education and other essays*. 3rd ed, London, Benn.

Whittlesey, DS.

(1927) Devices for accumulating geographic data in the field. *Annals of the Association of American Geographers*. 17: 72-78.

Wilkie F

(2002a) Mapping the Terrain: a Survey of Site-Specific Performance in Britain. *New Theatre Quarterly*. 70: 140-160.

(2002b) Kinds of Place at Bore Place: Site-Specific Performance and the Rules of Spatial Behaviour. *New Theatre Quarterly*. 18: 243-260.

Williams, R.

(1977) *Marxism and Literature*. Oxford, Oxford University Press. In Limón J E. (1983) Western Marxism and Folklore: A Critical Introduction. *The Journal of American Folklore*, 96: 379: 44.

(1981) *Culture*. London, Fontana.

Willis, P.

(1993) Symbolic Creativity. In *Studying culture: An introductory reader*. Gray, A. and McGuigan J. (eds.) London, Arnold. 209–216.

Willmott, P.

(1986) *Social Networks, Informal Care and Public Policy*. London: Policy Studies Institute. In Smith, MK. (2001) *Community*. Encyclopaedia of Informal Education. <http://www.infed.org/community/community.htm>  
Website accessed 23.12.13

Witkin, RW

(2003) *Adorno on popular culture*. Hove, Psychology Press.

Woodruff, G.

(1989) Community, Class, and Control: a View of Community Plays. *New Theatre Quarterly*. 5:20: 370 -373.

Woods, M.

(1999) Performing power: local politics and the Taunton pageant of 1928. *Journal of Historical Geography*. 25: 57–74.

Wolf, R

(1972) *The English mystery plays*. Univ of California Press.

- Wright, A. (1940) *British calendar customs: England*. Vol. 3. Folk-lore Society, Glaiser.
- Young, I. (1990) *Justice and the politics of difference*. Princeton, N.J. Oxford: Princeton University Press.

## Appendix 1: Data Set (anonymised)

13.10.10	Fieldnotes: Activate performing Arts Outdoor Events and Processions Networking Meeting.
22.10.10	BFTW Quest Voyage Summary, original outline.
27.10.10	Transcript: Interview with Arts Professional.
27.10.10	Transcript: Interview with Arts Professional.
23.03.11	Fieldnotes from meeting, Activate Performing Arts.
5.05.11	ACE update report, BFTW, email.
12.05.11	Fieldnotes: Activate Performing Arts workshop - 'Organising an Outdoor Event', Dorchester.
12.05.11	Transcript: Activate Performing Arts workshop - 'Organising an Outdoor Event', Dorchester.
17. 05. 11	Fieldnotes: <i>Moving Tides</i> / Processions Advisory Group meeting, Dorchester.
17. 05. 11	Transcript: <i>Moving Tides</i> / Processions Advisory Group meeting, Dorchester.
15.07.11	Transcript: Interview with BFTW Arts Professional.
15.07.11	Transcript: Interview with BFTW Arts Professional.
19. 07.11	Fieldnotes: Jurassic Coast World Heritage Team Awayday.
22.07.11	BFTW Project Plan, Dorset.
25. 07.11	Fieldnotes: BFTW Steering Group / Processions Advisory Group Meeting.
25.07.11	Transcript: BFTW Steering Group / Processions Advisory Group Meeting.
28.07.11	Transcript: Interview with Town Carnival Committee member, Weymouth.
1.08.11	Fieldnotes: The English Seaside Town as a setting for carnival.
1.08.11	Fieldnotes / reflection: post interview.
19.09.11	Transcript: Interview with Arts Professional, Weymouth.
19.09.11	Fieldnotes / reflection: post interview.
19.09.11	Organising committee roles, WEYMOUTH CARNIVAL & AIRSHOW 2012 committee, pdf.
23.09.11	Interview: BFTW Arts Professional.
23.09.11	Fieldnotes / reflection: post interview.
27.09.11	Transcript: Interview with Arts Professional.
27.09.11	Transcript: Interview with Arts Professional.
27.09.11	Transcript: Weymouth Town Carnival Committee meeting.
27.09.11	Fieldnotes / reflection: Weymouth Town Carnival Committee meeting.
27.09.11	Transcript: Interview with Arts Professional.
1.10.11	Fieldnotes: <i>Don't Rain on My Parade</i> Carnival Conference, Marine Theatre, Lyme Regis.
1.10.11	Transcript: Chris Huxley, <i>Don't Rain on My Parade</i> , conference address.

