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## **Intangible Cultural Heritage, India and Yoga**

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**Antonio Marcelo Jackson F. Da Silva: PhD in Political Science at University Research Institute of Rio de Janeiro (IUPERJ) and Professor at the Federal University of Ouro Preto, Brazil;**

**José Medeiros da Silva: PhD in Political Science at São Paulo University and Professor at Zhejiang International Studies University, China.**

**Professor Antonio Marcelo Jackson:** Hello and welcome everyone, we are now starting another International Forum of Ideas and this time we have a connection among Aracaju in Sergipe state, Brazil, Hangzhou in the People's Republic of China and, exceptionally today, not Ouro Preto but Niterói in Rio de Janeiro state, Brazil. Our guest today is Professor Janaína Cardoso de Mello, who holds a PhD in Social History from the Federal University of Rio de Janeiro and a Post-Doctoral title in Cultural Studies from the same university, and who is now a professor in the history department of the Federal University of Sergipe. Professor José Medeiros da Silva, PhD in Political Science and Professor at Zhejiang Foreign Studies University and myself, Antonio Marcelo Jackson Ferreira da Silva, professor at the Federal University of Ouro Preto, will also follow this conversation. Today's theme is cultural heritage, Yoga, Mahadeva and India, cultural relations that permeate historiography. I will immediately concede the floor and thank Professor Janaína Cardoso de Mello for her time and participation in our International forum of Ideas.

**Professor Janaína Cardoso de Mello:** I would like to thank you all for the opportunity to be here, reuniting with my old classmate and colleague at the State University of Rio de Janeiro (UERJ) [Professor Antonio] Marcelo, and meeting Professor José Medeiros. It is amazing that technology can enable these meetings and reunions so that we can discuss cultural heritage, yoga and its benefits when it is recognized as such, and how does this recognition work. So I thank you all kindly for the possibility of being here and making these exchanges.

Approximately eight years ago, when I first came to the Federal University of Sergipe (UFS), I started working with the matter of cultural heritage and history of museology, and started going on these paths and, for two years now, I am Chair of History and Cultural Heritage at the History Department of UFS. Thus, I work with first semester students in practical and theoretical classes to broaden their horizon to work not only with the reality in Sergipe but also with Brazilian reality as a whole. That is to understand the concept of material heritage and the declarations from UNESCO, the presence and function of this institution and the tensions and conflicts over the concept. Thus, we study public policy and the notion of governance and popular participation in

the formation of concepts and cultural constructions that envelop the approval of a seal of Cultural Heritage, and particularly as a “Cultural Heritage of Humanity”.

Here at Sergipe State, we have been going through a situation with São Francisco Square at the colonial town of São Cristóvão<sup>1</sup>. There the pressures of UNESCO have to live together (even after years of the World Heritage seal) with a lack of structure, financing and investment. Looking at this process, we have to understand other realities, and I believe we have much to learn from the East on these matters. From these discussions and exchanges with my students, we decided to start working from these oriental perspectives and on Yoga, and from there came the idea of an event that is now co-organized by some Brazilian universities: the International Symposium on Oriental Affairs, that partners up the University of Paraná, UERJ and many others. I wrote a text about the relationship between heritage charters, Yoga and the whole process of recognition by UNESCO started in 2016. This paper is now available online and had numerous comments. This exchange in ideas with people from different parts of the country contributed heavily for this study and was later published in an electronic book organized by André Bueno, Dulceli [Estacheski], Everton Crema and José Maria Neto with the name “Vários Orientes (Several orients)”, edited in União da Vitória (town in Paraná State, Brazil) and published by the Historical Research Laboratory in 2017.

It was a great initiative and it bore fruit in the sense that it led to other people discussing this issue and to start thinking about the idea of Mahadeva, thinking about this tradition that sounds so distant to us, but, it is, in sum, the seeking of the feeling of peace, of liberation from suffering. Since we are currently in this post-modernity, in a moment of great stress and concerns about the economic and political life, we seem away from religiousness or an idea of spirituality or the seeking for refuge that makes us free our minds and work in body and spirit towards renovating or re-signifying ourselves as human beings. This issue has been a constant in these last years and this recognition of yoga as an ancestral tradition. This has changed our perspective and made us look more dearly towards the value of these practices and exchanges. Yoga in Brazil has grown tremendously and it is now practiced in almost all countries and, although books and publications on the theme are abundant, Indian history is still scarcely recognized in our universities (which can be quickly verified in our Ancient History classes). It is in this space that the subject “History and Cultural Heritage” aims to establish these connections, away from the “commonplace” in history and historiography that is already covered in course programmes. We have really been working on making this discussion happen.

One of the points of contention is if UNESCO’s approval of Yoga as a Immaterial Cultural Heritage was a new form of colonization, that is, an attempt of subjecting the East to the West once again. However, what is interesting is the reversal of this process, since eastern communities have been subverting UNESCO’s determinations and demanding, over the past five years, changes in the selection and seal attribution criteria for the title of material or immaterial cultural heritages of humanity. Japan has been particularly active and so has India; the amount of eastern heritages that have been submitted for UNESCO’s consideration have been forcing the institution’s evaluators to

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<sup>1</sup> São Cristóvão is a Brazilian municipality founded on the mouth of the Vaza-Barris River on January 1st, 1590, thus the fourth oldest settlement in Brazil. UNESCO has recognized the town’s São Francisco Square as World Heritage Site in 2010.

re-evaluate and even break their own analysis paradigms that were previously overly western. That is fantastic because, in a first moment, it makes UNESCO uncomfortable and it forces it out of its comfort zone to accept the unknown, which leads to the creation of new evaluation and valuation criteria that are not western: now they are also eastern and they are equal.

