

The Expanding World Ayahuasca Diaspora

During its expansion from the Amazon jungle to Western societies, ayahuasca use has encountered different legal and cultural responses. Following on from the earlier edited collection, *The Expanding World Ayahuasca Diaspora* continues to explore how certain alternative global religious groups, shamanic tourism industries, and recreational drug milieus grounded in the consumption of the traditionally Amazonian psychoactive drink ayahuasca embody various challenges associated with modern societies.

Each contributor explores the symbolic effects of a “bureaucratization of enchantment” in religious practice and the “sanitizing” of indigenous rituals for tourist markets. Chapters include ethnographic investigations of ritual practice, transnational religious ideology, the politics of healing, and the invention of tradition. Larger questions on the commodification of ayahuasca and the categories of sacred and profane are also addressed.

Exploring classic and contemporary issues in social science and the humanities, this book provides rich material on the burgeoning expansion of ayahuasca use around the globe. As such, it will appeal to students and academics in religious studies, anthropology, sociology, psychology, cultural studies, biology, ecology, law, and conservation.

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Appropriation, Integration
and Legislation

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and Clancy Cavnar

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Preface

This timely follow up to the first volume of *The World Ayahuasca Diaspora: Reinvention and Controversies* explores ayahuasca in the context of classic and contemporary issues in social sciences and the humanities, providing rich material on the burgeoning expansion of ayahuasca as it situates itself in various circumstances around the globe and reveals its tendency to connect and transform people, beings, networks and ideas. The challenges associated with alternative global religious groups, shamanic tourism industries, and recreational drug milieus, expand to the same degree that the brew itself spreads. In this collection, space is given to discussions on the global intercultural exchange of ayahuasca affecting indigenous modernization, political and moral dimensions of ritual healing, drug policy, religious persecution, public controversies, gender stereotypes, and dilemmas of integration into mainstream society. Ayahuasca's travels from the Amazon jungle to Western societies and back to the jungle has entailed encounters with different legal and cultural contexts; disparate and competing ideas on authenticity have emerged among ayahuasca drinkers and between them and the state, creating an international patchwork of laws and representations regarding ayahuasca, all deserving of detailed explorations, some of which are provided herein. Cultural appropriation and commodification of indigenous traditions are also highly germane as ayahuasca expands into new sectors of society; it is in this arena that some of the most charged discussions may be found. This book tackles these issues and more in an attempt to capture the arguments and proofs of some of the most qualified ongoing research in social sciences regarding the vine. The rapid rise of ayahuasca in the public imagination has created an urgent need for ethnographically sound and unbiased reports and analysis such as we hope is provided here in this second volume. We hope you enjoy reading it!

Beatriz Caiuby Labate and Clancy Cavnar

Foreword

Ayahuasca and its controversies

Before leaving its first home on the Upper Amazon, ayahuasca had spent a long time mediating between peoples, languages, and cultures, between different shamanic traditions, between the waking world and the world of visions. Between humans and spirits. It was a thread connecting something that no religion, no political power, had yet unified. This mediating power multiplied afterwards, when ayahuasca began to become popularized in urban environments and offered, through its visions, an immediate immersion in what had, until then, appeared insurmountably distant and wild.

The chapter that opens this volume (Labate and Assis) shows how far this embassy has reached: from the forest to the cities and the capitals, to the old and new metropolises, and to other poles of the global panorama. Ayahuasca has already become established throughout Latin America, in the United States, and Western Europe, and, more incipiently, in Eastern Europe, but also in South Africa, Australia, and Japan. As Conrad's chapter reminds us, this expansion is virtually coextensive and coeval with the growth of the Internet, which has played an important role in its diffusion. But although the Internet has been an instrument in the expansion of ayahuasca, it is also perhaps another allegory for it. Amazonian indigenous peoples – who, for decades, have freely compared ayahuasca with cinema and television – surely have no problem extending this analogy to the network of networks.

As with the Internet, this wide-ranging mediation cannot occur without the traversed borders becoming more sensitive and increasingly disputed. This book explores these controversies, and this foreword also addresses them, in dialogue with the rich collection of chapters offered up by the book, albeit without looking to summarize them – nor concur with them on all their points.