- 1.10.11 Transcript: Alan Rogers, *Don't Rain on My Parade*, conference address.
- 1.10.11 Transcript: Maria Bota, *Don't Rain on My Parade*, conference address.
- 1.10.11 Transcript: Adrian Evans, *Don't Rain on My Parade*, conference address.
- 1.10.11 Transcript: Sam Rose, *Don't Rain on My Parade*, conference address.
- 1.10.11 Transcript: Mel Day & Annabelle Macfadyen, *Don't Rain on My Parade*, conference address.
- 11.10.11 Fieldnotes and reflection: BFTW Creative Meeting.
- 12.10.11 Transcript: Interview with Arts Professional.
- 18.10.11 Transcript: Interview with Arts Professional.
- 18.10.11 Transcript: Interview with Arts Professional.
- 31.10.11 Transcript: Interview with Arts Professional.
- 1.11.11 Transcript: Interview with Arts Professional.
- 2.11.11 Fieldnotes: Seaton Town Carnival Committee, AGM.
- 2.11.11 Transcript: Interview with Arts Professional, JCAP.
- 2.11.11 Transcript: Interview with Weymouth Town Carnival Committee member.
- 3-9.11.11 Email correspondence, Weymouth Committee Conflict - purposes of carnival.
- 10.11.11 Transcript: Interview with Weymouth Town Carnival Committee member.
- 11.11.11 Fieldnotes: Weymouth Town Carnival Committee.
- 14.11.11 Transcript: Interview with Arts Professional.
- 8.12.11 BFTW Regional events summary.
- 13.12.11 Transcript: BFTW Creative Meeting, Exeter.
- 13.12.11 Fieldnotes and reflection: BFTW Creative Meeting.
- 13.12.11 Moving Tides, Minutes of steering group meeting.
- 15.12.11 Transcript: Interview with Weymouth Town Carnival Committee member.
- 15.12.11 Transcript: Interview with Weymouth Town Carnival Committee members (x2).
- 15.12.11 Transcript: Interview with Weymouth Town Carnival Committee member.
- 15.12.11 Schedule of resources: Weymouth Library, Weymouth carnival history.
- 15.12.11 Archival Research notes Weymouth carnival history.
- 15.12.11 Archival Research notes Weymouth carnival history, photographs x 6.
- 16.12.11 Fieldnotes: East Devon Carnival Circuit AGM and Prizegiving, Seaton Town Hall.
- 6.01.12 Fieldnotes: Westham Community Carnival Group, Weymouth.
- 6.01.12 Moving Tides, Progress report.
- 11.01.12 Transcript: Interview with Seaton Town Carnival Committee member.
- 13.01.12 Transcript: Interview with Seaton Town Carnival Committee member.

13.01.12 Fieldnotes: Westham Community Carnival Group, Weymouth.

16.01.12 Fieldnotes: Interview with (WCV) re Weymouth Carnival Conflict.

18.01.12 Transcript : BFTW Creative Meeting, Lyric Theatre, Bridport.

1.02.12 Fieldnotes: Interview with Exmouth Town Carnival Committee members (x3).

1.02.12 Fieldnotes: Seaton Town Carnival Committee meeting.

1.02.12 Moving Tides, Agenda.

1.02. 12 Moving Tides, AUCB Updates for Steering group.

1.02.12 Moving Tides, Minutes of steering group meeting.

6.02.12 Moving Tides, *Kinetica* Weekend Workshop Plan.

8.02.12 Email from Weymouth Town Carnival Committee member, Plans for Weymouth Carnival.

22.02.12 Moving Tides, Minutes of steering group meeting.

7.03.12 Fieldnotes: Seaton Town Carnival Committee meeting.

8.03.12 Fieldnotes: Weymouth Town Carnival Committee meeting.

16.03.12 Fieldnotes / reflection: Creative Coast Forum (Arts and Tourism).

16.03.12 Fieldnotes: Westham Community Carnival Group, Weymouth.

16.03.12 Moving Tides, Order of procession.

17.03.12 BFTW, Logistics for Weymouth.

21.03.12 Moving Tides, Minutes of steering group meeting.

21.03.12 Moving Tides, Budget.

22.03.12 Moving Tides, 2012 Key Dates.

23.03.12 Email from Weymouth Town Carnival Committee member: Carnival resignations / politics of committee.

4.04.12 Fieldnotes: Seaton Town Carnival Committee meeting.

17.04.12 Moving Tides, Operational Plan.

20.04.12 Moving Tides, SC Email budget.

24.04.12 BFTW, Alice Oswald Wind Poems.

2.05.12 Transcript and Fieldnotes: Interview at Seaton Museum.

2.05.12 Fieldnotes: Seaton Town Carnival Committee meeting.

3-5.05.12 Fieldnotes: BFTW, Lyme Regis Fossil Festival.