I believe we can escape from the hierarchy that only elevated to the title of heritage what was in the West, and conquer visibility and the power of political discourse. Due to that we see a great strength to establish new parameters coming from the East. It is very interesting to see how India, Japan and even China establishing themselves not as subjects to UNESCO, but as lead players attributing value and heritage seals to the places that are their own.

When we are talking of immaterial heritage this is even more important, for the very community needs to grant this valuation and feel referenced, feel their identity represented in that particular practice, and we can see that very strongly. It is not just a matter for political managers, but an issue that involves associations, communities. On the matter of Yoga, we can see Yoga associations meeting and defining these requirements, bringing a more horizontal governance: instead of a top-down approach with UNESCO picking and choosing what it wants as heritage. Here in Brazil, we have seen no longer the dominance of the National Institute of Historic and Artistic Heritage (IPHAN), but communities questioning and affirming: “we are the ones who are going to define what is our heritage and what we want out of it”. This also leads to alterations on the very power dynamics, leading to the creation of new dynamics.

**Professor Antonio Marcelo Jackson:** the amount of information in your speech is unbelievable, because you are dealing with many topics at once. Professor José Medeiros, who is a Brazilian living, for many years now, in China, also faces this situation. Also because Hangzhou is also listed as a World Heritage. Thus, José Medeiros, the floor is now yours.

**Professor José Medeiros:** Firstly, it is a great pleasure to participate in this fifth edition of the International Forum of Ideas, our first in 2018, now with the participation of Doctor Janaína Cardoso, who honours us by sharing her reflexions. Professor Cardoso highlighted many aspects that I believe to be intellectually intriguing. First of all, the matter of power games and the definition of relevance for individuals and communities. What does it mean to be historic?

I have noticed that the great task for Brazilian people is to include themselves in the history of nation-building, appropriating themselves from this historical process. This is still not done on the ideational level. If we do not perceive ourselves as relevant subjects in the historical process, we are always in the outside of history looking in. Thus, we are qualified only in general categories, such as ‘The People’ and so on... Thus, we, concrete people that walk along and leave marks, soon disappear.

Now coming back to the matter of acquired knowledge and consolidated cultural practices that are cut through generations – such as Yoga in India and Tai’Ji’Quan (太极拳, anglicised as Tai Chi Chuan) in China –, when this knowledge is perceived as relevant both as collective and individual identities, it then finds the means for its continuity over time. There comes a moment when these practices are perceived also by the popular conscience, gaining a new dynamism for its propagation and continuity.

I believe Professor Janaína is bringing somehow, when she, for example, offers, in her University, a discipline that promotes the interaction between her students and certain traditional cultural knowledge that exist in given communities. In this fashion, what was already valuable is now perceived as such by other social groupings, making for new dynamics among communities and human groupings that are interested in diverse human culture. Professor Janaína provides us with an example of a path to be followed and multiplied by our universities.

About the matter of the Eastern hemisphere, I somewhat believe, with honourable exceptions, that Brazilian universities and many of our main thinkers have forgot that this vast territory even exists. When we understand that more than half of mankind inhabits the East, studying this hemisphere should be common in our universities. Unfortunately, it still is not. This discourse of mankind that does not consider it in its totality, is an incomplete discourse. Why do I select a certain content to be taught? Why do we only reflect about a certain part of the globe in detriment of others? Professor Janaína brings us around to think about these issues.

The more universalize ourselves, the more we are complete. Brazil needs to be this part that embraces the whole. Now more than ever, Brazil needs to comprehend that, so it is not imprisoned by smaller issues. That being said, I am happy to see that, based on Professor Janaína's talk, that good seeds are being planet in Brazil.

**Professor Antonio Marcelo Jackson:** Thank you for the words, José. Janaína, do you want to say something based on what Professor José said, or do you prefer to wait for my comment? It is entirely up to you.

**Professor Janaína Cardoso de Mello:** I would like to speak about these matters that we have been dealing with.

When working with heritage charters, people highlight the Athens Charter and the Paris Charter that were crafted in the beginning of the 20<sup>th</sup> century, but forget about the third extremely important heritage document that was organized exactly in New Delhi, namely the “Recommendation on International Principles Applicable to Archaeological Excavations”, signed at the 9<sup>th</sup> session of UNESCO. From this document the matter of archaeological heritage, collection creation and educational actions was discussed, aiming precisely to think about the Eastern Hemisphere. This territory was important for Western archaeologists and researchers, but these were taking eastern material to western museums. That is, not necessarily valuing the place where the excavation and prospection took place. Thus, many countries have been pressuring great museums to return these pieces, they claim to be the rightful and true owners and act to repatriate these goods and their management. This also figures in the new agenda, that consist not only in cultural, but also political discussions, because we know that possession of these objects, mainly the ones that came from the East, has deviated the influx of tourists from the East to the Louvre in Paris or the museums in London. We have gains from tickets, lodging, circulation and food for these tourists, and the East, the “supplier” of this material is getting absolutely nothing from that, not even 10%. This perception also prompted reflexion for countries in Africa, who have been making demands to Portugal and other countries who participated on this process of colonialism and imperialism. This has been creating a new perception of guarding these goods. It is very interesting to see the contestation of these guarding spaces. The main contestation is not only coming from official representatives, presidents, prime-ministers and the like, but also

from an organized civilian population. This is fundamental for me, this conscience that is cultural and eminently political.

