



# In Search of the Authenticity of Contemporary Yogas of Non-Indian Matrix

Roberto Serafim Simões<sup>1</sup>

Received: 11 November 2021 / Accepted: 9 February 2022 / Published online: 14 March 2022  
© The Author(s), under exclusive licence to Springer Nature Switzerland AG 2022

## Abstract

In this article, we discuss the issue of the authenticity of contemporary yogas of non-Indian matrices, specifically, five Brazilian yogic *perspectives*. Several new Indian trade schools emerged in the nineteenth century. In the twentieth century, the so-called modern yoga and its types emerged. These are spiritual movements that, although contain traditional beliefs and practices, deviate from the previous yogic matrices. Modern yogis, in turn, transplant their spiritual schools to geographies far from the Hindu canopy, such as Europe and the USA. Meanwhile, these transplanted modern yogas originate from other yogic denominations, which we here call *Contemporary Yogas* or *Neo-Yogas*, are deviations from traditional or Modern Yogas. The yogas that exist in Brazil are examples of contemporary spiritual *perspectives* produced by singular syncretisms and hybridisms within the Brazilian cultural and religious context. We conclude to conceive the investigated *Contemporary Yogas*, upheld by non-Indian authorities, as can be understood as legitimate and possible *New Spiritual Movements* or *deviations* from modern yoga with new beliefs and practices.

**Keywords** Yoga · Hybridism · Contemporary · Religion · Sociology

## Introduction

The Modern Yoga concept is a denomination established between American and European scholars that include all Indian yogas conceived during the process of the British colonisation of India. Thus, Vivekananda, Sivananda, Kuvalayananda, Yogananda, Krishnamacharya, and other yogic schools are *not a continuation* of *traditional Yogas*, such as Patanjali Yoga (Patanjali-Yoga) or Yoga of The Nathas (Hatha-Yoga) (Singleton 2010), but derived from spiritual yogic approaches, which seek to maintain traditional beliefs and practices (Singleton & Byrne 2008; Simões 2020; Muñoz 2020; Godrej 2017; Newcombe 2009; De Michelis 1995, pp. 77–92).

---

✉ Roberto Serafim Simões  
iogacontemporaneo@gmail.com

<sup>1</sup> Researcher at the Pontifical Catholic University of São Paulo (PUC-SP), São Paulo, Brazil

Furthermore, several other yogic schools emerged from modern yogas. These are approaches to yoga that do not present a continuation of discipleship or direct lineage of *Modern Yoga*, such as *Iyengar Yoga* of *guruji* Iyengar, *Astanga Vinyasa Yoga* of Prof. Pattabhi Jois, or Divine Life *Society* of *swami* Sivananda. These schools are influenced by these lineages, no doubt; they are *schismatic yogic* groups, but with similar beliefs and practices or *traditions* (Singleton 2008, pp. 83–85).

Contemporary Yogas or *Neoyogas* are not, therefore, approaches from a direct lineage of *traditional yogis* but rather, however, schismatic yogic spiritual groups *innovatory*. They created their own beliefs, doctrines, communities, experiences, and practices in regard to problems in their societies (Shoji and Usarski 2014).

Modern yogas, all from the Indian matrix and upheld by Indians, are known from and were born in Indian nationalism related to their country's independence from the British empire, promoting various cultural transformations, with their yogas being the flag of dissemination of their ideals. Contemporary yogas, either created or still being created outside the Hinduism, Buddhism,<sup>1</sup> or traditional yogic traditions, as well as the approaches to *Brazilian yoga* that we will explore, seem to present themselves as equally derived yogic approaches. More precisely, they are not successional spiritual lineages, nor are they traditional or modern yogis. Some Brazilian yogis, however, may have developed (or are still developing) new beliefs and practices influenced by traditional and modern yogis, but which have been woven through Amerindian spiritualities, Latin American popular Christianity, spiritism, and *Santo Daime*.

Despite the wealth of confluences that exist between these new spiritual approaches and contemporary yogas, as well as those of the Indian matrix or Modern Yoga, these new traditions have become non-Indian matrix yogas and are invariably perceived (both by the lay and academic public) as distortions, cultural appropriations or *misappropriations of Indian yogas* (traditional or modern), and as “inauthentic” in many pieces of research (Askegaard and Eckhardt 2012; Bartholomew 2020; Schwind 2015).

We present here five Brazilian yogic *perspectives* (contemporary or *neo-yoga*), with their histories, influences, and repercussions in the spiritual field of yoga in the country to reflect on their *praxis* and *theory* as a dynamic insurgency to adapt, innovate, and reframe their innovations culturally and respond to questions of the routine of the group that adopts its beliefs and practices incorporating them into their yogas (Simões 2019; Simões 2020).

We present an overview of the dispute over the “legitimacy” of the various approaches to yoga, which is very much in vogue in studies on yoga. Subsequently, we will define briefly what we mean by “*traditional yoga*”, “*modern yoga*”, and “*contemporary yoga*”, so that we can realise that it is the paradigm that needs to be changed and not the inclusion of more “types” and/or “yogic” categories. We will seek to demonstrate this new yogic panorama by investigating five yogas that developed in Brazil between the years 1950 and 2020.

---

<sup>1</sup> Although in a fewer number, it should be noted that there are Buddhist centers that also offer (postural) yoga practices.

## State of the Art

The first research on yoga in the social areas and the humanities invariably investigated the *authenticity* of Indian yogas and/or their interrelations with approaches to yoga that arose during the British colonisation of India. Researchers such as Mircea Eliade, H. Zimmer, and G. Feuerstein have criticised as “misperceptions” and “fitness training” all modern yogic schools, such as Vivekananda and their pre- and post-independence Indian colleagues (Singleton 2010 pp.208–209). They were perceived, precisely, as *deviations* from “traditional Yogic” approaches that they investigated as historians. As a result, all approaches to yoga that emerged as the fruit of Indian nationalism and which began to be transplanted to the USA and Europe were not considered *authentic* yogas by the first scholars of the subject. The perspective they worked on was based on the comparison of what they read in the yogic spiritual scriptures, in general, translated and interpreted by them and Surendranath Dasgupta who held the yogic discursive hegemony of that moment (Guggenbühl 2008).

These categorical statements of Yogic *legitimacy* differ from new research that explored the new yogas in modernity and their new influences, such as biomedicine, Christianity, and physical education (Alter 2004; Singleton 2010). However, during the process of transplanting modern Indian yoga, new contradictions emerged to be overcome: Kemeti Yoga, Yoga Flow, AcroYoga, Restorative Yoga, and Yoga therapy, among many others. The solution adopted now, however, is the same as that of Eliade and his colleagues; these seem to have been “forgotten” or considered “inappropriate” for academic studies. Even in research on yoga in non-Indian contexts, the subject remains of the modern yogic approaches, such as Iyengar Yoga (Newcombe 2010), Sivananda, and Yogendra (De Michelis 1995). To escape a concept apparently already established as being “inauthentic” in relation to all non-Indian or *internationalised* Yogic schools, we prefer to opt for Farah Godrej’s (2017) designation of these Yogic schools as postmodern or contemporary; however, a new paradigm is needed to understand the current totality of the yogas.

Godrej regards modern yoga approaches as an invention, as all previous yogic denominations, and asserts by making practitioners and academics available to debate the authenticity of yogas, we may investigate contemporary yogic forms developed as singularities. She argues, for example, that the centrality of the Yoga-Sutras as “classical scripture” was constructed by Swami Vivekananda out of “disdain” for bodily practices, which is a different position from other yoga masters such as Sivananda and Krishnamacharya. She concludes that modern Indian yogis chose their ways to disseminate their yoga methods, seeking to harness the rationalism of modern science and biomedicine. Therefore, attempts to find a yogic “root” or “authenticity” become totally arbitrary; what the author instead proposes is to facilitate the identification of an “authorised understanding” of yoga, as well as to recognise the partiality of our own perspective as scientists investigating the yoga phenomenon in existing plural societies who encounter the multivalence of the yogic tradition.

Brazil is a remarkably interesting country for the study of contemporary Yogic schools as, in the process of transplanting modern Yogic spiritualities, the Brazilian yogis have gone for over 40 years without a direct influence of Indian yogis (or their

disciples). More precisely, they single-handedly created their Yogic schools (Simões 2019) that are considerably different from the panorama of those in Europe and the USA, for example, where yogas were brought directly by modern Indian yogis.

