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Entering the Black Box: Flusser and Indian Philosophy

1. Introduction

Vilém Flusser as a philosopher and media theorist is quite well known in Western academic circles, but the relationship of his thought towards Indian Philosophy has hardly been characterized or understood. What was his personal approach to Yoga, and how did it influence his writings? Due to the lack of earlier research and bibliography about such topics, the aim of this paper is precisely this: to open the black box of the Eastern Wisdom and unpack the subtle links between Flusser and Indian Philosophy.

For that, we will examine Flusser's books *The History of the Devil* and *Vampyroteuthis Infernalis*, his correspondences with Alex Bloch, Dora Ferreira da Silva and his Yoga teacher, as well as his other references to Yoga Philosophy, Vedic Literature, and Zen Buddhism in order to gain a perspective on the way how Flusser related his thought and life with the 'experimental science' of Yoga (from a Western point of view).

In many of his texts, Flusser's ways of linking mind with the technical media seem to draw on a yogic toolset. Especially his early works, such as the *Unto the Third and Fourth Generation* (2017a), *The History of the Devil* (2010), *On Doubt* (2014a), and even *Into the Universe of Technical Images* (2011a), present some clues about how much the dialectics of his thought is borrowed from Indian Philosophy.

In the first part of this paper, we will try to summarize the possible sources Flusser might have used in forming his thought about Indian Philosophy. Then we will show how he implemented and adapted these sources in his own Flusserian way using concrete evidence and examples from his texts. Moreover, we will also try to examine his personal relationships with the subject by analyzing parts of his correspondence.

2. Flusser's possible sources on Indian Philosophy

Vilém Flusser and Alex Bloch were close friends in Flusser's Brazilian years, and maintained the friendship through lively correspondence into the 1980s. One can find 84 letters between them in the Vilém Flusser Archive (Flusser & Bloch 1951-1986), which were also published in the volume *Briefe an Alex Bloch* (Flusser 2000). Bloch had Prague-Jewish origins, just like Flusser, and worked

in a bookshop in São Paulo where one could find not only local but also international literature. For Flusser, therefore, Bloch was an important source of contemporary European and North American books (Guldin & Bernardo 2017). A good example of that can be found in their correspondence from 1951, when Bloch writes in his letter, “Auf Ihren Brief hin, habe ich Ihnen die “Buddhistische Meditation” durch ihren Schwiegervater ueberreichen lassen.” (“Following your letter, I sent you the “Buddhist Meditation” through your father-in-law.”) (Bloch 1951:1) Bloch goes on to quote from this book later in the letter. However, the volume can unfortunately not be found in Flusser’s Traveling Library at the Vilém Flusser Archive any longer.

Alex Bloch was, as described by Flusser, a freethinker and dreamer (Flusser 2000b). He was deeply interested in Eastern philosophy and became an assistant to a Buddhist monk. He also introduced Zen Buddhism to Flusser, which then they both studied and practiced from the 1950s (Maltez Novaes: 2014). We will not deeply examine the topic of Zen Buddhism, since other authors in this *Flusser Studies* issue will almost certainly dedicate their papers to this theme. However, the correspondence with Alex Bloch gives us insights about the beginning of Flusser’s general interest in Indian Philosophy.

In Flusser’s Traveling Library we can find the following literature that might have been important sources for Flusser’s thought on Indian Philosophy. First, he owned two popular introductory works: *The Essentials of Indian Philosophy* by Mysore Hiriyanna (1978) and a similar work, *Fundamentals of Indian Philosophy* by P. Nagaraja Rao (1976). He might also have read Swami Vivekananda’s *Jnana Yoga* in German, because he owned its translation, published in Switzerland (Vivekananda: 1949). Moreover, Pierre Rambach and Vitold de Golish’s catalog *Indische Tempel und Götterbilder* (1950) was part of his library. We could also add to this list Medard Boss’ *Indienfahrt eines Psychiaters* (1966), a piece on the colorful Vedic psychology, and Filmer Stuart Northrop’s *The Meeting of East and West. An Inquiry Concerning World Understanding* (1946) about eastern influences on European and North American cultures.¹

Insights into Flusser’s study of Vedic literature can be traced in his book *The History of the Devil*: “Already during the time of the Veda, Hindu thinkers sought (...)” (Flusser 2014b: 174). The *History* was originally written in German in 1958, but Flusser reworked it thoroughly, and its revised Portuguese version was then published seven years later in 1965. The recently translated English version (Flusser 2014b) is from the Portuguese, and is one of the basic sources of this paper.