**Professor Antonio Marcelo Jackson:** Certainly, Janaína. Coming from your previous speech, when you talk about artefact management... I remember, for example, at the National Museum of the Federal University of Rio de Janeiro, that has the biggest collection of Egyptian artefacts in the world after the Cairo Museum (Egito). Some years ago the Egyptian government voiced some stark criticism about the custody of these pieces saying: “look, if you do not have the proper conditions to store these items, give them back, please” – I am just naming this one case. Returning to the original point, Janaína, when you talk about the actions put forward by UNESCO and how they deal with cultural heritage, and how this could be a new form of colonization, it immediately brought to mind a book that we have read during our Bachelor’s degree: Edward Said’s *Orientalism: western conceptions of the orient*. This book made a big impression in my formative years because, in essence, it argues that the very word Orient is branding the Eastern hemisphere as ‘the other’. Thus, one is branding oneself as the centre, and everything that is not this one is the other, and this other is now known as ‘the Orient’. This Orient that encompasses India, China, Japan, and even Africa is not geographic, but ideologically, being carved firstly as discourse. Said’s work is remarkably interesting. I think about these discourses and, free-riding a bit on José’s speech, every discourse is foremost and necessarily political. This recent crisis, for example, among United States, Israel and UNESCO, is symptomatic. That is, by the time you have myriad societies from the so-called ‘Orient’ claiming their own cultural values as Immaterial Heritages and their buildings as Material Heritages from the same world, this space is now occupied and then the US and Israeli governments decide to criticize and withdraw from UNESCO. They ceased to finance the institution as if they were saying: “listen, now I am starting to dislike playing ball with you”. While the “game” was favourable to their side it was nice, but now it isn’t anymore. Coming back to Said’s book, it is as if this Orient ceased to be a western conception, and then the west lost interest. It is clear that this discourse is no longer sustainable. This is even clearer when it comes to defining what it is to be a “good heritage”. So, what would consist a good cultural heritage? The western one.

Moving on to geopolitics, we all know what place China occupies in the globe at the moment; the Chinese growth and the previous growth materialized by Japan meant a shift in global markets, and moved the centre of the globe from its original place on the Atlantic Ocean.

Thus, without losing our train of thought and returning to the information you brought to us sooner, your work, Janaína, as a Professor at the Federal University of Sergipe is remarkable, as was highlighted by Professor José Medeiros, and of crucial importance. I am thinking about these communities’ use of technology. It is curious that this technology was created firstly as a controlling mechanism, and is now used by communities that were held hostage by this process and start to cherish themselves regardless of the current status of the system, regardless of the fact of public policy being able or not to take a certain demand into account. For example, in Rio de Janeiro city there is a way of singing and dancing called ‘Jongo’, which comes from the Banto African societies (currently Congo, Angola and Mozambique). This ethnic group massively inhabited the regions of Rio de Janeiro, Minas Gerais and São Paulo states, in addition to a small part of Bahia state and a small part of the Brazilian Northeast macro-

region. As a cultural consequence of Banto Society's presence in Rio is that now we have two places known for their excellence in the Jongo rhythm: 'Morro da Serrinha', on the neighbourhood of Madureira, and 'Morro do Salgueiro', close to the neighbourhood of Tijuca. At Morro da Serrinha, there was a House of Jongo, which received financial support from the Mayor's office of Rio de Janeiro. At present, however, the city is managed by a mayor supported by evangelical religious groups and will not support anything that is not connected to their religious strand. What did he do? Removed support from the House of Jongo. At any other point in time, this place would simply wither and no one would know about it, or, if they did, it would be already too late. However, the House of Jongo now has a Facebook page, a Youtube channel and so on... myriad resources to make its voice heard. They then started to criticize the Mayor's decision and are now receiving support because of this technology.

I do not know if this debate fits within the discipline you teach, Janaína. But having said that, I would like to give you the floor once again.

**Professor Janaína Cardoso de Mello:** just so we have an idea of quantity, in 2011 we had 213 elements that were applying for the seal of immaterial cultural heritage; put of those, 96 came from the Asia-Pacific region. Thus, almost half of those were countering the fixed idea of western centrality or majority. From the 90 traditions that now detain the seal of immaterial heritage from UNESCO, 26 are from the Asia-Pacific. This is data from 2011. If we update this data, I am sure that there are going to be many more. If we think about the music, the dancing and the ancient languages that have been seeking this visibility, this seal as a cultural heritage as political actors, as said by Professor José Medeiros, this shows this will towards a lead role in global debates. When the matter of technology came up – and I have been working with that since 2009, when I started working at UFS. In 2010 I started to get closer to technology and it has been almost six years as a member in the Coordinating body for Innovation and Technology Transfer (CINTECC-UFS). There I started to develop some projects such as: firstly, a quite timid elaboration of blogs and websites with the purpose of building databases about cultural heritages, aiming to organize and systematize a tool for students to use. For two years now I have also been going towards the path of development of apps, now with two proposals dealing with the matter off heritages. The Maptour, a tourism app, with the purpose of mapping Brazilian airports. At the moment, six Brazilian airports are directing and mapping products which are certified as a geographic patrimony. There are 13 Brazilian products that are produced culturally, such as the Cerro Cheese from Minas Gerais State. The idea then is to map a route that will promote a system favouring communities individuality and their collective actions. In many cases when you have this very successful geographic indication, public policy is soon to follow, such as a case – in the South – of Vinhedos Valley. Also here in Sergipe State with the so-called Irish Weaving in the city of Divina Pastora and the pan makers from Goiabeira. The idea is to bring visibility to these communities, so people start to link their culture to their territory through the geographic indication. Sometimes the seal of heritage has already been given to that practice by the IPHAN, but sometimes it has not. However, none of that takes away its value because the very community has already recognized it as a material heritage. The app shows the location where these communities can be found and, thus, it can eliminate the intermediary. When one buys directly from these communities it incentivizes a whole tourism