3.05.12 Blog text , BFTW, Windgathering at Fossil Festival.

6.05.12 BFTW , Doldrums' Emergence Scenario , Lyme Regis Fossil Festival.

8.05.12 Fieldnotes and reflection: BFTW, Dorset artistic meeting.

8.05.12 Fieldnotes: BFTW, Chat with Arts Professional.

9.05.12 Fieldnotes: BFTW, structure and anti-structure.

10.05.12 Rehearsal fieldnotes: BFTW, Process / Participation / Art.

11.05.12 Moving Tides, Workshop List inc puppet design.

11.05.12 Moving Tides, Transport arrangements, doc.

11.05.12 BFTW, Song, Lyrics.

14-17.05.12 Fieldnotes and Reflection: BFTW, rehearsals , songs / rehearsal / place.

29.05.12 Moving Tides, SC Email workshops.

29.05.12 Moving Tides, SC Email route and pick up.

29.05.12 E-mail: Arts Professional, re JCAP carnival origins.

6.06.12 Transcript: Interview with float maker, Seaton Town Carnival.

12.06.12 Texts to organiser, setting up fieldwork. Westham Community Carnival Group, Weymouth.

13.06.12 E-mail: Arts Professional, re: JCAP carnival origins.

15.06.12 BFTW script.

27.06.12 BFTW, News report, Bridport Echo: 'Olympic wind machine first outing Bridport Arts Centre'

29.06.12 BFTW Draft schedule for Dorset.

1.07.12 BFTW News report Bournemouth Echo; Maritime Mix BFTW trailer: 'A summer like no other'.

4.07.12 Fieldnotes: Seaton Town Carnival Committee meeting.

4.07.12 Fieldnotes and reflection: BFTW, Cartwheelin at Bridport.

4.07.12 Blog text: BFTW, Cartwheelin at Bridport.

5.07.12 BFTW Cartwheelin flyer.

7.07.12 BFTW Certificate of Wind / Arts Professional, personal reflection on function.

7.07.12 Fieldnotes: BFTW, Cartwheelin at Shaftesbury.

9.07.12 Fieldnotes: BFTW, Arts Professional Gets Sacked,

10.07.12 Fieldnotes: BFTW, Cartwheelin at Christchurch.

12.07.12 Moving Tides, News report : Moving Tides cancelled.

12.07.12 BFTW Email from Arts Professional.

12.07.12 Fieldnote: BFTW, Arts Professional – MT called off,

12.07.12 Fieldnotes: BFTW, Dinner with Arts Professional.

13.07.12 Fieldnotes: BFTW, Cartwheelin at Slades Farm.

14.07.12 Fieldnotes: BFTW, Cartwheelin at Bournemouth.

14.07.12 BFTW Film footage Cartwheelin Bport, <http://youtu.be/z-6eC3IZBGs>.

15.07.12 Preamble / Post interview reflection: BFTW, Quest 1, JC.

15.07.12 Fieldnotes: Weymouth Town Carnival Committee meeting.

17.07.12 BFTW Performance Script.

22.07.12 Fieldnotes: BFTW, Weymouth 1, Driving to Weymouth with Rob.

22.07.12 Fieldnotes: BFTW, Weymouth 1, Redlands sports hub.

23.07.12 Fieldnotes: BFTW, Weymouth 2, Live Site meeting.

23.07.12 BFTW Dorset schedule, Weymouth.

23.07.12 Fieldnotes: BFTW, Weymouth, prod meeting.

24.07.12 Fieldnotes: BFTW, Weymouth 3, Portland Site visit.

24.07.12 Fieldnotes: BFTW, Weymouth 4, Biscuit on the Live Site.

25.07.12 Process memo: BFTW, Weymouth 5, role of researcher.

26.07.12 Fieldnotes: BFTW, Weymouth 6, rehearsal tech and show structure.

27.07.12 Fieldnotes: BFTW, Weymouth 7, Portland perambulation.

27.07.12 Fieldnotes: BFTW, street show 1.

27.07.12 Fieldnotes: BFTW, dress rehearsal and meeting with Weymouth Town Carnival committee member.

27.07.12 Fieldnotes: BFTW, Weymouth 8, Breakfast with Arts Professionals (x3).

27.07.12 Fieldnotes: BFTW, Weymouth 9, Street procession and vehicle symbolism.

27.07.12 Fieldnotes: BFTW, Weymouth 10, Main show and aftermath.

27.07.12 Fieldnotes: BFTW, talk with Arts Professionals (x2).

27.7.12 Fieldnotes: Doldrum's Lair – a site-specific theatrical review.

30.07.12 BFTW Arts Professional , thanks email text.

1.08.12 Fieldnotes: Seaton Town Carnival Committee meeting.

2.08.12 BFTW Doldrum's Lair evaluation doc.

2.08.12 BFTW News report – View From Weymouth, 'Doldrum is defeated', with pix.

