EAST COAST SOUTH AMERICA SERIES
Vol. XXI No. 2
(Brazil)

CARNIVAL AND GUAPIRA'S CHILDREN: THE MORAL CHALLENGE

Part I: Poised

by Richard Critchfield

April 1977

Morals are the rules by which a society tries to persuade its members to behavior consistent with its order, security, and growth.

A little knowledge of the world's two million or so traditional villages suggests that while moral codes greatly differ and sometimes contradict each other, there is a certain universality of moral codes in settled agricultural villages, and their necessity. Where they differ, it is because they adjust themselves to environmental conditions. For example, some years ago, living with nomadic Arab herdsmen on the Mesopotamian desert, this writer was at first appalled by their comparative greed, sexual readiness, brutality, and cruelty.[1] Only gradually did I grasp that these Bedouins were the cultural remnants of the hunting stage in man's economic development: the predatory instinct, the ability to kill, the need for many offspring, the fierce loyalty to tribe and hostility to outsiders, were advantages in their struggle for existence. A harsh environment can turn vices into virtues, that is, qualities making for the survival of the group. Freudian theory of Id being held in check by Superego, or the Christian doctrine of original sin, for that matter, suggests that, as Will Durant has put it, "Man's sins may be the relics of his rise rather than the stigmata of his fall." [2]

When Neolithic peoples discovered wild wheat could be sown and passed from hunting to herdsmen to cultivators, they created a stern moral code that survives in the world's villages to this day. Industry and thrift became more profitable than bravery and violence. Children were economic assets and birth control was made immoral, or "against God's will" as most village women will still tell you. The village family was the unit of agricultural production under the discipline of the father and the seasons; paternal authority had a firm economic base. Sons and daughters became self-reliant by performing useful chores from earliest childhood; by 15 a boy was as prepared to earn a livelihood ploughing, sowing, and harvesting as he was at 40. Marriage came soon after puberty and there was little frustration from the restraints placed upon premarital sex by village social pressure. Chastity, early marriage, divorceless monogamy, and multiple maternity were part of an agricultural code, which along with religious and other supernatural beliefs, formed an agricultural moral code that has proved to be the most durable in man's history.

As people enter the third of the three main economic stages, the new urban industrial technological order, the old agricultural moral code begins to break down. In the United States this has happened only gradually since the turn of the century and a great many Americans over 40 grew up under the old code. In poor countries today the breakdown can come very abruptly when young men and women leave the village and family, authority and unity to seek work in the modernized cities, ironically, working as individuals in factories or service industries designed not for them but for urban society at large. Every year as the cities in poor countries approach closer to the economic form and social superstructure of European and North American cities, the machines multiply and the culture of the upper classes becomes more cosmopolitan and materialistic or "Americanized." For the poor, the capacity to feed and support a family comes much later; children are no longer economic assets, marriage is delayed, premarital chastity becomes harder to maintain, and contra-

ceptives enable girls to separate intercourse from pregnancy. The authority of the father and mother begins to lose its economic base. Youth is no longer constrained by the surveillance of the village; sins can be hidden in the protective anonymity of the crowd. Education spreads religious doubts and the old morality loses its supernatural supports, superseded by a shallow urban sophistication priding itself on cynical, materialistic philosophies. Money becomes a prime value.

Even the United States, one of the most technologically advanced societies, has yet to find a satisfying urban substitute for the old agricultural moral code. Some see this an evidence of decay and cite history's lesson that civilizations always begin with pasture and agriculture, expand into commerce and industry, luxuriate with finance and then, cut off from their moral and economic basis in agriculture, begin gradually to decline. Yet history also reveals that this breakdown is a leisurely process, usually taking centuries. Whether Western civilization is in decline or simply in a ferment preceding the emergence of a new moral code and way of life is something we will not, barring a nuclear catastrophe, know the answer to in our lifetimes.

What we are instead very likely to know—indeed, within the next five or ten years—is what happens in much of the rest of the world when the old agricultural moral code is shattered suddenly for the multitudes of young villagers now flooding into the cities of the poor countries, whose educated elites are doing their best to pursue an American-style affluent civilization. In the United States, an unmoored younger generation, caught between the dying of the old moral code and the still unborn formation of something to replace it, may surrender itself to Epicureanism, luxury, and a restless disorder of family and of morals. Or it may desperately cling to the old code and restraints even though they no longer have an economic basis. The election of a man like Jimmy Carter who so personifies the old agricultural moral code, the reversal of the shift toward continued urbanization since 1970, and the resurgence of church-going, particularly among Roman Catholics, suggest how many have made this second choice. In poor countries there is no such cushion of wealth for the great majority. Here the unmooring of village youth in the cities could have a much more immediate impact. If Christian doctrine, Freud, and historians like Durant are right, when a moral code breaks down, the more basic animal instincts of acquisition, violence, and sex take over; the symptoms of this, a surfacing of naked greed and rising crime and promiscuity, have become in recent years increasingly evident in the great cities of Asia, Africa, and Latin America. Yet those countries where populations and poverty are most concentrated in their cities and whose governments are increasingly given the choice of enfeebling their economies by providing a dole for the urban poor or facing riot and revolution—India, Indonesia, and Egypt are the prime examples—are the very countries where the old agricultural moral code survives most tenaciously among the urban village immigrants. The rioters in Cairo this winter, Calcutta's Marxist terrorists in the late 1960s, or those who burned Japanese imports in the streets of Jakarta a few years ago, have almost all been youths born and raised in the city, not village immigrants. As Napoleon once observed, religion keeps the poor from murdering the rich. It is the strength of the village moral code that, despite the mindlessness and indifference of the urban rich in most poor countries, prevents a reversion to savagery.

Such restraint may not last forever. A very precarious balance now exists in the world supply and demand of wheat, which most poor countries import and subsidize to feed their restless urban inhabitants.[3] Theoretically, world food production can be doubled to feed projected populations through the year 2000 if current trends toward a reduced rate of population growth continues. But one year of bad weather and wheat crop failure in North America, with restricted exports going only to the highest bidders, and we can expect a series of violent urban political explosions. If the old agricultural code has become too weak among the urban immigrants, competition for food, land, materials, fuel, and mastery would revert to primitive, instinctive behavior. For human nature is a constant. Men biologically respond in certain, limited ways to hunger, danger, or sex. The agricultural moral code, and the religions that have been part of it, has been the most durable modification of these instinctive responses. The scientific and humanistic rationalism of contemporary urban American civilization is another. But as we can see from urban violence and high crime rates in the United States it does not embrace the lowest economic and educational strata; in the worst of our

city slums, unmoored youth fear not God nor parents but only the policeman, if that.

These are large issues. The purpose of these two Reports, however, is modest: to try and illustrate the nature of the moral challenge facing village youth when they go to the city. The specific environment in this illustration is impoverished Northeast Brazil; the city, Salvador, the capital of Bahia state; and the handful of village immigrant youth to be sketched are from Guapira, a small community (ca. 2,500) 160 kilometers from Salvador. The time frame is the six days of the pre-Lenten street Carnival (*Carnaval*), February 17 to 22, chosen because this week is characterized by a spectacular shedding of customary cultural restraints.

As in much of Northeast Brazil, virtually *all* the youth in Guapira village, age 18 through the late 20s, have either migrated to Salvador (or the southern industrial city of Sao Paulo), or intend to. Almost an entire generation is abandoning the countryside, as if Salvador were a Pied Piper luring Guapira's children away forever. The reasons for this and a description of Guapira village are given in a previous Fieldstaff Report.[4] Mostly the youths go to Salvador to escape the hard, primitive labor involved in growing and processing manioc, the principal crop, and to become educated, if only at the primary level. Every single Guapira immigrant is going to night school; the village school is so inadequate that almost all, though in their 20s, are still in the first six primary grades.

