

## EDITOR'S NOTE

The idea for this supplement to *História, Ciências, Saúde – Manguinhos* came about at the seminar “Health, Environment, and Culture: 100 years of Oswaldo Cruz in the Amazon,” held October 2005 at the Centro de Pesquisa Leônidas e Maria Deane, a branch of Fiocruz in Manaus, capital of Amazonas state.

The seminar's title is an allusion to the trips Oswaldo Cruz took in 1905-06 to inspect Brazil's marine and river ports. As director-general of Public Health for Brazil, Cruz visited Belem, Santarém, Óbidos, Parintins, Manaus, and Tatuoca Island, among other stops. The purpose of the meeting in Manaus one century later was to bring colleagues together to catch up on the discussions that had inspired research and recording work for the projects “Revisiting Carlos Chagas' Amazon: from rubber to biodiversity (1991-97)” and “Oswaldo Cruz in the Amazon (1999-2002).”

Conducted by the Casa de Oswaldo Cruz's Department of Archives and Documentation, Image in Movement Sector, the video documentaries *Chagas in the Amazon* (1991), *Chagas on the Negro and Branco rivers* (1994), *Chagas in Acre and Purus* (1997), and *Oswaldo Cruz in the Amazon* (2002)—all in Portuguese—cover the paths of these same journeys as they re-examine issues involving health conditions in the Amazon region.

This issue's article by Júlio César Schweickardt and Nísia Trindade Lima points up the value of studying the reports from scientific expeditions by Carlos Chagas and Oswaldo Cruz (1910-13)—testimonials that helped construct representations of the Amazon which long held sway in scientific thought and the history of ideas on the region.

In 1991, as rector of the Universidade Federal do Amazonas, the physician and professor Marcus Barros took part in the first documentary on the Juruá and Solimões rivers. Thanks to the friendship then forged with researchers from the Casa de Oswaldo Cruz, Barros ended up providing support to new research in the region. In the interview published in this issue, he talks about his trajectory as a physician and politician, which led him to engage in struggles in support of sustainable development of the region, better living conditions, and improved healthcare.

In 2005, while president of Brazil's environmental protection agency, Ibama, Marcus Barros was one of the mentors behind the idea of bestowing on Tukano *pajé* Gabriel Gentil the honorary title of Fiocruz researcher in the field of traditional knowledge. This gesture has reinforced partnerships in the struggle for recognition of traditional native knowledge and increased dialogue between the indigenous and scientific communities. With an introduction by Ana Carla Bruno, the text by Séribhi— Gabriel Gentil's Tukano name — is a mythological narrative involving intertribal relations among Aruak people in the Negro River region, relations that are subject to conflict and change. During his lecture at the October 2005 seminar, Gentil, adorned with his white quartz necklace, in words and gestures explained how a *pajé* transforms into a jaguar in order to exercise his healing powers.

The jaguar-*pajé*'s actions could be understood more deeply after Pará philosopher Benedito Nunes' lecture on the animal and the primitive, two beings lying outside our Greco-Latin culture. In mythological times, animal and man were united. Ever since the ancient gods were demonized by Christianity, we have seen the animal that inhabits man as a stranger, as something that symbolizes man's lowest, coarsest side. The second 'other' of our culture — the Indian — even raised a theological question: could those primitives have a soul; were they human? Benedito Nunes invokes Levi-Strauss in *Tristes tropiques*: we should acknowledge two complementary methods of science, one closer to the real, which reaches it through the imagination, and the other a little farther away, relying on abstract concepts.

In her article on the eating myths and rites of the Baniwa, Luiza Garnelo, a physician with a doctorate in anthropology, analyzes how this rich tradition has influenced the political, ethical, and practical dimensions of the group's social life and how it guides their survival. For the Baniwa, as for other South-American indigenous societies, there is a unity of spirit between humans and animals. In daily Baniwa life, the actions of capturing fish, preparing them, and then consuming them display ritual characteristics that manifest the links between human life and the cosmic order. If food is prepared without compliance to ritual rules, it is contaminated with the aggressive power of animal-spirits and can provoke digestive or other ailments.