Along with some of the latest studies on yoga (O'Brien-Kop and Newcombe 2020), we posit that interdisciplinary studies are critical to expanding the understanding of approaches to yoga beyond the Indian borders for, as Shameem Black (2000) explains, yoga is a philosophical practice of transformation that can go far beyond a neoliberal perspective of individualistic gains. More specifically, the yogas may also increase our sensitivity to affect and be affected by the real problems that touch our community and create a critical spirit in yogis that enables them to evaluate creative solutions for ethical behaviour in the world in which we live. As Adrian Munez (2020) rightly observes, Latin American yogis are urban, i.e., they interact socially and do not devote themselves to renouncing actions (like the Indian sadhus, for example). I would complement this by arguing that many of them have acted “yogically” to solve their daily problems through the experiences arising from their practices. Remarkably, even modern studies on the transplantation of yoga have been conducted within the European context. Furthermore, the dominant discussion is still primarily focused on the transformations of the yoga of the Indian matrix in different cultures, but very few studies have investigated developments of non-Indian matrix yoga (Newcombe and Deslippe 2020). Thus, one of our contributions will be to present the authenticity of Brazilian approaches to yoga.

Brazil “acquired” its own yogi(ni)s and its approaches from spiritual leaders of plural religious hues, therefore escaping the traditional or modern yogic designations that we have been contemporaries of since birth.

## Research Question

Are *contemporary Yoga* fruits of the modern yogic transplantation process, where new spiritual approaches to yogas have emerged? This new cartography opens different streams of “lifestyle yoga”. We understand that it becomes very difficult to *perceive* these new ways of living yoga by just comparing it with the Indian yoga lifestyle (whether Hindu, Sikkhi, Buddhist, Tantric, or Natha) or yoga contained in their sacred scriptures. Would a new paradigm be necessary to include contemporary yogas or do we continue with the past scenario, excluding them from serious academic studies?

## Definitions of Key Terms

### Traditional Yoga

It is understood here as the yogas created before the British imperial colonisation of India. Above all, we refer to the Yoga of Patanjali, systematised in the doctrine of Yoga-Sutras, and the Yoga developed by the tradition of Nathas or Hatha-Yoga from the scriptures Hatha-Yoga Pradipika and Gheranda Samhita, among others.

## Modern Yoga

The yogas that emerged from the historical Indian nationalist period, known as the Indian Renaissance, during the struggle for the country's independence from the British empire, but also by the process of religious privatisation, commodification, medicalisation, the Anglican Protestant ethic of English colonisers, and orientalist discourses, among others (De Michelis 2008, pp. 17–27). Names such as Vivekananda, Kuvalayananda, Sivananda, Yogananda, Krishnamacharya, and their best-known disciples, Iyengar and Jois established the most popular yoga schools among Westerners. These are, thus, deviating yogic approaches with traditional beliefs and practices.

- **Contemporary Yoga:** All non-Indian matrix yogas are classified here, i.e., those yogic schools were established in the transplantation process of Modern Yogas. They are yogi(ni)s, influenced in one way or another by modern yoga and traditional yoga, but without affiliation or affiliation with these directly. They are, thus, deviating schools with new beliefs and practices. Examples include the yogic approaches investigated in this work: Restorative Yoga Method, Yogatherapy, Swásthya-Yôga, Awaken Love Yoga, and Marginal Yoga (or *Sarra Yoga*).
- **Cultural Appropriation Consensual and Cultural Appropriation Non-consensual:** Consensual cultural appropriation is understood, according to Karl Baier (2016), when the representatives of the reference culture “create a willingness to share the transfer-item” (p.316); and, it is understood as a non-consensual cultural appropriation (a mechanism of oppression or “theft”), that is, at the moment when a dominant group assumes a culture, emptying its productions, customs, traditions, and other elements (Id.).

## Study Significance

This is one of the first studies that investigate non-Indian approaches to yoga or contemporary Yogic schools as “authentic”, regarding them as the fruit of the acculturation that Modern Yogas and Traditional Yogas underwent in their processes of transplantation, especially in societies dominated by neoliberal policies (Godrej 2017).

Non-Indian matrix yogas, particularly those outside the India-USA-Europe axis, are invariably delegitimised because they do not have “lineages” or do not have respect for Indian religious “traditions”. It is permissible to claim that this research can contribute to and make room for further studies and dialogues on the subject. The first yoga scholars of the early nineteenth century did not accurately perceive the medieval Hatha-Yogis in terms of their plural influences and perceived them as being less *rooted* in traditional Hindu scriptures, such as Buddhist, Sufi, Tantric, Alchemical, and other yogis from non-Vedic traditions (Eliade 2001, pp. 244–254). During the period of British colonisation, modern yogic schools were ignored for the same conservative reasons, that is, because it was believed that they had *lost* the traditional spiritual “essence” (Singleton and Byrne 2008, pp. 4–6).

More precisely, the focus of understanding what yoga is or is not is continuously discussed by those who dispute the *authority* of its *legitimacy* (Godrej 2017). This struggle for the power of yogic epistemology may be preventing us from acquiring an understanding of yoga in its totality and complexity, as well as its possible practices and other perspectives of diffusion.

Today, we risk committing the same academic deception of yesteryear by not considering contemporary Yogic schools or those that flourish within the scope of neoliberal capitalist societies (both in India and other political and religious geographies) and at the hands of yogi(ni)s “without tradition” (without caste?), which may be bringing meanings of spiritual life to a portion of the social field in which they affect and by which they are affected.

### Total Study of Yoga and Not Its Parts

A rhizome does not start or conclude, it is always in the middle, between things, inter-being, intermezzo. The tree is affiliation, but the rhizome is alliance, alliance only. The tree imposes the verb “to be”, but the rhizome has as tissue the conjunction “and... And... and...” There is in this conjunction enough strength to shake and uproot the verb being. (Deleuze and Guattari 2000, book cover)

Yogas are *hybrids*, and there has never been a *yoga-root* that birthed the various yogic spiritual approaches present in any other historical time. Yoga is rhizomatic and not branched (Muñoz and Martino 2019). All the approaches to yoga we know today are, in a way, *inventions*—or *deviants*—that interconnect horizontally; thus, it is impossible to determine their beginning or end. The Raja-Yoga of Patanjali, for example, presented in his *Yoga-Sutras*, is a contested issue by Jason Birch (2014) because it is an appropriation of consensual elements of the *Samkhya* religion and Hinduism in the same way the texts related to “Hatha-Yoga” are multifaceted and their influences are difficult to determine—which makes the multifaceted character that composes them more evident. Adrian Muñoz (2016) identified influences from the Shivaist and Buddhist siddhas on the Hatha-Yoga Pradipika and the Gheranda-Samhita among the Vaisnavas, Tantric saiva, and possible influences found in shamanic and alchemical elements. It does not seem that the modern yogis(ni)s have expressed any fear in hybridising their yogas (cf. De Michelis 2004), whether with physical education, biomedical physiology, Christianity, or other cultural appropriations of the geographies in which it was transplanted, as the Brazilians cases demonstrate.

There is no yoga that has not been “crossed over” by social groups. All approaches to yoga are hybrids. It is not that new yogas are *misrepresented*, but rather that they can be perceived as misrepresenting “traditional” yoga. They are, in fact, *creative* solutions to real problems that afflict the very culture that receives religious transplantation (Usarski 2017).

It is, thus, possible to identify three large areas of study on yoga currently: (1) “*philologists*” of yoga, (2) sociology of yoga, and (3) *physiology* of modern yoga.

The first, the “philologists”, focus on the search and sealing of the “roots” of yoga in their texts, commentators, and interpreters. There is a focus on rescuing the ancestry of yogic traditions and, accordingly, comparing how current yogas have distanced themselves from those early forms. Generally, they aim to demonstrate how contemporary yogas differ from ancient yogas (cf. Mallinson and Singleton 2017).

The second are the “sociologists”. They theorise contemporary yogas as a type of social, economic, political, cultural, and religious project, as the fruit of neoliberal capitalism. There is a concern to take away the “misappropriations” that the neoliberal oppressive system promotes in the spiritual aspect of yoga, as echoes or extensions of colonial imperialism, even though this influence is not over (cf. Jain 2014, 2020).

Finally, the “physiologists” of yoga focus primarily on the “techniques” of yoga and their organic consequences. Their great motto is the secular therapeutic power of the current yoga (Schmalzl et al. 2021, pp.821–857). They are either totally alienated from mystical aspects and magical and religious yoga or they hold the idea that it is a matter of time until biomedical physiological science will “prove” the yogic scriptures, as was thought by swami Kuvalayananda, who is still considered the “father of scientific yoga” by many today (Alter 2004).