One of these controversies is probably the most extensive and decisive of the Western tradition; namely, the separation between culture and nature. Here, we are not talking about archaeology or about outmoded prejudices; this dividing line is one of the foundations of our legal systems, and traces,

for example, the difference between what can be a subject of intellectual property and what cannot, between what is no more than a plant and what constitutes an illegal drug.

These two issues have already given rise to polemics in the world of ayahuasca. Twenty years ago, the patenting of a *Banisteriopsis* plant provoked one of the biggest scandals in biopiracy, while the growing police repression of the trade in the components of ayahuasca has been based, as the article by Hobbs points out, on the degree of alteration through human manipulation. The nature/culture divide is worth exploring, since it succeeds in penalizing actions like drying and packing, or, more effectively, in criminalizing not the plant itself, but the information relating to it, seen as an incentive to drug use. The nature-culture divide is always like a border drawn in the middle of a metropolis: it serves more to create contraband than prevent it, and ayahuasca is a perfect example of this effect. Typically, its followers, like the judges, place it on the side of nature, thereby eclipsing the considerable human action needed for the activity of a set of plants and their combined possibilities to be known by humans.

Another issue concerns the difference between drug and food (Gearin and Labate). Many of the Amazonian uses of ayahuasca are subsumed under a more general framework of a shamanism of food and are conceived more as “purges” or “diets” than as visionary experiences. The alimentary prescriptions and taboos that surround the use of ayahuasca form a continuum with those that govern the local norms of elaborating the body. For Pano peoples, for example, ayahuasca is included in a set of bitter substances, indispensable to the perfecting of the human body, but prejudicial to the beginnings of its formation; that is, for young infants and for women during pregnancy and while feeding. None of this necessarily presumes a contrast with the West, where a growing proportion of the population shows itself obsessed by the ethical implications of foods and their interpretation as either “medicines” or “poisons.” New users of ayahuasca frequently display much more concern with these interactions than the indigenous users for whom, to give one example, ayahuasca is often carefully separated from alcohol, yet is not infrequently taken to be its equivalent. Ayahuasca may form the center of a comprehensive health practice, or of a religious or speculative quest – without clear boundaries demarcating it from recreational use – and this applies indiscriminately to the entire global trajectory traced by ayahuasca.

The contrast between a primitive authenticity and New Age inventions has become of less and less interest. The professionals and amateurs of anthropology have little by little abandoned their belligerence against neo-shamanism. Sustaining a hostile stance had become difficult, since many intermediary forms – here we can think of Santo Daime or the UDV – had already acquired a patina of respect over time. Moreover, the subjects who supposedly represented the purest tradition – indigenous shamans – had been directly involved in openly hybrid ventures. Also, it is worth noting, in passing, the traditionalist prosopopoeia of neo-shamanism, with its

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solemn ritualism and priestly attire, provides an insight into how little the indigenous shamanism of the past was “traditional” itself, as it was characterized by widespread borrowing and experimentation. We can no longer understand ayahuasca as simply an extension of Amazonian shamanism (in itself, a very risky generalization): it already has a field of its own, organized around very different techniques and cosmologies.

However, the fact that the tension between tradition and invention has lost its edge has not prevented the conflict from reappearing now in more pragmatic forms. The encounter between the ayahuasca of native Amazonians and more or less wealthy urbanites produces, after the initial euphoria, tensions that, as usual, tend to have more impact on the financially weaker pole. A local resource has become the object of foreign avidity, and what was a means of dealing with vital conflicts has turned into a way of life. From being a singular subject, often situated at the outer limit of alterity, the shaman has become the archetype of the indigenous person, an archetype that needs to be embodied as decisively as possible, since he or she faces competition from new protagonists, coming from all parts of the world to appropriate this role.

