

EDITOR'S NOTE

Dear readers,

We come to the end of a very productive year by delivering this issue to you, oh-so-hot off the presses of a scorching Rio. Our pages open with a most interesting article by Rafael de Bivar Marquese, who shows how Caribbean slave agriculture was the model for reformists of the Luso-Brazilian Enlightenment intent on boosting the Portuguese Empire's economy at the close of the eighteenth century (yet to be undertaken: an analysis of the very significant relations between the Caribbean and Brazil in the arena of medicine and collective health). One of the go-betweens in conveying knowledge for these purposes was *Frei* José Mariano da Conceição Veloso, who figures in another article recently published by *Manguinhos* (vol. 16, no. 1, Jan.-Mar. 2009). In the current issue, Marquese highlights efforts by this Minas Gerais botanist to afford Brazilians access to the best writings on agricultural crops cultivatable in the Americas. Veloso made available translations of works written in Britain's and France's Caribbean possessions, especially Pierre-Joseph Laborie's *The coffee planter of Saint Domingo* (1798), regarded as the main reference on the topic until well into the nineteenth century. Laborie belonged to the Société Royale des Sciences et des Arts du Cap François, a society emblematic of scientific progress in Europe's richest New World slave colony. This colony was stage to the slave uprising that would give birth to the independent Empire of Haiti in 1804, when the French Revolution had already made aristocratic heads of the Ancien Régime roll. Laborie's work was in part motivated by these events, which shook the social formations of slave societies in the Americas. Marquese analyzes his influence on the establishment of coffee production in Cuba and in the Tijuca massif, where coffee planting spread quickly after the Portuguese royal family fled to Rio de Janeiro. He also examines the abandonment of the Santo Domingo model by slave-owning coffee growers in the Vale do Paraíba as their response to massification of the world coffee market.

Related to the same historical setting, Moacir Rodrigo de Castro Maia's article transports us to a cozier corner of the masters' mansions at the turn of the eighteenth to the nineteenth century: their gardens. Usually consisting of irregular arrangements of flowerbeds, orchards, kitchen gardens, and areas for raising small animals, these green areas provided a source of subsistence food and medicinal herbs, offered a place for aesthetic enjoyment, and served as refuge for women subjected to patriarchal captivity. Using travelers' accounts and other sources, Castro Maia highlights the garden planted by *Dom Frei* Cipriano de São José, bishop of Mariana, Minas Gerais, at his palace. It was precisely the regular, symmetrical arrangements of natural and artistic elements that surprised the Cartesian eye of Auguste de Saint-Hilaire. This garden bore witness to the refined friar's ties to enlightened reformism.

It would not be unreasonable to suppose that the library of the bishop of Mariana might hold *Rapports du physique et du moral de l'homme* (1802), by Jean Pierre George Cabanis, physiologist and philosopher whose story is bound up with the fall of France's Ancien Régime. Cabanis was close to the encyclopedists and took part in the revolution, as one of the group of savants that became known as the "ideologues." Under the Convention of 1795, they were entrusted with the task of founding a new center for revolutionary thought – the Institut de France – which comprised the five great French academies, including the Académie des Sciences. Cabanis was hospital administrator for

Paris and a teacher at the Faculté de Médecine when he published his *Rapports*, consisting in part of memoirs read at the Institut de France.

In “Climate, brain, and degeneration in Cabanis” (in Port.), Sandra Caponi analyzes two of these memoirs, which focus on how regime and climate influence the physical traits and moral habits of individuals and races. She explores the materialist arguments Cabanis used to draw a relation between undesirable organic changes (mainly those located in the brain and nervous system) and morality, thus introducing the issue of degeneration to the medical field. According to the author, Cabanis lies halfway between the theses put forward by Buffon in *De la generation des animaux* (1776) and Benedict August Morel’s *Traité des dégénérescences physiques, intellectuelles et morales de l’espèce humaine* (1857), which eventually consolidated a research program long followed by physicians, alienists, and hygienists.

Every reader is free to follow the route best suited to his or her interests in perusing this issue. My path took me to the thought-provoking reflections of Regina Horta Duarte in “History and biology: possible dialogues, necessary distances” (in Port.). Brazil so far has few professionals working in the vital, promising realm of environmental history, to which Horta Duarte has already made important contributions. In this article, she has her Cabanis moment, as an “ideologue” endeavoring to open windows of communication between professional territories whose members still look at each other somewhat askance, both sides prisoners of specialization and the consequent fragmentation of knowledge. According to this author, history and evolutionary biology are inconceivable without events and time. Events are irreproducible and often contingent. They emerge in the midst of existing and not necessarily determinant conditions, and transform them. From this perspective of time and event as the emergence of that which did not previously exist (or sometimes as the reproduction of that which already did), there is no room for teleologies, for the logic of progress, or for forecasting the future based on determinist reasoning.