industry that supports it. The app can also show that even in places where you do not have hotels or restaurants around these communities, they are sure to be in the proximities. With that, this ceases to be merely a space, just as it was here: people came to Sergipe and bought the Irish Weaving<sup>2</sup> from Aracaju instead of going to Divina Pastora. The idea is that people know that Divina Pastora is just one hour and a half away in a bus, or forty minutes in a car. You can buy directly from people who produce it, you get to know the city and see the weavers producing it. We want to stimulate this process.

This is one of the apps I have been working on now and has received, in the past year, financing from the Itaú Cultural Observatory. Nowadays we have the capital to develop an app that goes outside the order, because we were working with open software and work with something that is much more elaborate. The second app being develop – and I believe that it will be available in August or September – is more endogenous to the state of Sergipe: we want to map all folk groups that are constantly working on cultural manifestation of traditional dances that are not necessarily in the capital Aracaju. This maps these groups and makes available their bios, videos, magazines and photographs, also bringing their timetable for rehearsals, and makes their contact information available so they can perform in fairs and parties. The idea is to include them in the dynamics of the cultural economy and, mainly, to make them the managers of their own product, so we have been producing a lot of research. For example, at the Festival in Laranjeiras in January, we have collected data; our interns have taken advantage of this process to interview the grand masters of these expeditions, most of them already elderly. These are registers of people that we do not know how long they have in this Earth, and we can broadcast their knowledge with the proper technology. These are traditional groups that were not using any resource and that are now objects and lead actors of technology because, with that, other states and other countries can contact them directly so they can use their images. They can thus make this exchange and enrich their immaterial heritage.

An ongoing debate in academic circles with historians, anthropologists, sociologists and so on is if immaterial heritages need to be in this creative economy, cultural economy circuit. It needs to be a factor for the economic sustainability for those who are producing it. It is no use to think of this heritage in a social-idealistic manner: “people do it because they like it, because they love doing it and have the obligation to keep the culture alive without earning anything, because if start getting paid this is effectively the commodification of culture”. In current society, we see young people abandoning their tradition to seek for other means that will be better economically. Thus, if you include cultural and material processes into the circuit of the cultural economy, when they are their own managers, they establish the price, divide the wealth and favour the communitarianism and empowering of said community. This is a way to keep this material heritage alive. I believe that some other countries have already realized that and Brazil is still crawling.

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<sup>2</sup> “Irish Weaving” is a form of weaving which is typically connected to the aristocracy, but that was appropriated by the people from Sergipe. A generally female activity, the weaving consists in manifold shapes crafted in silky, elongated and flat threads in the middle as a support and with fine needle-point weaving throughout. It is considered a heritage and a trademark of the State of Sergipe.

Coming back to the matter of the East here in Brazil, I believe that the political and economical advancement of China will be very important for this Sino-Brazilian partnership and for our knowledge of China. China is not anymore the other, but it is becoming a partner. As partner, we need to get to know their culture so we can build a relationship through dialogue.

Portugal has realized this and has already established this dialogue. Here in Brazil we have to look to this scenario and I believe that Universities have a major role to play here. We are training the new generations in manifold areas of knowledge so they can dialogue in the building of this new universe that is now unfolding. If we sacrifice one generation, we will be abetting the exclusion of this group, and then who will be able to dialogue and to build a basis for collective interests and action? These matters need to be discussed in universities. I really hope that this discipline of History and Cultural Heritage carries on. We are now going through a refurbishing of our pedagogical policy and I have been fighting so that this subject is kept in the curriculum. And I also want it to be in the first semester, because that is when students first come to the university and are eager. They are already interested in discussing these matters and start to recognize that heritage is not only what is recognized as heritage, but is what gives them a sense of belonging, of identity, of reference. This has made me very happy, also because students from other courses are also interested by the course.

I am already in my fourth class in this discipline and in all calls, more than 60 students have taken this class. And not only History majors (because for them it is mandatory), but I have had students requiring additional vacancies from the majors of Tourism, Archaeology, Architecture, Arts, Theatre and so on. People from different majors are expressing their interest in get to know this matter of heritage.

I make it a point to work with India, China, the East, Japan, the heritage charters and to show that, despite tensions and conflicts, people have constructed a new dynamics of thought about heritage, making guarding institutions, or the ones that have the official word, rethink their position to take into account these new demands and this new agenda. It has been very interesting to see this because it gives us the hope that this new generation will also walk this path, researching the matter of heritage and fighting for the protection, treasuring and development of their communities via public policy and governance. Mainly here in Northeast Brazil, we have an enormous culture, but very few things have heritage seals. Talking only about geographic indications, if we think that Sergipe has only one, that is, the “Irish Weaving”, it makes us wonder how many more products could be geographically indicated.