Flusser writes about Indian Philosophy, including the Vedas, in his unpublished book manuscript, *Das Zwanzigste Jahrhundert* (Flusser, n.d.) too – see more about it in Guldin 2015. In it, he praises

¹ See also Rainer Guldin, Die Vedanta und der Buddhismus in Vilém Flussers *Das Zwanzigste Jahrhundert* as well as Vilém Flusser, Das Weltbild der Vedanta both in the present issue of *Flusser Studies*

Sanskrit, the language of the Vedas, and its multifunctionality. This thought was then also repeated in his book *Língua e Realidade* [Language and Reality] (Flusser 2017).

Moreover, two important philosophers who likely played a role in Flusser's interest in Eastern philosophy must also be taken into consideration: Nietzsche (e.g. *Thus Spoke Zarathustra*) and Schopenhauer (e.g. *The World as Will and Representation*). Flusser read their works closely and let himself be influenced by their writings, especially on Buddhism.

From these sources, the authors of this paper will try to trace Flusser's interest in Indian Philosophy, with the main focus on Yoga Philosophy.

3. Flusser and Yoga Philosophy

3.1 On Yoga Philosophy

Yoga Philosophy, or Yoga, is one of the six orthodox² philosophical schools of Hinduism that accept the authority of the Vedas (Rao 1976). The other five streams are *Sāṃkhya*, *Nyāya*, *Vaiśeṣika*, *Mīmāṃsā*, and *Vedānta*, from which *Sāṃkhya* is the closest to Yoga. They all differ in some ways, but at the same time they also have many similarities. One of these resemblances is the premise: “you are not your body”. How each arrives at such a conclusion will not be examined here, but it is a fact that for the yogi, wisdom the physical body is only one of the mind's many layers of energy, and, it should be noted, the outermost and least subtle. As Flusser puts it, “The ‘body’ is nothing but a superior, and entirely fictitious, layer of the mind (...)” (Flusser 2014b: 174).

These schools may differ most strikingly in their acceptance of the *Pramāṇas*. *Pramāṇa* refers to epistemology in Indian philosophies; it is a theory of knowledge, so to speak, an account of the way humans can gain accurate knowledge. The six *Pramāṇas* are the following: 1) perception (*pratyakṣa*), 2) inference (*anumāna*), 3) comparison and analogy (*ūpamāna*), 4) derivation from circumstances (*arthapatti*), 5) non-perception (*anupalabdhi*), and 6) testimony of past or present reliable experts (*Śabda*) (Bhawuk, 2011). The different schools vary on which ones of these six *Pramāṇas* are accepted as epistemically reliable means to knowledge. Yoga, for example, accepts only *pratyakṣa*, *anumāna*, and *Śabda* (Bilimoria 1993).

Yoga as a physical practice or as a sport has been popularized in Europe and North America since the early and mid-20th century. There is no close association with *asana* (posture) culture in

² The heterodox systems, Buddhism and Jainism, do not accept the authority of the Vedas. Instead, they are based on the authoritative spiritual experiences of their prophets, Buddha and Mahavira (Rao, 1976).

the origins of Yoga, however, except for the comfortable seated pose that is suitable for longer meditation practice, suggested in *The Yoga Sūtras of Patañjali* (2017) (Singleton 2010).

