



“Carnival is not a spectacle seen by the people; they live in it, and everyone participates because its very idea embraces all the people. While carnival lasts, there is no other life outside it. During carnival time, life is subject only to its laws, that is, the laws of its own freedom. It has a universal spirit; it is a special condition of the entire world, of the world's revival and renewal, in which all take part.” -Mikhail Bakhtin

CARNIVAL

CARNIVAL

“Farewell to Meat” – pre-fast / pre-lent ritual ;

Originated in Europe w/ Peasant class [after feast of fools-clergy-ritual]

transplanted to Americas, Syncretized with African, Native, Religious / Festive Rituals

Roots possibly in hunting-dance, Dionysus rituals



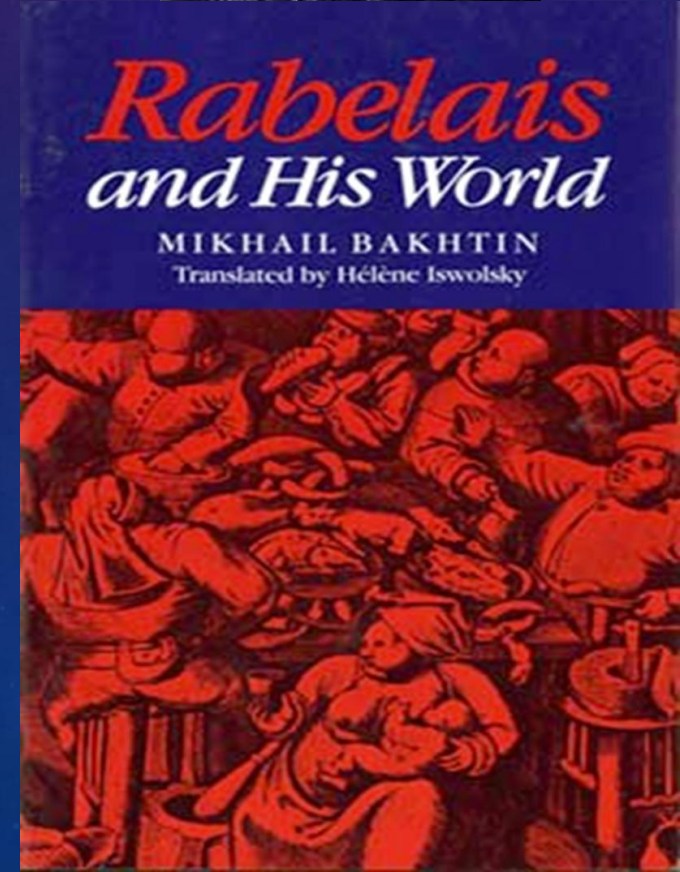
Social production of space

Spectacle: Fragmented representations meant to unify and record through performative action. [Debord 1998]

Performance: a process of behaviors which enable or transform for the group as well as the individual; a constituting identity through actions; Action planned and that is meant for an audience, for ritual, or for selfhood

EARLY DISTINCTIONS: SACRED AND PROFANE; ELITE AND POPULAR

“carnival celebrated temporary liberation from the prevailing truth and from the established order; it marked the suspension of all hierarchical rank, privileges, norms, and prohibitions...the true feast of time, the feast of becoming, change, and renewal...hostile to all that was immortalized and completed.” (10).