However, none of these schools of study of yoga alone can perceive the object of yoga in its entirety, as a new religious phenomenon in progress and already disconnected from Hinduism (De Michelis 2004, pp.51–90). These link a religious perspective to the totality of the study in which they are specialists: philology, sociology, or physiology. It is possible, nevertheless, not to lose sight of the entirety of these approaches to yoga as spiritual schools being investigated (Greschat 2005, p. 24).

A second point is to understand yogas as yogic spiritual approaches and to investigate them from four perspectives: (1) communities, (2) system of acts or “ritual practice”, (3) set of doctrines, and (4) sedimentation of experiences. To the specialists, first, the “philologists” of yoga, it seems that only doctrines have importance; to “sociologists”, only communities and, sometimes, their experiences or behaviours; and to the “physiologists” of yoga, the experiences and their systems of acts or “practices” represent the motto of their studies (Greschat 2005, p. 25).

The third, last, and most important point is that all Brazilian yoga approaches presented here are living social and spiritual phenomena, therefore “nomadic”:

Living religions change without ceasing. Sometimes a change is hidden until it becomes noticeable. Living religions consist of traditions inherited there and faithful here, the intellectualizations of contemporary theologians, in ancient answers to modern questions. Among these poles it urges for balance, a demand that is sometimes accompanied by discharges and bangs. The balance between past and present, given by change, is important and keeps religions alive (Greschat 2005, p. 27).

We will continue this way, investigating five characteristics that comprise a Brazilian Yogic social field and reflecting on singular hybridisms with native religions and complex acculturations of Brazilian culture. Perhaps, with Brazilian approaches to yoga, these can act as a type of laboratory, testing the so-called modern yoga in

new complexities. We propose to think of yoga in Brazil as a totality that approaches and dialogues with new *creative escape* lines; not of *types* of yoga, but possible new categories of thinking and living yoga.

### **Brazilian Yogas: Biography, Influences, and Legacy**

Yoga was introduced to Brazilian culture by the Frenchman Léo Costet de Mascheville, who became known as Sevananda, the son of a well-known occultist of the esoteric Marinist Order who was, between the years 1925 and 1960, perceived by the spiritual community as a missionary to the New World (i.e., Latin America) to announce the coming of a “new” race to the world and the synthesis of the teachings of Jesus Christ and Gandhi (Simões 2019).

Years later, Léo Costet founded the yoga school *Sarva Yoga* to fulfil his spiritual mission, which he conceived in the last years of the 1940s, based in the city of Resende/RJ, between the states of Rio de Janeiro and São Paulo. There he founded the Expectant Church (Igreja Expectante) with an Essenian monastery and an Indian *ashram* or *yoguiço*.

In the doctrinal aspect it is already clear that All Gospels are Accepted by the Expectant Church. However, in Latin America, for example, its rituals are always Christian based (the Essenes), on the one hand, with a basic complement to the east. Since the coming of Maitreya, the next manifestation of the for the coming era, it has been known and disseminated in the East for many decades, and in the West, itself has already been much commented on.

The various races have had successive Revelations, of which each has generated multiple religions, as is the case of Buddhism, divided into so many sects or schools, and with Christianity, divided into Catholicism, Protestantism, Orthodox and countless Heterodox, perfectly Christian too!

The broad expectant position therefore makes this Church the Church of all religions or, better said, of all the cults that make up the Universal Religion (ibid.).

During this period of his idealisation, construction, and founding of the activities of the Expectant Church with its priestly structure and public service, Léo Costet held several lectures in esoteric orders of yoga in Brazil. In one of these presentations, a general of the Brazilian army, the theosophist Gal. Caio Miranda (1909–1969), was impressed by the yogic ideas presented by Léo Costet. Sometime later and in a totally self-taught way, Caio Miranda wrote the first Brazilian book on yoga, making history as the precursor of yogic spirituality in the country and influencing an entire later generation (cf. Simões 2020).

Thus, Yoga entered Brazil not by Indian masters, but by an esoteric and European occultist. His vision of yoga will guide, at least in the beginning, the first two characters of the recent Brazilian yogic social field to settle in and formalise the ideas about yoga disseminated in the country between 1960 and 2000:

The therapeutic and curative tendency of yoga for all.  
His approach to Christianity.



Its esoteric and occult influence.

The establishment of the first training course for other yoga teachers, in a way replicant of their missionary ideas.

These items, associated with the fact that yoga in Brazil was transplanted not by Indian masters but by a controversial European, further reinforce this realisation and the “Brazilian knack” that, while non-traditional, manages to invent “traditionalist approaches to yoga” (ibid.), as we will see below.

### **José Hermógenes de Andrade Biography**

Prof. Hermógenes was a reserve captain of the Brazilian army who, was diagnosed with tuberculosis at the age of 35 in 1955. José Hermógenes dedicated himself, throughout the mandatory rest of his treatment, to reading, relaxing, meditating, and obtaining various spiritual experiences from the practices of his yoga or *Yoga therapy*. There has always been a strong synergy between Catholicism, Kardecist Spiritism, Esotericism, and holistic medicine in *Hermogean Yoga*, so to speak (cf. Simões 2020).

In 1960, José Hermógenes released his first book—*Self-Perfection with Hatha Yoga*—and, in 1962, opened the Hermógenes Academy, a space in which he held practical classes of his yoga as well as workshops on his method of yoga. As during this period, there was no literature on yoga in Brazil and no influences by any Indian institutions that could authorise or deauthorise anyone as being a yogi or not, his first readings were the works *Sport et Yoga* by Selvarajan Yesudian and Elisabeth Haich and *The Yoga System of Health and Relief from Tension* by Yogi Vithaldas (Sanchez 2014, p. 35). These are all works lacking in-depth philosophical discussions about the sacred scriptures of yoga; even so, Hermógenes’ approach was based on the practical application of yoga in effects on health and, even today, the method he developed, *Yogatherapy*, is quite popular in Brazil as a holistic form of prevention and cure.

Prof. José Hermógenes died in early 2015, at the age of 94, due to multiple organ failures after years of battling Parkinson’s disease, leaving his yoga therapeutic methodological legacy in the hands of his grandson, as well as Hermógenes (yoga) Academy.

### **Influences**

In addition to links to Christianity, José Hermógenes established a late discipleship bond with Indian guru Sai Baba, becoming the main diffuser of the master’s message in Brazil and Portugal during his lifetime. In the biography of Hermógenes, in addition to reinforcing a certain hagiography of him, we report the appearance of Sai Baba’s silhouette behind the Brazilian Yogi (Caruso 2012, p. 95). Supernatural accounts like this are quite common in the Brazilian culture to legitimise the holiness of someone, but this extraordinary data is not the only one in his biography. There is also the record of a letter psychograph through the greatest Brazilian medium, Chico Xavier, by the spirit Bezerra de Menezes, addressed to Hermógenes,

further confirming *his yogic path* of deep spirituality: “that his work has the help of a high spiritual support team” says the disembodied spirit giving moral authority to the yoga therapy of Prof. José Hermógenes in Brazil (cf. Simões 2020).

### Repercussions and Legacy

Prof. José Hermógenes’ main legacy to Brazilian yoga was his *Yogatherapy*. Undoubtedly, this yogi stands out for his pioneering work in associating yoga with holistic aspects of cure and disease prevention in Brazil. However, it goes further when, influenced by the equally therapeutic-religious character of Brazilian kardecist spiritism, he invented a simple yoga method with easy learning and utilising postures with respiratory breathing that anyone could perform and disseminating ideas that associate bodily health with spiritual elevation and self-knowledge.

Owing to the yoga therapy’s fusion, as was said, of yogic practices with Christianity and spiritism, it was very well accepted among the middle class of Rio de Janeiro and, throughout his life, among the whole population of Brazil. His more than 30 books published in several other languages brought repercussions on the idea, still strong in Brazil, of yoga for health promotion. His approaches with Sai Baba (although not so publicised) and Brazilian spiritual religiosity helped to popularise yoga and meditation with faith in God (Hermógenes 2005). There are few yogis in Brazil today who spoke as openly of God as Hermógenes. At the same time, some other religions looked at yoga as a new developing religion in the country (Apolloni 2004).