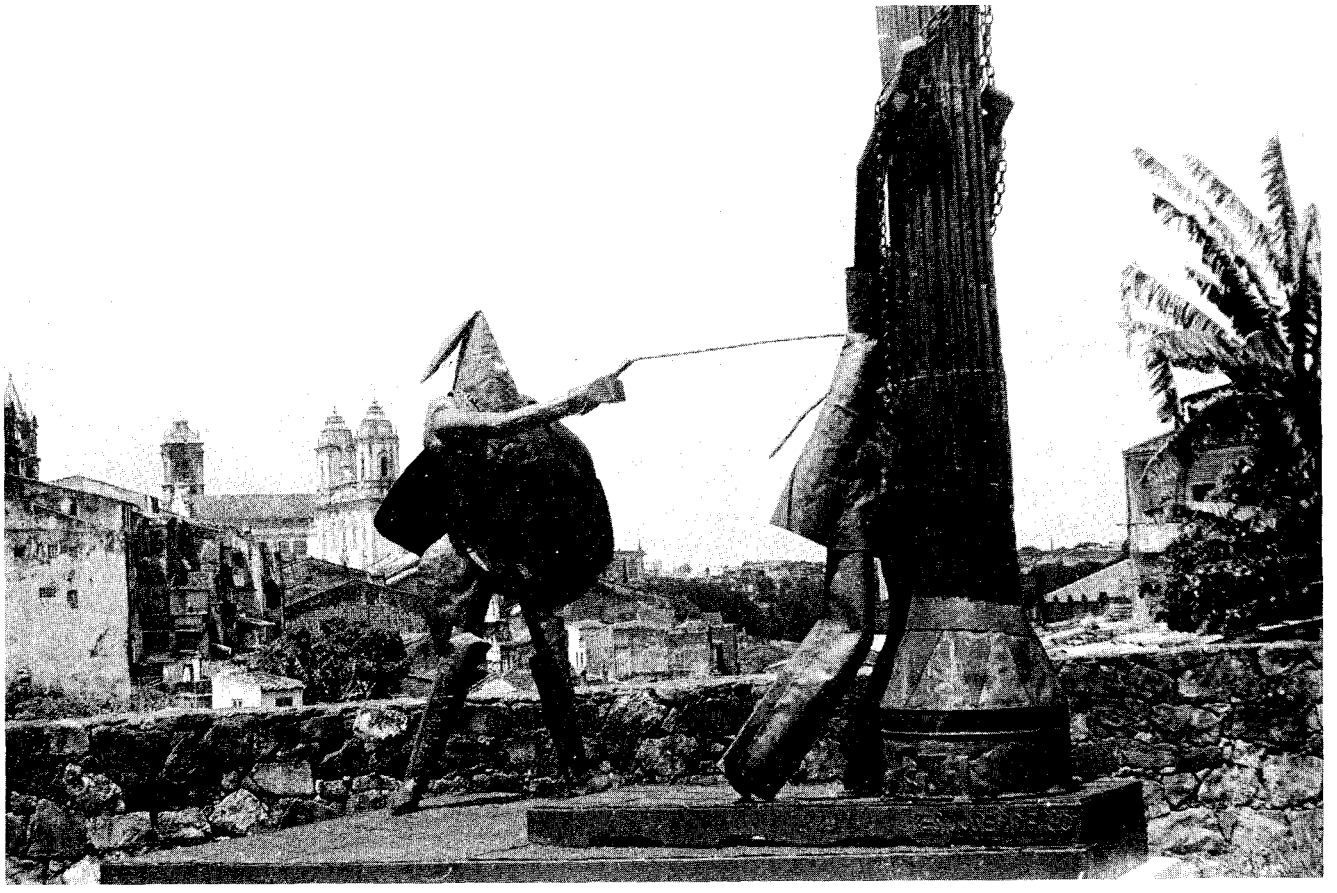
Old Salvador.

There are also older migrants in Salvador, people who left Guapira years ago. In every instance, more deeply imbued with the agricultural moral code, they cannot accept Salvador's values or absence of values and want to go home again. Each of the new, young immigrants is involved in a personal struggle between enjoying the new freedom and being frightened by it. Like all younger generations, Guapira's children rebel against the old. One suspects many will pass from rebellion to conformity, and even to reaction.

Brazil has done precious little for its villages in the Northeast. In few countries do the educated, urban elite possess so little sense of social responsibility for the poor, especially the rural poor. One cannot fault the Brazilian governments too much, past or present, as they seem almost liberal and reformist compared with the social indifference of the prospering classes. The day will almost certainly come when this elite recognizes that its own future comfort and safety will depend upon making the villages better places to live. As yet these villages lack even the minimal infrastructure—decent primary schools, all-weather roads, the most rudimentary sanitation and health care—that has become almost universal in much poorer countries than Brazil.

Choosing the week of Carnival for the focus of this article slightly distorts one's impression of Salvador. Salvador's population is usually given as just over a million,[5] but it is swollen by about 200,000 more during the festivities. For most of the 600,000 to 700,000 people who actively took part this year, including this writer, Carnival was essentially fun. Yet to the young village immigrants its purely pleasurable aspects had to be balanced against the challenge it symbolized to the agricultural moral code which they had grown up believing.

The idea of carnival, as old as civilization, is to celebrate the recovery of the boundless vitality and fecundity of primordial chaos. Or, put less loftily,



Salvador's colonial heritage: Catholicism, sugar, and slavery.

to gain a new lease on life for society and the individual through a temporary abolition of order and moral restraint. The orgiastic spring festival of *holi* that survives from antiquity in India, the celebration of the phallic god Min in pharaonic Egypt, or the rites to Dionysus in ancient Greece, have been expressions of this. In the Roman Saturnalia, dedicated to Bacchus, the god of wine, and Venus, the goddess of love, there was excessive drinking, sexual irregularities, slaves had temporary freedom, and a "mock king" presided who perhaps was put to death when the celebration ended. This most popular of Roman festivals was later tolerated in early Christian Rome as a burst of revelry to be followed by a fast of 40 days, supposed to have been instituted by St. Telesphorus, Bishop of Rome (125-136 A.D.). Centuries later this became the Lenten period of self-denial. The Carnival spirit of relaxing the moral code preceding a period of religious discipline spread to the Latin countries, moving from Italy to France, Spain, and Portugal,

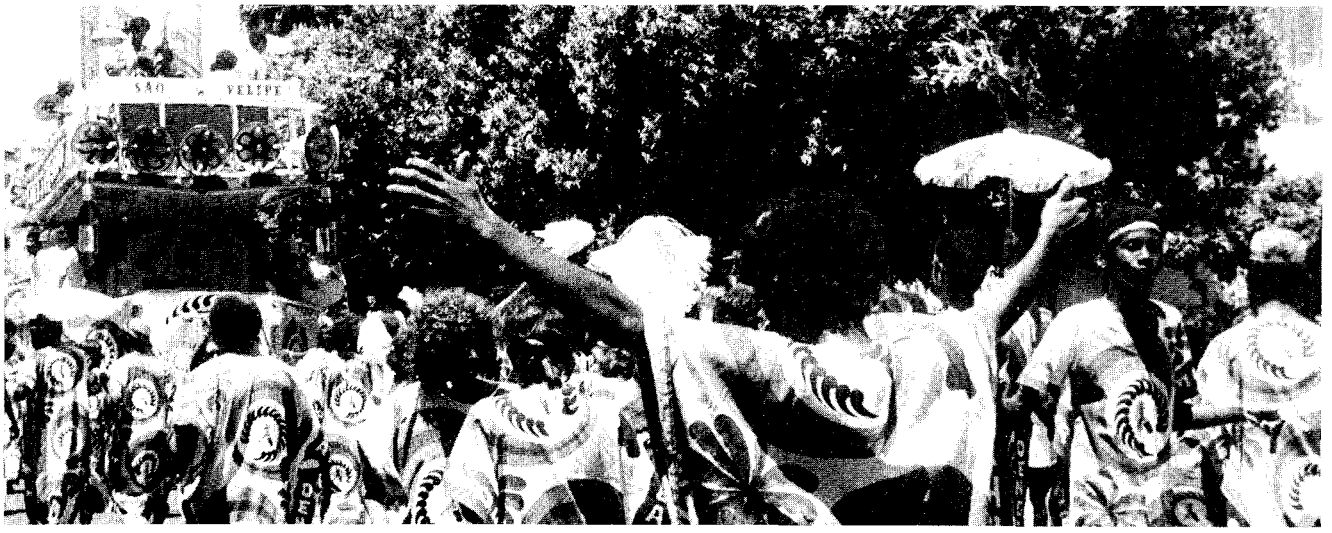
Celebrating *Holi* in India.

and eventually to their colonies, including Brazil. Venice in the fifteenth and sixteenth centuries was famous for the licentiousness of its masked balls and France's mad King Charles VI (r. 1380-1422) was nearly killed by mistake at a ball while disguised as a bear. Brazil's most famous Carnival has been in Rio de Janeiro, although today most of the population are merely spectators, observing parades of sumptuously costumed dancers and floats. In the United States, the Mardi Gras in New Orleans keeps the tradition alive, along with the "carnivals" or traveling amusement enterprises with their merry-go-rounds, Ferris wheels, freak shows, strip tease joints, and games of chance.

The precise derivation of the word is obscure. The Latin *carni vale*, or "flesh, farewell" is commonly accepted, though many scholars prefer *carnem levare*, the putting away of meat (in earlier days Catholics abstained from meat during Lent). Another possibility is *carrus navalis*, a ship on a cart drawn through the streets of pagan Rome during the Saturnalia. Similar ship-carts appeared in eleventh-century Holland where naked women danced around them despite protests from the clergy; ship-carts were used in religious processions in ancient Egypt and still are pulled about in a nominally Muslim festival in Luxor each year. In its long history, Carnival has played a significant role in the development of popular theater, vernacular story, and folk dancing. Perhaps its most memorable twentieth-century portrayal was Jean Cocteau's classic motion picture, *Orphée Noire* (*Black Orpheus*), filmed in Rio.