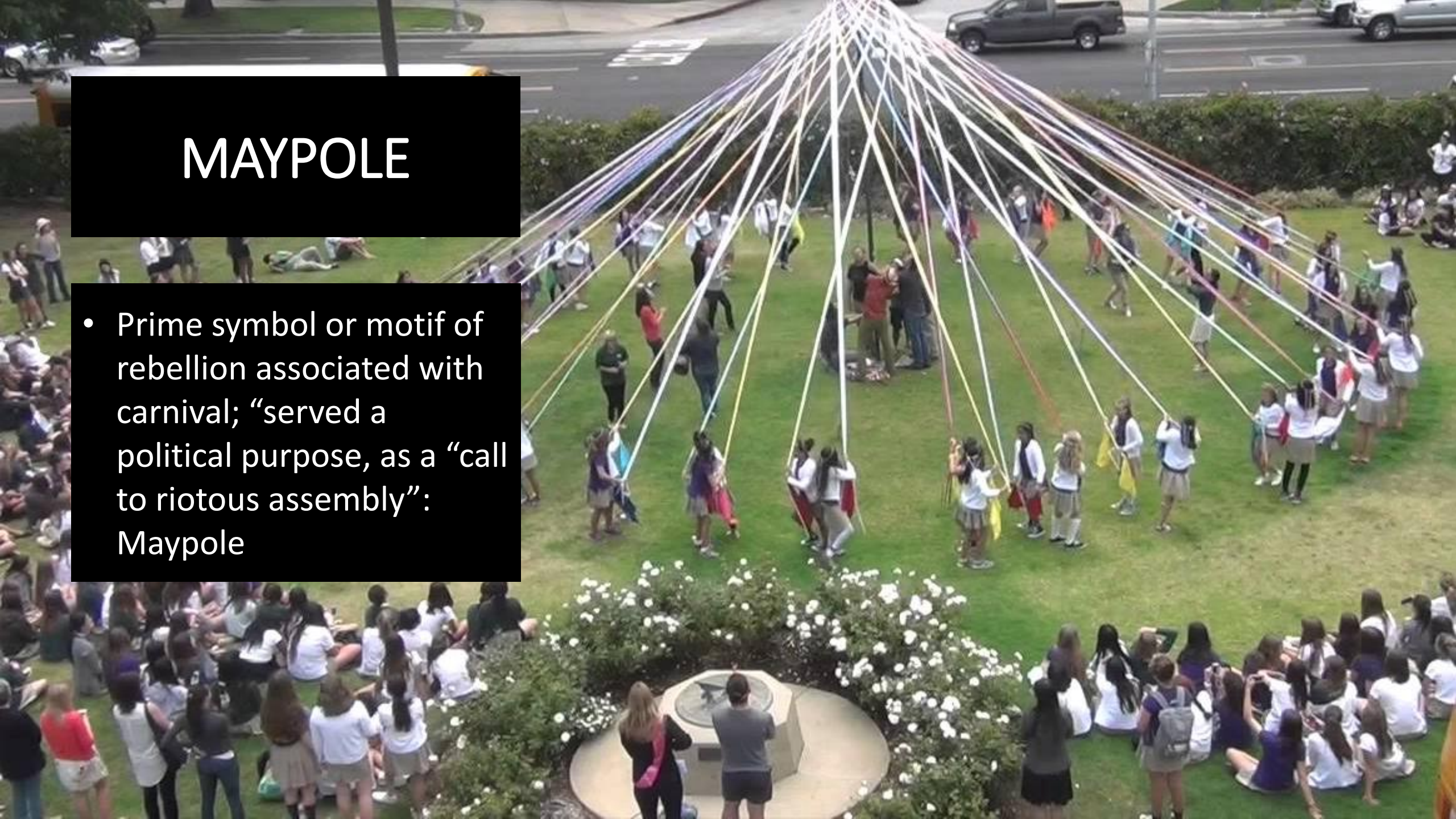
CARNIVAL: 12TH-15TH CENTURY, ACROSS EUROPE

- Feasts
- Drinking
- Dancing
- Animal sacrifice/cruelty
- Costuming [cross-dressing; dressing as political/ecclesiastical authorities for mockery]
- Games /sports
 - Bowling
 - Archery
 - Wrestling
 - Darts
 - Handball



MAYPOLE

- Prime symbol or motif of rebellion associated with carnival; “served a political purpose, as a “call to riotous assembly”:
Maypole



DANCE, CHURCH, AND CARNIVAL : PROHIBITION AND PROTEST

1206

- dancers threatened with excommunication by the Synod of Cahors [France]

1208

- dancing prohibited in churches, processions, and churchyards by Bishop of Paris [France]

1215

- Lateran council declares dancing sin

1227

- three step and ring dances prohibited by Council of Trier [Germany]

1278

- Utrecht –dance mania on Mosel bridge [collapsed; 200 people drowned]



DANCE AND CARNIVAL : PROHIBITION AND PROTEST



CARNIVAL: 12TH-15TH CENTURY, ACROSS EUROPE

- King of Fools [character]
- 1207-1444: Controversy over Feast of Fools
- Cross-dressing deacons performing burlesque mockery of mass, using props [like sausage and shoe-burning] and replacing psalms with gibberish and vulgar songs



CARNIVAL: 12TH-15TH CENTURY, ACROSS EUROPE

Sports, drama,
comedy – expelled
from churches

France $\frac{1}{4}$ days/year =
holidays [local or
major]

Holy days – regularly
scheduled festivity

13th-15th century:
“one long outdoor
party, punctuated by
bouts of hard labor”

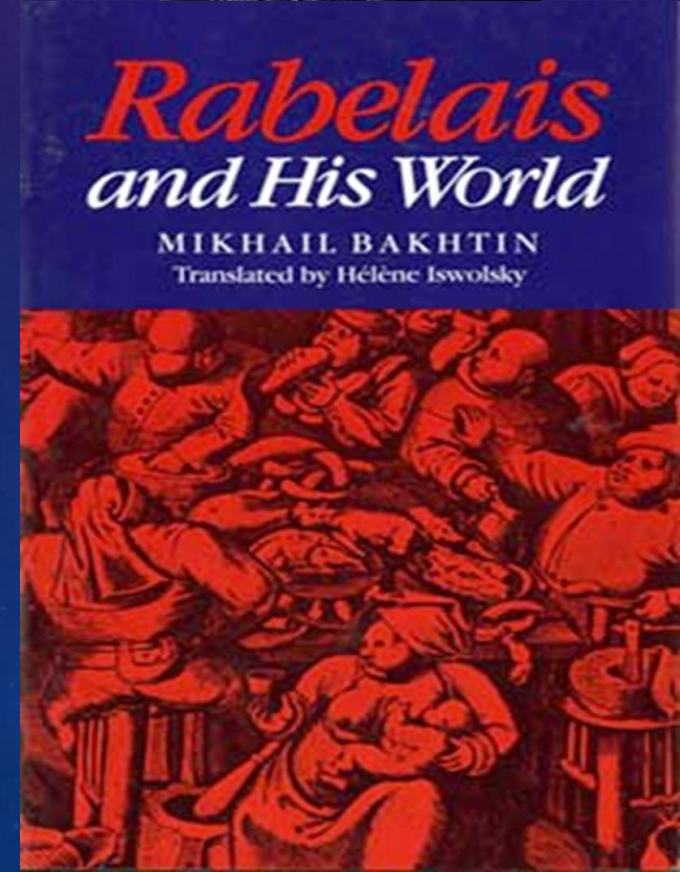
CARNIVAL: 12TH-15TH CENTURY, ACROSS EUROPE

- Movement from “ecstatic ritual to ‘secularized festivities’” –removal of religious meaning / spiritual experience /trancelike unity with divinity as goal of events
- shift was taking place in understandings of religiosity’s goals, from that of no longer offering spiritual union but instead a rational self-control against that seen as sinful.