Probably the most important primary sources of Yoga philosophy are *The Holy Vedas*, *Bhagavad Gītā*, *The Yoga Sūtras of Patañjali*, and later Svātmārāma's *Haṭha Yoga Pradīpikā* that already includes proper descriptions of physical practices. The *Bhagavad Gītā* differentiates among 18 yoga systems, of which three are primary: *Jñāna Yoga*: the Path of Knowledge, *Karma Yoga*: the Path of Action, and *Bhakti Yoga*: the Path of Devotion (Paul 2004). Later, *Rāja Yoga*: the Path of Royal Knowledge was added as a fourth primary Yoga system, mostly due to Swami Vivekananda's work.

3.2 Flusser and Jñāna Yoga

Of the above-mentioned paths, Flusser most often refers to *Jñāna Yoga*, The Path of Knowledge when he writes about Yoga in general. Jñāna Yoga is also a progression of study and practice to attain *moksha*, liberation from the cycle of death and rebirth. As mentioned, Flusser owned the German version of Vivekananda's book *Jnana Yoga*.³

Jnana Yoga was first published in 1899 as a collection of his lectures delivered mainly in the USA and UK. If one takes a closer look at these talks, it can be realized that his main topics surround Ātman, Maya, Cosmos, and God, the same themes that are often mentioned by Flusser too, especially in *The History of the Devil*. Jñāna comes from the Sanskrit verb *jna* that means 'to know'. In this sense, knowledge is the ultimate goal of Yoga.

In the Portuguese version of *The History of the Devil*, Flusser dedicates a whole subchapter to Yoga, more precisely to Jnana Yoga. It is in the main chapter of *Pride* and within that in the subchapter *Pincers of the Will*. However, throughout the whole book three important concepts of Indian philosophy are mentioned repeatedly: *Ātman*, the self or soul, *Brahman*, the ultimate reality, and *Maya*, the illusion. These principles are, of course, more complex and their definitions also vary among the different schools.

Ātman and Brahman are often defined in correlation with each other. In dualistic schools, Brahman is different from Ātman in each being. In non-dualistic schools, they are identical, and Brahman is inside of everyone (Myers 2001). Yoga is a dualistic school: self and body or consciousness and matter are two different realities. However, Flusser stands more on the non-dualistic side: "The Brahman, this apparent foundation of the *Ātman*, is nothing but a projection of the *Ātman*,

³ Swami Vivekananda (1863-1902) was an Indian Hindu monk and an important figure who brought Hindu thought to the West, where he became famous for his speech held at the Parliament of the World's Religions in Chicago in 1893. After that, he gave lectures on different segments of Indian philosophy in the USA, UK and Japan (Nikhilananda 1989).

and is equal to it.” (Flusser 2014b: 175) This he follows with a critique of the dualistic view: “It is true that this last conclusion is generally unacceptable for yogis. In their majority, they continue to pay homage to the *Brahman*. But the very structure of the discipline of Yoga proves that it is completely dedicated to the struggle against the *Brahman*, and that its aim is the overcoming of the *Brahman*” (176). This thought was most likely influenced by Vivekananda, who also propagated the non-dualistic *Advaita Vedānta* school of Hinduism. Also, according to Flusser, “The whole world, nature and mind, are nothing but creations of *Ātman*, of dreams of *Ātman*, and the handcuffs of destiny, *Karma*, have been imposed on this world by the *Ātman*” (176).

It is important to remark that *Maya* is a fundamental concept in the *Advaita Vedānta*. It is the “powerful force that creates the cosmic illusion that the phenomenal world is real” (Encyclopaedia Britannica 2015). The *Classical Advaita Vedānta* emphasizes the path of Jñāna Yoga whose final aim is to gain correct knowledge that destroys *avidyā* (misunderstandings). Based on the *Bṛhadāraṇyaka Upaniṣad*, there are three steps to reach this goal: via hearing, thinking and meditating (Mayeda, 1992). Flusser often writes about the last step: “Individual meditations, or meditative disciplines, always manage to infiltrate the subconscious.” (Flusser 2014b: 60), and, as already mentioned, he practiced such meditation (Maltez Novaes 2014).