### Luiz Sérgio Derose Biography

Luiz Derose is a contemporary to our previous character and, as we will see, presents himself almost as the antithesis of *Yogatherapy*. Luiz Derose was a young Carioca (inhabitant of Rio) from Tijuca who appeared in the early 1960s, and in a way, subverted all Christian morality represented by the *Yogatherapy* of Prof. José Hermógenes. In the middle of the Brazilian military dictatorship, Luiz Derose went to the opposite of the medicalisation of Hermogean yoga and invested in the Hinduist and Tantric aspects of yoga, thus, with a strong traditionalist appeal and, at least at the beginning (between the years 1960 and 1990), a self-taught image and techniques tied to sensualism to achieve hyperorgasms (see Derose 1996. *Hyperorgasm, a tantric pathway*. Ed. Martin Claret).

According to Luiz Derose, his Yogic doctrine, *the Swásthya-Yôga*, was systematised to him through a disembodied Indian spirit named Sri *Bhavajánanda*, and that this originated prior to the arrival of Vedic culture in India—facts that had no material historical trace, but which were so consolidated in the knowledge of their schools and books that few students disputed this story (Derose 2006, pp. 47–49; pp. 58–63).

There are two very distinct phases of the life of Luiz Derose: the first being the revelation of *swásthya-yôga* as a young man and its entire period (1960–2008) of consolidation of the various schools accredited with its brand; and the second, from

2008, when it expanded to the *Derose Method*, where *swásthya* was relegated only to “techniques” and the behaviorist “concept” was included in the creation of the Derose Method at last, as he himself defined his work with yoga.<sup>2</sup>

Recently, being over the age of 75 years, Derose has been seeking to change this image of body, sensuality, occultism, mysticism, and spirituality that he has built for most of his life, switching the front line of his yoga brand’s name from *swásthya-yôga* to *Método Derose*, which he aims to direct predominantly to the male audience and entrepreneurs and young people who crave “high performance” and who wish to re-educate their behaviour.<sup>3</sup>

## Influences

The yoga that Luiz Derose invented, unlike José Hermógenes, is composed of choreographed postures, but which changed, as we said, from 2008, to include “concepts of behavioural re-education”, becoming the *Derose Method*. Therefore, his influences also changed following his septuagenarian age. Among Indian yogis, his influences are Swami Vivekananda and Sivananda. Derose visited the temple (*ashram*) of the latter more often. Freemasonry, where his yoga is initiated, as it is with other esoteric orders, as deeply inspires this yoga as possible to perceive it in a certain hierarchical organization where yoga values are diffuse and, also, in its degrees of elevation.

Furthermore, as the Brazilian yogic market began to receive other yoga schools (North American and Indian), Derose even complained in an interview that yoga is becoming very “spiritualised”. Thus, it seems credible to assume, by a change in marketing strategy, that Luiz Derose reinvented himself once again, establishing a certain *symbiosis* between his revealed yoga, *swásthya-yôga*, and elements of behavioural psychology by A. Maslow, J.B. Watson, and Skinner, in addition to *Coaching*, giving rise to the *Derose Method*.

## Repercussions and Legacy

Brazil inherited from Luiz Derose the following:

1. Commodification of yoga in several *accreditation-type schools*, but also the commercialisation of yoga products.
2. Pluralisation of training courses for new yoga teachers as professionals to work in the Brazilian yoga market.

Luiz Derose and his yoga were inspired by the Indians such as Vivekananda, Yogananda, Sivananda, and Kunalayananda. The influence of these figures lies in

<sup>2</sup> Cf. <https://derosemethod.org/blogdoderose/profissao/voce-prefere-trabalhar-com-o-swasthya-ou-com-o-metodo-derose/>, accessed 12/01/2020.

<sup>3</sup> Cf. <https://derosemethod.org/blogdoderose/profissao/derose-method-e-outra-coisa/>, accessed 12/01/2020.

the fact that they created the first yoga schools and courses to train yogis worldwide. Derosé followed this same path and established his numerous yoga schools across Brazil. However, he did so especially in the mystical rhetoric of encounters with disembodied yoga masters and epiphanies caused by asceticism and other magical constructions.

### Janderson Oliveira Sri Prem Baba Biography

Since the 2000s, changes have occurred in the social field of Brazilian yoga. Other schools and yoga methods arrived in Brazil. They spread more intensely across North America, Europe, and India with their yogas: *Power Yoga*, *Iyengar Yoga*, and *Astanga Vinyasa Yoga*. This openness to new yogic perspectives culminated in *new creative* escape lines that adapt and re-adjust, once again, the process of yoga transplantation in Brazilian lands. One of the best known is that of a former disciple of Luiz Derosé, born Janderson Oliveira, better known by his start-up name *Sri Prem Baba*.

Sri Prem Baba or Janderson de Oliveira Fernandes, a Paulistano (person from São Paulo city) at the age of 13 introduced to yoga and later graduated in psychology (cf. Stern and Guerriero 2020). Subsequently, he founded a Holistic Therapies Centre in 1994, which initiated a new Brazilian yogic method that will be exported, even back to India, consisting of *Awaken Love Yoga*, combining ayahuasca intake, psychotherapy, and meditation (Labate 2004, p. 125; MAIA 2018, pp. 58–87).<sup>4</sup>

The big twist in his life happened, as Oliveira recounts from a dream, when he had, at the age of 14, a vision of a man with a long beard and long hair, who said to him—at the age of 33—that the man would meet Oliveira. Then, at exactly 33 years of age, on his honeymoon trip to *the city of Rishikesh* in India, upon entering a Hindu temple, the man of his dream appeared, recognised him, and presented himself as his master, Sri *Hansraj Maharajji*, of the *Sachcha tradition*. After this episode, Oliveira became a disciple to the master of the dream, as if there were no other action and it was meant to be. He then finally became Sri Prem Baba, as he tells in his autobiography.<sup>5</sup>

With the death of Master *Maharajji* in 2011, Janderson assumed the representation of the highest degree of this lineage. Prem Baba, always very charismatic and occupying the role of leader of yoga in the country, following Hermógenes and Derosé, has a biography that gained the spotlight of the mainstream media, especially because of the notoriety he assumed among many soap opera artists and politicians from Brazil and the USA, such as Will Smith, making him a kind of pop *guru* in newspapers and magazines.<sup>6</sup>

<sup>4</sup> Cf. <http://portaldonic.com.br/jornalismo/2017/12/18/sri-prem-baba-propaga-o-seu-proposito-durante-encontro/>, accessed 12/01/2020.

<sup>5</sup> Cf. <https://www.sriprembaba.org/biografia>, accessed 12/01/2020.

<sup>6</sup> <https://amauryjr.blog.bol.uol.com.br/2017/12/12/will-smith-arrisca-frase-em-portugues-ao-conhecer-sri-prem-baba-em-sp/>.

However, his story was deeply shaken in mid-2018, after accusations and confessions of sexual abuse by disciples in his *ashrams* in Brazil. He then withdrew himself in silence, returning after a year with his beard and his hair cut, and distanced from the leadership of the Indian Yoguica *Sachcha* lineage. Currently, he seeks to regain his space in the spiritual field of Brazilian yoga but has not reached much success.<sup>7</sup>

## Influences

Janderson Oliveira's (Prem Baba) is the grandson of a *benzedeira* (blessing practitioner), who is evangelical and he has been under Afro-indigenous influences. Oliveira reports that he has mediumship or extrasensory experiences, such as visions, dreams, and "sensations that no one can explain" (Maia 2018, pp. 59). Janderson Oliveira was already a religious member of the church of Santo Daime and also a practitioner of the *swāsthya-yôga* of Derose (Labate 2004); but that curiously aligns, in a way, a therapeutic yoga perspective of José Hermógenes in his psycho-spiritual work.

## Repercussions and Legacy

Janderson Prem Baba innovates by not only associating the ritual use of Ayahuasca within the practices of his yoga but also by managing to export it back to India (LABATE 2004; MAIA 2018).<sup>8</sup> This transplantation is undoubtedly the most original repercussion that a non-Indian yoga performs.

## Miila Derzett Biography

Miila Derzett is an experienced Brazilian yogini and a psychologist focused on social psychology and schizoanalysis. In addition, she is a journalist and actress with backgrounds in different methods of yoga crossed with the engaged Buddhism teachings of a Vietnamese master and with theorists of psychology and social anthropology. It was from 2005 onwards, during cancer treatment, that "healing" and her restorative yoga started taking shape, as she states.<sup>9</sup> Once a trained teacher, whilst recovering, she read the books of Prof. José Hermógenes and his *Yogatherapy*, and these sparked a deeper interest that awakened her to other forms of yoga. In the same year, she sought ways of practice and yogic philosophy with lower physical intensity and, in addition to yoga therapy, found the work of the American Judith Lasater and her *Relax and Renew*; a yoga method inspired by master Iyengar and physiotherapy that excels in variations of the same *yoga posture (asana)*: the posture of the dead or *savasana* (DERZETT 2015, p.15).

