

EVOLUTION OF THE LATIN AMERICAN CARNIVAL

Carnival was brought to the New World by Spanish and Portuguese colonizers, and it has been preserved there up to our day, although in the meantime it has almost disappeared from the countries where it originated. One asks oneself if Carnival has kept its original characteristics over the years, or if it instead has been transformed, and if so, how. The ethnological and cultural variety present in Latin America leads us to think that there must have been an evolution over the years, and that Carnival should show some signs of acculturation. It is the examination of these two points that will be the subject of our study.

CARNIVAL IN THE PLURAL IN SPANISH AMERICA

A certain number of studies of different epochs show that in Spanish colonies two different types of carnival have co-existed up to our day—a rural carnival and a urban one.

In 1949 Augusto R. Cortezar described the village carnival, also called *Andruído*, of the Calchaqui Valley in Argentina. The fiesta started with a cavalcade of boys and girls who invited the people of the village and its surroundings to come with them to celebrate during the three days that preceded Ash Wednesday.

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A large dinner reunited all the people of the neighborhood. During the days consecrated to the festival people danced to the music of folksongs, and played various kinds of games. They bombarded each other with egg shells full of water, little balls of flour, and pieces of paper. An effigy made of rags, the traditional Pujllay, was led through the streets on a donkey all the afternoon of Shrove Tuesday, followed by a horde of masked revellers dancing and chanting. As soon as night fell, cries and laments took the place of the songs, and the parade became funereal. Pujllay was at last buried at the foot of a tree outside of the village.¹ According to recent studies, festivals of this type are still to be found in Argentina, Bolivia, Columbia, Mexico, etc.

The general scheme was just about the same all over, with some differences in detail.² The masques, for example, play only a secondary role in the Calchaqui Valley, while at Jujuy—which is also in Argentina—they have a great importance.³ In the Papantlan region of Mexico the feast lasted seven days instead of three,⁴ while at Ichcatepec it went on for three days but with another central theme—that of casting out devils, represented by grotesque masks.⁵ In the high Bolivian plateaus a sumptuous parade and simulated combat among masked groups constituted the high point of the festivities.⁶ Aside from these variations, particularly where it still exists in Spanish America, the rustic Carnival is intimately bound to Holy Week, and can be understood only in this context.⁷

The same traditional basic elements can be found all over: parades of masques, battles with flour balls, or of egg shells filled with water, or of small bits of paper; music, songs, dances; burial or destruction of a personage made of rags or of straw who represents the Carnival; sumptuous or ironical parades; copious meals in which special foods are eaten. In some regions the festival is associated with the division of the flocks and the crops.⁸

¹ Cortazar, 1949, pp. 214-216.

² Garcia, 1960; Sancho, 1970; Diazmuñoz, 1976.

³ Cortazar, 1949, *loc. cit.*

⁴ Diazmuñoz, 1976, pp. 107-113.

⁵ Garcia, 1960, pp. 55-85.

⁶ Heredia, pp. 55-85.

⁷ Garcia, 1960, *loc. cit.*

⁸ Sancho, 1970, pp. 302-303; Aznar, 1966, pp. 383-387.

Besides the rural carnivals, Spanish America has always had an urban variety, which has lasted to the present time. In Mexico, for example, in the province of Vera Cruz, the carnival of Papantla is not at all like the justly famous one of the provincial capital. In this city the festivities start on Saturday with the arrival of the King of Carnival at the head of a cortège of cars filled with masked celebrants: the entire population is singing and dancing in the streets. The Carnival Queen is chosen and crowned during the celebrations on Sunday evening, and for the three following nights dancing goes on without cease in the streets, the clubs, and the theatres. On the evening of Shrove Tuesday there is a grand parade of richly decorated floats through the main streets of the city, and the effigy of Juan Carnival is finally buried the next day; the masques, with black veils thrown over their costumes, follow the funeral cortège in mourning.⁹