Nowhere on earth does the true Carnival, in the sense of exuberant, total abandon, in the spirit of the Roman Saturnalia, seem to survive quite so spectacularly as it does in Salvador. From Thursday, when the king of Carnival is crowned, until the dawn of Ash Wednesday six days later, revelers take over the city's two-mile-long downtown boulevards, Sete de Setembro and Carlos Gomez; the route is lined with improvised sidewalk beer taverns, music is supplied by bands of drummers or huge *trios eletricos*—electronically amplified rock bands mounted on trucks—fantastically costumed *escolas de samba* compete, and more than a hundred organized *blocos*, some with thousands of members, dance in procession the last three days. Everyone can participate and while about half the revelers masquerade as Red Indians, Zulus, Persian princes, specters, vampires, or whatever, the rest wear a long, loose cotton gown called a *mortalha*, originally a white shroud or winding sheet but today brightly colored, with flowers or stripes. Others wear only G-strings and spangles, or bikinis; a remarkably large number of men, as in the Roman Saturnalia, appear as garish transvestites.

The heart of it all is the *samba*. From the sixteenth to the nineteenth centuries, among the African slaves on the sugar plantations of Bahia and neighboring Pernambuco state, the samba was a communal round dance performed at Carnival time with a soloist turning and leaping in the center of the circle, whose members stamped and swayed. The samba, familiar in the United States from



Dancers following the music of a *trio eletrico*.

college dances and old Carmen Miranda movies, was introduced in Rio in 1917. This simple backward and forward step of tilting, rocking body movements to a syncopated rhythm bears almost no resemblance to the samba of Salvador. This is an older, very African type of dance which varies from a taut, forward stamping with only the feet and hips in motion, to the most violent abandoned movement of the entire body. Salvador has Brazil's largest concentration of blacks and mulattos—at least half the population—and there they have preserved the music's spirit and rhythm, and enhanced it with the sumptuous costumes that give Salvador's carnival much of its distinctive character.[6]

Why the Saturnalia spirit of ancient Rome should survive so exuberantly 2,000 years later in a New World city with a populace of mixed African and Portuguese descent is a question one can only speculate upon. Ancient Rome and modern Salvador do have one thing in common. The Saturnalia was originally a wholesome rural festival to Saturn, the god of sowing. It did not become a week-long debauch until the triumph of rationality over mythology in the last century before Christianity. In Rome, as in Salvador today, reason and logic did much to dissolve the religion and superstitions that buttressed the old agricultural moral code. In Rome there erupted the most blatant Epicureanism; it would be hard to describe the lifestyle of Salvador's upper classes as anything else.

In the villages like Guapira, both Roman Catholicism and folk superstition still influence daily life.[7] There is an altar for a plaster image of St. George or St. Anthony in every hut, no matter how humble. Supernatural comforts for the sick, the suffering, and the old can be precious when water is infected, medical help unavailable or too expensive, and transportation hard to come by. The poorest people in Guapira are elderly single men and women whose families have abandoned them. They may live in the lowliest mud-and-wattle huts and subsist on manioc flour, tea, and little else, but their religion, rich in miracle, mystery, and myth, confers meaning and dignity on their lives.

In the city Guapira's children face the replacement of Christian with secular institutions. The rich man or the high official matters, rarely the priest. At night school and in the newspapers they are made aware that man, though possessing the technology to blow up the earth or travel to the moon, occupies a tiny place in the infinite universe. They discover that the Bible is as much myth as history, to say nothing of the divine revelation their parents claim it to be. They encounter all kinds of Protestant sects and conflicting ideologies abound, each attacking the Catholic saints and miracles as frauds, and appealing to Scripture or scientific logic. Holy days become holidays. Salvador's beaches are jammed on Sundays and its churches, half empty. Kung Fu and Tarzan films set cultural standards of aggressive behavior. A thousand signs tell the young village immigrants that the faith and certitudes of their parents are nowhere to be found in Salvador.

Yet they find no substitute for the consoling mythology of the Catholicism and folklore of their childhood, with their appeal to imagination and hope. The city weakens trust in the old agricultural moral code but offers the immigrant nothing in its place. In the village the family was always central to life, with its orderly homes, affectionate parents, enduring marriages, and a strong supporting structure of brothers, sisters, and friends. In the city, no such institution exists for the young immigrants. Without it, Carnival becomes a kind of wanton play, frightening in its excesses, yet exhilarating in its freedom, stimulating in its nudity, and immensely pleasurable in its sense of physical and emotional liberation.

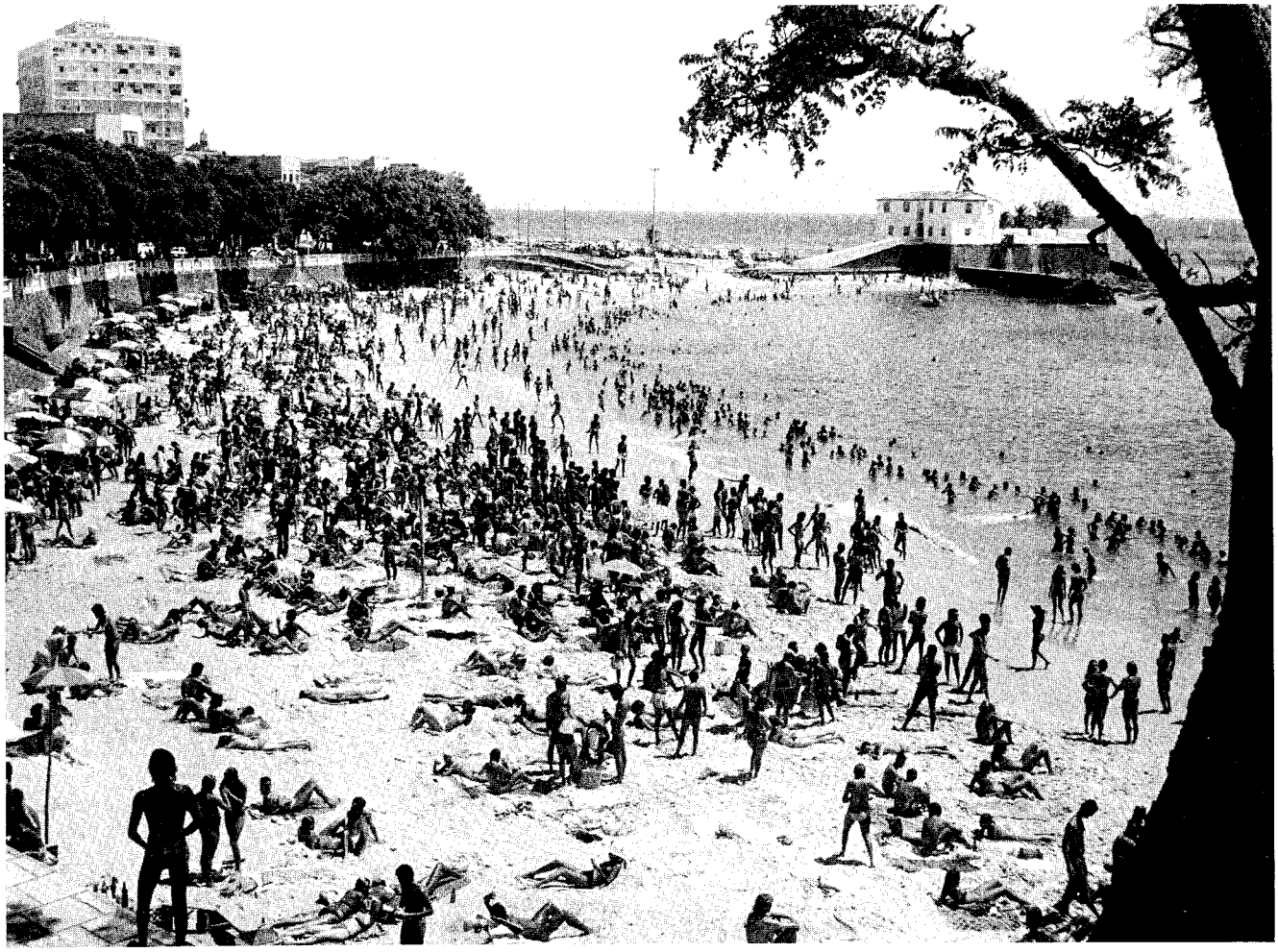
Guapira's children are left in confusion.