<sup>7</sup> <https://veja.abril.com.br/blog/veja-gente/o-retorno-sem-alarde-do-guru-prem-baba/>.

<sup>8</sup> See <https://gururating.org/sri-prem-baba/>.

<sup>9</sup> Cf. <https://soundcloud.com/miila-derzett/como-o-cancer-me-curou-cap-ii-o-que-voce-quer-fazer-de-sua-vida>, accessed 12/02/2020.

Soon after undergoing successful cancer treatment, between 2005 and 2010, she graduated as the first authorised teacher of Lasater yoga, attending *the Relax and Renew* course (Derzett 2016, p.101). She is currently one of the representatives of the Stress Reduction Protocol of the Mind and Body Institute in Brazil, applying the technique and teachings to users of the Psychosocial Care Center (CAPS) in Florianópolis/Brazil, which has developed its own system for stress reduction based on the yoga that Derzett has been developing: *The Restorative Yoga Method* (Ibid., pp.180–188). She has published four books: *Relax!* (2015), *Super Rest* (2016), *Restorative Method in Clinical Application* (2018), *Embrace!* (2019), and *Restorative Revolution* (in the press).

## Influences

One of the first and strongest inspirations of Miila Derzett was, as we said, the *Yoga-therapy* of Prof. José Hermógenes that is reflected in her commitment to perceive yoga as psychotherapy and in its links with science, especially during the period of cancer in her life. Here again, the relationship of healing and spirituality is strongly inspired by the New Age movement. Another strong reference, as we already discussed, are the yogic techniques of the American Judith Lasater, author of the book *Relax and Renew*. In the first phase of Derzett's yoga development, Lasater's proposal is more striking, especially when it presents a yoga practice outside the scope of the common sense of stretching and strength; moving, in fact, to the opposite of that.

From this, one of the great turning points, besides her experience of cancer, which brings Derzett closer to less muscular yogas, is the experience of applying her yoga in vulnerable groups. From this experience of rest, the non-movement of yoga comprised the psychotherapeutic strength and the responses of patients of the Psychosocial Care Center, in which she interned during her graduation in psychology. This slow and gradual process of maturation led to a natural search for academic studies of psychophysical states that deep relaxation seemed to entail. At this point, the research of Benson and Frichione's team have helped Derzett understand the effects on the body and mind of vulnerable and peripheral groups that had failed to gain access to yoga.

Yoga teacher Derzett studied as a student-listener various disciplines of anthropology and social psychology at the university of her city. Therefore, authors such as Deleuze, Guatarri, and Pichon-Rivieri and others expanded the approximation of their *Restorative Method of Yoga* with social relations (or their decrease in capitalist societies), which can be perceived in the books and articles they publish. However, it is from a more intimate contact with socially engaged Buddhism of Vietnamese Zen monk Thich Nhat Hanh, which Miila Derzett was involved in the inclusion of dialogue and "affection" that, according to her, yoga was still far from being allowed (Derzett 2019, pp. 53–54).

Currently, she no longer teaches regular classes but works exclusively in the training of new teachers of the yoga method she created, travelling through Brazil and Europe and promoting her work.

## Repercussions and Legacy

The most important contribution here is the aspect of comprehensiveness and social concern for vulnerable groups. Miila Derzett's yoga includes time, touch, affectivity, and dialogue as a fundamental basis of her method, because, according to her, these columns are formed to reach the dimension and social reach that yoga has in potential, but was being neglected until then (Derzett 2016, pp. 176–179).

Thus, we can think of two repercussions, although they should be corroborated by other studies:

1. The inversion of the role of yoga teacher from the instructor (of techniques above all, but of the concepts of yogic philosophy), as we saw in the research on the SUS and the “leaders of yoga” in Brazil, to that of the *educator* in the pedagogical sense.
2. The inclusion of the affective dimension, but above all, dialogue, at the end of yogic practices.

It may seem of little note, especially to those less used to the social field of Brazilian yoga, but these two items represent an ongoing revolution taking place, as we will discuss more in the conclusion.

## Tainá Antonio Biography

Yoga teacher Tainá Antonio is a young black woman born and raised in the *fluminense baixada* (lowlands) of Rio de Janeiro—a metropolitan area away from south Rio de Janeiro, the “noble” region of the city. From an early age, she realised, as she says in some interviews, that there were no black people in the yoga studios where she attended. This fact, associated with Brazilian poverty, permeated the construction of her own yoga method, *Marginal Yoga*, characterised, as well as *the Restorative Yoga* of our previous character, by a strong concern regarding the *inclusion* of life in yoga and not the opposite.

These circumstances of social differences, also reflected in the spiritual field of Brazilian yoga, led her to reflect on the marginalised society in which she lives; and that yoga, instead of uniting (literal meaning in Sanskrit of the word yoga), has been separating individuals and subjecting them to the capitalist, colonial, oppressing and formative ways of living docile, and unliberated bodies (literally the focus of yoga, *kaivalya*, or liberation). Years later, she graduated in yoga. Working as a yoga teacher in the communities of Rio de Janeiro, she became familiar with *Kemetic Yoga*, an American yoga method that finds the ancestral origins of yoga in Egypt—before India defined the geography for *the* root of yoga. Currently, she continues to work with young black residents of the outlying communities of Rio de Janeiro, but above all, during and after the COVID-19 pandemic, in live classes online through social media.

## Influences

We can determine three major influences on *The Marginal Yoga* (in development) of Tainá:

1. The power of yoga as a vehicle of social and pedagogical awareness.
2. *Kemetic Yoga*, conceived by the American Elvrid C. Lawrence (Yiser Ra Hotep), inaugurates a historical inversion of yogic originality to Africa and not India; a theory still controversial in academic circles, but which has gained adherents by incorporating the black identity and a whole decolonial discourse into the yogic spiritual social field.
3. The Brazilian ghetto culture itself, especially the *Carioca* (Rio) funk and the axé music from Bahia.

The socio-pedagogical power that *Marginal Yoga* has been revealing, as well as the *Restorative Yoga* of the previous character, is a role of yoga in Brazil that we had not yet witnessed. With yoga teacher Tainá, this issue intensified because it is the first time (or at least the first time with greater force) that a resident of *peripheral urban areas* (or *shantytowns*), and not a yoga teacher from outside these, voluntarily comes to bring a perspective on yoga to the needy. It is an insider who really appropriates yoga to invent another Brazilian yoga, this time for the marginalised.

The arrival of yoga that is affirmed with Afrodescendant roots, *Kemetic Yoga*, reinforces this background of legitimation from the peripheral to the Brazilian yogic social field, especially Tainá and her *Marginal Yoga*. In the pot of influences, there are also the appropriations that Tainá weaves with the *Carioca* funk and the *Bahian axé*, which help shape this yoga with a true identification with the peripheral lower class culture of Brazil. The identity issues of *funkeiros* in the *baixada Fluminense*, in particular, “reflect the postmodern world” because of its identity subjected to the *docilisation* of yogic bodies with their Hinduist values and patterns, which are traditionally the heritage of almost all the yogis of the modern world. However, in *Marginal Yoga*, it resists and does not let itself be submitted to the representations of the dominant yogas: “it is possible for them [the *funkeiro*, representative of Brazilian hip hop] to have diversifications at different times, which meet their [own] expectations” (Nogueira 2013).

Similar to what Janderson Oliveira Prem Baba performed with the derosean *swásthya-yôga*, the new psychotherapy era and the ritual use of *ayahuasca* in Santo Daime, *Marginal Yoga* approaches *Kemetic Yoga* and Afro-Brazilian religiosity, psychopedagogy, and the ritual use of the singular gingado of the hips from the popular dances of the Carioca hills and the Bahian Street carnival to develop *sarrayoga*: a technique for releasing the subtle energy (transphysiological) *kundalini*.

## Repercussions and Legacy

Once again in the history of crossing over, there is the legacy of the deterritorialisation of the dominant yogas, not only by inverting yoga of the Indian castes (or the south zone of Rio de Janeiro) to incorporate it into black and peripheral bodies, but



also to appropriate the Brazilian “GINGA”, while the elite watches in horror at the “sacred bodies” in yogic postures rebreaking into the “profane bodies” of the funk dances of the *baixada fluminense* and the *sambas-de-roda* of the Bahian axé to yoga mats. This shows the displacement that *Marginal Yoga* causes in yoga among Brazilians. Tainá provocatively calls *sarayoga* “these broken hips”, in a clear allusion to the “sarração” (funk dance style from the favelas of Rio de Janeiro and axé from Bahia) to the most unsuspecting and moralistic of the national yoga field.