3.08.12 Fieldnotes: Westham Community Carnival Group, Weymouth.

8.08.12 Fieldnotes: Westham Community Carnival Group, Weymouth.

10.08.12 Fieldnotes: Westham Community Carnival Group, Weymouth.

10.08.12 Transcript: Interview with participant, Westham Community Carnival Group, Weymouth.

11.08.12 News report, Dorset Echo: *Weymouth Carnival float efforts bring community together.*

13.08.12 News report, Dorset Echo: *Weymouth Carnival Arts and crafts sessions under way.*

14.08.12 Fieldnotes: Westham Community Carnival Group, Weymouth.

14.08.12 Transcript: Interview with participants, Westham Community Carnival Group, Weymouth.

14.08.12 Fieldnotes: Interview with fairground owner, Weymouth.

15.08.12 Fieldnotes: Westham Community Carnival Group, Carnival Day, Weymouth.

15.08.12 Transcript: Interview with Lorry driver.

15.08.12 Transcript: Interview with Walking participant, reaction after the parade.

15.08.12 Transcript: Interview with participant, (x2) PCSO involvement and reaction after the parade.

15.08.12 Transcript: Interview with Walking participant, reaction after the parade

15.08.12 Transcript: Interview with Float participant, process, and reaction after the parade.

15.08.12 Transcript: Interview with Walking participants: reaction after the parade.

15.08.12 Transcript: Interview with Float participant, reaction after the parade.

15.08.12 Transcript: Interview with Organiser / Float participant, reaction after the parade.

15.08.12 Transcript: Interview with Organiser / Float participant, re: funding.

15.08.12 Transcript: Interview with Organiser / Float participant, re: schedules.

15.08.12 Transcript: Interview with Organisers / Float participants, re: decorating the lorry.

15.08.12 Transcript: Interview with Organiser, re: numbers and jobs.

15.08.12 Fieldnotes: Participants and audience vox pop, Carnival Day, Weymouth.

15.08.12 Fieldnotes: JC reflections, Carnival Day, Weymouth.

15.08.12 Excerpts from public Commentary (x3) Weymouth Carnival Committee member.

15.08.12 Comments re Extra events, Ian James, Weymouth Carnival Committee member

15.08.12 Transcript: 'Bollocking from the council', Weymouth Carnival Committee member.

15.08.12 Transcript: Interview with walking participant: Academy of Carnival (Somerset).

15.08.12 Transcript: Interview with walking participant: Martial Arts Network UK 1.

15.08.12 Transcript: Interview with walking participant: Martial Arts Network UK 2.

15.08.12 Transcript: Interview with walking participant: 'Milky Bar family'.

15.08.12 Transcript: Interview with float participant: Chickerell Carnival Club

15.08.12 Transcript: Interview with float participant: NHS/ Unison

15.08.12 Transcript: Interview with walking participant: Plesiosaur, Milborne St Andrew First School.

15.08.12 Transcript: Interview with walking participant: Portland Utd Youth FC.

15.08.12 Transcript: Interview with float participant: Allsorts Preschool Weymouth.

15.08.12 Transcript: Interview with float participant (commercial): Sandworld Weymouth.

15.08.12 Transcript: Interview with float participant: Weymouth Sea Cadets.

15.08.12 Transcript: Interview with walking participant: Front Skate Park Weymouth

15.08.12 Transcript: Interview with Audience members: (local) 1.

15.08.12 Transcript: Interview with Audience members: (visitor) (Frome) 2.

15.08.12 Transcript: Interview with Audience members: (visitor) 3.

15.08.12 Transcript: Interview with Audience members: (local) 4.

15.08.12 Transcript: Interview with Audience members: (returning local) 5.

15.08.12 Transcript: Interview with Audience members: x3 (local) 6.