Thursday, February 17, 1977

It was the first day of Carnival, though the really big crowds would not join the street dancing until Sunday, when the revelry would gather momentum until the dawn of Ash Wednesday and Lent would begin.

As Antônio drove home at dusk in the blue Corvel sedan belonging to the Internal Revenue Ministry, where he was employed as a chauffeur, clearly a fever of expectation had swept the city: large crowds pressed to get into the Lacerda elevator, which lifted them 234 feet up the steep cliff that divided the lower city, with its harbor and banking quarter,[8] from Salvador proper, extending along the hills encircling All Saints Bay. The

sky was still a deep blue and rising into it were the spires of the Cathedral da Se and the fine baroque church of St. Francis, built in 1701, its altars and interior gilded and encrusted with gold. Eastward, from fashionable Vitoria, rose the slim, rectangular new luxury apartment houses built by the cacao- and sugar-barons, mostly to house their children. Reaching the heights, Antonio drove past the municipal plaza, adorned with the splendor of the Bahia governor's roseate palace and now decorated with enormous flowers, African masks, and a dove of peace, which would be illuminated at night for Carnival. Like the crumbling mansions along tree-lined Avenida Sete de Setembro, the palace and the other baroque civic buildings had long been decaying monuments to the grandeur of a dying sugar civilization. Only the people had been left behind, streaming in from the exhausted land and Bahia's immense and arid *sertão*; not more than a few had been lucky enough to get the jobs offered by the government-aided, capital-intensive industrial outposts that had grown up around Salvador in the last ten years. Now they crowded along the black-and-white stone mosaic sidewalks of Sete de Setembro, rushing to spend what little money they had, like last-minute Christmas shoppers, on masks, cheap cotton cloth, sequins, bangles, beads, theatrical makeup, wigs, streamers, and confetti, which they would need for their Carnival *fantasias*. An army of street hawkers had appeared from nowhere, advertising their gaudy wares with shouts that sounded strangely gay in the heavy traffic. The avenue was narrow, designed for the horses and carriages of Portuguese colonists more than 400 years before, for Salvador had been the Brazilian capital from 1549 to 1763, and the crowds some-



A Sunday crowd gathers at Salvador's Barra Beach, the young people's alternative to church.

times overflowed onto the pavement, seething and swarming past the brightly plastered old colonial buildings, anxious to finish their shopping in time. Civic workers were festooning the way with hundreds of strings of colored light bulbs which, pallid in the bright sunlight, gave Sete de Setembro the strange aspect of a long, narrow cavern, dripping with glassy icicles.

The Carnival processions would move from the municipal plaza a mile's distance along Sete de Setembro to Campo Grande, the city's largest park, near Vitoria, returning again along a drabber parallel street, Carlos Gomez. Where the two thoroughfares converged, at the bottom of a long slope descending from the governor's palace, Praça Castro Alves,[9] thousands of small wooden tables and chairs were being set out in improvised beer gardens, for here the largest crowds were expected. Music would come from a hundred or more marching bands of drummers and a dozen *trios eletricos*,[10] the truck-mounted rock bands, the sound of each long haired, crotch-wrenching, guitar-pumping group of young men multiplied into a deafening roar by 40 or 50 electronic amplifiers.[11]

Antônio had come to Salvador from Guapira village ten years before and had watched the city almost double in size, the *favelas* of the immigrants spreading into the surrounding hills like fungus. The crowds of merrymakers at Carnival had also doubled—perhaps 600,000 or 700,000 would take to the streets—so that a vague apprehension accompanied his growing excitement. Inflation was rampant,[12] and wages, especially for the poor, had fallen far behind. The prices of black beans, rice, and manioc flour, which the poor depended upon

Praça Castro Alves: Carnival enthusiasts dancing to the rhythm of the *trios eletricos*.

to survive, had soared; and in Pernambues, the *favela* where Antônio lived, his neighbors spoke in a baffled, inarticulate way of being taken. The rich, in their city mansions and high-rise apartments or in their villas strung out ten miles east of the city along the Atlantic coast, seemed to be spending as freely as ever; there were many tales of corruption among this upper class and the predominating insecurity of the poor—as they found themselves unable to feed their hunger, adequately house themselves, or send their children to school—had induced a certain demoralization, encouraging shady and antisocial practices. These had manifested themselves in license, profligacy, and a rising crime wave in the weeks as Carnival approached. Contrary to custom, Antônio had seen drunkards in the evenings; some said that at night gangs of youth in certain areas of the city had made the streets unsafe. Burglaries and even murders were more frequent, and threats were made to gain revenge during the confusion of Carnival. Professional debauchery too assumed abnormal proportions.[13]

At 27, Antônio had few illusions about the lot of the poor in Salvador.[14] He had wrestled for a decent life the hard way, rising from the docks to household servant until he finally was able to find a post as a night watchman. A friend had taught him to drive. Earning $300 a month in his four years as a chauffeur, he had been able to save enough to buy a piece of land; the house was still a shanty, a crude structure of cement blocks and plywood divided into four tiny cubicles, but he had enough land to plant bananas, papayas, and a small vegetable garden. After five years of night school, he had finished the sixth grade and now hoped to earn a high school degree in three more years. Then he could marry; his fiancée, Nana, a girl from Guapira, still worked as a housemaid, helping to save money so Antônio could build them a new house. They already had a radio, refrigerator, and two beds, for Antônio's younger brother, Roque, 22, lived with him, and their father, Cambeca, stayed each Friday night when he brought manioc flour, jaca fruit, and peppers from Guapira each week to sell in Salvador's public market near the harbor, transporting the goods by sailboat from the small river town of Maragojipe, across All Saints Bay. There was always news from home, and, rare among Salvador's migrants, Antônio still had a strong sense of family and ties with his village.

Once he was established, Antônio had helped Roque, two more brothers, José Carlos and Pedro, and a sister, Dahlia, to find jobs in the city. José Carlos, 23, a tough muscular young man who went his own way, had done the best and was now chefe de bar in the seaside Hotel do Farol da Barra, where foreign tourists stayed. Pedro had been

Antônio and Nana at home in Salvador's Pernambuco *favela*.

taken on as an assistant bartender. The two earned $500 a month between them and shared a $100-a-month flat in fashionable Barra district; Antônio rarely saw them. As the oldest son, Antônio felt responsible for the others and would tell Nana, "They respect me and do what I say." He was pleased when, after he drank too much beer to celebrate his birthday and had a hangover the next day, Roque, José Carlos, and Pedro chipped in to give him $10, saying he could see a doctor if he wished. But against his advice, José Carlos had once more joined the notorious *Apache bloco* for Carnival; some 6,000 strong, mostly poor black or mulatto youths from the villages, the Apaches, costumed in red and white Indian outfits, with headbands and white adhesive taped to their faces as warpaint, had alarmed the city with their unruly roughness and fights during Carnival the year before. Antônio had told his younger brother, "Myself, I'll only watch Carnival this year. There's getting to be too many fights. Maybe somebody gets killed with knives."

Roque, too, did not plan to take part. Instead he had arranged to work as a bartender in a sidewalk beer stall to earn some extra money. Although he was the only brother to smoke cigarettes, his sole extravagance, Roque was sober and religious; he never missed mass Sunday mornings.

Back in Guapira, their mother, Dona Selina, a small, garrulous, warm hearted woman, immensely proud of her sons, told everyone that Antônio was the religious one. She called him a *creente* or "believer," for on recent visits home he had carried a Bible. "Antônio believes that the most important thing is the God in the heavens," she said, astonished that one of her children defended private judgment. "Now we in the village and people who are older, well, we believe what our parents told

Cambeca, center, father of Antônio and José Carlos, selling produce from Guapira in Salvador.

us." During a drought in the *sertão* when she was just a small girl, Dona Selina had been brought with her family by mule to the coast in a five-day journey without food. "Father carried us in baskets on the mules," she recalled. "My mother taught us that God had given us the saints so that when we got up in the mornings and crossed ourselves, we would see those images there and pray to them and God would help us through them." Then she laughed, saying she was illiterate and could not even write her name. "I only know what my mother taught me. She taught me cooking, how to sew, how to make bobbin lace, mats, hats of straw. My mother even knew how to make clay pots. She taught me all I ever knew, everything, all about God and those other things too. Praying to the saints each morning is not part of the church, I tell Antônio. It's the faith of the people, what we need to go on and have hope."

Antônio realized the faith of his mother and Roque consoled them and brightened their lives. But he could no longer believe that the palm-clad altar inside his parent's house in Guapira, with its white candles and flyspecked colored print of Saint George getting the better of a fire-spouting dragon, was anything more than just a picture on the wall. He would search his mother's thin, wizened face for some truth that had escaped him. Then he went back to Salvador and his radio and newspapers and put his faith in saving for a new house and his marriage, finishing high school and trying to get a better job someday. He wanted no more than one or two children; he was determined they would get the early education denied him in Guapira.