For the distant public of Brazilian culture, it is important to emphasise that both styles of music are considered minor from the erudite perspective of Brazilian music and by academia in general.

The technique of *sarayoga* is extracted from *Carioca* funk and combined with Bahian axé, in which rapid hip movements are joined in yoga-specific postures, aiming to release *kundalini* energy. Medievalist Indian yogis indicated it by other techniques, but, today, deriving from Indian geography and Hindu religiosity (cf. Simões 2011, p. 43–44), young black and peripheral people in Brazil aim for the same but by pertinent indications belonging to the cartography of the culture in which they live.

## Conclusions

### Yoga as a Ritual Healing Process

In Brazil, yoga understood as a practice and/or spiritual philosophy of healing or complementary to therapies relies heavily on Prof. Hermógenes efforts in the first years of the 1960s. In his autobiography, the search to legitimise the therapeutic aspect of yoga is extensive. It began with the pioneer of yoga in the country, the French Léo Costet. Something that both Hermógenes and also Janderson Oliveira *Prem Baba* accomplished, combining *hermogeian yogatherapy*, is the Brazilian Afro-Amerindian *pajelança* (similar with *xamanism*), as well as the religion of Santo Daime, as we explained.

Currently, Miila Derzetz’s Restorative Yoga Method is in this field based on her investments in C.A.P.S/Florianópolis (Brazilian Psychosocial Care Centre) where she works as a social psychologist, following the most scientific protocols of the American Herbert Benson’s Mind and Body Institute, and with elements of Buddhist social engagements as well. Furthermore, Prof. Tainá Antonio and her marginal yoga techniques, even with more focused purposes on youth education, establish equally “therapeutic” sessions, as she states. Additionally, the work of Janderson Oliveira *Prem Baba* and his *Awaken Love Yoga*, as we have seen, is based on the healing aspects of the bodies and souls of its adherents and clients.

The central axis of Brazilian yogas in their psychotherapeutic aspects (*Yogatherapy*, *Awaken Love Yoga*, *Restorative Yoga*, and *Marginal Yoga*) can, and should, be linked to New Age elements of healing and salvation. The “salvation” used here is not Catholic redemption, the search for metaphysical geography, or materialism for the purposes of biomedical healing. These Brazilian yogas propose dialogue with the immanence of social problems and the real intentions to solve them (cf. Simões

2015, pp. 130–160). Even disparate in their reach to populations and narrative constructions about yoga, they ultimately aim to solve issues of the reality in which the adherents live.

Brazilian religiosities (native or incremented as yoga described here) strengthen psychotherapeutic and “re-enchantment of the world” ties; since the Amerindian Shamanism, religions such as kardecist spiritism, the Ayahuasqueira religions, Catholicism itself and, currently, *neopentecostals*, each in their own ways, have a certain “psychologisation” in their narratives (Duarte and Carvalho 2005). Accordingly, yoga, as another religious phenomenon in formation in Brazil, is not different.

One last point is to realise the following. With the transplantation of modern yogic spiritual approaches to other social models beyond imperialism, such as capitalism, inserting themselves in problems of cosmopolitan and secular societies, new symbolic goods of spiritual salvation/liberation yogic were (and are being) established in Brazil, as, for example: *stress* as an *evil* to be fought, “producer of the maelstrom of the mind”; *relaxation* assuming a spiritual role; and a certain *divinisation of the state of homeostasis* (Simões 2017).

It seems legitimate to assume that contemporary Yogic spiritual goods are others than that of modern yogas.

### Yoga and Its Commodification

If there is something new to yogas that were born in *and survived* modernity, whether in Brazil, India, or any other part of the world, it does not reside in its new doctrines, masters, or massification of bodily practices. What really differentiates them as belonging to the modern historical period of yoga is their transplantation to societies governed by the capitalist model (cf. Jain 2014). We can argue that almost the entire yogic historical process took place under a social, political, economic, and religious imperialist model. It is with modern yogis that a transition to a capitalist model begins, contemporary yogas are established and immersed under the predominance of the neoliberal capitalist model (cf. Jain 2014).

Since *the Yoga-Sutras* of Patanjali, a Hindu brahmin, that belonged to the caste of the Brahmins, or the crossovers that gave rise to medieval *Hatha-Yoga*, all these yogic manifestations emerged in a model of imperialist social organization (Simões 2020, pp.103–104). Since 1897, with Vivekananda’s visit to the first World Parliament of the religions in the USA, all these so-called modern yogas and so many other yogas that arose (and much because of this) had to learn to live in capitalist societies and, accordingly, became much more cosmopolitan and secular (cf. Jain 2020; Simões 2020).

This change in the social structure of the yogic community thus influenced and shifted “living yogas” from under the Hindu religious canopy to an infinite plurality of new spiritualities, such as those we observed in Brazil. Among the yogis we investigated in Brazil, the one who knew how to read the situation more accurately (the situation of yoga being inserted in a new model of society: capitalist and of consumption, thereafter), was Luiz Derose, long before the Californian and Indian models arrived among Brazilians around the 2000s.

In 1964, as we presented, Luiz Derose opened his first branch of schools that spread in the following decades throughout Brazil and currently with branches in Europe and South America. These facts may be behind the disputes of narrative legitimacy that boiled and continue to boil between José Hermógenes and Luiz Derose (cf. Sanchez 2004). Even criticised in this mercantile aspect of *Derosean yoga*, almost all yogi(ni)s of later generations in Brazil inherited (or absorbed) this neoliberal capitalist aspect in managing their brands of schools, methods, and yogic approaches.

Thus, the social structure that sustains yogas in Brazil is governed under four economic aspects that maintain mother-in-law Brazilian institutions:

- a. Yoga spaces or studios selling regular classes (live or in post-pandemic live sessions)
- b. Training schools of new yoga teachers in the method, schools, or institution referred to
- c. Trips or pilgrimages to sites sacred to yoga, which today have expanded beyond traditional India to places such as Machu Pichu, Buddhist temples in Japan and Europe, and even Jerusalem, to name a few
- d. Marketing of yogic products such as practice mats, practice utensils (blocks, banners, towels, and others), books, and other materials

Luiz Derose and his *Swásthya-Yôga* (now *The Derose Method*) spread, in his own way, as he propagated himself, becoming the most successful yoga entrepreneur in the world, with the seeding of neoliberal ideas, and also by the organization of his schools as a type of *franchise* or as being “accredited”, as he himself disclosed his business. Practical classes are all choreographed and divided into ascending evolutionary levels from student to master.

In one way or another, almost all yogi(ni)s currently in Brazil replicate this capitalist and mercantile model, this yogic Derose way, even if they criticise it. Teachers who profess *Swásthya-Yôga*—and other yoga brands—establish themselves as liberal (or *enterprising*) labour market professionals of yoga (cf. Conrad and Vanes 2014).

### **The Brazilian Way of Staying Syncretic and “Ancestral”**

If there is one thing that Brazilian yogas achieve uniquely, it is to crossover in a thousand ways and, at the same time, still present themselves as ancestral and/or traditional. Hermógenes managed to align his yoga therapy with biomedicine, Christianity, Kardecist spiritism, and the tradition of the Indian master Sai Baba, and yet, guard his status of being a near-*saint* in the Brazilian Yogic field (cf. Sanches 2014). Luiz Derose and his *swásthya-yôga*, even without some ballast that corroborated his story of ancestral yoga, prior to the Aryan invasion, built an empire and, despite the contradiction, has students faithful to his doctrine. Janderson Prem Baba, perhaps the most inventive of all his precedents, sought to legitimise his *Awaken Love Yoga* through visions, dreams, and all sorts of spells, re-transplanting his *Ayahuasqueiro*

ritual yoga back to India and becoming one of the leading masters of a mystical yogic order in Rishikesh.

The *Restoration Yoga* of Miila Derzett takes a long path through Buddhism, research at Harvard, Hermogean yoga therapy, among other syncretisms, and elaborates a method for yoga, relaxation modularity for more affection and dialogue. Moreover, this is inserted in a psychosocial context with other problems to be solved: that of users of the CAPS. Furthermore, yoga teacher Tainá Antonio and her *Marginal Yoga* aligned with African yoga, also with little historical ballast, with an almost mythical connection to ancient Egypt, elements of Rio hip *hop culture (funk)* and Bahian street carnival (the *axé*), and yogic techniques with *kundalínic* purposes.

