

LETTER FROM THE EDITOR

Here is one more issue.

To say this sentence, as readers can easily imagine, is a tremendous source of satisfaction for those of us who edit this journal. Actually, the word satisfaction can hardly express what we feel. Perhaps joy would be a better word, since it means that we are not only concluding a phase — and finishing something is always better than doing it — but because this business of adding a number to a journal always gives us the illusion that the periodical will be as infinite as a mathematical series of numbers.

We could easily find a Cartesian reader who — casting doubt on everything — would begin by challenging our ability to judge our own journal. Yet we also feel joy in presenting the materials that follow, since we are certain that this second issue is ripe with timely information and food for controversy and reflection. After all, to reflect, to debate, and to lead others to reflect is the craft of intellectuals and is thus both the result and goal of everything readers will find bellow.

Manguinhos is still situated somewhat outside of academic patterns. In addition to traditional articles, it includes other more specific sections on methods and materials for historical research. We have thus included interviews where people with tuberculosis, like the beloved Brazilian poet Manuel Bandeira, talk about their experience with the “white plague”. In the section entitled “Libraries & Collections”, worms and butterflies are used to illustrate the importance of scientific collections as material for the history of sciences. In “Archives & Documents” a member of the board of the Rockefeller Foundation gives his opinion of Brazilians with all the candor typical of confidential reports. We also present a debate on biotechnology, where various specialists debate this highly important (albeit extremely unfamiliar) issue. The journal is rounded out by the section “Books, Articles & Networks”, with an addition on computerized networks, and abstracts of recent theses dissertations.

Readers who compare this number with the previous one will note that it is missing three sections: “Meetings”, “Images”, and “Research Notes”. The first was eliminated for editorial reasons, but we hope that the latter two will only be missing temporarily, and that sooner or later professionals and amateurs in this field will take advantage of these pages at their disposal. We are consoled by this reasoning and the kind words that have reached us from so many people, praising this attempt by Casa de Oswaldo Cruz to broaden the discussion on the histories of knowledge.

And now may the readers judge.

Sergio Goes de Paula