Let us remark upon the differences between the Portuguese and German versions of the 7th (in the German version, the 6th) chapter of *The History of the Devil*. The German subchapters are the following: 1. *Das Weben des Schleiers der Maja* (“Weaving the Veil of Maya”), 1.1. *Der Schuß und die Kette der Sprache* (“The Weft and the Warp of Language”), 1.2. *Das Summen der Sprache* (“The Hum of Language”), 1.3. *Das Leuchten der Sprache* (“The Glow of Language”), 1.4. *Überblick auf das Gewebe der Maja* (“Overview of the Fabric of the Maya”), 2. *Das Zerreißen des Schleiers der Maja* (“The Tearing of the Veil of Maya”), and 3. *Die Zerknirschung* (“The Contrition”).

Seven years later, the Portuguese version separates the following ones: 7.1. *Língua* (Language), 7.1.1. *A Poesia* (Poetry), 7.1.2. *A Música e a Poesia Concreta* (Music and Concrete Poetry), 7.1.3. *A Pintura* (Painting), 7.1.4. *A Ciência* (Science), 7.2. *Tenazes da Vontade* (Pincers of the Will), 7.2.1. *A Ciência Como Ioga* (Science as Yoga), 7.2.2. *Ioga Como Ciência* (Yoga as Science), 7.3. *A Contrição* (Contrition).

Already from these titles, we can realize many differences between these two versions. One can see that Flusser might have worked on Indian philosophical topics within those seven years and based on his new findings, he reworked this chapter. We will not reflect upon these differences in depth, but it is important to note that during this period, in 1963, Flusser published his book *Língua e Realidade*, in which he also dedicates chapters to (concrete) poetry, music and visual arts. So, it is not surprising that he touches these topics in his 1965 book too. With regards to content, the two versions are not completely different, because Flusser puts emphasis on similar topics in

the German version, but he added some additional thoughts to his text and also changed the subtitles and the construction of this part. However, let us take a closer look at the subchapters *Science as Yoga* and *Yoga as Science*.

3.3 Science as Yoga vs. Yoga as Science

Flusser was well-known for his mostly negative or critical opinion about the methodologies of Western science in general. He tended to criticize the lack of creativity in science and one could also say the missing ‘artistic’ input: As he states, “Science shall become creative.” (Flusser, 2014b, p. 173) This argument can be traced back in many of Flusser’s writings, e.g. in his books *Language and Reality* (2017b) and *Vampyroteuthis Infernalis* (2011).

In the chapter *Pride in The History of the Devil*, Flusser nicely compares this Western or European science with the Indian or Yogic one. The main difference lies between them as follows, “The European blade advances into nature, and seeks to eliminate this illusory veil, its ethical and logical aspects, in order to discover the purely linguistic structure; the purely aesthetic structure of its foundation. The Indian blade seeks to reconstitute the mind, by vertically cutting and laying bare the Will’s path as it creates the mind. The methods of science and Yoga are opposed methods” (Flusser 2014b:170).

Then Flusser continues with “Science still pretends to dismiss Yoga” (171). He also expresses his opinion about Western science, which has, he says, ceased to be dominant and should accept different ways of observation, including the yogic one. Therefore, for Flusser, future science is a self-critical and creative one that “is a work of art aware of itself” (173).

Another important difference between Western science and Yoga (or Indian philosophy in general) is, according to Flusser, that the West separates science and theology (and philosophy); on the contrary, this has never happened in India. There these fields belong together and cannot be separated from each other. Flusser adds to this comparison, “Our scientific method prepares itself to transform logical laws into aesthetic ones, and ends up, therefore, in mysticism. Yoga reaches the same result without having previously eliminated the ethical aspect of its discipline” (174). In this sense, the yogic science is more progressive than the Western one.

As mentioned earlier, *Maya* is an important notion in these chapters (see, for example the subtitles of the German version). Flusser used different perspectives in approaching the question of how we can stop the cycle of illusion. One of the first steps could be that we mix Western with Eastern thought in order to see that there are different ways of seeing science and knowledge in general. According to him, our ultimate goal should be to realize that everything around us is part of *Maya*. As the yogis’ final aim is to be aware of this fact and end up in the state of *Samādhi*, the

‘westerners’ should also see that only at the stage of being free of all illusions can they become enlightened.