Though the rugged José Carlos was evidently his mother's favorite, Antônio showed her the most affection. The year before he had brought her to Salvador to see Carnival, the first time she had left the village since moving there 30 years before. Now she never tired of relating the experience to the neighbors. "My boys took me to see Carnival," she would say. "I heard the *trio eletrico* and saw one from Antônio's house in Penambues. One day the boys took me to Praça Castro Alves and I saw them all dancing. My, so many people you can't imagine. It was boiling. If you didn't dance, you fell to the bottom. But too much movement and confusion. I looked at it once and after that I stayed home and let the boys come and tell me about it. José Carlos wore an Indian costume from one of the *blocos*, the Apaches. It's the biggest *bloco* in Salvador."

* * * * *

The bar of the Hotel Farol opened out onto the tiled terrace of a swimming pool; beyond was the seventeenth-century lighthouse which gave the hotel its name. It stood on a rocky outcropping that was the dividing point between the deep natural harbor of All Saints Bay and the Atlantic Ocean. Potted rubber trees and waxy-leaved vines gave the bar the illusion of being outdoors; with the ocean breezes, the cries of surfers from the beach, and the clink of glasses from the tables round the pool, it was not unpleasant. As *chefe de bar*, presiding over this domain each day from mid-afternoon until closing time, José Carlos was an impressive figure: tall, glowing with health, his hard wiry shoulders and muscles visible through his immaculate white shirt, his black bow tie and black vest carefully brushed and his very white teeth occasionally flashing in a smile, he looked handsome. He was extremely courteous to the international tourists who frequented the bar, yet there was something hard and cold about him that did not encourage intimacy.

José Carlos looked so healthy and athletic because he devoted almost every waking hour off duty to exercise. He rose each morning at five, ran ten miles along the beach, swam in the surf, and four times each week went to a gym to practice karate or *capoeira*, the Bahian fighting dance of African origin that requires rapid high kicks, back flips, handstands, and split-second timing. José Carlos had studied *capoeira* under Bahia's most famous teacher, Mestre Bimba, until he died in 1975; he sometimes performed with the city's leading folklore group, and the Hotel do Farol's guests would have been surprised to learn he performed *capoeira* Saturday mornings near the public market, with a group of young toughs who shook down tourists who wanted to photograph them for as much money as they dared. For to José Carlos, the rich, no matter how genial and friendly they might be across the bar, had long ago become adversaries to exploit, in the same manner as they exploited the poor. Salvador had taught him a harsh realism.

As he had once told Dona Selina, "When I first went to Salvador I was afraid of the life there. Now

I'm secure within myself. I believe in myself," His creed was that of the Apaches' Carnival song:

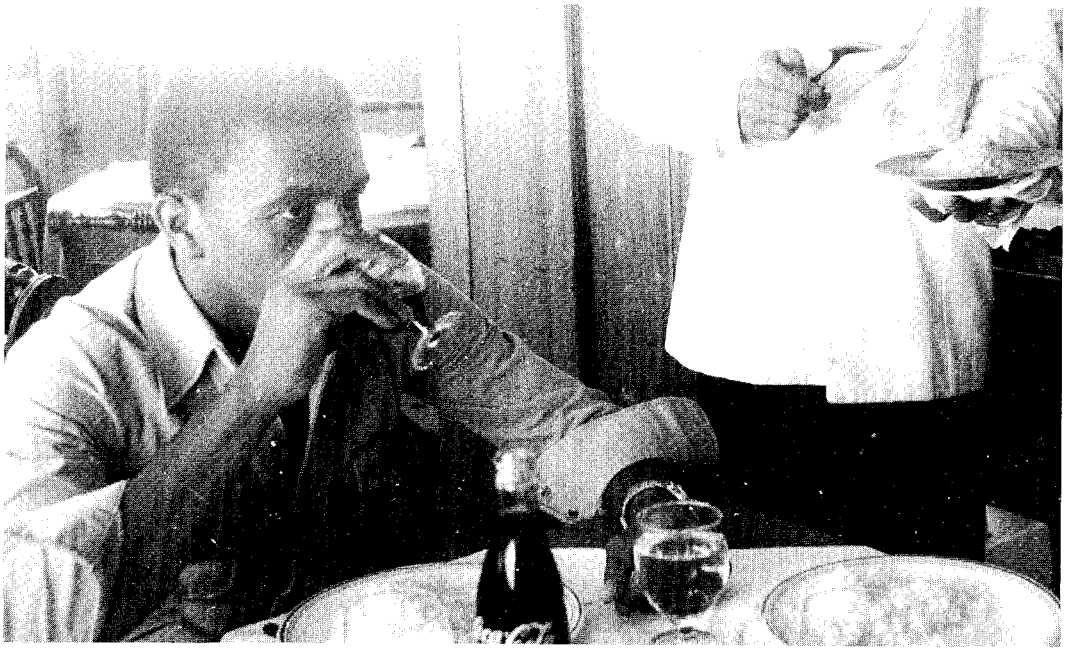
> My body is inviolate, it is mine and what does it have?
> Come close to me, come close to me, you will find out.

José Carlos's obsession with physical strength came from a sickly childhood. As a boy in Guapira he had suffered from worms and schistosomiasis, for in those days his family had yet to dig a deep well and drank from an infested stream. He did poorly at school and, unlike Antônio, when he went to Salvador he found he had to start all over again in the first grade.

When tourists at the hotel asked if he liked being a bartender, his stock reply was, "I wanted to be a civil engineer, but it cost too much." He was humiliated that at 23 he was still in the third grade, a secret he kept to himself. Nor would he ever speak of his years as a household servant, doing the most menial tasks, or of his job with the city, collecting garbage late at night. Nor how it had taken him years to collect all the necessary documents for the hotel job.[15] He had almost not been hired—he had started as a doorman—for the manager had taken a look at the surly, muscular youth and said, "you don't look to me like the kind that will stay." But he had stayed and no hotel employee had served so well. As he had once told Antônio, "I help others on the job. I work when they don't come. I always say yes, never no. All the people there like me." Antônio sometimes wondered what resentment was hidden behind that hard, set, handsome face.

José Carlos had a steady girl, Braulina, who lived in a village not far from Guapira. José Carlos told her he did not want to marry for at least another five years or until he earned enough to pay the $200 monthly rent for a small flat in a good district like Barra. He was not going to live in a *favela* if he could help it; he wanted no more than one child. "People are crazy," he would tell her. "If they don't have money, they still get married." Braulina, a beautiful mulatto, would have liked to raise a large family in the village, as her mother had done. Braulina hated Salvador. When she came to see José Carlos, staying with relatives, she feared to be out on the streets late at night, even with him. She told José Carlos, "It's dangerous after ten. The only other women you see are women who don't count for anything." He laughed and said, "I like to fight. If I see a fight, I'll run into it. I don't care if I know the men or not."

* * * * *



José Carlos: A long way from the village.

"There's too much confusion and fighting in Carnival," Florsina told her friend, Olympia, as they sat on the steps of Edificio Delrio, a towering new building of luxury flats where they worked as housemaids. "I don't even like to walk home from night school alone any more. You're always afraid that sometimes a bad man or some man who's been drinking will try to grab you or speak badly."

Florsina, 20, had lived in Salvador eight years and was the acknowledged authority; she cooked, cleaned, and ironed for a Chilean family, earning $60 a month. Olympia, just 17, had come from Guapira only nine months earlier; the two fussy spinster schoolteachers and their elderly mother who employed her paid just $20 a month. She had just arrived in time for Carnival the previous year and it had scared her. "Lots of fights," she told Florsina. "People drank too much. Big crowds. You could get hurt. And people drive so dangerously. They don't stop for traffic lights."

Olympia never ventured out on the streets after dark without Florsina, who had been a housemaid since she was 12. Once Florsina had shocked her by saying, "I don't want any children when I marry. I had to raise my brothers and sisters at home. And all I've done in Salvador is look after other people's babies."

Both girls were Roman Catholic, though they went to the beach and not church every Sunday morning. Olympia's father, João, had become a convert to the Pentecostal faith and these days talked of nothing but the Bible and the coming Apocalypse. Olympia could not accept his new puritanism; to her the city's cinemas, beaches, bright clothes, and even the *festas*, were happy things. For all their worries about its dangers, the girls considered life in Salvador, with all its material comfort, far superior to anything to be found in Guapira. "Here it is better for everything," Florsina said flatly, and Olympia, who was quick to adopt her friend's opinions as her own, agreed. "There are more things to do and more people to see," she would say. "I don't want to stay behind a hoe, working in the fields, all my life."