EARLY DISTINCTIONS: SACRED AND PROFANE; ELITE AND POPULAR

“Of course these are not religious rituals like, for instance, the Christian liturgy... The basis of laughter which gives form to carnival rituals frees them completely from all religious and ecclesiastic dogmatism, from all mysticism and piety. They are completely deprived of the character of magic and prayer; they do not command nor do they ask for anything. Even more, certain carnival forms parody the Church’s cult. All these forms are systematically placed outside the Church and religiosity; they belong to an entirely different sphere.” (Bakhtin Year: 7)



CARNIVAL: 12TH-15TH CENTURY, ACROSS EUROPE

Folk carnival humor

- opposition to the stark seriousness offered by the church
- involved, “comic rites and cultures, the clowns and fools, giants, dwarfs and jugglers, the vast and manifold literature of parody”



CARNIVAL: 12TH-15TH CENTURY, ACROSS EUROPE



Bakhtin – Folk Culture:

- Ritual spectacles [such as comedy shows, carnival pageants]
- Comic Verbal compositions [such as spoken and written parodies]
- “Various genres of billingsgate [such as oaths and curses] + “marketplace language” –idiomatic /slang expressions



MASS IS BORING

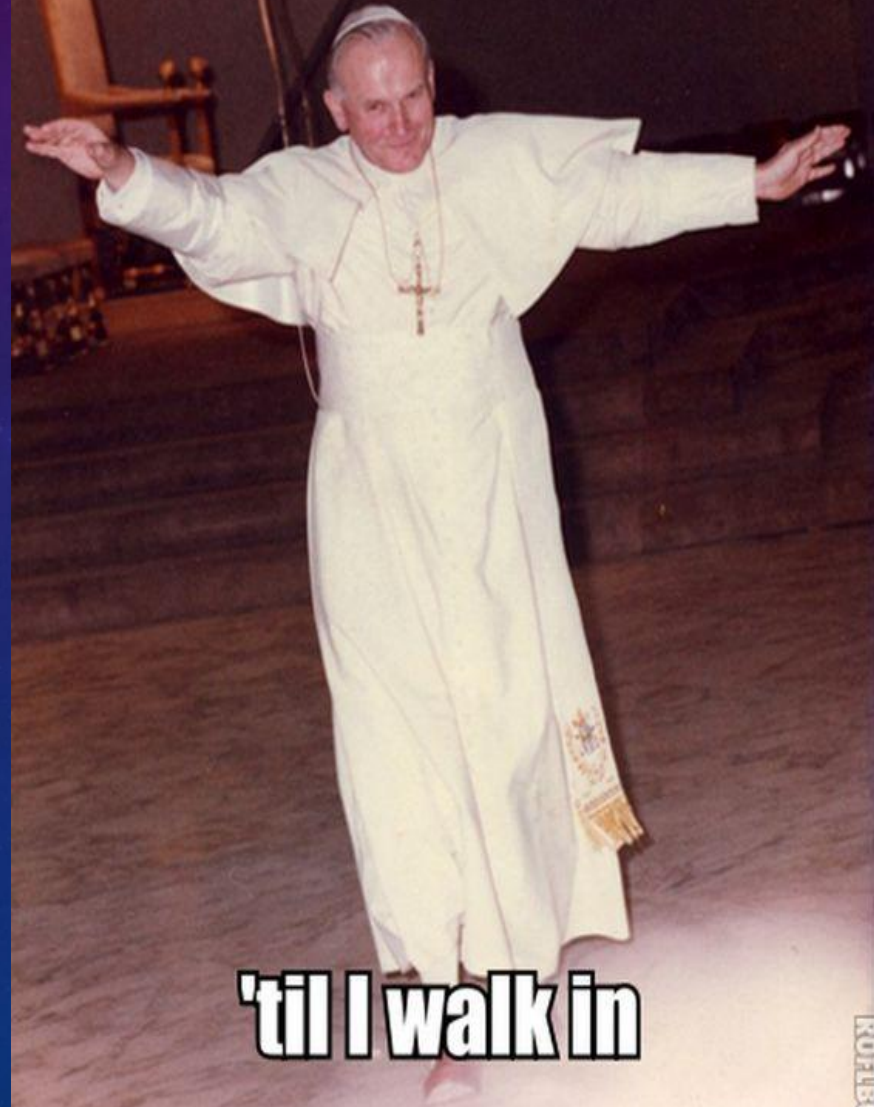


**SAID NO ANGEL, SAINT OR HOLY
SOUL IN PURGATORY EVER**

POWER DYNAMICS AND CELEBRATIONS

“When the community of believers could no longer access the deity on their own, through ecstatic forms of worship, the community itself was reduced to a state of dependence on central ecclesiastic authorities. “Prophesying” became the business of the priest...”
(Enrenreich :76)