3.4 Struggles in between in and out of Yoga

Even though Flusser had a deep relationship with the yogic universe in his writings, he struggled with it in his life. In a letter to the poet Dora Ferreira da Silva from the year of 1974, Flusser writes that before he met Dora, he went through an Orientalizing period: “I think it’s a disease that we all must go through, like mumps or communism” (Flusser 1974: 2). Then he continues with a very sharp statement, “paraphrasing Clemenceau”⁴ who said ‘If you’re not a communist at the age of 20, you haven’t got a heart. If you’re still a communist at the age of 30, you haven’t got a brain.’, I would say that if you haven’t practiced *Jñāna Yoga* at the age of 30, you don’t have religious vocation. If you still do it at the age of 40, you have a lack of shame.” (Flusser 1974: 2)

He writes, “Eastern wisdom? Bullshit!” (Flusser 1974: 2). Flusser also makes two objections to it, a theoretical one and an ethical-religious one. The first one is that for the Hindu wisdom, the spirit is a sort of a rarified matter, and not the subject of all objects, as it is in the Jewish and Greek traditions. In this way, the Hindus are materialists in a “strictly radical and primitive sense” (Flusser: 1974, 2). As a good believer in the power of dialectics, Flusser accuses the Hindu philosophy of “being incapable of the dialectics that characterizes our being-in-the-world” (Flusser 1972: 2).

In the second objection, Flusser says that Yoga is a “mental, moral, spiritual and physical gymnastic and Samādhi is the athletic record. It is a kind of exercise with gigantic wheels called ‘Sam-sara’” (Flusser 1974: 2). That is because, for Flusser, “to want to reach salvation (enlightenment) with appropriate techniques is a lack of shame. I don’t deny that it is impossible. But I deny that it is valid” (2). After declaring that he has read Swami Vivekananda, Aurobindo, Ramakrishna, etc., he also realized that all this wisdom could be summarized in the sentence “they come like water and they go like wind” (2).

Therefore, in warning Dora that Yoga denies the dialectical existence of life and considers salvation to be a matter of effort, Flusser not only alerts Dora not to enter into the universe of Yoga Philosophy, but also acknowledges that it is something that is derived from his way of living and beliefs. As we would expect from someone like Flusser, he just lived his own existential dialectic and struggled to keep Yoga out of it.

In a subsequent letter dated 1981, Yoga enters again through the back door: now he asks for tips for breathing exercises from his Yoga teacher. As an answer, she goes through the techniques

⁴ It cannot be evidenced that this quote is from Clemenceau.

of low, medium and high breathing with some body movements, as described in the next section. Flusser has a lack of air. And the exercises he deeply criticizes are, at the same time, the ones that allow him to breathe.

For an author who positions himself between existentialism and cybernetics, between center and periphery, between different languages, would Yoga and non-Yoga become irreconcilable oppositions? Life in-between? Thought in-between? Even before the cautions, uncertainties, and difficulties of mixing life and work, even knowing that many times our thoughts escape the life that possesses us, there is no way to approach Flusser's thought and work without pointing to his relationship with Eastern Philosophy and, simultaneously, his own doubts and objections about it.

3.5 Flusser's Correspondance with his Yoga Teacher⁵

Besides his – controversial – epistemological relationship with Yoga, Flusser also had a practical one: he exchanged letters with his Brazilian Yoga teacher asking for mentoring on this topic. Answering his demands, the Yoga teacher (her name at the end of the letter is not legible), sends him a letter dated on 30 March 1981 describing seven breathing exercises for him to practice. In this section we would like to summarize the content of this letter in order to illustrate a concrete example of Flusser's exercise-based Yoga practice.