On the other hand, as Echazu and Carew note, the same clients, patients, or users who seek out the forest to escape the Euro-American conventions end up importing demands to regulate and control the use of ayahuasca and the relations between its actors. The moral ambiguity that pervades the original world of ayahuasca – a means of healing, but equally a means of aggression, including as a weapon of war – suddenly becomes caught up in a game in which all these ambiguities are no longer parts of the complexity of being, but elements of the penal code. Globalized ayahuasca has its discontents, just like globalization as a whole.

The case of Taita Orlando Gaitán, related by Caicedo, and his prosecution for sexual abuse provides a clear parable of the many equivocations and conflicts surrounding the globalization of ayahuasca, ranging from the management of indigenous identity to the transformation of the shaman into a businessman straddled between religion and the third sector (the NGOs), passing through the readjustment of shamanic codes to a new clientele, and through the blurred overlapping between the power of a leader and the power of the plant.

The chapters by Cavnar and Mesturini touch, in different ways, on another famous duality, the opposition between the individual and the collective: two aspirations that have both equally sought to drink from “primitive” sources. Ayahuasca originates from a world, Amazonia, that has been presented sometimes as a model of community life, sometimes as an anarchic refuge of personal freedom. Mesturini points to a peculiar virtue of ayahuasca that distances it from both these poles: the virtue of, despite its expansion, remaining entangled, propagating itself through networks, and creating them. The virtue of not transforming simply into a *substance*, into an *active principle*: the question is always ayahuasca and all the relations

that it involves, not DMT. This fact distinguishes ayahuasca from other psychoactives of Amerindian origin that seem more liable to become associated with individual experiences and their auto-referential metaphysic. Cavnar focuses, on the contrary, on the relationship between ayahuasca and the most definitive aspect of individuality today: sexual orientation and identity. For many users from the LGBT scene, the visionary experience – not the social context in which it takes place, for the most part highly orthodox in sexual matters – has played a valuable role in developing a positive perception of a sexual identity challenged by its surroundings.

Cavnar's chapter brings up another interesting dimension: ayahuasca's value in the affirmation of homosexuality contrasts with the use, decades ago, of psychedelic drugs (LSD) in order to try to "cure" it. The relation between psychoactives and gender models seems to be equally ambiguous: the chapters of this volume offer different, and even discordant, opinions on this point. Echazu and Carew criticize the masculine bias that has dominated New Age trends like Peruvian *vegetalismo* and highlight the frequent presence of female shamans in the indigenous world. In contrast, Mesturini observes that the neo-shamanisms have incorporated – unsurprisingly, given the public to which they are directed – a more egalitarian and even feminist conception of gender, including the assimilation of ayahuasca with feminine symbols or archetypes, altering a landscape previously dominated by a masculine ethos. Perhaps these two appraisals are not so incompatible as they first seem: what changes as we shift from one world to another is not so much the gender models but the status attributed to norm and transgression. Women can be shamans in one world, the indigenous world, where spiritual power is a matter of fact, not law. Shamanism is not a priesthood whose efficacy depends on institutional consecration. One can be a shaman despite not taking the usual paths to becoming a shaman: by stealing secrets, for example, or by inventing resources that regular transmission had denied. One can also become a shaman by eluding the male norm. Moreover, such abnormality is not always an impairment to shamanic capacity; in fact, it may heighten it, since the exceptional has powers of which the normal is unaware. In the new situation, women are granted something of this role that previously they seized for themselves, and this points, at the same time, to a kind of liberalization and a species of domestication.

The use of ayahuasca oscillates between a "religion" and being some antithesis of the latter. For a long time, the dualities of this series – religion versus sorcery, magic, superstition, and so on – served to stigmatize any practice not subjected to the frameworks of an institution. But recently, the poles have reversed, and terms like "spirituality" or "holistic therapy" have proven useful to sectors that, having abjured religion and its means, remain interested in what religion proposed as an end. The choice between "religion" and "spirituality" (and related terms) also has other consequences, of course. Depending on time and place, the assimilation of the use of ayahuasca with a religious practice can contribute to its legitimization or the