The party don't start

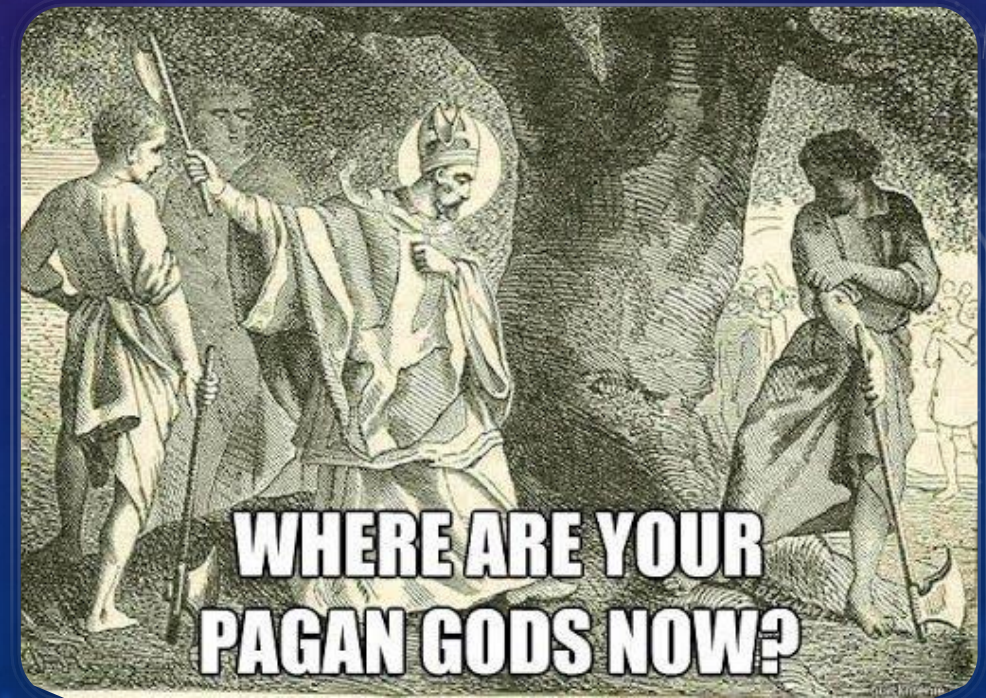


'til I walk in

POWER DYNAMICS AND CELEBRATIONS

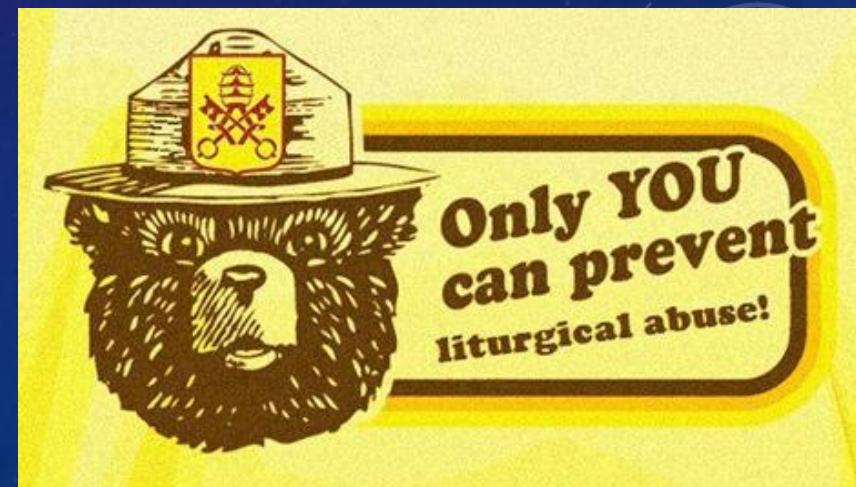
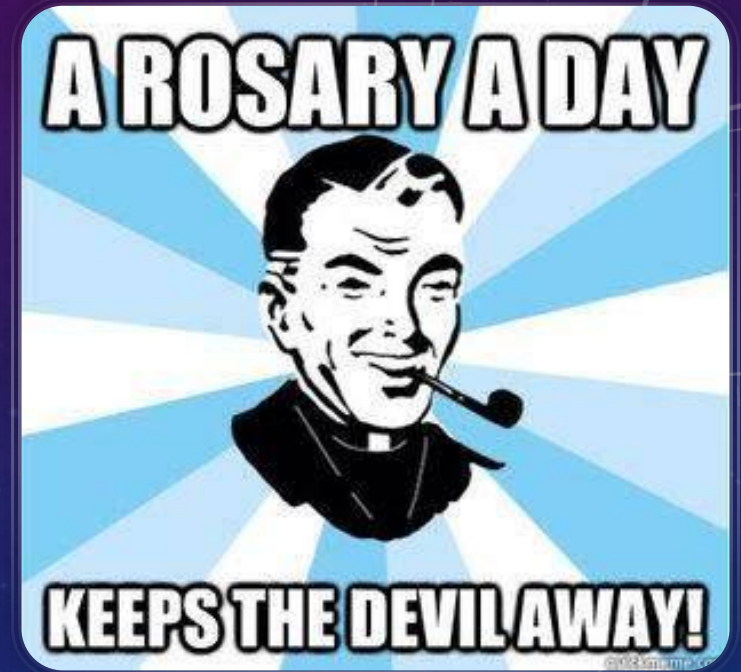
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<https://www.catholic.com/magazine/print-edition/the-ten-most-common-liturgical-abuses>



“LITURGICAL ABUSES”

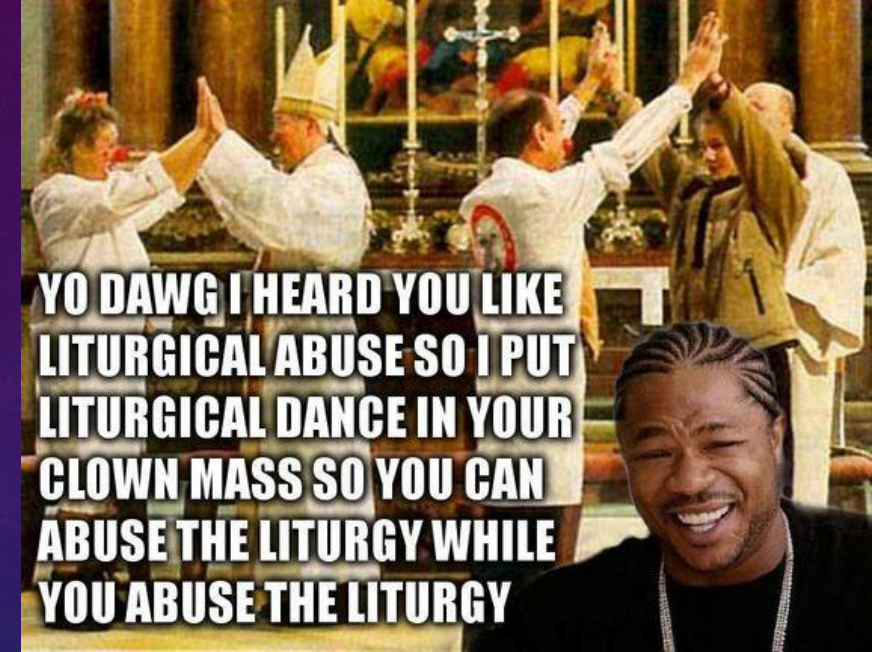
1. Disregarding the prescribed text of the Order of Mass.
2. Interrupting the Mass.
3. Omitting the penitential rite.
4. Replacing or omitting the homily.
5. Dictating posture.
6. Dictating the manner of reception of the Eucharist.
7. Ignoring rules for reception of the Eucharist.
8. Holding hands during the Our Father.
9. Performing liturgical dance.
10. Closing the holy water fonts at some seasons.