15.08.12 Transcript: Interview with Audience members: x2 (local) 7.

15.08.12 Transcript: Interview with Audience members: (local) 8.

15.08.12 Transcript: Interview with Audience members: (local) 9.

15.08.12 Transcript: Interview with Audience members: (local) 10.

15.08.12 Transcript: Interview with Audience members: (local) (Portland) 11.

15.08.12 Transcript: Interview with Audience members: visitor) 12.

15.08.12 Transcript: Interview with Audience members: (visitor) 13.

25.08.12 Fieldnotes: Carnival Week, Fun Day, Seaton.

25.08.12 Fieldnotes: Carnival Week, Bingo Night, Seaton.

26.08.12 Fieldnotes: Carnival Week, Classic Car Rally, Seaton.

26.08.12 Fieldnotes: Carnival Week, Talk with Committee members, Seaton.

26.08.12 Fieldnotes: Carnival Week, Lunch with the committee, Seaton.

26.08.12 Fieldnotes: Carnival Week, Crabbing Competition, Seaton.

26.08.12 Fieldnotes: Carnival Week, Songs of Praise Service, Seaton.

27.08.12 Fieldnotes: Carnival Week, Busking Competition and Street Fayre, Seaton.

29.08.12 Fieldnotes: Carnival Week, Quiz Night, Seaton.

30.08.12 Fieldnotes: Carnival Week, Murder Mystery Night, Seaton.

30.08.12 Process memo: Carnival Week (carnival development) Seaton.

30.08.12 Fieldnotes: Carnival Week, Lighting up the Float, Seaton.

31.08.12 Fieldnotes: Carnival Week, Working on the Float, Seaton.

1.09.12 Fieldnotes: Seaton Carnival Day, Men's Breakfast.

1.09.12 Fieldnotes: Seaton Carnival Day. Committee preparations.

1.09.12 Fieldnotes: Seaton Carnival Day: Interviews with Float Crews.

1.09.12 Transcript: Interview with Editor, South West Carnival Newsletter, Seaton. Carnival Day.

1.09.12 Transcript: Interview with East Devon Carnival Circuit member.

1.09.12 Transcript: Interview with Float Participants, Axminster Young Farmers.

1.09.12 Transcript: Interview with, Float Participant, Budleigh Salterton Carnival Club.

1.09.12 Transcript: Interview with Float Participant, Dawlish Carnival Club.

1.09.12 Transcript: Interview with Float Participant, Honiton Scouts.

1.09.12 Transcript: Interview with Float Participant, Cousins Carnival Club (Ilminster).

1.09.12 Transcript: Interview with Float Participant, Ottery Venture Scouts Carnival Club.

1.09.12 Transcript: Interview with Float Participant, Topsham Town Fair.

1.09.12 Fieldnotes: Seaton Carnival Day: preparing for the parade.  
1.09.12 Fieldnotes: Seaton Carnival Day: Parade.  
1.09.12 Fieldnotes: Seaton Carnival Day: Parade / audience vox pop.  
1.09.12 Transcript: Interview with Street Hawker.  
1.09.12 Transcript: Interview with Carnival audience member (local) 1.  
1.09.12 Transcript: Interview with Carnival audience member (local) 2.  
1.09.12 Transcript: Interview with Carnival audience member (visitor) 3.  
1.09.12 Transcript: Interview with Carnival audience member (visitor) 4.  
1.09.12 Transcript: Interview with, Carnival audience member (visitor) 5.  
1.09.12 Results list: Seaton Carnival Day.  
1.09.12 Fieldnotes / Interview: Seaton Carnival: after the parade: 1.  
1.09.12 Fieldnotes / Interview: Seaton Carnival: after the parade: 2.  
7.9.12 email re: political content in Weymouth Carnival, Cllr Gill Taylor (WPBC).  
9.09.12 News report: Moving Tides: Moving Tides, part of London 2012 closing celebrations.  
16.09.12 BFTW e-mail survey, vehicle symbolism, BFTW Lead Artist 1.  
17.9.12 BFTW e-mail survey, vehicle symbolism, BFTW Lead Artist 2.  
8.10.12 BFTW e-mail survey, vehicle symbolism, BFTW Lead Artist 3.  
11.10.12 BFTW e-mail survey, vehicle symbolism, BFTW Lead Artist 4.  
17.10.12 BFTW e-mail survey, vehicle symbolism, BFTW Lead Artist 5.