Brazil, as a continental country, has very few geographic indications for its wonderful cultural products. This is a concern that has already been addressed for ages in Europe and is also noticeable in China and Japan, with major advancements for geographical indications for traditional and cultural products, and not only for agricultural ones. I believe this to be the way.

**Professor Antônio Marcelo Jackson:** José, the floor is yours.

**Professor José Medeiros da Silva:** Professor Janaína’s talk gives us a lot to think about.

I recently saw a Brazilian movie called Nise: the heart of madness, which was broadcast in China by the National Cinema Network. So, I went to the movie theatre in my city,

Hangzhou, to see the movie. Later, the journalist João Pimenta, international correspondent from the News Agency Lusa (a Portuguese news agency) in Beijing called me so I could comment<sup>3</sup>. One of the opinions I emitted in the interview is that the relationship between China and Brazil could not revolve merely around Soy Beans and Iron Ore. It was necessary also to think about culture in its economic perspective, such as what Professor Janaína just said.

Here in China we perceive that the first movement so that a cultural-historical good is nationally or internationally recognized is that it is locally treasured. A local cuisine, a dance and any other cultural manifestation is rarely perceived by the broad public if it is not valued locally. Only after these local efforts, it can enter the dynamics of cultural consumption.

It is observed in China that the more society materially develops, the more cultural goods are appreciated. In truth, this is a consolidated phenomenon.

For example, me and Rafael Lima travelled to India to consume culture. We visited Daman, Diu and Goa because of its culture and History. Because there and in Brazil, the Portuguese watched, left their marks, even on the way people speak. We know that this existed and was relevant. We had this information.

Why did I go to Hiroshima? In addition, from Hiroshima I brought some small rock over what it exploded the first atomic bomb? I am taking this stone to my library-museum in Cana Brava, in the municipality of Pureza at the State of Rio Grande do Norte. I am taking these stones there to stimulate children to think about human history and about peace.

When I was a child with around eight years old, I read a book about the first atomic bomb in Hiroshima and that left me impressed and with the will of visiting that place. Next week I am going to Japan once again with my wife. This time I want to visit Nagasaki and also bring, from there, one or two rocks to the Garden of Science. And also because Nagasaki was practically created by the Portuguese.

At the moment our minds appropriate information it enhances its possibility of interacting with history and with cultural manifestations that come from these spaces.

Professor Antônio commented the question of the East and the West. “*Who is the East?*”. I believe that our East is right now telling itself who it is. One thing is *who I am* as told by the other. This is very different from *who I am* as told by myself.

I believe that there is something new afoot for mankind, since groupings and individuals are now perceiving and affirming their own citizenship and dignity. The legitimation of this affirmation, when another gives he stamp and says that this has value, is just a consequence. You already have the conscience of your value as a human being, of your dignity, regardless if this is perceived or not by others. It is obvious that when we have this perception we value the other and recognize their value.

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<sup>3</sup> <https://www.dn.pt/lusa/interior/reportagem-brasileiros-na-china-celebram-primeiro-filme-do-brasil-nos-cinemas-chineses-9080456.html> (text written in Portuguese language).

Professor Janaína's speech made me think about a complementary movement for a different outlook towards local and external cultural manifestations.

For example, we can look outside and interact with other peoples and cultures so, if possible, we can absorb some of their practices that can be incorporated in our daily lives for our own human development. When we get to know, for instance, Yoga and appropriate it, its cultural value is also ours. This line of thinking can be broadened for traditional foods, sports, dances etc...

Another movement is to look towards our surroundings and to ourselves. We can see we have cultural and historical values that are there to be cherished and transmitted.

This branch of economics is extremely relevant, that is, to think culture also from an economic point of view. We need to be careful because, a historical knowledge or a cultural manifestation cannot depend exclusively on the supports of public power or a specific company. Society cannot leave something so valuable on other people's hands.

Preciousness needs to be cared. The first step is to work social conscience so it appropriates from its cultural and historical gems. Put in another way, we cannot let what is valuable die because of a temporary setting such as wars, droughts, lack of investment etc... In this sense, we need an educational process that will make people see value. From there, they can mobilize and create mechanisms to continue what is culturally valuable.

This is the great challenge. In this aspect, Brazil is in a very elementary phase. We also need to be clear about our limitations as a nation because, our people is still very disperse about these issues.

For example, in the region of Touros, my hometown, me and my family are developing the Aziz Ab'Sáber Garden of Science, a sociocultural experiment that aims to stimulate the local youth to appropriate from their history and interact with other cultural manifestations that happen elsewhere in the world.

**Professor Antonio Marcelo Jackson:** It so happens that Professor José Medeiros has been in China for almost ten years and, with his own resources, is developing this project in his community of Cana Brava in the township of Pureza in the State of Rio Grande do Norte. José dreams that, one day, we can have a forum that will be taped there, live from the Garden of Science. What he was citing just now is a dream we share with him.

**Professor José Medeiros da Silva:** We need to mentally appropriate ourselves from the world and its historical and cultural treasures. This is a great task for the Brazilian people, namely, to appropriate themselves, care for and transmit these traditional and relevant knowledge. Of course the first step is for this knowledge to be perceived. For instance, 20 kilometres away from the Garden of Science we have the Landmark Beach (currently located in the municipality of São Miguel do Gostoso). There it was found the Touros' Colonial Landmark, affixed there by the Kingdom of Portugal in the year of 1501. It is a relevant historical finding, and was listed as heritage by the IPHAN. The

monument was taking to the Wise Men<sup>4</sup> Fortress in Natal. But the beach is right there, close to many schools and smaller municipalities. However, I do not know if the schools around this landmark have been taking advantage of it. I just know that, when I studied there I was never taken to this beach to appreciate – in loco – such an important part of Brazilian history. Only years later, when I was already an adult I perceived the relevance of that place.