There is, however, room for probabilistic reasoning, and therein lies the crux of statistics, a technology that nation-states have relied on ever since the Enlightenment, and with ever increasing sophistication. Along the lines of the pioneering studies of Nelson Senra, whose article “Historical study of statistics: topics and sources” (in Port.) recently appeared in our journal (vol. 15, no. 2, pp. 411-425, Jun. 2008), Alexandre de Paiva Rio Camargo has now contributed “The Sociology of Statistics: the possibilities of a new field of investigation.” The sociology of statistics, Camargo writes, seeks to recognize the manifold roles assumed by public statistics: its methods and techniques, its political demands in terms of planning and coordination, and the values of scientific culture shared by statisticians, economists, demographers, cartographers, educators, sociologists, and anthropologists. By exploring the various actors involved in the production of statistics, as well as the complex Latourian translations, changes in meaning, and interpretations that take place, the sociological perspective shows producers and users of statistics how all statistical procedures entail limitations and implicit choices.

Eliot Freidson, one of the founders of the sociology of professions (especially the medical profession), was certainly aware of this. His own professional trajectory is analyzed by André Pereira Neto, who emphasizes not so much the ideas of this New York University professor as the processes and events, opportunities and choices, that shaped his intellectual career.

Three other articles in this issue offer analyses of unquestionable value to historians and sociologists whose interest lies in the medical professions.

Maria Goretti Queiroz and Luiz Fernandes Dourado examine proposals on dental teaching found in documents from the 1960s: a WHO Expert Committee report on dental

hygiene and the annals of three Paho-sponsored seminars on dental teaching, with the support of the Kellogg Foundation and the Latin American Association of Dental Colleges (Associação Latino-americana das Faculdades de Odontologia, or Alafo). The documents offer recommendations on the training of professors, the integration of teaching and research, and the correspondence between teaching and social reality in American countries and regions, encompassing the various dimensions of the health/sickness process. The seminars encouraged some courses in dentistry to enhance human resource training, but many of these “novel ideas” were not implemented; the authors suggest that the reasons for this would make good topics for future studies.

Relying on theses and dissertations from the Capes databank, Elisete Casotti, Victoria Maria Brant Ribeiro, and Mônica Villela Gouvêa map the production of knowledge in dental education during 1995-2006. They observe that the process is still incipient but that the wealth of topics and social actors under study illustrates the field’s vitality. The authors associate this with the broader movement in education and health while also recognizing this as dentistry’s response to the discussion about the need to train health professionals capable of meeting the social challenges of Brazilian reality.

Relations between teaching, research, and health care at the Universidade Federal do Rio de Janeiro’s School of Medicine are analyzed by Francisco Strauss and Jacqueline Leta using documents and testimonies from a group of professors from the Department of Clinical Medicine. The authors show that although research activities predated the Clementino Fraga Filho University Hospital, the inauguration of the facility in March 1978 and the concomitant development of a graduate program and of clinical epidemiology substantially augmented research at the institute. As to the teaching hospital model, there are still those who see the facility as a center for the production of knowledge and those who believe it should combine multiple roles, balancing teaching, research, and health care.

Since your head is likely spinning from all these thorny topics, you might want to relax a bit with “Folklore and popular medicine in the Amazon” (in Port.), by Márcio Couto Henrique. Offering a fine survey of stories and references, his enjoyable article takes up the intriguing topic of the Amazon porpoise, a frequent protagonist of the region’s legends and myths.

In closing, I would like to call special attention to the debate on influenza epidemics: the one that occurred in 1918-1919 and the so-called swine flu that has been sweeping the world this year. Lending their voices to the discussion were Ana Maria Carrilo, from Mexico; Adriana Alvarez and Adrián Carbonetti, from Argentina; and Cláudio Bertolli, Nara Azevedo, Christiane Maria Cruz de Souza, and Liane Maria Bertucci, from Brazil. The debate is our first experience with preprint through SciELO, and now the text is also being released in hard copy, with the English translation available online. I also recommend a visit to Bireme/Paho/WHO’s site and blog on the flu (<http://h1n1.influenza.bvsalud.org/php/index.php?lang=en>; <http://blog.h1n1.influenza.bvsalud.org/en/>).

We wish our readers and contributors a very happy Christmas, Hanukkah, Eid, Kwanzaa, or whatever form of fellowship you may choose to take part in as the year comes to a close. May we meet again in 2010 enveloped in light and in hope, with the passion to push forward activities that will bring peace, health, and wisdom to all men, women, and children – including the wisdom to preserve this planet and all forms of life that dwell on it.

Jaime L. Benchimol

Editor