## Appendix 2

### Weymouth carnivals: Schedule of resources – Weymouth Library

1. Weymouth and Melton Regis Carnivals: brief historical references 1898-1909; Pamphlets, L.394.25 WE8.
2. Weymouth Carnivals: Carnival Days: a nostalgic look back at Weymouth's summer celebrations. Dorset Echo supplement, August 2005, 40pp (ill) facsimis, parts, 32cm. Pamphlet: L.394.25CA6
3. Weymouth and Melton Regis Carnivals: Weymouth Carnival, collection of materials. STACK (Oversize) L.394.25 WE6.7
4. Weymouth and Melton Regis Carnivals: Weymouth Carnival, a file of newspaper cuttings. Pamphlet L394.25CA3
5. Weymouth Carnivals: HALLET, Michael: *The Weymouth Carnival Photographer Story*. By Michael Hallet, illustrations by Jonathan Hubbard. Pamphlet file, L.921.HAL1
6. Weymouth and Melton Regis Carnivals: SANDIFORD, John, *Weymouth Makes Whoopee!* Extracted from the Daily Mirror, 19<sup>th</sup> August 1971. Illus. Pamphlet, L.394.25 SA1
7. Weymouth Carnivals: ILLUSTRATIONS. Various dates. In;-STAELENS Yvette, *Weymouth Through Old Photographs*, 1989. Pages 70,71,72. L.942.335 ST.5 ( Open Access) L.942.335 ST.5A (STACK)
8. Weymouth and Melton Regis Carnivals: 1909. 'Weymouth Hospitals Day' Advertisement & Illus. 11.8.09 Pamphlets L394.25 WE10
9. Weymouth Carnival. 1930s. Weymouth Hospital Carnival programmes for 1931, 1932, 1933 and 1934. STACK L.394.25 WE.7

10. Weymouth and Melton Regis Carnivals: 1935. Illustrations. 2 B&W Illus. Showing procession nr Alex Gdns. Illustrations Collection. L.394.25 WE9
11. Weymouth and Melton Regis Carnivals: Illustrations. 1950s, in *Seaside Weymouth - a Celebration in Pictures*, by ATTWOOLL, Maureen and WEST, Jack. Picture Number 95. STACK. L.942.335 AT1, L.942.335 AT1A, L.942.335 AT1B.
12. Weymouth Carnival: Illustration. 1950s United Nations Float in 1955 Carnival Procession. Black and White Photograph. Illustrations . L.394.25WE11
13. Weymouth Carnivals: Illustrations. 1953. 5 views of Weymouth Carnival and Regatta. Date 20/8/1953. 5 black and white photographs. HERBERT COLLECTION 2398A, 2398B, 2398C, 2398D, 2398E.
14. Weymouth Carnivals: Illustrations. 1954. Carnival Procession along the Esplanade. Black and white photograph, 1954. Illustration L.394.25. CA1
15. Weymouth Carnival 1955: Illustrations. Carnival procession 17/8/1955. 3 black and white photographs. HERBERT COLLECTION 2944A, 2944B, 2944C.
16. Weymouth Carnival 1956: Illustrations. Weymouth Carnival procession 12/9/1956. Black and white photograph. HERBERT COLLECTION 3211.
17. Weymouth Carnival 1958: Illustrations. Scenes of Weymouth Carnival 1958 4 Black and white photographs.
18. Weymouth Carnival 1959: Illustrations. Weymouth Carnival 1959. Firework display and RNLI Float. Date 27/8/1959. 2 Black and white photographs. HERBERT COLLECTION 3910A and 3910B.
19. Weymouth Carnival 1963: Illustrations. Weymouth Carnival 1963. 'Sunblest' float on car park adjacent to the gasworks. Date: 21/8/1963. Black and white photograph. HERBERT COLLECTION 4860.
20. Weymouth Carnival 1964: Illustrations. Weymouth Carnival 1964. Procession and floats. Date: 20/8/1964. 3 Black and white photographs. HERBERT COLLECTION 5083A, 5083B, 5083C.

