Discussion Questions (09/13)

Discussion Questions on Barbosa: (submitted by Amber)

1. I would like to start with two questions the author proposed. Though she semi-responded, I had a different opinion than she did and therefore feel that these could generate more discussion: "Why...is the jeitinho more present today in the media and daily speech than ever before, after two decades of intensive growth and considerable modernization in our society? What does it mean when it is used as part of narratives of national identity?" (37-38) And, following that direction, what does the commonality of this "social drama" say about the current state of Brasil?

2. Thinking of the phrase "Brasil real e Brasil legal" (A real Brazil and a legal Brazil) and the prominence of not only the jeitinho but of serious corruption, we could consider what implications embracing this practice as a part of the national identity has on Brazil. Do practices like the jeitinho keep Brazil from moving forward by setting the tone that bending the law is ok, or does it let Brazil develop in its own manner?

3. Barbosa introduces the idea of equality in Brazil on page 44. Though she argues that there is equality in Brazil, the film Nasci Mulher Negra had several people speaking out against this myth of "racial democracy". How does this myth affect the development of Brazil?

Discussion Questions on Schwarz: (submitted by James)

1. Why did Brazilians want to transplant the European ideas of progress, science, and liberalism to their nation? On page 30 the author says that “in Brazil ideas were off-center in relation to European usage,” why was the adoption of these ideas such a struggle?

2. Did European liberalism bring the feelings of self-hate and shame to Brazil?

3. How did Brazilian literature challenge and critique European and Brazilian ideas concerning social order and modernity?

4. In what ways did Brazilian slavery stand in conflict with European Liberalism?

Discussion Questions on Evans: (submitted by Mike)

1. What have been the major differences between Brazil and other South American countries in terms of the process of development?

2. Is there a relationship between increased development and increased self-sufficiency? If so, what is it?
3. What effect did having Portugal as the colonizing country as opposed to Spain have in regards to development?

4. How significant were world events such as World War II to development in Brazil?

5. Is Brazil more or less vulnerable now to pressure and changes in the center countries than it was in the past?