Carnival in the great cities of Spanish America had other elements which we will discuss. Up to 1970 the Spanish folklorist Nieves de Hoyos Sancho found them unchanged in the capitals of Cuba, Venezuela, Chile, Uruguay, and Argentina; he remarked that everywhere there was an abundant use of confetti, serpentines, and of "perfume-throwers." The various social categories remained separate during these festivities: dressed with great pomp, the rich paraded in their automobiles along the avenues in the center of the city, while the lesser folk, on foot, made up dancing crowds.¹¹ All of the city celebrated, but each class in its place.¹²

This socio-economic division did not exist in the villages. Participation in the festivities was according to age and sex, without class distinctions. Each group played its part in the general activities. The carnival was a sort of theatrical spectacle played by the entire village, each group having a specific part. There was nothing of this in the urban version, where every social level had its own special spectacle.

According to Diazmuñoz, the difference in the two kinds of carnival already existed in colonial times, and has only been accentuated in the twentieth century. For Nieves de Hoyos Sancho, on the contrary, this evolution began in the nineteenth century:

⁹ Diazmuñoz, 1976.

¹⁰ Sancho, 1970, pp. 297-313.

¹¹ Diazmuñoz, 1976, pp. 78-82.

¹² Bascom, 1966, p. 427.

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carnival activities up to then were identical in city and country, with the *antruido*¹³ present in both cases. For example, in Panama City, famous for its carnival, there was absolutely no class distinction made, and the whole city came to amuse itself in the streets. This is no longer true: the kind of carnival fun varies from one class to another, and is even localized within the city limits; people do not mix as they did before. Sancho found the same phenomenon as well in Venezuela, in Chile, and in Argentina.¹⁴

There is another difference which now distinguishes the two carnivals of Spanish America: in the villages it is still a religious feast, strictly bound to Lent and Holy Week, while in the big cities, on the contrary, it has become a profane celebration. City dwellers no longer seem to remember that in the past Carnival contributed to the maintenance of a whole religious ritual with a greater significance.

The Spanish Carnival is the direct source of the Latin American one, both rural and urban. In the article which he has devoted to this subject, Nieves de Hoyos Sancho's remarks not without some astonishment that the new continent was the meeting place for cultural elements coming from at least three different and distinct origins: native, European, and African.¹⁵ For his part, Augusto Raul Cortazar says: "The village Carnival reproduces under our eyes scenes and practices which one could describe—and I can demonstrate this—with the same words that were used in the sixteenth century to describe Spanish festivals."¹⁶ Reading the work of Julio Caro Baroja, a veritable treatise on the Spanish Carnival still had its religious significance, and involved masquer-

The author shows that at the beginning of the twentieth century Carnival still had its religious significance, and involved masquerades, jets of water and of flour, engaging the entire village population in its rites. It ended with the burial of an effigy, whose name changed according to the region.¹⁷ The carnival activities had kept the same characteristics since very ancient times, but there were always regional differences in detail, even

¹³ Diazmuñoz, 1976, pp. 78-82; Sancho, 1970, pp. 299-310.

¹⁴ Sancho, 1970, pp. 299-310.

¹⁵ Sancho, 1970, pp. 299-310; see also Sancho, 1966.

¹⁶ Cortazar, 1949, p. 244; see also pp. 166-169.

¹⁷ Baroja, 1965, p. 111.

from village to village in the same district. In Madrid there was the famous "burial of the sardine," immortalized by Goya in one of his paintings. From the seventeenth century on one notices a modification of Carnival in the large Spanish cities, which causes the wealthy classes to separate themselves ever more distinctly from the poorer celebrants. Around the middle of the nineteenth century this differentiation was complete. Copied from Italy, an urban carnival, which Baroja also calls a "middle class carnival," is substituted for the ancient customs. It brings with it masked balls, fabulous parades, and luxurious cavalcades, and gives rise to competition among the various carnival societies for the most sumptuously decorated floats.¹⁸

Julio Caro Baroja's description of the Spanish carnival festivities confirm the observations of Latin American researchers about their own customs, urban and rural, which proves an identical evolution in the home country and the new world. Nieves de Hoyos Sancho has concluded that contact with other ethnic groups and other cultures seems to have had only a faint influence on the composition and the evolution of the carnival celebration in Latin America; their general scheme is still the same and the variations are found only in details. According to him, acculturation has added slight local variations, but in spite of this or that village particularity or certain specific traits here and there, the general character of the carnival feast has remained the same. The result of this mixture of cultural heritage loses its "interest as a collective human expression and as an ethnological gift; in the Latin American carnival only the general principles are retained as fundamental, and all that is *general* comes from Spain."¹⁹

