Popular Religion in South America

ANT325

Popular Catholicism

- Syncretism
  - Blend of Catholicism and Folk Religion that has connections with the Pre-Columbian past
  - Folk Catholicism is the result of this syncretism
- Read Sanabria text!

Importance of public rituals and ceremonies

- Overlap with Catholic Church liturgical calendar
- Sponsored in devotion to or in honor of deities of the Catholic pantheon
- Sponsored in devotion to or in honor of deities of the non-Catholic deities
- Harkens back to pre-Hispanic and non-Catholic themes

Symbiotic and Reciprocal Relationships

- Between
  - Humans
    - Inca
    - Priests
    - Parishioners
  - Supernatural(s)
    - Witches
    - Sprites
    - Mountain deities (Apu)
Presence of lay practitioners

- “Gente decente”
- Church “guardian”
- Cofradías
- Shaman(s)
- rezadores

Blurring of boundaries between living and dead

- All Saints Day (Todos Santos)
- Pishtaco
- Incest taboo breakers

Critique of the social order

- Poor pray to the saints for help and change
- Cult of Mary
- Liberation theology
- Devil represents external threats (Tío Sam)

Spread of Protestantism

- Reaction to social ills and inequality
- Ritual intoxication in Catholicism
- Rejection of alcoholism
- Embrace of capitalism
- Rejection of old systems and acceptance of new restrictions
- Fervor and enthusiasm
Civil-Religious Cargo System

• Mainly in Mesoamerica and Andes
• Responsibilities to host a ritual entails cargoes (mayordomo)
• Usually expensive
• Are they leveling mechanisms keeping the community poor and equal?
• Do they protect against the outside world?
• How did they emerge?