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Brazilian Carnival

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Wesley J. Cook

Logan, Utah

November 2018

Brazilian Carnival

Customs

Informant: Luis Felipe Mussalein is my Brazilian foreign exchange brother. He will be living with my parents for the length of one school year. Luis is fifteen and is from São Luís, Brazil. Luis is very soft spoken and is good with my younger siblings.

Context: I interview Luis at my parent's home in Kaysville, Utah on November 14, 2018. We were sitting on the couch in the front room. The fire place was on to help combat the autumn chill. When asked about any traditions that he remembers in Brazil, Luis mentioned a tradition called Carnival. Carnival is a huge deal in Brazil. It consists of gigantic public parties that people dance and get drunk. From Luis's explanations, Carnival is analogous to Mardi Graw in New Orleans, Louisiana. The drinking age is eighteen in Brazil, so eighteen-year-olds are involved in the drinking and partying. It is not uncommon for teenagers younger than eighteen to get drunk during Carnival. During this event, Brazil hosts a large parade that has a year worth of planning behind it. In short Carnival is a time of good food, good drinks, dancing, and parades.

Text: [So being from the country Brazil, what is a large holiday that is in your country?]

Definitely Carnival! [What do you do during Carnival?] So, during Carnival there is a lot of public parties, there is a lot of parades. Like a lot of people get costumes like really shiny and bright costumes. Those people go inside the parade. The people that do not go inside of the parade still party and have fun seeing the people there. Everyone has a kind of a costume. [When they party, what do they do?] Yeah, they eat a lot of food, but really there is just a lot of alcohol. It is the time people most... most drink alcohol. There is not any specific Carnival foods, but since it is a party there is always food. There is a lot of alcohol, it is what they usually do. There is specific Carnival songs, specific Carnival singers, there is a specific kind of like types of musics. This is what people listen to while they celebrate. Only the adults can buy alcohol legally, but sometimes teenagers get drinks. They don't sell it, but some adults buy for them. Usually adults have it. Teenagers normally celebrate it without alcohol. [What is the age drinking is legal?] eighteen.

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Texture: As a foreign exchange student, Luis is not allowed to drink. As a result, Luis was quiet as he talked about Carnival. Although he was not saying anything incriminating, the subject of this interview resulted in hushed tones. Luis continually looked around to see if my mom was anywhere nearby. When satisfied my mom was nowhere around, Luis would go on with his story. It is unlikely Luis participated in the drinking aspect of Carnival. Luis was adamant that there were other ways to enjoy Carnival for teenagers other than drinking.

Wesley J. Cook

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English 2210

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Fall 2018