

LETTER FROM THE EDITOR

The very name of this journal (History, Sciences, Health — Manguinhos) points to its objectives. The first three expressions denote its field of specialization, yet they point to a certain thinning of boundaries: after all, they are separated by commas rather than connectives, indicating that the journal's content is not restricted to the 'history of health sciences'. The fourth and last word, unmistakably vernacular, evokes one of the few places in Brazil where this history of health sciences has been made, and it hopes to call attention to what we might call the journal's indigenous character. Thus, Manguinhos (let's call it this, and dispense with the rest of the name) is a journal intended to address the history of knowledge and learning, with special emphasis on biomedical knowledge. Furthermore, to communicate from here at Manguinhos with researchers in Brazil and abroad, on issues which over time are relevant to an understanding of current reality — after all, what could be more important for history?

As readers will see, Manguinhos does not have the traditional format of an academic publication; it goes beyond the usual articles and book reviews admitting other products from the scholarly field. Throughout the journal's sections, readers will find theses abstracts, interviews, debates, reports from meetings and congresses, research notes, and the presentation of original documents. (By the way, this is one of its major concerns: to stress the value of original sources, to bring to light the foundations for knowledge that historians may eventually produce.) Finally, having read these brief introductory words, readers will be able to leaf through the journal and perceive another feature of Manguinhos: an uncommon concern for the quality of its visual presentation, beyond a simple dilettantish regard with aesthetics, calling attention to the fact that the kind of knowledge that interests us is produced in a non-positive manner.

I would like to conclude this letter where I began: with the journal's name. Manguinhos (the Little Mangrove) is a peculiar name, because this diminutive no longer evokes an open natural environment (first to recover, by the way, whenever nature's free forces act anew in any coast-line), but an artificial place where state-of-the-art science is practiced under controlled, aseptic conditions. Besides, this diminutive is characteristic of the affection we Brazilians tend to adopt when dealing with anybody else. In other words, it's a good name.

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