21. Weymouth Carnival 1966: Illustrations. Scenes from the 1966 Weymouth Carnival. Date: 17/8/1966. 5 Black and white photographs. HERBERT COLLECTION 5653A, 5653B, 5653C, 5653D, 5653E.
22. Weymouth Carnival 1966/ 1967: Illustrations. Photographs of the crowning of Weymouth Carnival Queen 1966 by Mayor Mrs Lucie Hill, with one photograph of the crowning of Weymouth Carnival Queen 1967 by Michael Bentine. Illustrations. L. 394.25 WE12.
23. Weymouth and Melcombe Regis Carnival. Illustrations. 1971. 'From Pages to Pitchforks' Weymouth Public Library's float in the Carnival procession 18<sup>th</sup> August, 1971. Coloured photograph. Illustrations Collection. L.394.25 WE5.
24. Weymouth Carnival 1973. 'The Portland scene – Weymouth Carnival 1973'. Anonymous dialect prose 'From a wold Portlander.' Pamphlet. L.394.25 PO1
25. Weymouth and Melcombe Regis Carnival. 1974. Illustrations. Aerial displays over Weymouth Carnival Day, 21<sup>st</sup> August 1974. A&B: The Red Arrows over Weymouth Bay. C: Blue Devils Helicopter Team. Three coloured photographs. Illustrations Collection: L.629.13 WE1.
26. Weymouth and Melcombe Regis Carnival. Illustrations. 1980. Aerial photographs of Weymouth taken by RAF cameraman 20 August 1980 – Carnival Day – and reproduced in Dorset Evening Echo 2<sup>nd</sup>, 3<sup>rd</sup>, and 4<sup>th</sup> September 1980. 1: Esplanade and sands. 2: Town Bridge and North Quay. 3: Station, Esplanade and Sands. Illustrations Collection: L.778.35.DO9
27. Weymouth and Melcombe Regis Carnival. 1994. Programme for Weymouth Carnival 1994. Pamphlet L394.25 WE12
28. Weymouth Carnival 2002. Walton, Harry D.E.E 24<sup>th</sup> June 2002. Reaction from Hoteliers and Business to a change in the route of Weymouth Carnival. Pamphlet. L394.25 CA2
29. Weymouth Carnival 2006. Articles on Weymouth Carnival 2006. (including Carnival supplement) Pamphlet. L394.25 CA4.

30. Weymouth and Melcombe Regis Carnival. 2008. Weymouth Carnival 2008. 3 fun-filled days from the 18<sup>th</sup> -20<sup>th</sup> August. Official souvenir programme. Weymouth. Dorset Echo, 2008. 51p col.ill.parts 30cm. Pamphlet. L394.25 CA5

### **Appendix 3: Research Participants (Anonymised)**

#### **Moniker:**

Adam	Arts Professional, BFTW
Alex	WCV member, Weymouth
Alice	Town Carnival Committee member, Seaton
Anna	Town Carnival Committee member, Seaton.
Archie	Town Carnival Committee member, Weymouth
Arthur	Town Carnival Committee member, Weymouth
Ben	Arts Professional, BFTW
Cara	Arts Professional BFTW
Charlie	Town Carnival Committee member, Weymouth
Chris	Arts Professional, BFTW
Christian	Seaton Town Carnival Committee member
Connor	UNISON Save the NHS Float, Carnival Day, Weymouth, 15.8.12
Daniel	Audience member, Seaton Carnival Day 1.9.12
Danny	Pedlar, Carnival Day, Seaton, 1.9.12
Dylan	Westham CC participant, Carnival Day, Weymouth, 15.8.12
Ed	Town Carnival Committee member, Seaton
Elizabeth	Arts Professional, Jurassic Coast Arts Strategy

Emma	Town Carnival Committee member, Weymouth
Esme	Seaton Town Carnival Committee member
Evie	Arts Professional
Evie	Audience member, Seaton Carnival Day 1.9.12
Faith	Arts Professional
Fraser	Town Carnival Committee member, Seaton
Freya	Westham CC participant, Carnival Day, Weymouth, 15.8.12
Gaby	Town Carnival Committee member, Exmouth
George	Float Participant, Dawlish CC, Carnival Day, Seaton, 1.9.12
Grace	Arts Professional, BFTW
Grace	Town Carnival Committee member, Exmouth
Hannah	Westham CC participant, Carnival Day, Weymouth, 15.8.12
Harold	Seaton Museum
Harry	Audience member, Carnival Day, Seaton, 1.9.12
Heidi	Arts Professional
Henry	Arts Professional
Holly	Arts Professional
Hugh	Float builder, Seaton Carnival Day, 1.9.12
Isabelle	Audience member, Carnival Day, Seaton, 1.9.12

Jack	Lorry driver. Westham CC, Carnival Day, Weymouth, 15.8.12
Jacob	Audience member, Seaton Carnival Day 1.9.12
Jason	Float Participant, Honiton CC, Carnival Day, Seaton, 1.9.12
Jessica	Arts Professional
Jim	Arts Professional, BFTW
Joe	Arts Professional, BFTW
Katie	Float participant, Carnival Day, Weymouth, 15.8.12
Laura	Arts Professional
Lewis	Float participant, Westham CC, Carnival Day, Weymouth, 15.8.12
Lily	Arts Professional
Lucy	Westham CC participant, Carnival Day, Weymouth, 15.8.12
Luke	Town Carnival Committee member, Weymouth
Lydia	Town Carnival Committee member, Seaton
Maria	Westham CC Float participant
Mark	Westham Community Carnival Club member
Martha	Westham CC participant
Matilda	Float Participant, Budleigh CC, Carnival Day, Seaton, 1.9.12
Matthew	Town Carnival Committee member Seaton
Max	Audience member, Seaton Carnival Day 1.9.12

