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First Reading Response

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In an era in time where all Brazilian relationships between a male and a female seem to have come out of a Hispanic telenovela, it is quite interesting to see the affects of how the way that social norms between a man a woman determined their ways of life and future. In the ideals of hierarchy and power control a man always seemed to have higher standard and value than a woman, especially those of European descent, same as a woman. It was only seen as acceptable to encounter relationships with women who attained the similar or equal power as you. In the midst of sexuality and marriage it was very interesting to see how woman at the time could use this to obtain in a way a higher power or social being.

The role of the man is to give a name and provide, the role of the woman, depending on the class is many times seen as to only fulfill the needs of the man, especially sexual needs. In the readings of Nazzari, and the story of Jose Antonio da Silva and Doña Clara Maria Ribiera we can see the direct transparency of the common moral and social rule in colonial Brasil. It can be seen that women of both high ranking as well as low ranking end up benefiting from marrying da Silva. In a way it is like reaching a new level of ground. Yet his wife never had children with him, and they held a house together he was unfaithful and he did have children outside of the marriage with woman of a lower “social standing”. What connected these women and Da Silva, was sex, the power of sexuality and women knowing how to use it in their favor of benefiting from various social indulged things.

Patriarchy is still seen today engraved in modern social norms, yet it seems to have been broken off from that barrier of colonial thinking. For a male the idea of a patriarchal government and society is and will always be of benefit to them as it is a way to continue their advancement in life, or simply reign in power. Whereas the form of sexuality where as it benefits both men and females in this case the sexuality of a woman literally opened doors for them, and changed things for them in a male dominated environment. This is something we can say that benefited the female preservative of colonial Brasil era. Even though male dominance often held control over women, they demonstrated that the ones that were willing on doing illicit things to intentionally or unintentionally better their living norms did go about it. In the colonial era, for both Spain and Portugal it was a way to hold of different family values, many people were not married and many had ways of going around social cues to obtain what they wanted.

The laws and regulations seemed to be overpowered by the power or the high social standing of the people that you became involved with. Even the change of race was made on a census level depending on the man that the woman involved themselves with. (Nazzari, 231) “ It would describe illicit sexual relationships, marriages characterized by differences in qualidade, and how the racial category of individuals could change in the regional census depending on their ownership of property their, marital status, or the sexual relationships that they maintained with an important person.”

The church and state created laws and regulations that seemed to be more dominant on the female counterparts yet it was the idea of power and important beings that could either change that, give a better outlook on some that didn't even have that option. In this reading it is very interesting to see the work that is presented by Nazzari and his views on this colonial brazilian census based on the story of the woman in Jose Antonio da Silvas life and children and how it can be used to see the social standing and determination of many people in the past. For example we can see how the outcome of the census directly affected the life of the woman involved with Silva, the various women came from different backgrounds some might not have been wanting to be in that relationship yet the ones that were slaves “secured freedom for their children” Ignacia benefited from the inheritance of her son and later once married she was seen as a white woman in the census. Gertrudes was as well seen as white and even gained land after his deaths which land means a form of power. It was also showing that in this era women with property and land often were seen as power holders and could remarry faster all three women including Doña Clara remarried younger men after the death of Silva. (236)

In the work of Nazzari and the census fold of Jose Antonio da Silva and his women, it can be seen the ideals of colonial Brazilian era, can be molded or changed in ways the actuality of male dominance and power at the time came with plenty of other things, like land ownership and race as well as gender. Yet the circumstances can be changed in order of who is involved with what powerful man. Sexuality can be seen as an outlet for power and social acceptance in this era. Even though some are not benefitted in the tale of events many women actually became benefited from the system that was intended to keep them down.

Work Cited:

* Andrien, Kenneth J. *The Human Tradition in Colonial Latin America*. Nazzari. S Muriel, Jose Antonio da Silva Marriage and Concubinage in Colonial Brazil Wilmington, Del: Scholarly Resources, Inc, 2002. Print.