After apologizing for the late response, the Yoga teacher explains the techniques one by one, calling them as “movements and basic breathings” (Yoga Teacher 1981: 1). In the first exercise, she explains that it is important to breathe correctly, feeling the air passing through the glottis and not pressing the nostrils when inhaling. “To know how to breath: inhale by the mouth, lowering the tongue, and feeling the fresh air passing by. Later, close the mouth and inhale by the nose, and feel the nostrils wide open. Keep putting the tongue down even when the mouth is closed” (1). She also highlights the importance of feeling the air inhaled by the nose crossing the glottis, creating a flux. This must be the so-called *Ujjayi* breathing.

In the second exercise, the yoga teacher recommends Flusser lie down and put his hands on the belly button. In this position, inhale, swelling the abdomen a little bit and then exhaling, releasing all the air, contracting the abdominal musculature in order to expel all the air. She emphasizes being mindful that the air cannot go to the medium and upper parts of the lungs. However, if the breathing is conscious, lower, medium and upper lungs should have separate movements, even though the most relaxing one of the three is the lower one. She suggests trying to remember to

⁵ The whole letter is published alongside this paper.

train these three parts daily and that in the inhaling, the abdomen or thorax must get inflated. This technique can be identified as the *Dirga* (or *Deerga*) *Swasam Pranayama*, or three-part breath.

The third breathing technique teaches Flusser to stand up, separate the legs, inhale and lift up the arms in parallel to the floor. After that, retaining the air, move the arms up and down for as long as possible, and when air is needed, stop the arms up and exhale while bringing them down. She prescribes this exercise to be repeated five times. The next one is also in the same position, standing up with separated legs. But now, she recommends breathing deeply, filling the lungs with air and, in retention, massaging the chest with the hands. When air is needed, stop the movement and exhale. It is suggested to repeat the technique three times. The fifth is the same as the fourth, but with someone massaging the back as well.

In the sixth exercise, the Yoga teacher instructs Flusser to stand up with separated legs, inhale, raising the arms up and exhaling by mouth, blowing deeply, emptying the lungs by flexing the back and bringing the arms down, then repeating this three times. The last breathing technique is to sit in lotus position or in a chair and blow into a balloon, filling it with only one blow, releasing and cleaning the lungs of the most toxic air. She reinforces the importance of remembering to do the breathing exercises in a controlled way and at slow pace as well.

Beyond these seven techniques, she advises movements of rotation with the head very slowly and with no pressure, three times in each direction. She recommends that he listens to relaxing music during the exercises. After doing the lower, medium and upper breathing separately, the Yoga teacher suggests practicing them all together, as one single exercise.

After this informative section, she starts another one to narrate her personal life: she writes about how happy she is to be living close to Miguel Flusser and how much she is grateful for his help in finding her a new home at an affordable price. She also adds “we are looking forward to your and Edith’s visit and we miss you” (3). She also tells about the financial difficulties she and her husband are going through and describes how gratifying it was to receive his last letter.

3.6 The yogic body as the Vampyroteuthic model of media

After describing Flusser’s connection to Yoga Philosophy and practice, now we would like to add a mixture out of these two approaches: the philosophical fiction, *Vampyroteuthis Infernalis* (Flusser: 2011b).

In this, Flusser and Bec perform an imaginative exercise that seeks to bring together humans and the rare species of the cephalopoda genus, *Vampyroteuthis infernalis*, in order to mirror human existence from the perspective of this animal that lives where we would die, and that dies where we are able to live. The two animals are as far apart genealogically as possible. By analyzing the

Vampyroteuthis' way of living, Flusser amplifies how the octopus-like creature works as an inverted mirror (Bernardo 2011) of the human world, with its culture, arts, society and way of thinking.

In his reflection on the Vampyroteuthis' culture, Flusser (2011b) asks, "How do we manage to control our own thoughts as if they were 'from the outside'? How can the central nervous system programme, by itself, the processing of its own data?" (83) Instead of producing objects, as human history does in order to be able to create memory, the octopus produces history not by the mediation of objects, but instead, by the sophisticated control of the nervous system in order to produce art and transmit data genetically. The art of the Vampyroteuthis is the art of enlightening itself by bioluminescence. But how does the vampyroteuthic existence emerge as a metaphor for the yogic body?