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complete opposite. In Uruguay, as Scuro shows, ayahuasca has been careful to avoid becoming associated with religion, something undesirable in a country with a strongly secular tradition. Forming part of a religion is, on the contrary, what has helped legitimize ayahuasca in Brazil and the United States: countries with harsh anti-drug policies. The Irish case, presented in the chapter by Watt, is an interesting example because it unites the two poles. For a time, ayahuasca found a safe niche in its identification as a native variant of Catholicism. Santo Daime was none other than the Amazonian version of this alliance between the Christian message and the pre-Christian religious world that centuries earlier had also given rise to an Irish Catholicism impregnated with Celtic remnants. Ayahuasca was thus a new avatar of this deep-rooted community religion of such importance to the Irish national identity. Later, however, the country's growing modernization and the moral crisis caused by the sexual abuse scandals within the Catholic Church wiped out the political value of this association, and it became advisable to defend ayahuasca outside the religious model. The story does not end there, though. The growing repression of the components used in the potion, necessarily imported from South America, has led to the realization of ayahuasca cults – almost without ayahuasca. Centered now on another “root” practice, possession, the religion of Barquinha, in Brazil, had already shown the possibility of combining possession and visionary trance.

The chapter by Goldstein and Labate on the relations between contemporary art and ayahuasca, including the art inspired by the latter, may be the most complex. Just as Eduardo Viveiros de Castro argued in a famous text, that inconstancy was the one true constant of indigenous thought, here we could say that there is nothing more “Western” than contemporary art's passion to abolish all Western norms, dichotomies, and categories, starting with the category of art itself. Enough of contrasting author and public, artwork and everyday object, visual art and theatre, mastery and chance, conventions of beauty and ugliness. Contemporary art strives to overcome these limits, although unfortunately, it fails to show the same determination, or success, in relation to other traditional conditions of the art world; namely, the speculative environment of the market and the dubious world of patronage.

It is in these conditions that indigenous art, or the ayahuasca that served as its inspiration in so many cases, is convoked as an ally. This convocation is ambiguous, since it may be inspired both by the perception of indigenous productions as “art” and by the desire for symbolic demolition to which the new actor is invited to contribute. Of course, the demolition of Western categories is of no more interest to indigenous actors than the categories themselves, making their role somewhat dubious. Artists? Diacritics whose presence serves to enhance the iconoclastic value of an exhibition or performance? Authors or coauthors, duly recognized and remunerated as such? Exotic figurants? The authors note that these experiences of intercultural art frequently explicitly preclude the collaboration of anthropologists in

order to establish a purer relation, free of the colonial and academic vestiges of anthropology; although, this good intention may sometimes result in no more than a new staging of old plays that are always easier to applaud in the absence of critics.

Allow me to conclude with a couple of notes of concern that pervade the chapters of this book. The more somber is the observation that the forces that led to the War on Drugs – one of the most dismal legacies of the twentieth century – has not yet run its course, and, while the legalization or de-penalization of marijuana seems on the verge of acceptance, use of ayahuasca – which, for a long time, benefitted from a legal vacuum – is, little by little, being restricted.

It is worth noting that it is not now a question of a war *on* drugs but a war *between* drugs. The ideal of a life or a body without drugs was always an illusion; the use of drugs is as old as humankind, and strictly speaking, exceeds the limits of our species; but, it becomes completely hypocritical when announced in the middle of a system that makes massive use of psychotropic drugs from childhood. The real debate is not between the substances and their respective dangers, but between the agencies that control them: the subjects themselves, the networks in which they are embedded, the medical-pharmaceutical complex and its legal apparatus. It remains a paradox that public opinion still trusts the latter more than the former. Hobbs's chapter reveals the deafness of legislators to scientific works when it comes to ascertaining the danger posed by a substance: the sensationalist press, stirring up phantasms, has always been much more esteemed as an advisor. Perhaps this is because the fear of drugs, rather than being good for public health, is simply “good for banning,” for multiplying draconian laws that the state is incapable of enforcing, but maintains as a reserve of arbitrary power.