Megan	Westham CC participant, Carnival Day, Weymouth, 15.8.12
Melissa	Arts Professional
Michael	Arts Professional
Molly	Float participant, Westham CC, Carnival Day, Weymouth,15.8.12
Neve	Arts Professional
Nicky	Arts Professional BFTW
Nicole	Westham CC participant
Owen	Arts Professional, BFTW
Pat	Carnival float-maker, Seaton
Paul	Float participant, Westham CC, Carnival Day, Weymouth,15.8.12
Rebecca	Town Carnival Committee member, Exmouth
Rob	Arts Professional BFTW
Ron	Audience member, Carnival Day, Seaton, 1.9.12
Rose	Town Carnival Committee member, Seaton
Ruby	Arts Professional
Sam	Arts Professional, BFTW
Scarlet	Arts Professional, BFTW
Scott	Town Carnival Committee member, Weymouth
Sofia	Float participant, Westham CC, Carnival Day, Weymouth,15.8.12

Sophie	Seaton Town Carnival Committee member
Stan	Town Carnival Committee member, Weymouth
Stella	Westham Carnival Club member.
Stephen	Arts Professional BFTW
Tom	Float Participant, Carnival Day, Seaton, 1.9.12
Tony	Arts Professional
Victoria	Arts Professional, BFTW
William	Arts Professional, BFTW

## Appendix 4: Copy of Consent Form

### GUIDE INFORMATION/CONSENT FORM FOR INTERVIEWS

**Title of Research Project:** The Practices of Carnival: Communities Culture and Place

This project is an AHRC-funded Collaborative PhD Studentship based at the School of Geography, University of Exeter in association with the Jurassic Coast World Heritage Site Arts Programme. The study will explore how local communities are engaged with the Jurassic Coast through processional and carnival arts, and how this landscape is reflected in carnival and processional performances during the 2012 Olympics. The study will involve observation of the practices of individuals and groups involved in outdoor performances, carnival and processional events in the project area between 2011 and 2013. It will explore how and why local communities stage carnivals and processions and how these events reflect relationships with landscape and history. Research methods will include observation of organisational meetings and rehearsals, interviews, audio and video recording of participants, and, where possible, participation by the researcher in community performances. This study will contribute to an understanding of the relationship between cultural performances and places, and offer new insights about how community arts projects can best help communities to develop their local performances while at the same time meeting the interpretive aims of large-scale organisations. Information gathered during the research will be shared with University supervisory academic staff and published in a final PhD thesis in September, 2013. It may also form content for presentation at academic conferences in the UK and abroad and for papers published in academic journals.

**Researcher:** Jon Croose is a freelance community artist and PhD research student who works all over the South West UK. He is also a street performer, writer and stage manager of the Blazing Saddle dance and fire stage at Glastonbury Festival.

**Contact Details** For further information about the research or your interview data, please contact: Jon Croose, School of Geography, College of Life and Environmental Sciences, Amory Building, Rennes Drive, Exeter University, Exeter, Devon, EX4 4QJ. Tel 00 44 (0) 1803 872 847, e-mail: jfc208@ex.ac.uk If you have concerns/questions about the research you would like to discuss with someone else at the University, please contact: **Dr Nicola Thomas**, School of Geography, College of Life and Environmental Sciences, Amory Building, Rennes Drive, Exeter University, Exeter, Devon, EX4 4QJ

**Confidentiality** Interview tapes and transcripts will be held in confidence. They will not be used other than for the purposes described above and third parties will not be allowed access to them (except as may be required by the law). However, if you request it, you will be supplied with a copy of *your* interview transcript so that you can comment on and edit it as you see fit (please give your email below). Your data will be held in accordance with the Data Protection Act.

**Anonymity** Interview data will be held and used on an anonymous basis, with no mention of your name, but we will refer to the group of which you are a member.

If you are happy to waive this right and be identified as part of the survey, please tick  e

**Consent** I voluntarily agree to participate and to the use of my data for the purposes specified above. I can withdraw consent at any time by contacting the interviewers.

**DATE**.....

**Note: Your contact details are kept separately from your interview data**

Name of interviewee:.....

Signature: .....

Email/phone:.....

Signature of researcher.....

2 copies to be signed by both interviewee and researcher, one kept by each.