One of the possible responses to these unimaginable approaches could be the religious structure of Brazilian Kardecist spiritism at the beginning of the twentieth century in imperial Brazil. Since 1840, Brazilians had already been introduced to Mesmerism and homoeopathy, which were already beginning their diffusion in the most affluent media of society (Luz 2019, pp. 143–171). Long before the Portuguese landed here, the shamanic perspective of the Amerindians of pre-colonial Brazil already allowed this interpenetration between the world of the living and the dead and of healing processes (Viveiros De Castro 2015, pp. 171–182). It is in this spiritual and pseudoscientific crucible, religiously and shamanically native to the late nineteenth century in Brazil, that Kardecist Spiritism gained notoriety and certain perceived robustness, among its adherents, of a “scientific”, rational and spiritual religion, but not religious. When yoga arrived in Brazil, with Leo Costet, there was already a fertile ground ready for growth.

All Hindu spiritual concepts were already incorporated in the poorest social layers, especially via Afro-Brazilian religiosity and Amerindian Shamanism, as we have previously stated. Thus, even before Léo Costet arrived here in 1940–1950, ideas such as reincarnation, spirits, and concepts of *karma* and *psychic* development (similar to *siddhis*), as well as trance states (such as those of *samadhi*) and “*special*” human beings (such as “enlightened” Indian masters) were all already part of the imagination and reality of the people, especially of the Brazilian yogis and our characters investigated here.

Now, the epiphanies of Luiz Derose, with his disembodied master (a *siddha*?), Sai Baba’s silhouette in the shadow of Hermógenes, or the premonitory dreams of Janderson Prem Baba, will all not sound so exotic anymore.

### **Built-in Peripheral Yoga and Not Social Projects (“Missionaries”)**

Social projects that offer regular yoga classes to underprivileged and/or marginalised social classes are not new in Brazil, such as volunteer work with yoga in prison systems, hospitals, and peripheral urban regions. For example, there is the social project *Yoga da Maré*, in the Maré favela in Rio de Janeiro, coordinated by a Portuguese woman who resides in Brazil.<sup>10</sup>

<sup>10</sup> <https://www.uol.com.br/urbantaste/noticias/redacao/2019/07/18/yoga-na-mare-leva-acolhimento-para-moradores-de-complexo-de-favelas-no-rj.htm>.

However, what we offer here, with the *Marginal Yoga* of Prof. Tainá and the Method of *Restorative Yoga* of Miila Derzett, goes beyond offering yogas to the “needy”. Both yogas *merge* into their communities; they are not taught, but they establish *dialectics* with them. To put it simply, contrary to what many systematised yogas propose, the marginal and *restorative* yogas of Tainá and Miila carry with them much of the *Pedagogy of the Oppressed* against *antidialogical* pedagogies, as the Brazilian Paulo Freire called oppressive educational practices, or as “top-down”.

Even if the Freirean dialogical teaching method is not explicit in both yogas (*Restorative* of Miila Derzett and the *Marginal* of Tainá Antonio), these yogas carry within them the gene of this originally Brazilian pedagogy with the proposal of autonomy included in their classes, the revolutionary posture they exhibit in the awareness about the learning process of yoga, and, above all, the encouragement of self-reflection in teaching both CAPS users in Florianópolis and the needy young people of the Baixada Fluminense in Rio de Janeiro.

Paulo Freire and his pedagogy of the oppressed gained prominence in the country soon after the re-democratisation of Brazil in the late 1980s, especially with the new constitution of 1988. He is considered the patron of Brazilian education; thus, even being absent from the biography of Miila’s and Tainá’s yogas, it is legitimate to assume that they were inspired by his philosophies of libertarian education and on the less privileged.

Paulo Freire’s pedagogical philosophy is based on the strength in which the student would assimilate knowledge of the object from the dialogue with reality, as opposed to technicist, “banking”, and alienating education. The proposal is that the student creates/invents their own education, building clearings in the forest of life, and not obeying sweetly a supposedly ideal path already previously built. Popular education, as his pedagogical method was called, would be focused on the formation of critical political consciousness (Freire 2011, pp. 11–30).

What Miila and Tainá propose with their yogas are *escape lines* that create other ways of living yoga not yet experienced and not yet having arrived in Brazil. Both yogas—*Marginal Yoga* with its appropriate techniques of Brazilian Funk and Axé and the *Restorative Yoga Method* with its techniques of deep relaxation—not *only* present and *minister* doctrines and practices to social groups that did not *yet* know yoga, but dialogue with these same marginalised individuals, some of them hidden from society (such as the case of schizophrenia, mania, and various other psychic problems that exist in the CAPS or among the peripheral young people of the Baixada Fluminense). The pedagogy of the oppressed that these yogas use do not present technical models of organizing bodies, which alienate bodies and minds more than instigate them to think for themselves, replicating models of European, North American, Indian, or Brazilian approaches to yoga.

Furthermore, does the difference between Brazilian yogas and Indian yogas lie in the discussion between the authenticity and the falsehood of their lineage? Of its real function of reach of samadhi, *kaivalya*, or “liberation from ignorance” from its “true essence”? What makes something yoga or not? This is a question that is still open, but that, in our judgment, is not up to scientists of religion to answer, but to the yogic agents themselves who work in the yoga field in which they operate. If

there is an essence in yoga, perhaps it is its perseverance in continuing to exist as a living spirituality and in becoming more practised.

### The New Paradigm of Yogas Without the Indian Matrix

The five Brazilian yoga approaches, therefore, without an Indian matrix, are the fruit of a secondary perspective of modern schools among Latin Americans. The primary perspective of Latin American yoga approaches came from four Europeans and one Chilean—Léo Costet, Cesar Della Rosa, Serge Raynaud, and Benjamin Guzman—already discussed in another work (cf. Simões 2018).

Yogas in Brazil might have not been able to obtain the identity strength of maintaining yoga and could have been diluted among so many other forms of new spiritual therapy, such as Reiki, Tai-Chi Chuan, and others; but that did not happen. These yogas were organized in their self-organized complexities and developed their *Brazilian yogas lifestyle*. We aimed to demonstrate that the Brazilian yogas described here did not establish themselves by appropriating India culturally, but by organizing themselves spiritually in a way that is deviating not only from *both Patanjali-Yoga* and *Hatha-Yoga*, but also from the modern Yogic schools of the Indian matrix.

The difference, however, lies in the fact that Brazilian yogas presented here do not follow traditional beliefs and practices, they innovate. Importantly, that does not delegitimise them. Stark and Bainbridge's theory of religion makes it legitimate to think of contemporary yogas and modern yogas as *New Spiritual Movements*. While in the examples of Brazilian (or contemporary) yogas, these deviations break with tradition, the modern yogas deviations maintain traditional beliefs and practices (Stark and Bainbridge 2018, p. 159).

We realise that yogic originality, in cultures far from the Hindu canopy and its priests, develops its own and self-organized processes of legitimisation as yoga from meetings with native religious experts. The Brazilian yogas presented here and many other yogas that were born outside the Hindu world are not continuities of Indian traditions as one might think regarding the modern yogas of Iyengar, Sivananda, or Kavalayananda. That is, the so-called contemporary yogas, as presented in the Brazilian case, do not maintain traditional Indian beliefs and practices (Natha, Hindu, Tantric, or Sikhi). They, therefore, should be understood as deviant yogas, but not "inauthentic". They have their own internal logics that interact with the social, political, economic, and religious realities that surround them.

What we seek, in an embryonic way here, is not the question of proving the legitimacy of yogas with or without an Indian matrix but understanding that it is impossible to evaluate international deviant yogas or even disregard them. It is changing the paradigm of yogas. The "authenticity" category is no longer valid within the current scope.

Now, here established are the rudiments of a global yogic socioreligious structure (in progress), as the issue of "authentic" or "inauthentic" yogas loses its strength to a "definition" of yoga that fits the yogas of any historical time. This is because we include a religious tension of our own, with its own actors generating new spiritual movements and the search to maintain, exchange, and create their yogic spiritual goods in the various societies in which yoga was established since the beginning of the twentieth century.