Another concern relates to the limitations of multiculturalism. Thirty years ago, when this current of thought became absorbed into legislative frameworks and public policies, it seemed a good way of dealing with the colonial legacy, balancing equality and differences. Thirty years later, everything is governed more than ever by a single criterion from one corner of the planet to the other, and what little remains of cultural difference falls into the hands of an active market of symbolic goods. The contemporary literature on ayahuasca, to which this book adds, conveys the malaise created by this pincer movement, contrasting with the sense of surprise felt years ago when the first steps in an unsuspected diaspora became perceptible. A more amenable vision can only come from this intuition, evident throughout a large part of the book's chapters, that we are dealing with new networks and objects, created from the clashes and equivocations of the colonial encounter, albeit not fated to perpetuate them forever.

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1 A critical review of the literature on the diaspora of Brazilian ayahuasca religions¹

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Introduction

In the complex and vibrant religious panorama of contemporary Brazil, a number of spiritual movements born in this country have spread beyond its borders and crossed the oceans to all inhabited continents. This is the case, for example, of the Universal Church of the Kingdom of God (*Igreja Universal do Reino de Deus*) and of Umbanda. Less known, but no less fascinating, are the Brazilian ayahuasca religions.

Originating in the rubber tapper culture of the Brazilian Amazon in the twentieth century, Barquinha, Santo Daime, and the União do Vegetal (UDV) remained geographically confined to the north of the country until the 1980s. Thereafter, though, they started to become known to a wider public. Santo Daime and the UDV, in particular, expanded significantly, reaching all regions of Brazil and stimulating the production of a sizeable literature on the ritual and religious use of ayahuasca; documented, for example, in the book *Ayahuasca Religions: A Comprehensive Bibliography & Critical Essays* (Labate et al., 2009).⁴

Today, the Santo Daime and the UDV diaspora has grown large indeed and involves transnational networks and alliances, raising intriguing questions about cultural tradition, language, and religious diasporas. Santo Daime⁵ has spread to at least 43 countries on all the inhabited continents (Labate & Assis, 2016), while the UDV is present in the United States, the United Kingdom, Spain, Switzerland, Italy, Holland, and Australia. This process of internationalization has, in turn, stimulated its own literary output, issuing from places as far apart as Ireland, Australia, and the United States. Although this intellectual production is expanding yearly, it remains somewhat dispersed and diffuse, posing difficulties to researchers and other interested people wishing to access this field of studies and preventing deeper analytic inquiry into the phenomenon.

Here, then, we look to unite and critically evaluate literature worldwide on the internationalization of the Brazilian ayahuasca religions. This includes articles, master's theses, and doctoral dissertations in Portuguese, Spanish, and English, both published and unpublished, along with practitioners' publications that engage with the theme of internationalization.

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Due to space limitations, and the ever-increasing number of works on the theme, it is impossible for us to include all of this intellectual production. Various texts have been omitted from our discussion, therefore, without implying that we consider these to be less valuable. The present chapter is not intended, therefore, to comprise all texts published on the topic, but to be a general guide that signposts various paths for lay readers and researchers interested in this universe, acting as a catalyst for the development of future research. With this aim in mind, we have divided the article into five sections: Social Sciences; the Ayahuasca Diaspora; Legal Issues and Regulation of Ayahuasca; Biomedicine, Psychology and Public Health;⁶ and Native Literature and Religious Texts.

Social sciences

Although the earliest reports of ayahuasca religious rituals being performed outside Brazil's borders date from the 1980s, studies of the internationalization of these groups only began to be produced years later. Despite expanding research in the areas of biomedicine, health, law, and public policies, the most fertile area so far has been the social sciences, especially anthropology. Here, we start by assessing the extensive bibliography on Santo Daime, beginning with the inaugural texts, followed by publications according to the regions where studies have been conducted, before turning to works written by foreign authors in Brazil. Next, we examine the research on UDV, and, finally, we turn to ethnomusicological studies.