We can place the yogic body as the vampyroteuthic model of Flusser's media analysis. Like the Vampyroteuthis, the yogic body aims to regulate thoughts and emotions by the subtle control of the mind and the nervous system, turning life and the very matter of living into an art itself. It therefore serves as the symmetric opposite of our current mediated experience, which is full of screens, gadgets, googles and technical image objects that try to enter the realm of the mind just like meditation techniques. However, they do it only with the tip of the fingers, that is, without the effort of poses (*asanas*), vegetarian diet and meditation done by yogis in order to seek for enlightenment, or *Samādhi*. That is because the search for *Samādhi* shortcuts meditation practices and it is done by the *literal search for light*: technically exchanging electric current between fingertips and photosensitive screens via the digital body of a virtual profile (Mozzini-Alister 2018).

Therefore, the yogic body is, out of the depths of the ocean, the inverted mirror of the human capitalistic model: just like the Vampyroteuthis, it aims to create a history no longer mediated by objects via the conversion of the body into an apparatus to penetrate the mind. With eyes closed, paralyzing the motor-sensorial organs and isolating ourselves from social networks, the practices of the yogic body teach us more and more how to move back from the concrete world in order to grasp the mental reality of the unlimited – the reality where virtual profiles, whose flesh is made of pixels, algorithms, photons and electrons, live.

Not by chance, nowadays, meditation has become a new wave that is curiously being ridden in parallel with the explosion of forms sociability woven via social network profiles: every day Facebook asks "What's on your mind?". This question is being increasingly converted into an object of empirical investigation in the so-called "Western" world. What neuroscience is currently making palpable on "this side" of the planet through sophisticated brain mapping techniques, has already been thoroughly and intuitively investigated thousands of years ago on the "other side," without any equipment. Such investigation was undertaken by yogis who today are leaving the reclusion of the Himalayas to disperse themselves among urban centres.

Thus, it is not a coincidence or just a matter of rhetorical argument that Flusser so often related his analytics of media to concepts like Eastern apparatus, quantic realities and the experimental science of Yoga (Flusser 2014b). The *Vampyroteuthic* relationship between media and yogic body comes from Flusser's personal practice and intellectual experience with the universe of Yoga. To deny this mystical part of Flusser's thought is to deny a whole dimension of his philosophy of media. In the investigation of our technological futures, the yogic body emerges in contrast to a society filled with more and more imagined objects.

4. Summary

The authors of this paper have highlighted the most striking points from Vilém Flusser's thought and writings on Indian, more precisely, Yoga Philosophy. We attempted to assess as many of his writings as possible, but one could have, of course, examined many more of them. For example, an interesting experiment would be to trace back the ideas presented in Flusser's media theoretical writings (e.g. *Into the Universe of Technical Images*) in greater depth.

According to our findings, Indian Philosophy played an important role in Flusser's thinking, even though he often denied its legitimacy, and almost had a 'love-hate relationship' towards it (see e.g. his above described letter to Dora Ferreira da Silva). Especially in the 1950s and 1960s, he was fascinated by Yoga Philosophy and the techniques of Zen Buddhist meditation, which he also expressed in his texts, e.g. in *The History of the Devil*. Moreover, we also found interesting insights about his attempts to practice Yoga physically via movements and Prānāyāma, breathing exercises, as prescribed in his Yoga teacher's letter.

As the title of this paper suggests, we just opened and entered the black box of this subject without going deeply enough into it. However, we believe that this topic would sustain future research in order to see even more parallels between Flusser's thought and Indian or Yoga Philosophy. Evidence for this is that one of the authors of this paper, Anita Jóri, was giving a course on this subject at Berlin University of the Arts this semester, where students were inspired and created a performance as an outcome of the seminar. We hope for similar events in the near future because the subject is broad enough to discuss further at considerable length.

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