In my recent visit to Portugal with my wife we went to Braga to visit Paulo Rodrigues, a friend who is also a Professor at Zhejiang International Studies University. When we got there he said: “*Look, here in the museum is the Cross from the First Mass celebrated in Brazil*”. I was very excited and we went quickly to the museum to take a look. Although there are doubts on whether that object is in fact the Cross of the First Mass, the mere possibility of it being so put me in a quite special state of euphoria. It was as if I had just received a great present. The same happened to my relationship with the Touros’ Landmark. However these sensations took place because I had already appropriated from these objects in my imaginary. This needs to be done especially when it comes to young people.

Well, Professor Janaína, I believe that it is necessary for us to work in manifold directions, but always joining forces. A good direction is the one you are currently trailing, that is, the mapping of traditional cultural practices and the development of apps that will facilitate their finding by other people. In this sense, involving academic institutions, companies, the public power, communities and so on is extremely laudable and important.

However, it is necessary to explore other paths. What I develop in the Garden of Science aims to enable the appropriation of what is historically valuable and it is done independently from the participation of governments or other institution’s financial aid. There is knowledge which is given, but are not perceived as important for the strengthening of citizens. When we draw a world map on the wall of the Garden of Science, we are symbolically appropriating the world. We are offering new possibilities for visiting children, who can now locate and perceive other spaces. There one can, for instance, locate Portuguese speaking spaces like Macau, China, Goa, Daman, Diu, East Timor or African Portuguese speaking countries.

These examples make possible for children in our poor communities to expand their imaginary and broaden their knowledge about the world.

I believe that is it. There are manifold forms of special knowledge produced by our universities and that need to get out of our campuses so they can be appreciated and understood by people, and that is one example presented here by Professor Janaína. I have also been talking with Professor Antonio about how the Forum is also a step in this direction. It is something new that we have to cherish and amplify. The interaction in our networks will create the strength we need to appropriate from the knowledge that need to be appropriated.

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<sup>4</sup> The name of the fortress in Portuguese (Forte dos Reis Magos) refers to the Three Biblical Magi (translator’s note).

**Professor Antonio Marcelo Jackson:** Then I present you with a few words so you can close up our chat. I would like you to finish by addressing the following question: taking what you said that Sergipe has only one recognized immaterial heritage, are we not also a part of the Orient? Thinking of Orient in the sense of Edward Said, his concept applied to our country. I think about the Garden of Science, done by José in Rio Grande do Norte, that is, are we not also Orient? Up to what point are we not foreigners in our own land? This is a big question. I thus give you the floor back, so you can make the closing remarks in our Forum.

**Professor Janáina Cardoso de Mello:** The only heritage that is geographically indicated here by the National Institute of Industrial Property (INPI) is the Irish Weaving. It is also listed as heritage by the IPHAN and is registered as immaterial heritage. We have some heritages that are only recognized by the State. For example the “queijadas<sup>5</sup>” made by Dona Marieta Santos were listed as heritage via state legislation. When it comes to city squares, we have one, which is listed by UNESCO as world heritage, which is the Saint Francis Square in São Cristóvão. Besides, we have other heritages listed by IPHAN: the Laranjeiras Historic Centre and other spaces. But they are still very few.

In fact, we still live and have to learn a lot about the matter of heritages. The past decades were marked by greater conscience that the claim of being listed as heritage has to come from the community itself so it makes sense. This must not come from the top-down, as it did in the 1930, when we had listing of material heritage and total disregard for immaterial heritage. When it comes to matters of spaces that pertaining to the age of colonization, such as spaces of power and catholic churches, for example, this trend was subverted (with the State of Minas Gerais being particularly relevant for this process). From the year 2000, with the UNESCO Conference on Immaterial Heritage and the definition of this concept, we started to see this kind of heritage being valued by edicts. The groups that are producing this immaterial heritage (the concept of know-how)<sup>6</sup>, mainly dance groups or folklore groups are starting to participate in said edicts. They started to separate from the matter of political power, which was always asking for votes in exchange for financing. Here in the northeast – and I believe Professor Medeiros knows this quite well – these groups were given new uniforms since they, when campaigning begun, danced with T-Shirts favouring one mayoral or state government candidate who had favoured them with public funding.

For the part 10 years, there was a change in this system, in the sense these groups started to be systematized, and acquired their own registry as groups to be able to compete in public edicts and open competitions. Universities started to come closer, helping them on how to craft proposals to acquire this funding through open competition. Thus, the funding that now is getting to them is no longer a donation, but their own conquest. They cease to own favours to public managers.

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<sup>5</sup> Queijada is a sweet made mostly in Portugal and based on cheese. In Sergipe, these are made with flour, coconut, butter, milk and sugar.

<sup>6</sup> The concept ‘saber-fazer’ in Portuguese has to do with “knowing how to do” something... know-how is probably the closest translation (Translator’s note).