Among the inaugural works, we can cite the doctoral dissertation by Alberto Groisman at the University of London (2000), the first ethnography on ayahuasca religions conducted outside of Brazil. In this work, based on short-term field research, the author studies the Santo Daime groups in Holland, pursuing an exploratory and descriptive approach. In subsequent years, Groisman continued to study the internationalization of Santo Daime, including its expansion to Europe in one article (2009) and the legal aspects of its expansion in the United States in his postdoctoral work, published in a chapter in the collected volume *Ayahuasca y Salud* (2013a). He has also written about the “creative appropriation” of elements of the Santo Daime doctrine in the Dutch context (2013b). Another early contribution was Carsten Balzer's work (2004; 2005). Along with its innovation, his work provides an important account of the informal and mostly non-institutional beginnings of Santo Daime's internationalization, a phase during which ceremonies were mainly held in the context of weekend workshops until more structured rituals gradually began to gain ground.

The British scholar Andrew Dawson was one of the first to produce a full-length book on the internationalization of Santo Daime (2012) published in Europe. The author looks to comprehend the internationalization and transformations of the religion at a theoretical level, constructing a distinctive conceptual framework. He situates Santo Daime within the wider

circuits of New Age religiosity and the contemporary religious consumer market, something he had already done in a more wide-ranging publication on the New Age movement that touched on the theme of ayahuasca religions (2007). His theoretical analysis, informed by a conceptual originality, is limited, however, by the lack of solid ethnographic data and long-term field research. This leads the author to take regional and contextual aspects of the religion, such as possession trance, as general features of Santo Daime (2011). On the other hand, the doctoral dissertation by Marc Blainey (2013) examines Santo Daime in Belgium. It includes details on the religious context in general, Belgian colonization in Africa, and also some quantitative data on Santo Daime in Europe. His main thesis is similar to Dawson's, namely, that the religion is not opposed to contemporary "secular" society, but embedded within it, comprising a technology, a tool, and a mystical solution to the problems faced by the modern self.

Gilliam Watt presents a pioneering master's thesis on Santo Daime in Ireland (2013) that adds fresh data on the religion in this location, such as the description of hymns evoking pre-Celtic deities. Writing about the situation in Holland, Judith Sudholter (2012), in her master's thesis, provides a close account of the way in which Dutch followers experience Santo Daime rituals and transform them into narratives. For his part, the German psychologist Jan Weinhold (2007) sets out to explore ritual "mistakes and failures" in the European context, problematizing the question of the ritual efficacy of ayahuasca and Santo Daime in a sociocultural context exogenous to Brazil; an approach that, as we had occasion to witness personally, elicited protests among the German Santo Daime community.

Heading from Europe to North America, the researcher Kenneth Tupper has produced the only doctoral dissertation existing at present on the expansion of ayahuasca to Canada (2011). Based on the case study of a Canadian Santo Daime church, the Céu do Montreal, the author embarks on a discussion of drug policies, emphasizing the role of stereotypes and the choice of language in narratives concerning tradition in Canadian public opinion and in the establishment of policies on psychoactive drug use. This text, along with others by Tupper (2008; 2009; 2016), exemplifies a new line of studies on ayahuasca that examines public policies and drug policies, an approach that has burgeoned over recent years. In the United States, the master's thesis by Alfonso Matas (2014) describes the Céu da Lua Cheia, a Santo Daime church in Miami, and the difficulties of adapting to the North American context, discussing at a more superficial level theoretical issues already explored by Dawson and Blainey, such as Santo Daime's entry into a religious market. Still on the North American continent, Guzmán (2013, 2015) sketches a historical overview and a contemporary panorama of Santo Daime in Mexico, as well as preliminary observations on legal questions, the incorporation of Mexican religious elements into Santo Daime rituals, and the presence of Santo Daime in alternative therapy networks.