One can thus conclude with the author, at least provisorily, that in the Latin American countries both native and African civilizations have left their mark on Carnival practices, but they have not essentially changed them. The indigenous civilization and the African have without doubt had their influence on the dances, the songs, the music in general, but they have not modified the profound religious sense nor the basic composition. The same modifications in the two types of Carnival have come about at

¹⁸ Baroja, 1965, p. 110, 147, 148-49, notes 14 and 15.

¹⁹ Sancho, 1970, p. 313.

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approximately the same time in the Spanish cities and their colonies, disassociating the rural carnival from the urban one. This transformation of practices—one could really speak of a transformation of “rites”—has been, in the two regions, accompanied by a more profound variation: in the cities the “carnival—religious celebration” has given way little by little to “carnival—profane celebration.”

Julio Caro Baroja does not tell us if village carnivals in Spain were on their way to losing religious character at the time of his studies in 1965. But in his interesting analysis of Carnival in Ichapetec, Mexico, Luis Reyes Garcia shows how, in 1960, the urban influence was becoming more and more important in Indian villages, depriving the celebration ever more of its religious aspect. He says that this is only one aspect of a vaster transformation which involves rural civilization in its entirety. The whole picture of this civilization is slowly changing, undermined as it is by the adoption of more and more urban customs.²⁰

It is not only the rural customs which are changing; according to many authors a process of decadence is going on in the cities as well. As proof of this they cite the progressive disappearance of the parades, the decorated floats, the magnificent balls held in the theatres. Diasmuñoz, analyzing the Carnival of Veracruz in Mexico, shows that it is losing its importance to the upper classes and is maintained only by the poor. The economic crises the country has had to endure may be the cause: Carnival parades were an occasion for the well-to-do to demonstrate their wealth and economic power, and this could no longer be done when the upper and middle classes were undergoing considerable financial difficulties. For the poor people the Carnival—days of forgetfulness and not of display—continues to exist in spite of economic ups-and-downs, since the expense it involves for them is already reduced to a minimum.²¹

According to the documents we have consulted and the testimony of several authors, this process of degeneration in the city carnival is not general, and is noticeable only in the upper levels of the population. The researchers themselves belong to this upper level, and the conclusions they draw may well be more value

²⁰ Garcia, 1960, pp. 87-88.

²¹ Diasmuñoz, 1976, p. 117; see also Bascom, 1966.

judgments than notations of fact. The city carnival in Latin America does not seem to be on the road to oblivion, but rather to be undergoing a process of mutation, and only time will show what new forms will evolve.

We have noticed two processes in course in Spanish America: one has to do with rural Carnival, the other with the urban. In the villages Carnival seems to be losing certain elements which it had conserved since colonial times and arriving at a certain secularization on contact with urban culture; this modification is part of the general change in rural life as it is influenced by the city. In the city the carnival of the upper classes seems to be disappearing, but the poor people's carnival continues to exist and is testimony of a great vitality; it is a question of the "popularization" of the city carnival—a popularization that is perhaps explained by economic crisis—and in both cases the change in carnival customs seems to be strictly tied to that of the entire society in which it is taking place.

Julio Caro Baroja has also noticed in Spain the same process of the secularization of Carnival in the country, and the popularization of Carnival in the city. This seems to prove that they are not strictly limited to Latin America. Whereas they are still going on in the colonies, in Spain they are by now a thing of the past, since the distinction between rural and urban carnival has almost ceased to exist. Does this mean that there is a slow death in act, and that the destiny of Latin American carnival is to become ever less important? There is nothing to prove this, and its own vigor would seem to protect it from such a fate.