We had very good public policy. Unfortunately, the current juncture Brazil is facing has made much of what was done impossible. We are now going backwards. However, over the past 10 years a lot was discussed on matters of national policies for culture. The 10-year plans, as Professor José was saying, are important so we are not hostages of political parties, or isolated figures. Cultural policy needs to be a plan of the state, and not the project of one government in power. In that fashion, discontinuity can be deleterious in this process.

With this scenario, many regions have empowered. We had the elaboration of municipal and state conferences on cultural public policy-making. Many research groups and academic journals were launched to support these segments. So there is discussion in this sense, we see some moving forward, in past years, which was favourable to this conscience building. However us, as Brazilians, need a lot more. We are still crawling and we need to favour younger generations so that they have this knowledge.

About what was said by Professor Medeiros about young people not knowing about a cultural treasure that sits 20 minutes away from their own home, I see this every semester when I kick-off my History and Cultural Heritage class. I am from the state of Rio de Janeiro and have been living in the Brazilian northeast for 13 years, almost 9 in Sergipe alone. But I see students from Sergipe that have never been to Laranjeiras, the place where the most famous Cultural Encounter in the state takes place. So, what do I do? When the discipline takes place at the same time as this Cultural Encounter, I take them to see Laranjeiras during the event. When I am on the inverse semester, I take them to Laranjeiras anyway, because in this fashion I can map these places and drag students along with me. Sometimes, when the university does not give us the resources of a charter bus and a driver, we take the regular bus. Each person pays for their own ticket and we get there, we make it happen. In January, in the last Laranjeiras' Cultural Encounter, we created a new form of testing, since the discipline proposes new reflexions, testing needs also to be different. Much is said about technology, so when testing for my discipline they were divided into groups and went to the Cultural Encounter. They had to make 5 minute videos about the event. Then, each student would be responsible for a part of the work of editing and correlating what they were seeing with our discipline. Also, they had to talk about material and immaterial heritages in another video and post it in YouTube. They did it, and now there are at least 8 videos posted in YouTube. Students were excited to interview the Masters, filmed dances and walked around the city. These kids that generally never went to Laranjeiras fell in love with the place and wanted to come back with their families. They had become multiplying agents, firstly for themselves and later, because of YouTube and the internet, for the whole world. They start to be noticed. I am always concerned with these issues and I believe we have to start working on that. I tell you one thing: what drew me to technology, even if I am a historian is exactly because no one wanted to work with that inside the Humanities and Social Sciences.

I remember going to patent or geographic indication meetings to learn about that with people from Engineering and Technology. They looked at me awkwardly as if they were asking “what is this foreign body doing here?” or “What does she want? Go back

to the files of the 18<sup>th</sup> and 19<sup>th</sup> century”. I said no, I wanted to learn how to make blogs and websites. It is funny how things work out: from Maptour, our app about tourism and airports, another app was born, Sergipe Cult, about folklore and popular merrymakings in Sergipe’s townships.

And I am now thinking, for the next open competition, on developing an app about food. We could talk about the products that are uniquely from here. For instance, we have in Laranjeiras a very specific type of Cachaça called “Pinga de Quati”. Almost no one knows about it because the Master who produces it selects some people in the Cultural Encounter to go to his place and he serves this aphrodisiac Cachaça. There is a whole matter of wood where the beverage is stored, and this happens only once a year and for one bottle. So there are not many people, and it has become a tradition. Everybody seeks the Master’s friendship so they can go to the Cultural Encounter and drink the famous cachaça.

This gave me an idea, I said: “well, look at how much stuff we have and we do not publicize it. It would be nice for us to create a digital mapping to show the places where we have a different type of fish, such as the Aracu, or the Soft Crab, that Antonio Marcelo was talking to me about some time ago. We have so much stuff here and we fail to think of it as our traditional culture. We know the restaurant that makes and sells those plates and delicacies, but we do not talk about the history, the culture and the people who have produced it. We need to connect all that. Yes, let’s talk about seafood, but let us also talk about people who collect it. It is fine to talk about mangaba liqueur, but we should also talk about the people collecting mangaba, because they have their own association, for example. I am thinking about this third app that works with food and beverages. I always joke that the Northeast has given me about 20 kilos. When Marcelo first met me I looked like I was wasting away, super thin, I now I feel the pain of the weight I have gained. I also joke that I need to stop working with projects that involve food, because that doesn’t work. But it has been an interesting experience. I believe that we need more of that because tech people do not want to develop a product about Culture, and much less here in Sergipe. Because of Petrobras, people from technology and engineering only want to work with projects involved with this oil company. They think there is no money to be earned in cultural projects.

So I decided to learn how to do that by myself and, in the way, I found more “crazy” people who think like me. I have an intellectual partner here, who is also working with technology. Professor Priscila Maria de Jesus is a museologist and also developed the Maptour brand. She is the one who made I and I am now learning how to develop logos and brands. We are joining forces and working in this sense. We can construct a collective action.