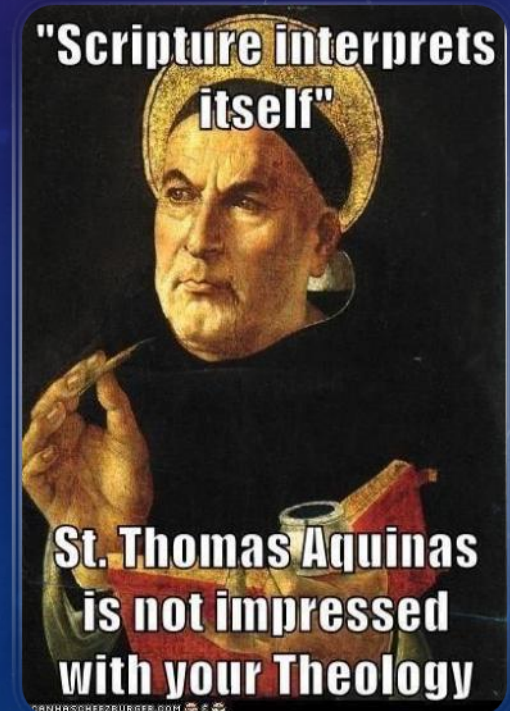
"LITURGICAL ABUSES"

- 9. Performing liturgical dance.

Introducing dance into the liturgy in the United States would be to add "one of the most desacralized and desacralizing elements" leading to "an atmosphere of profanity, which would easily suggest to those present worldly places and profane situations. Nor is it acceptable to introduce into the liturgy the so-called artistic ballet because it would reduce the liturgy to mere entertainment" (*Notitiae* 11 [1975] 202–205).