In Spanish America the variety of ethnic groups and cultures does not seem to have caused fundamental differences either in the composition of the carnival or in its transformation, as compared with what one can see in the mother country. But one difference has appeared between the two continents which researchers seem to have failed to notice, although they have remarked upon its consequences: in one country after another urban carnival is gradually losing its similarity with rustic carnival, even though they were once very much the same. The socio-economic structure of the city seems to be at the heart of this; the more this is affirmed, the larger becomes the difference between the two varieties.

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CARNIVAL IN THE SINGULAR IN PORTUGUESE AMERICA

Studies of the carnival are less numerous in Brazil, in spite of the great importance of the feast days in that country. In general it is credited with an African origin; the slaves brought their native customs with them, and these were gradually adopted by the indigenous population. In more instructed circles, however, European origins are not ignored. In the short essay which they have dedicated to this study, Gilberto Freyre and Mario Souto Maior show that Carnival was introduced to Brazil about 1505, under the form of the *entrudo*²²—groups of persons, masked or not, who ran through the streets dousing bystanders with water and throwing handfuls of flour at the.²³ Luís de Camara Cascudo, one of our better ethnologists, has found the *entrudo* just about everywhere as he has studied our past. It was conserved without important change to about the middle of the nineteenth century.

Other practices were then substituted little by little for these traditional ones, and about 1850 the ancient *entrudo* disappeared completely, replaced by masked balls in private halls, coaches from which bystanders were barraged with serpentines and confetti, parades of allegoric floats equipped by the wealthy carnival societies which began to be formed. At the beginning of the twentieth century we can say that the *entrudo* no longer existed, and—at least in the more important cities—a new carnival, called “Venetian,”²⁴ had replaced it. Only one type of carnival at a time had ever reigned in the country—first it was the *entrudo*, now it became the Venetian, which lasted until the 1940’s, when it disappeared to make way for even newer manifestations.²⁵

It is interesting to note that the Venetian carnival, more or less common to all countries, involved just about the same activities all over, with variations from one social class to another in the cities. Each group organized balls in private houses. The *corso*—a parade of coaches filled with masked revellers—was

²² Freyre and Souto Maior, 1974.

²³ Cascudo, 1962, vol. I, pp. 185-86.

²⁴ In a recent study, Olga R. de Moraes von Simson tells how this transformation, which she studied through newspapers of the period, takes place; in the newspapers she found the term “Venetian,” as well as a condemnation of the *entrudo* as a “barbaric game.” In contrast, the “Venetian carnival” was a “civilized game”... Von Simson, 1977.

²⁵ Freyre and Souto Maior, 1974.

the contribution of the upper classes, while the poor paraded on foot, with their families or forming into costumed groups who danced in the streets, variously called *ranchos*, *cordões*, or *blocos*—their names changing according to geographic region. The urban space adapted itself to these games: the hour of the parades and their routes were never the same, so that the poor could mass on the sidewalks to watch the rich go by, and the rich could applaud the antics of the *ranchos* from their windows.

The poor classes of the urban Brazilian population were at this time made up mostly of individuals of African origin; the music and the dance of the *blocos*, the *ranchos* and the *cordões* had been strongly influenced by their native culture, a fact which emphasized the difference between their carnival customs and those of the wealthy, whose music and dance remained similar to that of Europe.²⁶ During the second half of the nineteenth century and the first thirty years of the twentieth, only the European kind of carnival was officially recognized and deemed “admissible” by the authorities. The others were often forbidden and halted by the police, despite their success with the masses.²⁷

From a sociological point of view, a vital difference separates the *entrudo* from the Venetian carnival. At the time of the *entrudo* the urban celebrations were the same for all classes. With the introduction of the Venetian carnival, activities were differentiated according to a social-economic hierarchy. The difference in the two different cultural heritages is very distinct: the upper crust “amused” itself in European fashion with its parades and its floats, and with its cavalcades which were often accompanied by European opera music;²⁸ African rhythms warmed the parades of the *ranchos*.

In 1940 the Brazilian carnival entered into a new phase. Recent research demonstrates that the disappearance of the Venetian strain was rapid and total. Only the costumed balls continued to exist, and access to these was limited. The *corso*, the confetti

²⁶ At the end of the 19th century, waltzes, Scottish reels, and polkas were played during carnival balls; at the beginning of the 20th century there appeared the *marchinha*; a dance whose origin was a march and which became peculiar to this type of festivity.