I can say that technologies taught me and gave me another view of Academia. In History, I feel we do a solitary, individual and isolated job – I do not know if Marcelo also felt that. Now, in these projects of working with technology and heritage, I have been working inside a team. I need a team, because each person comes with aggregate knowledge and adds value to that project. It is wonderful. I do not know everything, I

have a lot to learn. Who can teach me? A colleague comes and says: “Look, you have something that interests me, can we exchange? I know how to do something, and you can give me what you know how to do”. I have exchanged a lot and we have build groups. This has been so wonderful. I no longer feel alone in my research, because these researches, now applied, are collective research. I believe that also changes the face of Universities. I believe more people needs to work this collectivism, so we can strengthen the Humanities and Social Sciences. It is of no use to stay each one in his or her respective corner and competing among themselves. We need to invest on groups, on solidarity networks and in extraterritorial networks, breaking our geographic limitations. I believe the matter of heritage to be a good path towards that and it is a path so that Brazil can be more valued, visible and recognized for its Cultural Heritage, material or immaterial. We are in the Humanities and Social Sciences and we need to grab the bull by the horns and make this happen. We cannot wait for the public power to come and do it, we need to be the lead actors in this process. Professor Medeiros’ activity in the Garden of Science is wonderful. This is the kind of initiative we need to have, initiatives that think outside the university, outside of our CV-building and publications. We need to think about the social impact not only for the community we are working on, but also for ourselves.

It is always wonderful for me to know that there is Pinga de Quati at Zé Rolinha’s house. So, while he is keeping this tradition alive, I can always drink this beverage on the Cultural Encounters and take some so my friends can appreciate it too. If this tradition dies, than what? I will also lose this as a researcher. We need to understand that this is a two-lane road, we are working so that they can produce something that will benefit the both of us. I also believe that this is the correct stance for a Professor, to break with this idea that we are now bringing knowledge to ignorant communities, because they are not. For a while now we have realized that we have underestimated them for a long time. These communities need to be treated as equal. They have PhDs in their own knowledge, and I have learned much during this time of mine in the northeast. I joke that I am not a “northeasterner”, but I am a “northeastern carioca<sup>7</sup>”. What I learn and am still learning is phenomenal. I believe that what I am now transmitting is profoundly little when compared to the richness the Northeast has brought me over the course of these years. I thank very much the communities that have opened their doors for me to, for instance, have lunch, or for anything else. My researches come from these interactions, they are born out of them. I am extremely happy to bring them and talk about them. We can talk about the queijadas from Dona Marieta, the Pinga de Quati from Zé Rolinha, and talk about them, because *they are the heritage*. I always say that it has been six years in a row going to the Laranjeiras’ Cultural Encounter in January during the Celebration of the Three Biblical Magi. And every single time I get emotional and I have tears in my eyes, and my students say: “Professor, it looks like you are from Sergipe”. In a way, I believe my soul is, and that is why I get emotional. That is so nice, and I believe we need to do this more often.

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<sup>7</sup> Carioca is the denomination for someone who was born in the state of Rio de Janeiro.

Just a reminder, when you talked about the Jongo, I remember I started to look, when I was searching for territorialities, to seek for apps that worked with the matter of popular culture, and I found an app that works with Samba and Jongo in Rio de Janeiro. The app maps locations in Rio that have Jongo and Samba presentations showing the time, place, price and how many people are admitted. The Sergipe Cult app was largely based on this Jongo app in Rio. We are taking baby steps. At some point, this will bring good results. In the long, or even medium term, we are contributing.

**Professor Antonio Marcelo Jackson:** Janaína, my friend, thank you so very much for this wonderful lecture. José, I leave to you to close our Forum and give the final regards.

**Professor José Medeiros da Silva:** Thank you. If you look at my screen here, you are going to see that there are two paintings, one from Ouro Preto and another from Japan. This one from Japan was brought from the house where the poet Matsuo Bashō (1644-1694) was born.

Professor Janaína, I leave our forum today a bit more at peace about the prospects for Brazil. I am very happy because I see that many important concepts, have already been created, and that is the most difficult part. When I see something that is mentally created for the betterment of conditions for human life, I am already satisfied, because I know this will materialize at some point in time. Thus, I see that you have already created wonderful things for the good of the country. For example, this concept of geographically indicating culture is pivotal to intensify this process of mental appropriation from our cultural treasures and also so we can value our communities and interact with them.

Our Garden Science celebrates a friend that has left us, Professor Aziz Ab'Saber (1924-2012). Professor Aziz always told us to appropriate mentally from our territory, because territory are the feet that gives us a base. Further, he said that we needed to think and analyse manifold forms of occupying these spaces, how the human being interacts with these spaces, and how knowledge is borne out of these interactions.

Today Professor Janaína gave us a good lecture and I would like to be present at the next Encounter in Laranjeiras. If not personally, maybe participating in a live online broadcast to China, so we can appreciate some minutes from this popular feast. We can gather a group here, with my Chinese students from the university to see a little bit of this cultural manifestation. Some local master could come and talk to these students. Since you are going to drink cachaça, we could perhaps make a virtual toast. Further, when I am in Brazil, I hope to get to know Laranjeiras personally. Maybe I can stimulate some teachers from my community or bring some people from the Garden to visit the feast. We need to appropriate from this. We are staring at the potential interactions and knowledge appropriation.

Thus, I would like to congratulate you again.

**Professor Antonio Marcelo Jackson:** I thank you, Janaína for everything. José, it is always a pleasure to talk to you, be it in official or unofficial form. Just to register, I believe I have not commented with Janaína. Although Professor José Medeiros has a PhD in Political Science, his whole formation is on the study of Languages and

Communication. He is a Professor of Portuguese Language at the Zhejiang International Studies University, which means that this broadcasting would be actually fantastic. For example, broadcasting the popular feast in Sergipe for some Portuguese Language students at China. This would be an event that I would like to participate somehow. It would definitely be extraordinary. Again, many thanks Janaína. We are now ending our International Forum of Ideas. Thank you all!