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One topic that remains little explored is the spread of Santo Daime in Mercosur countries. Juan Scuro looks to fill this lacuna in his master's thesis on Santo Daime's arrival in Uruguay (2012a) in the 1990s, as well as subsequent articles on the same topic (2012b, 2012c), where he identifies the "Uruguayan ayahuasca field" (see also Scuro & Apud, 2015). Lavazza (2007, 2014), in turn, examines the trajectory of Santo Daime in Argentina, setting out from an ethnography of a group from Buenos Aires and the negotiations between their local social reality and the imaginary of Brazilian Amazonia. In 2015, the anthropologist Valentina Zelada completed her monograph on Santo Daime in Santiago, Chile. Her investigation, which contains a generic description of the rituals already available elsewhere, relates the process of construction, internal crises, and institutional affiliation of this church to ICEFLU. It is valuable for its examination of a country home to various ayahuasca groups that have been little studied so far.

It is worth remembering that Santo Daime is also present in Asia, Africa, and the Middle East. However, the literary output in English concerning these contexts is virtually non-existent. An exception is the article by Sobiecki (2013), which describes his personal experience in a Santo Daime ritual in Johannesburg through a discussion of healing and "spiritual medicine."

In Brazil, the expansion and internationalization of Santo Daime has been addressed by Assis (2013), who observes the presence of Santo Daime in contexts as distinct as Minas Gerais, the Netherlands, and Germany, looking to insert the religion within the wider field of studies of the sociology of religion and the contemporary global religious panorama. On the other side, the article by Labate and Assis (2016) contextualizes the expansion of Santo Daime within the diaspora of Brazilian religions as a whole, analyzing this expansion in terms of the particular structural features of this religion, defined by the authors as its *miscibility* and *psychoactivity*.

In recent years, there has also been a considerable output of works by foreign researchers on Santo Daime groups in Brazil and abroad. Sulla (2005) wrote a master's thesis in psychology on the ideas of residents of Céu do Mapiá (the headquarters village of ICEFLU in the Amazon) concerning the question of healing in the religion and the healing system used in the community. Another master's thesis on Céu do Mapiá is by Lowell (2013), who examines the transformations experienced by the community during Santo Daime's expansion and internationalization, a topic also covered by another article co-authored by Lowell & Adams (2016). There is also a text by Barnard (2014) that provides a wide-ranging and generic examination of the use of entheogens in religious contexts based on the case of Santo Daime and a work by Schmidt (2007) that contemplates Santo Daime as an eco-religious movement.

Dawson (2010) presents a field report of his visit to Céu do Mapiá, and also a description (Dawson, 2013) of the *feitio* ritual performed to make the beverage, extremely important in the religious life of Santo Daime, yet little

studied. Similarly, Blocksom (2015) describes the Santo Daime community of Fortaleza, on the outskirts of Rio Branco in Acre State. Meyer (2014), in turn, produces one of the most analytically interesting works on Alto Santo, based on a dense ethnography. This group is more hermetic than ICEFLU, and the author has been one of few academics to have been granted permission to carry out research. Henman (1986; 2009) deserves mention for writing about the União do Vegetal and the earliest phase of its expansion in Brazil.

As we can observe, the low level of institutionalization and bureaucratization of ICEFLU/Santo Daime, along with its intense exchange with diverse other forms of religiosity, makes it easier to research its global spread. Hence, the most abundant, fragmented, and dispersed literature on the internationalization of Brazilian ayahuasca groups is dedicated to the study of Santo Daime. By contrast, there is a widely recognized lack of research on the UDV in international contexts compared to Santo Daime, reflecting the difficulty that scholars from diverse areas of knowledge have faced in studying the UDV. While the institutionalization and bureaucratization of this religion has enabled a consistent output of native publications, its secretive and closed nature has tended to block autonomous research from being conducted by people not belonging to the group.

The only monograph written in English dedicated entirely to the UDV was authored by Anderson (2007) and discusses the environmental values in the group's religious life. Patrícia Lima published an article (2014) and presented a doctoral dissertation in Portuguese (2016) on UDV's presence in Europe, especially in Portugal. She argues that in UDV rituals, the acoustic dimension is very important in the subjective perception of the participants, who may have very distinctly different experiences of the plant within the same acoustic setting. We have also learned of other research projects being conducted with the UDV that have, however, remained unfinished or are unpublished, due in part to the legal situation of the UDV and ayahuasca in diverse countries.