²⁷ Freyre and Souto Maior, 1974; Lamounier, 1977, p. 138.

²⁸ The triumphal march from Verdi's *Aida* was often used for the processions of allegorical floats. Von Simson, 1977; Nobre, 1978.

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fighters, the passage of decorated floats, all disappeared during the early fifties. The parades of the *ranchos*, on the other hand, acquired an ever increasing importance, particularly in Rio de Janeiro, held to be the "capital of the Brazilian carnival." Under a new name, "escolas di samba" (samba schools), these groups formed themselves into organizations which existed all year. The wealthy abandoned Carnival, conserving only their masked balls, which permitted them to continue to show off their wealth and to amuse themselves together, with exclusiveness guaranteed by the elevated price of admission; they turned into spectators of the other carnival, paying for their seats in the bleachers to watch the samba schools go by.

But this transformation, evident in Rio de Janeiro, was not the same all over the country: in the other cities the evolution which began with the Venetian carnival followed a different path, even though it came about at the same time. At Salvador (Bahia), for example, two forms of expression developed: the *cordões* and the *trios elétricos*. The *cordao*, brother of the *ranchos*, had already appeared in the popular sections of the city during the period of the Venetian carnival, but instead of evolving toward the samba school, as in Rio, it became ever more the carnival group *par excellence*, and this in all social classes. Those who make up a *cordao* wear identical costumes, and dance inside a cord (*cordao* in Portuguese) held in place by strong arms to protect the participants from the assaults of the public. The "electric trios" started about twenty years ago; their appearance coincides with the final defeat of the Venetian carnival. They are made up of trucks decorated extravagantly, brilliantly colored, copiously illuminated, carrying musicians whose incessant rhythms are diffused by loud speakers. Large companies and important commercial houses finance these trios. The dancing crowd—men, women, and children—circle around them as they drive slowly along the streets of the city. Dancing around a *trio elétrico* involves no expense, unless one counts the physical strain...²⁹

To belong to a *cordao*, on the contrary, one needs expensive costumes. Although it is not elaborate (it is, usually, for men, women and children without distinction, a long shirt in brilliant

²⁹ See the very vivid description given by Ortiz, 1976.

colors), it must be renewed each year, since the costume of each *cordao* changes for each new carnival. This uniform allows the members of a *cordao* to recognize each other at a distance in the crowd; among other things, only members who have been recognized may take their place inside the cord. The costume thus becomes an instrument of socio-economic differentiation and a status symbol. The population of the city of Salvador dances in the streets from nine o'clock in the morning to nine in the evening without disturbing the distinctive signs of the social hierarchy. At about eleven in the evening the distinction becomes even more obvious, as the masked balls begin in the theatres and the clubs, to which only members and their guests are allowed entrance, paying well for the privilege.

Apart from the masked balls, organized everywhere in the same way, the difference in the carnival celebration is notable if one compares Rio and Salvador. In Rio the poor people dance in the street, and the upper classes sit on the side to watch them. In Salvador, everybody in town dances from morning to evening, but maintaining a definite socio-economic hierarchy as they do so. In the streets, in Rio, the participation of the rich is passive. In Salvador it is very active, but the wealthy are isolated from the others by their cords and their costumes.

At the present time, the carnival of the larger Brazilian cities seems to follow the Rio de Janeiro model, with the parades of the samba schools and the stands loaded with spectators who pay well for their places. The Bahia model of the *cordaos* is still particular to the smaller cities.³⁰ At least two types of urban carnival seem to exist in Brazil: that of the big cities (with the exception of Salvador), and that of the medium-sized and small cities (including Salvador). In the large cities only the lower classes, represented by the samba schools, dance in the streets. In the smaller cities, everybody dances in the streets, but with no contact between rich and poor.