* * * * *

Carolina, 28, was scarcely aware it was the first day of Carnival. Afrodizio, a dock worker whom she and her two children, ages one and four, had been living with the past five years, had simply vanished two months before, gone, some of the neighbors said, to São Paulo. Stranded without support she had moved into a neighbor's house in the *favela* of Pau Miudo, or Small Stick, one of the meanest in Salvador. By taking in laundry and washing it each day in a canal, she had managed to earn almost $20 in February. "We eat," she wrote her mother in Guapira, "but only with the help of the neighbors.

Once it had been different. Carolina, like Olympia, had come to Salvador when she was 16.

Olympia.

Carolina.

With good fortune she had found work with a wealthy Brazilian family with four small children. The parents, who traveled a good deal, grew so fond of Carolina they left her in charge of the children and hired two other girls to do the housework. She had earned $80 a month and took home a television set for her parents, the first in Guapira, a dining table and chairs, as well as a cupboard filled with china dishes. She had helped her mother plaster and paint their mud-brick house and had decorated the walls with color photographs torn from magazines she brought from Salvador.

Like all the immigrant village girls, Carolina had enrolled in the free government night school, hoping to complete the sixth grade. Here, and walking home through the large park of Campo Grande, she made the acquaintance of several young men. In time she began strolling with them across the green lawns or under the deep shadows of the heavy foliaged trees. At first there were only kisses, then more. Carolina discovered she was pregnant. She could not bring herself to have an abortion and wanted to keep her baby.

Her wealthy employers at first were sympathetic. But once the baby was born they let her go. Her father refused to let Carolina come home. She moved to Pau Miudo and began living with Manuel, a carpenter, the first of what would be a series of men. Afrodizio had proved more stable than the others, but now he, too, had abandoned her. Carolina was faced with either finding another man to support her and the children, making a bare subsistence doing laundry, or turning to prostitution. Her immediate problem, since her neighbor's hospitality had worn thin long ago, was to find shelter.

* * * * *

Dahlia, 18, Antônio's younger sister, like many *empregadas* had been given a holiday for the six days of Carnival. At the urging of Antônio and Paulo, a clerk in a hardware store she was soon to marry, Dahlia went home to Guapira. Though Paulo earned only $300 a month and had found them a small house to live in in Pernambues, which had one of the highest crime rates in the city and could be reached only after an hour's ride, usually standing, on a hot, crowded bus, Dahlia, like most of the village girls when they came home, portrayed the city in the most glamorous light.

This morning she was paying a visit to Dona Benedita, her mother's next door neighbor. Dona Benedita, suffering a toothache and the flu, met her at the door looking feverish and pale, a moth-eaten old sweater draped over her faded cotton dress, despite the summer heat. As she habitually did outdoors, she wore a frayed old straw hat that had been discarded by her husband, Duga.

Dahlia, looking the very picture of urban fashion in a slack suit she had made herself, copying one belonging to the mistress of the family where she worked as a housemaid, rushed to kiss Dona Benedita on both cheeks, as is customary among Brazilian women. She was too preoccupied to notice that the older woman looked ill.

"I came to see my god-daughter," Dahlia exclaimed. "How are you, my sweet friend? How is my darling little god-daughter? Is she taking good care of the doll I brought her from Salvador? And where is the doll? Seeing the little girl cling sullenly to her mother's skirts, Dahlia went on brightly, "Look at those black clouds. Oh, it always seems to be raining in Guapira!"

"Yes, it's been raining here," said Dona Benedita wearily, snuffling from her illness. "Sunday all day and it was worse on Monday."

"Ah, in Salvador, the weather has been beautiful. Sunday I went to the beach and to my future mother-in-law's. Oh, I had the most beautiful day of my life. Everybody liked me so much. They all said, 'Paulino, you've got to bring her back again.' Everything was wonderful."

"How do you get to the beach, walking?"

"Oh, *no*!" Dahlia shrieked. "It's a long way. It takes an hour by car." Her condescending tone suggested it was quite impossible to make the villagers understand the splendor of city life.

Dona Benedita asked the girl about her coming marriage. "Are you making your wedding dress?"

"Oh, no. I'm going to buy it. I've already been to the shop. I've got the card of the saleswoman and

I've got it all picked out. It's going to be a long lace dress with fitted sleeves."

"Have you a house?"

"It's all ready. It's just waiting for me. I've got the dishes, the pans, the furniture all bought. All waiting for me."

"How are the papers going?"

"Everything is in order at last. But the judge is on vacation and won't come back until after Carnival. It only needs his signature. Paulino paid two thousand cruzeiros but it hasn't helped. Braulina came home with me. She'll stay until my marriage. And then everybody is going to leave. They'll all come for the wedding. After that *everybody* is going back to Salvador."

* * * * *

Dona Benedita's son, Eleandro, 22, the first of her six children to migrate to Salvador, was a laconic, responsible youth who earned $80 a month as foreman in a vinegar factory on the city's outskirts. After three years of night school, he had just finished the fourth grade and planned to stay on in Salvador until he graduated from high school. The vinegar factory was situated in what had formerly been the village of São Cristovão and there were still a few cane fields and vegetable gardens scattered about. Eleandro hoped his father, Duga, would someday buy a truck or a tavern so he could move home again. Though he went into Salvador each Sunday, an hour-long trip by bus, to the beach and then the cinema, and planned to go in and watch Carnival for a day or two, he lived with an uncle who farmed a small holding and culturally, despite his schooling, remained a villager.

* * * * *

Surprisingly, so did most of Guapira's people who had migrated to Salvador a generation ago. Ester, a handsome mulatto woman in her 50s, had come with her children in 1956 when her husband, De Noite, proved to be a poor provider. "We had a hard time," she would recall. "Sometimes we didn't have food to eat. My mother had taught me to make lace and I decided I must bring the children to Salvador and make a life for myself." For 16 years, living in a *favela* shack, she had gone from house to house, peddling lace. Then buyers from São Paulo, France, and the United States began buying her work wholesale and she was able to rent a crumbling old seventeenth-century house in the Pelourinho quarter. Two of her girls were schoolteachers, one a nurse, and the youngest, a boy, worked in a tourist agency.

Despite her prosperity, she refused to help De Noite, who she knew was living with another, younger, woman in Guapira. "I haven't seen him in years," she would say. "He only comes here if he is sick." Yet for 20 years, each Sunday, Ester made the six-hour round trip to Guapira by bus, claiming it was only to do her marketing. Her children, who did send money to their father, were not fooled. Once they asked her why they hadn't remained in the village. "We'd all be dead," Ester said.

Albertino, who in his early 50s resembled a distinguished, silver-haired banker, had survived for 20 years as a cobbler. Now his two sons were independent, working as messengers in the Salvador courthouse; after his wife was killed, struck down by a car in the street one day two years ago, Albertino began making plans to move back to Guapira. "I'll go just as soon as I can pay back all my debts," he told his sons. "When I came to the city I expected a better life. Now I know I should have stayed in Guapira."

Vivaldo, 42, ran a small general store in the outlying district of Fazenda Grande, where he moved five years ago to enable his six sons to become educated. A cheerful, confident man, Vivaldo planned to return to Guapira as soon as his sons finish school. "I've got land and I like to farm," he explained to his friends. "My wife feels the same way." Then he would laugh. "Well, somebody has got to grow the food. Ten years ago all our young people started coming to Salvador. Now everybody comes. I don't know what's going to happen five or ten years from now. Who's going to be left to till the fields?"

As Carnival began, neither Ester, Albertino nor Vivaldo or their families planned to participate. Vivaldo, still the authority in his family, told his customers, "My boys won't go. They don't like Carnival.They're afraid of the fights and confusion."

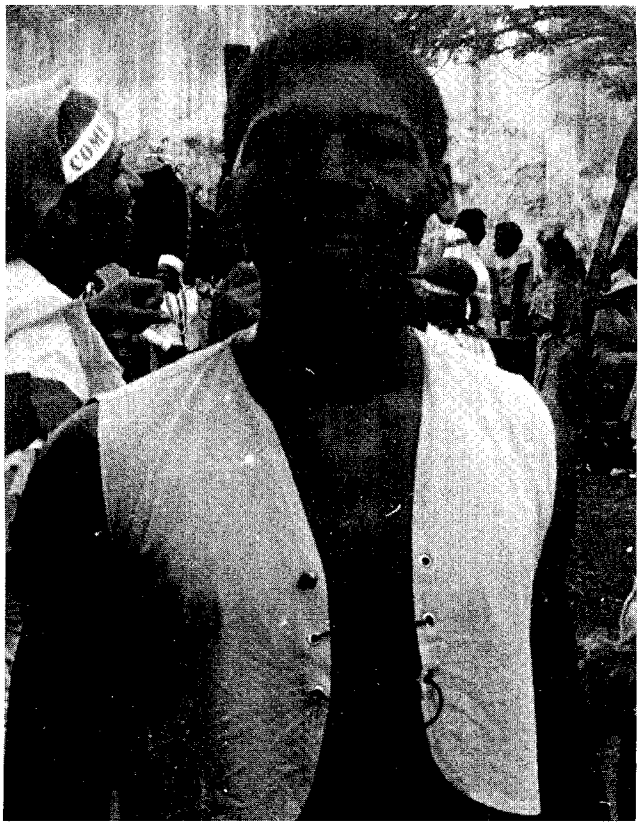
* * * * *

Jorge, 19, plunged into Carnival with the simple animal pleasure he found in almost every aspect of life in Salvador. A large black man, well over six feet tall, Jorge had a look of great physical strength; he had worked hard all his life, had never gone to school, and was completely illiterate. Working piecemeal as a stevedore on Salvador's docks, he made good money—$200 to $300 each month—much of which he spent on food, for Jorge had been hungry as long as he could remember.