## Declarations

**Conflict of Interest** The author declares no competing interests.

## References

- Alter J (2004) *Yoga in modern India: the body between science and philosophy*. Princeton University Press, New Jersey
- Apolloni R (2004) Entre a cruz e o asana: respostas cristãs à popularização do Yoga no Ocidente. *Revista De Estudos Da Religião* 3:50–73
- Askegaard S, Eckhardt GM (2012) Glocal yoga: re-appropriation in the Indian consumptionscape. *Mark Theory* 12(1):45–60
- Baier K (2016) Theosophical orientalism and the structures of intercultural transfer: annotations on the appropriation of the cakras in early theosophy. In: Chajes J, Huss B (eds) *Theosophical appropriations: esotericism, kabbalah, and the transformation of traditions*. Ben-Gurion University of the Negev Press, Beer Sheva, pp 309–354
- Bartholomew O (2020) Investigation of the “cultural appropriation” of Yoga. *International Research-Scape Journal* 7(2)
- Birch J (2014) Rajayoga: The reincarnations of the kink of all yogas. *Int J Hindu Studies* 17(3):401–444
- Caruso V (2012) *Hermógenes: Vida, Yoga, Fé e Amor*. Bodigaya, São Paulo
- Conrad C, Vanes H (2014) *The business of yoga: a step-by-step guide for marketing and maximizing profits for yoga studios and instructors*. Editora Let'sDo Yoga.com.
- Deleuze G, Guattari F (2000) *Mil Platôs: Capitalismo e Esquizofrenia (Vol.1)*, Editora 34. Rio de Janeiro
- De Michelis E (1995) Contemporary Hatha Yoga in the UK. *Journal of Contemporary Religion* 10(2):193–5
- De Michelis E (2004) *A history of modern yoga: Patañjali and western esotericism*. Continuum Books, London
- De Michelis E (2008) Modern yoga. In: Singleton M, Byrne J. (ed) *Yoga in the modern world*. Routledge, New York
- Derosé LSA (1996) *Hiperorgasmo, uma via, tântrica*. Martin Claret, Rio de Janeiro
- Derosé LSA (2006) *Quando é preciso der forte: Um aprendizado sobre superação, determinação e sucesso*. Ed. Nobel, São Paulo
- Derzett M (2015) *Relax! A practical guide to profound relaxation for the body and mind using the restorative method*. São Paulo: Ed. Matrix, São Paulo
- Derzett M (2016) The power of rest: the effects of relaxation, single pointed techniques and affection, capable of healing body, mind and heart diseases. Ed.Matrix, São Paulo
- Derzett M (2019) *Embrace! The miracle of the timeless hug: meditative and rest practices through the restorative method and by the interbeing order*. Ed.Matrix. São Paulo
- Duarte LF, Carvalho END (2005) Religião e psicanálise no Brasil contemporâneo: novas e velhas Weltanschauungen. *Revista de Antropologia* 48(2):473–500
- Eliade M (2001) *Yoga: imortalidade e Liberdade*. Palas Athena, São Paulo
- Farah G (2017) The neoliberal yogi and the politics of yoga. *Political Theory* 45(6):772–800
- Freire P (2011) *Pedagogia do oprimido*, 50a edn. Paz e Terra Ltda, Rio de Janeiro
- Godrej F (2017) The Neoliberal Yogi and the Politics of Yoga. *Political Theory* 45(6):772–800. <https://doi.org/10.1177/0090591716643604>
- Greschat HJ (2005) *O que é ciência da religião*. Ed. Paulinas, São Paulo
- Guggenbühl C (2008) Mircea Eliade and Surendranath Dasgupta: the history of their encounter; Dasgupta's life, his philosophy and his works on yoga; a comparative analysis of Eliade's chapter on Patanjali's Yogasutra and Dasgupta's Yoga as Philosophy and Religion. Available via [http://crossasirepository.ub.uniheidelberg.de/149/1/Guggenbuehl\\_Eliade\\_DasGupta\\_Gesamt2.pdf](http://crossasirepository.ub.uniheidelberg.de/149/1/Guggenbuehl_Eliade_DasGupta_Gesamt2.pdf). Accessed 17 Jan 2022
- Hermógenes J (2005) *Yoga: um caminho para Deus*. Nova Era, Rio de Janeiro

- Jain A (2014) *Selling yoga: from counterculture to pop culture*. Oxford University Press, New York
- Jain A (2020) *Peace Love Yoga: the politics of global spirituality*. Oxford University, New York
- Labate BC (2004) *A reinvenção do uso da ayahuasca nos centros urbanos*. Mercado de Letras/ Fapesp, Campinas/São Paulo
- Luz M (2019) *Natural, racional, social: razão médica e racionalidade moderna [recurso eletrônico]*. Fiocruz: Edições Livres, Rio de Janeiro
- Maia G (2018) *Hinduísmo Transnacional: Tradição e brasilidade no método do caminho do coração de Sri Prem Baba*. Dissertação de Mestrado, *Programa de Pós- Graduação em Ciência da Religião* da Universidade Federal de Juiz de Fora
- Mallinson J, Singleton M (2017) *Roots of yoga*. Penguin Classics, London
- Muñoz A (2016) *Radiografía del hathayoga*. El Colegio de México, Ciudad de México
- Muñoz A (2020) *Yoga in Latin America: a critical overview*. In: O'Brien-Kope K (ed) *Newcombe S. Routledge handbook of yoga and meditation studies*, London, pp 634–660
- Muñoz A, Martino G (2019) *Historia Mínima de el Yoga*. El Colegio de México, Ciudad de México
- Nogueira PLR (2013) *O funk do Rio de Janeiro: identidade étnica, cultural e social na Baixada Fluminense*. *Periferia* 5(2):113–130
- Newcombe S (2009) *The Development of Modern Yoga: A Survey of the Field*. *Religion Compass* 3:986–1002
- Newcombe S, Deslippe P (2020) *Anglophone yoga and meditation outside of Indian*. In: O'Brien-Kope K (ed) *Newcombe S. Routledge handbook of yoga and meditation Studies*, London, pp 662–691
- O'Brien-Kop K, Newcombe S (2020). In: O'Brien-Kope K (ed) *Newcombe S. Routledge handbook of yoga and meditation studies*, London, pp 30–47
- Sanches RL, (2014) *Curar o corpo, salvar a alma: as representações do Yoga no Brasil*. Dissertação de Mestrado, *Programa de Pós-Graduação em História da Faculdade de Ciências Humanas da Universidade Federal de Dourados (UFGD)*.
- Schmalzl L, Jeter P, Khalsa BS (2021) *The psychophysiology of yoga: characteristics of the main componentes and review of research studies*. In: O'Brien-Kop K (ed) *Newcombe S. Routledge handbook of yoga and meditation studies*, London, pp 821–857
- Shoji R, Usarski F (2014) *Japanese new religions in Brazil and the dynamics of globalization versus glocalization*. *Journal of Religion in Japan* 3(2–3):247–269
- Simões R (2011) *Fisiologia da Religião: uma análise sobre vários estudos da prática religiosa do Yoga*. Dissertação de Mestrado, *Programa de Pós-Graduação em Ciência da Religião da Pontifícia Universidade Católica de São Paulo*
- Simões R (2015) *O papel dos klesas no contexto moderno do ioga no Brasil: uma investigação sobre os possíveis deslocamentos da causa do mal e da produção de novos bens de salvação por meio da fisiologia biomédica ocidental*. Tese de Doutorado, *Programa de Pós-Graduação em Ciência da Religião da Pontifícia Universidade Católica de São Paulo*
- Simões R (2017) *O ioga e os seus novos bens de salvação: relaxamento espiritual e Homeostase Divina*. *NUMEM: Revista de estudos e pesquisa da religião*. 20(1):109–136
- Simões R (2018) *Early Latin American esoteric yoga as a new spirituality in the first half of the twentieth century*. *International Journal of Latin American Religions* 2:290–314
- Simões R (2020) *Yoga Malandro: sofrimento, liberdade e outras ficções*. Ed.Dialética, São Paulo
- Singleton M (2010) *Yoga body*. Oxford University Press, New York
- Singleton M, Byrne J (2008) *Yoga in the modern world*. Routledge, New York
- Stark R, Bainbridge S (2018) *Uma teoria da religião.*: Paulinas, São Paulo
- Stern F, Guerriero S (orgs) (2020) *Terapias holísticas: uma análise do sistema medico na Nova Era*. Editora da PUC-SP (online), São Paulo
- Schwind C (2015) *Tracing an American yoga: identity and cross-cultural transaction*. Electronic Theses and Dissertations. Available via: <https://digitalcommons.du.edu/etd/1048>. Accessed 02/07/22
- Viveiros de Castro E (2015) *Metafísicas canibais: elementos para uma antropologia pós-estrutural*. Ed. N-1 Edições, São Paulo