These two types of urban carnival contrast with the unique

³⁰ We have been able to observe it in the State of São Paulo. In the capital, the model followed is that of Rio de Janeiro, with its *escolas de samba*, but it is a rather pallid copy. In the medium sized and small cities, we find the carnival of the *cordões*, which fills the streets with dancing groups. Thus, the carnival of the *cordões* is not peculiar to one region of the country, but to a category of city.

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form of *passé* which one finds throughout Brazil in the two periods characterized first by the *entrudo* and then by the Venetian. The two present types are not regional, but stem from the more or less important size of the cities and the complexity of their structure.

The fact that Salvador finds itself among the smaller cities, when it is actually one of the largest in Brazil, seems to disprove our thesis, since the large cities in general follow the model of Rio de Janeiro. Before we analyse the case of Salvador, let us look again at the hypothesis advanced to explain the case of Rio.

We have seen that in this city the wealthy people no longer amuse themselves in the streets. This is a way for them to separate themselves even more obviously from the poor, and to avoid being identified with the "vulgar." This attitude is imitated by the middle classes, desirous of allying themselves with the upper classes and of denying any relationship with the populace. Even though only the lower classes remain in the streets at the moment of Carnival, and the masked balls continue to exist in all social strata, they reunite only people belonging to the same social category; and consequently do not lead to any dangerous social promiscuity among them. This hypothesis is suggested to us by the disappearance of the Venetian carnival (that is, the moment when the rich cease to amuse themselves in the streets), and the accelerated development of the city when intense industrialization began in the forties. A multiplication of the underprivileged classes has accompanied the great expansion of this epoch, with the resultant growth of the slums, *favelas*, around Rio de Janeiro.³¹ The increasing importance of the poverty-stricken, and the great variety in the intermediate classes leading to the multiplication of professions and jobs have been, it seems to me, the principal factor in the fundamental transformation undergone by Carnival, and in its present concentration around the parades of the samba schools. The wealthy classes have reacted as they have under the menace of being literally submerged by the avalanche of people who come from the poorer quarters to celebrate by dancing in the streets.³²

³¹ See Pereira de Queiroz, 1968 (a).

³² The *favelas* are located in the hills all around Rio de Janeiro, and sometimes within the town itself.

Salvador, one of the oldest cities of the country, has suffered since the eighteenth century from the decadence of the agricultural region of which it is the center, and which is based on the production of sugar cane. At the same time, the south-east region of Brazil, led by Rio de Janeiro, took part in the economic boom thanks to its coffee plantations, and this well-being led to urban growth.³³ Up to the sixties of our present century, Salvador could only vegetate, conserving a less complex and more traditional socio-economic structure. At the end of the fifties the discovery of petroleum not far from the city changed this situation brusquely and marked the beginning of the present industrial expansion.

So it happened that when the Venetian carnival began to disappear in 1940, Salvador did not yet have an urban structure complex enough for the model of the Rio carnival to take hold there. The wealthy classes did not yet feel menaced by the poor, and they continued to dance in the streets side by side.

The differences that one notices at the moment between the carnival of the large Brazilian cities and that of the smaller ones is due, then, to the socio-economic complexities which have come about in the metropolis, and to the multiplication of social categories. The importance acquired by the samba schools corresponds to a defense mechanism of the upper classes against the invasion of the streets by the lower. In the smaller cities the peril is not so obvious and the upper classes can continue to enjoy their fun.

Let me add that the present phase of the Brazilian carnival with its music, and its dance, seems much more "national" than the two preceding phases of the *entrudo* and the Venetian style, which came directly from Europe.³⁴ The parades of the samba schools and the *cordaos*, on the other hand, are composed of Afro-Brazilian and European elements, and differ from the origins of either. The specific Brazilian manner seems to be characterized in this case (as in many others, for that matter) by a process of

³³ The industrialization of the country, beginning in the 1930's, kept close step with agricultural expansion in the South-East. See the excellent analysis by Martin, 1966.

³⁴ The music and dance of the carnival were European until the first decades of the twentieth century; Afro-Brazilian rhythms were thus integrated rather late. The *marchinha*, a specifically carnival music, owes its origins to military marches.