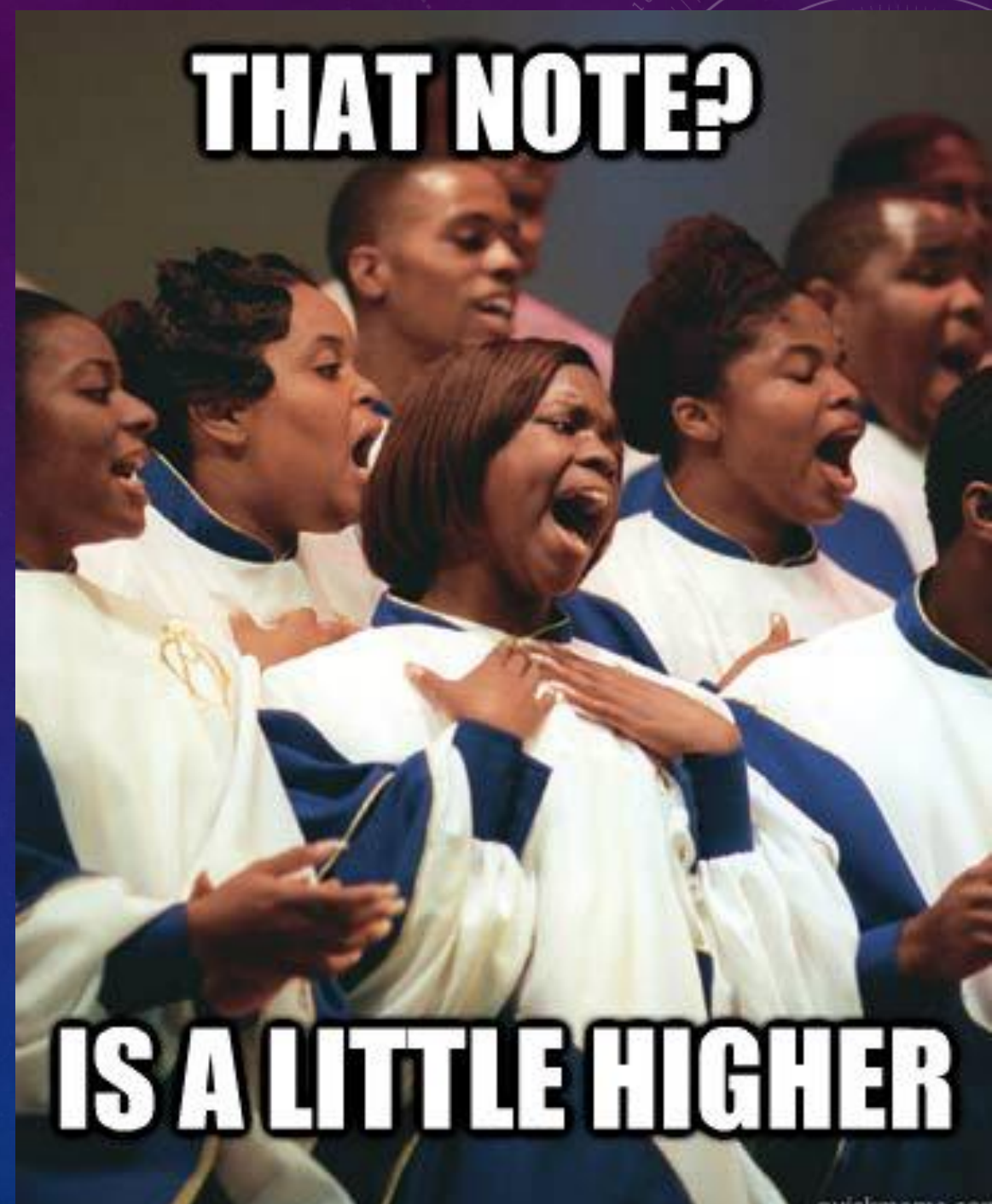


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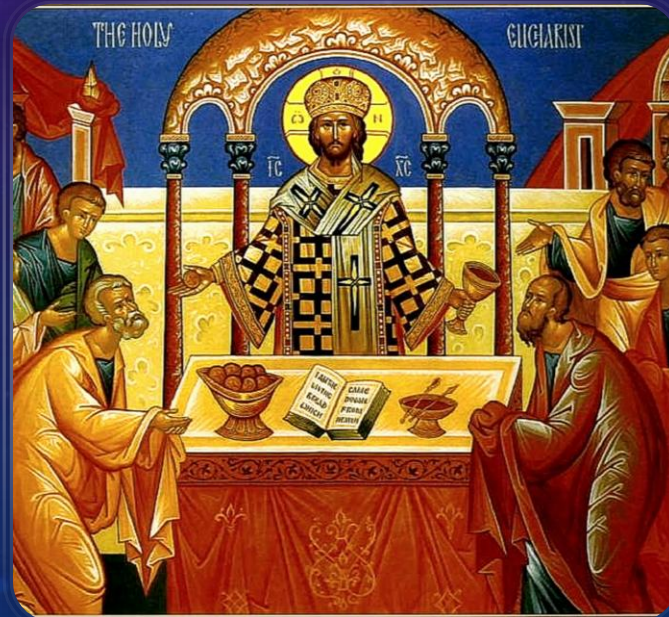
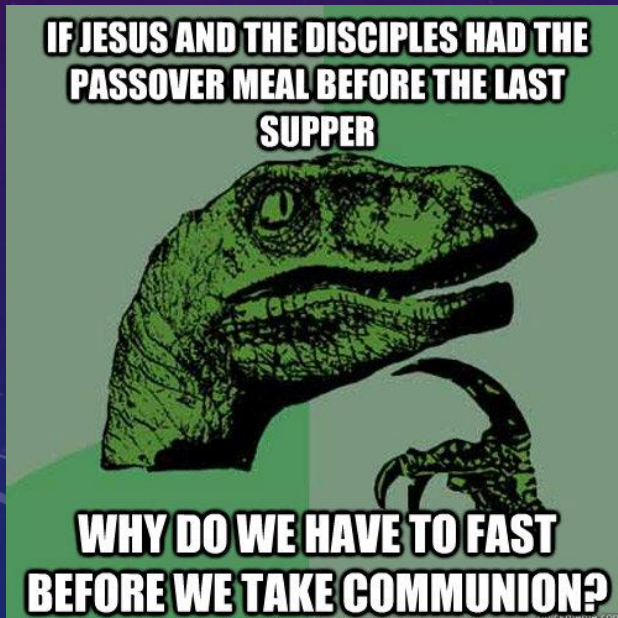
POWER DYNAMICS AND CELEBRATIONS

“...singing was relegated to a specialized choir and that characteristic feature of early Christian worship-...” (Enrenreich :76)



POWER DYNAMICS AND CELEBRATIONS

“[and] ... the communal meal or feast-shriveled into a morsel that could only tantalize the hungry.”
(Enrenreich :76)



Holy Feast and Holy Fast

THE RELIGIOUS SIGNIFICANCE
OF FOOD TO MEDIEVAL WOMEN



CAROLINE WALKER BYNUM

CARNIVAL: 12TH-15TH CENTURY, ACROSS EUROPE

- Church = spirituality, morality
- Festivity = space created outside Church's dominion



CARNIVAL: 12TH-15TH CENTURY, ACROSS EUROPE

Flip-side:

- motivation and opportunity for other human social organizations to direct festivals.
- gave people power to create their own social productions of costume, drama/theater, and rites.



CARNIVAL SUPPRESSION: 1500S-1800S ACROSS EUROPE

Prohibitions against

- Dancing
- Feasting
- Sports
- Theater



CARNIVAL SUPPRESSION: 1500S-1800S ACROSS EUROPE

Roots in a rule from two centuries earlier in Rome:

No uninhibited celebration for elites in front of “social inferiors” as it might compromise their legitimate right to power.



DANCE AND CARNIVAL : PROHIBITION AND PROTEST

16th-19th centuries

**“suppression of
traditional
festivities”**

1517

**Udine Italy-
Carnival turns to
riot**

1519

**Berne –Berne
'sacked'**

1529

**Shrove Tuesday-
Basle- overrun by
armed men**

1580

**Romans France -
aggressive weapon
use/demonstration
part of festivity
presentation**

MARTIN LUTHER, AND PROTESTANT CARNIVAL

- Used carnival rituals to advance their reformation causes
- Mock pope; parodys of monks, nuns and Catholic ritual
- Smashing statues; burning paintings and papal bulls
- Extorting money from a monastery
- Occasionally defecating on alters.
- Dancing through the streets/around the churches
- Sometimes led by local authorities behind the cause.



MARTIN LUTHER
Posting Problems on Walls before it was cool



MARTIN LUTHER, AND PROTESTANT CARNIVAL

1524:

- German peasants rebelled using masks during rebellion
- Horrified Luther
- Physical attacks of terror under mask.

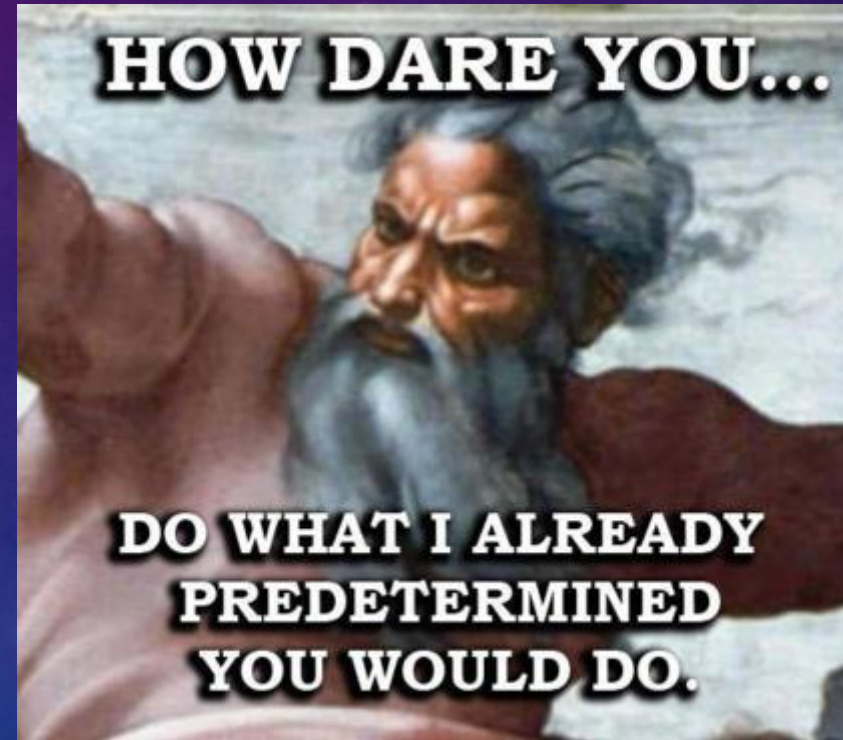


JOHN CALVIN (1550S-1600)