Jorge was from one of Guapira's poorest families,[16] which lived down in a hollow in a mud and wattle hut thatched with palm branches. His father had been a shiftless drunkard and Manu, an older brother, supported the family as a daily field laborer. Ever since he had been old enough to walk, Jorge had worked in the fields. He had run away to Salvador two years before and the city was an unending wonder to him. Because of his size, he wandered unmolested through its dingiest, crime-ridden quarters, and he knew the seamier side of Salvador, its brothels and dockers' taverns, as none other of Guapira's children, even José Carlos.

Jorge had joined the *Comanche bloco* for Carnival; because of his size and strength he had been chosen to play a kettledrum. Thursday night, since the *blocos* would not go out in procession until Sunday, Jorge hastened to Campo Grande, where a *trio eletrico* was to precede the newly crowned king of Carnival down Avenida Sete de Setembro.

As he had gone to the room he shared in Liberdade, Salvador's largest slum, to change clothes, it was late when he approached the park. Jorge saw the avenue was already closed to traffic and large crowds were milling about. He hurried until he heard the *trio*'s guitars and drums and heard the clamor ahead, where a seething crowd of young men, mostly mulattos or blacks like himself, were dancing. Soon he struggled his way into them, pushing and shoving until he reached the center of the dancing mob just ahead of the *trio*, where nothing could be heard above the deafening roar of the amplified guitars and drums. Then, no longer bucking the human tide around him, Jorge became part of it, dancing himself, and twisting and turning and moving his body with such a violent rhythm that sweat soon spurted from every pore. First laughing like a child, his kindly face then distorted into a set, avid expression, his four limbs whirling about him. Jorge forgot everything but the music, speeding up the rhythm until it seemed he must fly to pieces. Though crowds of people now filled the sidewalks and windows, and stood on the rooftops along Sete de Setembro, cheering the revelers and showering streamers and confetti down upon them, Jorge was not conscious of anything as he stamped and turned, his whole body taut, as the drums thundered against the resonant old colonial houses.



Jorge at Carnival.

NOTES

1. An account of Bedouin daily life appears in my book, *The Golden Boul Be Broken; Peasant Life in Four Cultures*, pp. 17-44, Indiana University Press, 1974. A much more detailed study of man's rise on the Mesopotamian Plain from hunter to herdsman to settled villager to modern commercial farmer, with profiles of individuals, was made in Papers, the Alicia Patterson Fund, New York, 1971, 856 pages, illustrated, available at the Library of Congress or the Mass Communications History Center, the State Historical Society of Wisconsin, which also has a collection of all my village notes and recorded dialogue of the past decade, for the use of students.

2. *The Lessons of History*, Will and Ariel Durant, Simon and Schuster, New York, 1968.

3. See *World Population Trends: Signs of Hope, Signs of Stress*, Lester R. Brown, Worldwatch Paper Series, Washington, 1976.

4. See this writer's *Small is Beautiful (If Enormously Problematical) in Northeast Brazil* [RC-1-'77], Fieldstaff Reports, East Coast South America series, Vol. XX, No. 1, 1977.

5. Salvador's population, 389,422 in 1950, passed the million mark in 1971; the million figure is still widely used although something like 1.3 or 1.4 million is perhaps more accurate today.

6. Race relations in Brazil are absorbing because they are so different from those in North America. In Guapira village, where almost everyone is a poor farmer and there is a rough economic equality, there was no evidence of discrimination at all; whites, mulattos, and blacks lived side by side, intermarried, labored in the fields together, mixed in the taverns and at the cockfights, and, while conscious of race—De Noite's nickname meant "At Night" and the phrases "black man" and "white man" were commonly used—the color of one's skin made no apparent social difference. This also held true in the small towns of the hinterland. In Cruz das Almas I lived for some weeks while studying Portuguese with a large black family who took in boarders and enjoyed an unself-conscious friendship with them that was not possible, for example, in Washington, where I lived with several black families in 1972 while writing profiles about them for *The Washington Star*. In Salvador, however, there is very evident discrimination. Its richest families have mostly made their money from cacao and sugar plantations where, although slavery was abolished in Brazil in 1888, something of the old master-chattel relationship still exists. The memberships of the exclusive Yacht, Tennis, Golf, Portuguese, and Spanish clubs are almost exclusively white. During Carnival, especially, any observer could see that the *blocos* of dancers from the poorer sections of the city were almost entirely composed of blacks—curiously, most of them masqueraded as Red Indians, Cheyennes, Apaches, Comanches—while the *blocos* from the wealthier neighborhoods were, in a few cases, entirely white. When I asked my interpreter, Nara, a Brazilian university student who had just spent a year in Georgia and had been appalled by race relations there, about this visible separation, she replied, "It's not a question of race but of status. Middle class people want to join the more exclusive *blocos*." Also during Carnival I found things went better when I was accompanied by black friends. When a blond Scandinavian friend from Wisconsin and I went alone, we sometimes found ourselves shoved and elbowed by young blacks from the Apache and Comanche *blocos* (the latter unaware that I had designed their Indian outfits with the help of some Remington drawings from the USIS library). With the exception of Egypt, which is genuinely integrated, it is hard to think of a country—both India and Indonesia are highly color conscious—where racial discrimination does not exist in the cities. Brazil has a long history of miscegenation and there is a popular saying that "in the United States a Negro is anyone with a drop of African blood while in Brazil a white is anyone with a drop of European blood." There is certainly far less racial discrimination in Brazil and, except during Carnival, none of that adversary relationship one sometimes encounters in the United States. A few blacks, like Pelé, the soccer superstar and the most internationally famous of all Brazilians, have risen to the top. In the two most successful Brazilian movies of 1976, *Dona Flor and her Two Husbands*, an adaptation of a Jorge Amanda novel which was filmed in Salvador, and *Xica da Silva*, about an actual eighteenth-century historical figure, the heroine of the first is a very lovely mulatto girl married in succession to two white men (the first returns as a ghost) and the heroine of the second is a black slave who becomes the capricious, extravagant, and powerful mistress of João Fernandes de Oliveira, a Portuguese diamond dealer and Brazil's richest man between 1760 and 1770. It is interesting that the *motif* of men of European descent with mulatto wives or mistresses is one which runs throughout Brazilian culture; it is the combination one also most often encounters in life. In North America, in fact as in fiction, it seems to be the other way around, the black man and white woman. But though the North American black, especially in the ghettos of the cities of the North and West, suffers a social isolation that does not exist in Brazil, he has made far greater advances in education and into the ranks of the upper echelons of business, politics, and the professions than has the Brazilian of African descent. And it is the upper classes, not the poor whites, who are most guilty of discrimination. To their credit, however, they have encouraged and supported the survival of African culture—food, art, dance, and religion—as has not been the case until very recently in the United States.

7. The belief in werewolves, or *lobishomens*, while spoofed by sophisticated Brazilians, is very genuine in rural Bahia. They are said to appear both on nights of the full moon, especially during Lent, and on nights of the dark of the moon. One night in Guapira village, Benedito, the owner of a small tavern—it was the dark of the moon—told us there was one in his vicinity. "This is the time of night he's beginning to change," he said with all seriousness. "His teeth are starting to grow." When I asked what he looked like, Benedito replied, "From the waist up like an animal. Part horse, part donkey and part wolf." "What does he do?" I asked. "Sucks the blood." "Oh, come now," I said, "when did a werewolf

last attack anybody?" "Last month," Benedito claimed. Just then a sudden wind slammed the doors of the tavern and we almost jumped out of our skins. Despite all the scare talk it was impossible to find a victim. Though names were supplied, they had always just moved away or turned out to be somebody's brother-in-law in a remote village too far to visit. Rural Brazilians believe in werewolves because they want to; it adds a certain mystery to village life.