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cultural assimilation of many diverse elements. In spite of this, this assimilation is responsible only for the third and last version of the carnival—the two preceding phases were entirely European. One can say, then, that the carnival has become national in Brazil at the moment that the underprivileged classes of the population gained the right to celebrate in their own way, and to dance freely in the streets.

Let us remark finally that the Brazilian carnival has always been associated with the cities; it never seems to have been celebrated in the countryside, and no mention of it has ever been found in connection with rustic groups or on the farms.³⁵ Is this association with urban centers and cities responsible for the early secularization of the feast, which dates back at least a century? Actually, documents from former epochs do not even mention the vaster meaning of Carnival, encompassing Lent and Holy Week. It seems to exist for itself alone, with no other reason than pleasure.

The origins of Carnival and its evolution have not been fundamentally different in the various Latin American countries; the *entrudo* from Portugal and the Spanish *antruido* have always been followed by the Venetian carnival, this latter tending to disappear everywhere a century later. But if the evolution in the cities has followed, at the same time, the same paths, in the rural districts the difference between the two regions of Latin America has been complete: only in Spanish America was the *antruido* adopted by the native population to become a village feast, which conserved practices very similar to those known in Spain.

In fact, Spanish America still has these two types of Carnival, different in their manifestations, their geographic location, and the kinds of people who take part; Portuguese America, on the other hand, still knows only one kind of carnival, a citizen's delight which has changed in the course of time. The specific conditions of the two regions at the moment of their colonization are at the base of this differentiation—specific conditions which led to a traditional rural civilization in Spanish America which Portuguese America never knew.

³⁵ Country people always came to celebrate carnival in the towns and cities. On the other hand, the feast of St. John was always celebrated in the country, in rural groups and on the farms.

In effect, although in Spanish America the distinction between town and city was in existence even before colonization, it has never existed in Portuguese America. Before the arrival of the first colonizers, the immense extension of territory in what is now Brazil was occupied by nomad tribes who had only rudimentary agricultural techniques. The Portuguese crown, anxious only to occupy as much of the territory as possible as fast as possible, did not favor the establishment of villages; that is to say, of concentrated habitations. It permitted at the most the establishment of a few indispensable centers for the administration of the country, and encouraged the colonizers to establish themselves in dispersed habitations on their own territory: the rural unit was the farm and not the village.³⁶ The *entrudo* was thus at the beginning a citizen's festival. Later, when the Venetian carnival arrived upon the scene, the carnival *entrudo*, lacking in the ancient Portuguese colonies a rural structure which could support it and guarantee its continuity, little by little disappeared.

This first divergence in the carnival of the two regions of Latin America was the origin of the process of transformations presently going on in an opposite sense. The rural carnival of Spanish America is on the way to closing the gap with the urban carnival both in its activities and its meaning (it is becoming secularized). Its evolution follows the general transformation going on inside the "traditional" civilization,³⁷ and a process of homogenization of carnival practices seems inevitable. In Portuguese America the growth of cities and urban centers and the differentiation which follows from their complexity has brought about the apparition of at least two types of carnival, which have substituted the ancient Venetian one to be found until 1940.

The different types of concentration of the population, and the variety of their socio-economic structure seem then to have had a greater influence on the evolution of the Latin American carnival than the processes of what Roger Bastide calls "interpenetration of civilizations." The composition of the carnival celebrations, their significance, vary according to the concentration in numbers of the citizens involved. The adoption of new cultural strains belonging to other ethnic groups and other cultures take place

³⁶ Pereira de Queiroz, 1968, (b).

³⁷ Garcia, 1960.

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within this differentiation, The observation of Nieves de Hoyos Sancho in regard to the very mediocre influence that the mixture of groups and cultures has had on the Latin American carnival seems very pertinent.³⁸

The evolution of the Latin American carnival should be studied in rapport to the development and transformation of the populations which support it. Can we go on speaking of carnival as if it were the same all over, or must we admit that it is multiform in time and since? The latter, without doubt. And since this diversity and evolution seem to be strictly connected to the type of concentration where the festival takes place, this study requires a profound knowledge of urban realities, as opposed to rural realities.

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³⁸ Sancho, 1970, p. 313.

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