Historical transformations threaten the way of life in Baniwa society. In the 1980s, the project to settle the Upper Negro River region was revitalized by the policy of frontier occupation, known as the Calha Norte project, and by other initiatives taken by the Brazilian government and society. At the same time, the demarcation of more than 10.6 million hectares of indigenous lands in the Upper Negro River region (1997-98) and the strengthening of the local indigenous movement meant gaining ground in the preservation of traditional knowledge. "The basis of knowledge is our lands; it is the forests, animals, and minerals, along with the spiritual part of each of these," says André Fernando, indigenous Baniwa leader in his paper entitled *The world and sustainable indigenous knowledge*.

Not only the Baniwa but twenty-two other ethnic groups—whose main organization is the Federation of Indigenous Organizations of the Upper Negro River—have been honing their ability to negotiate with the globalized world and are grappling with contradictions when it comes to implementing new projects to protect traditional knowledge, including within the realm of the National Council on Genetic Heritage.

The contradictions found within the contemporary Baniwa way of being are addressed in two other texts about the documentary *Koame wemakaa pandza, kome watapetaaka kaawa* [*Baniwa, a story of plants and cures*], which we offer our readers as a special treat in this issue: "Pathways to a script" was written by the author of the documentary, while "Plants that cure and 'qualities of being': on ontology and Amerindian otherness" (both in Port.) is a review by Marco Antonio Gonçalves, professor at the Universidade Federal do Rio de Janeiro.

Oral history is central to two articles. Jane Felipe Beltrão compares the cholera epidemics in Pará during the nineteenth and twentieth centuries, relying on such sources as the memoirs of cholera victims and their families. She concludes that tragedies repeat themselves and that the living conditions of the poor are still horrendous. While the nineteenth-century records by health workers are detailed, the same is not true of the 1991 epidemic. For the author, this difference is essential to historical analysis.

In an article on *caboclos* in the Negro River region, Fernando Dumas relies on the testimonies of the descendants of the region's various ethnic groups, including the Portuguese and migrants from the Northeast. The author shows how the knowledge shaping popular traditions has been transformed. He thus recovers a history that had seemed lost, a memory hidden by the apparent stagnation of the cultural process of the individuals of extractivism.

Ana Daou examines the interests and expectations of the educated elite as present in pictorial representation of the Amazon landscape. In the decoration of the Teatro Amazonas auditorium, the author sees a propagandizing dimension of local nature, clearly meant to neutralize the negative features and effects that other discourses had associated with this nature. The panels portray an Amazon rich in flora and fauna, yet idealized, gentle, and at a remove from fevers, indigenous populations, and urban workers.

Kelerson Semerene Costa analyzes a work written by Father João Daniel in the state of Maranhão e Grão-Pará between 1741 and 1757. In *Tesouro descoberto no rio Amazonas* (Treasure discovered on the Amazon River), the Jesuit missionary, banished to Lisbon two years before the Company of Jesus was expelled from Portuguese America, presents a project for colonization that is critical of the model then in effect and that stresses the role of labor.

Based on newspapers published in Manaus between 1895 and 1915, Fabiane Vinente dos Santos draws a relation between the local elites' civilizing project and the characteristically modern concern with woman's body and sexuality, within a social and historical context of solidification of scientific thought and technology, whose object of intervention was the body.

In the earliest decades of the twentieth century, intellectuals and physicians persistently identified malaria as the great roadblock to the development of the Amazon and its integration with the rest of Brazil. Following the Estado Novo coup d'état in November 1937, the Vargas government accorded importance to the Amazon, with the president even traveling to the region. It was within this political context that the Amazon Sanitation Plan (1940-42) was designed, analyzed by Rômulo de Paula Andrade and Gilberto Hochman.

Marcos Chor Maio and Rodrigo Cesar da Silva Magalhães address this same historical context in their analysis of the International Institute of the Hylean Amazon project. This Unesco proposal arose from ideas on development in fashion following World War II.

One hundred years ago, Oswaldo Cruz began an integrated study of nature and the health conditions of native populations and of those who migrated to the Amazon region drawn by the rubber trade or by large ventures like the Madeira-Mamoré railway. This research agenda is still valid today. We should add to it the challenge of integrating policies for improving the quality of life for forest populations with pro-environmental policies. Nature must be preserved through protected area policies and respect for the traditional knowledge and intellectual rights of forest peoples.

*Stella Oswaldo Cruz Penido*  
Guest Editor's note