PROHIBITIONS AGAINST CARNIVAL

Practices outlawed related to Calvinism:

- Hair [heads shaved]
- Tattooing
- Liquor
- Dancing
- local music
- garland weaving



CAPITALISM, CALVINISM, AND THE PROTESTANT WORK ETHIC

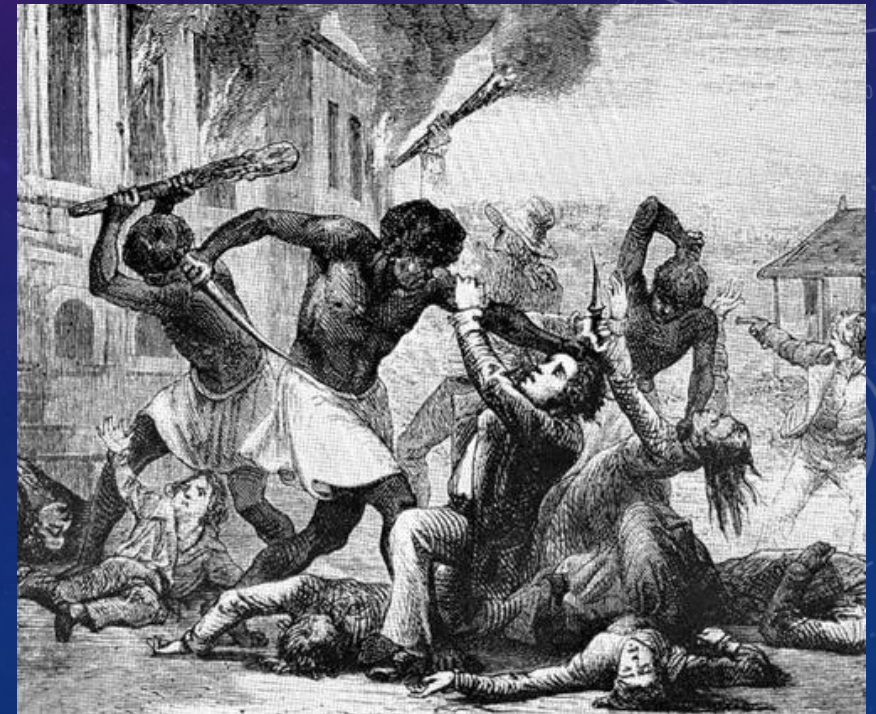
Capitalism:

- structural set up dependent on middle/lower classes saving money, delaying gratifications
- disciplining themselves to factory/work standards [promptness, sobriety, less leisure time]
- “protestant work ethic”: Calvinist idea: “unremitting, disciplined labor” = good for souls; “festivities were positively sinful, along with mere idleness.” (100).



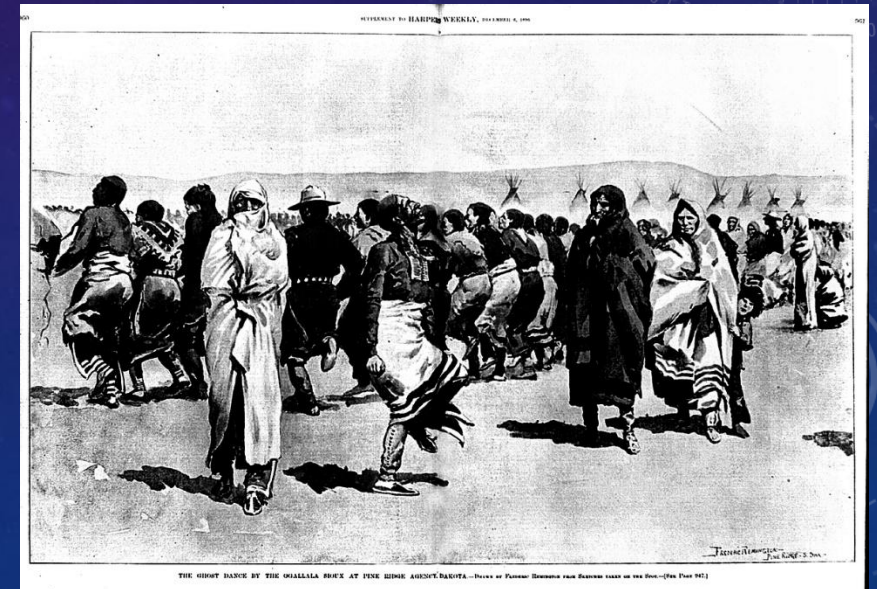
CARNIVAL AND SLAVE REVOLT

- Transplanted by Catholic French, Portuguese, Spanish settlers
- Potential additional transplant of local African Customs [across many countries] – evidence in rule that forbid them to engage in ‘heathen’ practices such as drumming/dancing
- Used as “springboards for rebellion against white rule, much as the European lower classes had deployed carnival as an occasion for armed resistance to their rulers and landlords.”