8. Salvador's industry consists of factories for food and tobacco processing, textile manufacturing, metallurgy, woodworking, leather-working, and shipbuilding and repair. Its port exports cacao, tobacco, sugar, hides, beans, diamonds, hardwoods, and petroleum from the nearby Candeias oil field; *Petrobras*, the government petroleum monopoly, is a major employer.

9. Of the place names mentioned in the article, Praça Tome de Sousa is named after Brazil's first Portuguese governor in 1549; Avenida Sete de Setembro commemorates Brazil's independence from Portugal on September 7, 1889; Praça Castro Alves after a late nineteenth-century poet whose most famous work, *Os Escravos* (*The Slaves*) played the same role in the abolition of slavery (1888), as *Uncle Tom's Cabin* had done a generation earlier in the United States; Carlos Gomez was the only nineteenth-century Brazilian operatic composer to have his work performed at La Scala. Brazilians tend to honor the memory of artists more than political figures; one of the major statues in Rio de Janeiro is of Chopin. (There is also, strange to say, one of Mahatma Gandhi.)

10. The *trio eletrico*, today a rock band of guitarists and drummers standing atop a truck-mounted float surrounded by 30 or 40 amplifiers, was introduced to Carnival in Salvador 26 years ago, the invention of two Bahians, known popularly as "Dodo" and "Osman." The two, now middle-aged, still lead a *trio eletrico* band during Carnival. Rio de Janeiro is reportedly considering introducing *trios* into its Carnival next year. If it does, the Rio Carnival would be transformed from a spectator to a mass participant street Carnival as in Salvador, becoming both more fun and more violent.

11. The Brazilian love of dancing does not come wholly from the African influence. Pedro Vaz de Caminha, who accompanied the early Portuguese explorer, Alvares de Cabral in 1500, entered history with a famous letter home that, together with the writings of Amerigo Vespucci, is the earliest report on Brazil. Describing the Indians his party encountered, he wrote: "Beyond the river, many of them were moving about, enjoying themselves and dancing, some of them facing others without joining hands. And they did it well.... They frolicked together and laughed, and followed the music of the pipes very well...." He could be describing Salvador's Carnival. Bahia's *samba*, however, is distinctly of West African origin and style, closely resembling certain tribal dances of the Yorubas in Nigeria. Caminha also found the Indians cultivating yams and manioc, removing the poison from the tubers and making flour from them, still, 476 years later, the principal agricultural activity in Guapira village. In one of his letters, Vespucci, who of course gave us our name, wrote about the native Brazilians, "They live according to nature, and might more properly be called Epicureans than Stoics." Again, still true. The most admirable quality of the modern Brazilians is their peculiar gift for light-hearted pleasure.

12. Inflation in Brazil in 1976 was officially acknowledged at 45 percent. In Bahia it was thought to be higher.

13. Prostitution is very visible in Salvador, whole sections around the municipal plaza and the old Pelourino quarter—so named because runaway slaves and criminals were once pilloried there (one can still see the pillory in the municipal museum)—being devoted to it. This is also, though only on the principal thoroughfares that pass through them—the main tourist area as it is the oldest part of Salvador. At night the prostitutes can be aggressive, two or three of them seizing a passerby's arms and trying to pull him down an alleyway. Interestingly, the pimps, thieves, and pickpockets who make up Salvador's sizable underworld are mostly Salvador born and bred, while the prostitutes themselves are predominantly girls from the villages. In an interview, Dr. Inaia de Corvelho of the Federal University of Bahia's Center of Human Resources, who has conducted studies of prostitution in Salvador, said that "nine out of ten" of the girls drawn into it were *empregadas* or housemaids who had become pregnant. Turned out by their employers, who did not want a small baby in the house, and rejected by their parents, the girls faced the choice of either finding a small cubicle in a *favela* shack and trying to survive taking in laundry, enabling them to keep their babies, or supporting themselves as prostitutes. Others had been abandoned by husbands in the villages and perhaps with two or three children, saw no alternative to support themselves. Under Brazilian law, a boy must marry any girl under 18 who becomes pregnant and paternity can be proved. This is still enforced in the villages but no longer in Salvador. But there is nothing to keep a village husband from simply vanishing into the cities; some do. Dr. Corvelho felt male immigrants had the harder time establishing themselves in Salvador. "Often they work on construction sites and if their wages are too low, they sleep on the sites and eat mostly *feijão*, *arroz*, and *farinha* [black beans, rice, and manioc flour, the daily staple of poor Brazilians], cooking it themselves. A girl, working as a housemaid, may make only $20 to $80 a month, but she has a room, usually a private bath, and her meals." Girls from Guapira village usually manage to send a little money home; boys, almost never.

"But if a girl becomes pregnant, her situation becomes much worse than a boy's," Dr. Corvelho continued. Because of this, she said, many illegal abortions are performed by midwives in the outlying *favelas*; boys, even when they are engaged to marry a girl but cannot afford it yet, will seek relief with prostitutes, sometimes with their fiancee's acquiescence. Girls also sometimes have trouble with males, particularly grown sons, in the families who employ them.

This social dislocation, with young immigrant men and women being forced to delay marriage until their late twenties, has also produced a considerable amount of homosexuality in Salvador. It centers in movie theaters. In about

a dozen Salvador cinemas, especially those in the poorer parts of the city, men can be seen congregating in the seats and the aisles in the rear of the theater; it is rare to go in a washroom without being solicited. There is something pathetic about this spectacle, as if the men, most of them evidently young village immigrants, feel that what happens in the darkened, twilight, fantasy world of a movie theater does not have to be a real part of their lives. Salvador does have at least two male brothels, something this writer had encountered previously only in Manila, suggesting a linkage with Latin urban culture. Some years ago the KinseyReport pointed out that homsexuality in the United States was almost entirely an urban phenonenon. With the exception of Upper Egypt (not the heavily populated Nile Delta), I have seen no evidence of its existence in any of the dozen or so villages where I have lived. A large number of male transvestites appeared in Salvador's streets during Carnival, but this was distinctly a separate thing, mostly characterized by the spirit of fraternity boys impersonating females in a college show. Some, bewigged and painted, would hoist up their skirts to waggle huge plastic phalluses at passing girls.

While I have stressed the universality of the village agricultural moral code, there are local variations. In Guapira, where both prostitution and homosexuality are nonexistent, a married man may take a mistress and still remain respectable, providing he supports her and her children. Duga, the otherwise very upright villager married to Dona Benedita, himself kept—and financially supported—a mistress. But he regarded the vendor owner, Benedito, as immoral and having, as he called it, "a bent life," because his wife had left him and he had affairs with village women without assuming any financial obligation. Duga's creed: "Every man has to have a family whom he takes care of well. He can have another woman outside the house if he is prepared to support her. But first of all he must look after his wife, family and home." Needless to say, Guapira's women did not share this philosophy; Duga's mistress was a constant mortification to Dona Benedita.

14. The Brazilian love of conspicuous luxury probably makes economic differentiation in Salvador seem greater than it is. In talking about the gap between rich and poor in developing countries, whether in Latin America or elsewhere, Americans should keep in mind that the gap between the wealthiest and the poorest in the United States is now greater than in any other country in the world and greater than at any time since Imperial plutocratic Rome. This fact tends to be obscured by political institutions formed in a society of relative equality at the time of the Revolutionary War. Ironically, this great gap between rich and poor has developed in the most basic and universal democracy the world has ever seen. The relative freedom of American society has allowed a concentration of wealth based upon a concentration of opportunity and ability.

15. Incredibly, to get a job in a factory, office, hotel, or other more permanent forms of employment in Salvador, requires the applicant to have eight documents: a *carteira de identitade* (identity card); *carteira de travalho* (work permit); *certificado de alistamento* (draft card, for males); *carteira de saude* (health card); *titulo de eleitor* (voter's registration); *folha corrida* (police registration); *antecedentes criminal* (proof of no previous criminal record); and *atestado de residencia* (certificate of residence). The time and money that has to be spent getting these eight pieces of paper effectively prohibits many semiliterate young immigrants, existing on day-to-day earnings, from ever rising above such tertiary occupations as street vendors, construction laborers, stevedores,and errand boys, where such papers are not needed. The Salvador bureaucracy can be brusque, arbitrary, inefficient and corrupt; anyone who has ever had to renew a visa knows it can take ages. If a village immigrant should run into trouble with the police or get tuberculosis or some other disease, his chances of rising in Salvador's urban society are over. This system helps to perpetuate the poverty of the Brazilian poor.

16. Brief sketches of Jorge's older brother, Manu; Dona Benedita and her husband, Duga; Olympia's father, João; and Ester's husband, De Noite; appear in the earlier report on Guapira. Dona Selina and Cambeca, the parents of Dahlia, Antônio, José Carlos and their brothers, live next door to Duga but were met later.