LATE 1800S

- Late 1800s ecstatic dance rite developed by native/indigenous populations of North America –Ghost Dance or “Dream Dance”
- Earlier anthropologists and scholars were not immune from ethnocentric bias, describing ecstatic rituals of colonized peoples as :
Psychosis; Madness/Mental Illness; Hysteria;
Frenzy



SYNCRETIC RELIGION

- late 1800s; described as Enrenreich as being “ecstatic, danced religions” due to inclusion of rituals of possession trance: Candomble [Brazil]; Vodou, Santeria, Shango, Obeah (Caribbean), North American Protestantism-variation on practice by African Americans.
- “So the ecstatic rites of these diaspora religions were not mad orgies, as whites often perceived them, but deliberately nurtured *techniques* of [spiritual] ecstasy, derived from ancient traditions.
- vehicles used for preserving some African traditions for individuals transplanted by enslavement to the Americas
Carnival and Religion



THE REVIVAL OF CARNIVAL

1900S - EUROPE AND AMERICAS

- Medieval peasants / lower class 19th century – in common – revolution from ground up / focus on removal of hierarchy / removal of elite
- requiring disciplined planning of tactics [because of “absolutist monarchs who possessed vast armies and police apparatuses” (174)]
- ascetic self-denial; revolutionary rather than frivolous festivity



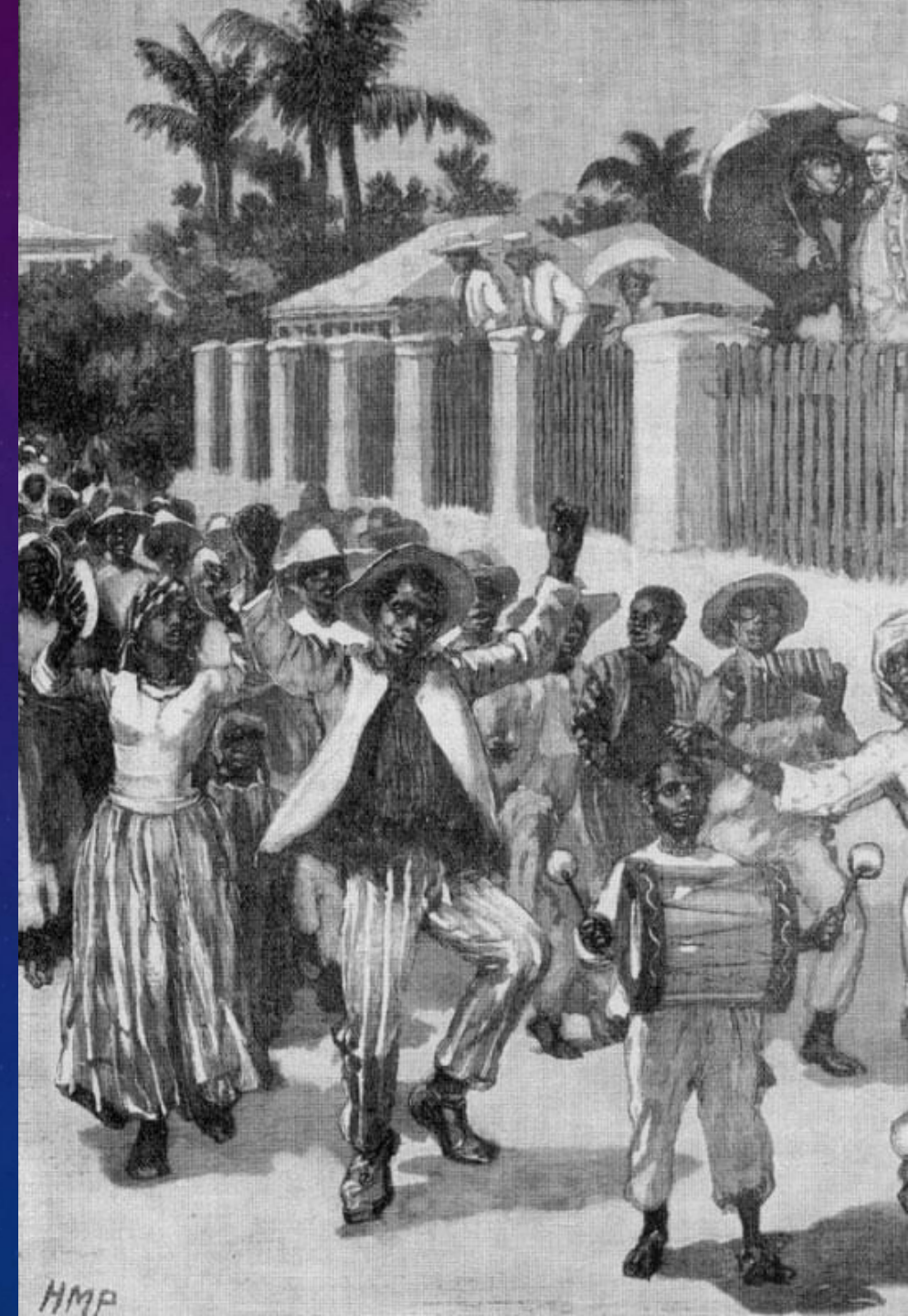
1688: FESTIVITY OF AFRICANS ENSLAVED IN AMERICAS

- Costume, dancing
- Gift giving (money, drinks, dance rights) [forcible, later willing, later forced again-Carolinas] and chore taking over of Europeans/Plantation owners



EVE OF EMANCIPATION 1834: TRINIDAD CARNIVAL

- Carnival was (arguably) originally imported by French settlers with formal prohibitions against non-Europeans participation, as well as use of blackface/slave-costumes
- As a festival of independence, Africans put on a carnival involving parody of European-descended/local-Caucasian Militia



BRAZIL – CARNIVAL

- Brazil -1880s-
- drums and tambourines –
- carnival parade of slaves
- said to derive from earlier practices of funeral dances



CONTEMPORARY CARNIVAL

- Pre-Lent Indulgence
- Still: Political, religious, hierarchical mockery; masks, dancing, music, and other hallmarks



Venice, Italy





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Nice, France







MARDI GRAS: NEW ORLEANS





STYLE: MARDI GRAS



STYLE: MARDI GRAS



BARBARA ENRENREICH



**Dancing in the Streets:
A History of Collective Joy**