In relation to the musical aspects of the ayahuasca religions, one emerging area of studies is ethnomusicology, a field that already has a reasonable number of publications. One of the most wide-ranging is the doctoral dissertation by Lucas Kastrup Rehen (2011). Based on the author's short-term field experience in a Santo Daime church in Holland, it examines the question of music in the ritual and its relation to emotions and discusses the divinely inspired quality of authentic hymns compared to normal musical compositions. Labate, Assis, and Cavnar wrote a chapter on the expansion of Santo Daime from a musical perspective (2016), seeking to analyze the way in which its hymns are interpreted, sung, imbued with new meanings, and translated outside of Brazil. This is one of the few studies to explore the question of language and the establishment of transnational networks in the Santo Daime religion.

The ayahuasca diaspora

Internationally, we find a combination of ayahuasca religions and other spiritual movements in a multitude of therapeutic, neoshamanic, and other modalities, making it difficult to analyze the internationalization of ayahuasca religions in isolation, that is, without contemplating the wider universe of alternative religiosity. Today, the ritual and therapeutic use of ayahuasca has become a global phenomenon – closely linked to New Age spirituality networks – diffused by indigenous peoples, vegetalistas, and diverse kinds of therapists and facilitators, especially in North America and Europe.

Losonczy and Mesturini (2010; 2011) seek to understand the reasons behind ayahuasca's success as a plant of power in the Amazonian setting and also as a sacred substance in the international New Age circuit. Observing the history of the hallucinogenic brew's spread, the authors identify two key roles performed by ayahuasca: as an intangible cultural heritage, and as a translator of the Latin American shamanic universe to the Western public and vice versa. In the Latin American region, an interesting work was recently published by Caicedo-Fernández (2015) on the Colombian *yajecero* field: the shamanic networks of Amazonia and neo-shamanism (or neoshamanisms, in the plural) in the context of spiritual tourism and globalization of the use of ayahuasca. The book touches on critical issues like the cultural ownership and medicalization of ayahuasca.

Sánchez and Bouso (2015) recently examined the process involved in the globalization of ayahuasca and its legal implications, while Dawson (2016) analyzes the international diffusion of ayahuasca through the idea of invented traditions, arguing that one of the inherent traits of modernity is its constant feeding on the traditional. The Australian Alex Gearin (2015), for his part, embarks on an important and pioneering comparative study on the use of ayahuasca and its relation to healing in Amazonia and Australia. López-Pavillard wrote a doctoral dissertation on ayahuasca shamanism in Spain (2015), observing its therapeutic results from the viewpoint of the epistemology and rationality of the shamans themselves. In an article on ayahuasca tourism in South America, Kavenská and Simonova (2015) quiz tourists about their experiences with the brew, observing their motivations along with the benefits and risks of this contact. A similar approach is undertaken by Prayag, Mura, Hall, and Fontaine (2016), who examine not only the viewpoint of the tourists, but also the shamans' views of ayahuasca tourism.

An interesting collection exploring ayahuasca's diffusion is *Ayahuasca Shamanism in the Amazon and Beyond* (Labate & Cavnar, 2014a). Though dealing with Amazonian shamanism in general, the volume focuses mainly on the expansion and development of the rituals involving ayahuasca consumption worldwide, discussing key themes, like the relationship between ecotourism and ethnic tourism, the combination of shamanism with a global

therapeutic and religious network, and cultural hybridization. Meanwhile, the book *The Internationalization of Ayahuasca*, in turn, edited by Labate and Jungaberle (2011), is entirely devoted to the internalization of ayahuasca, approaching the question from a multidisciplinary perspective. The volume is organized in three thematic sections that discuss the many different manifestations and uses of ayahuasca as a cultural and religious phenomenon; its pharmacological, chemical, medical, and therapeutic aspects; and also the processes of legalization, institutionalization, and recognition of ayahuasca religions in different countries. Labate, Cavnar and Gearin (2016) are responsible for an international collection dedicated to examining what they call “the world ayahuasca diaspora,” including chapters on the expansion of ayahuasca religions and Amazonian shamanism. The work puts to use previously unpublished ethnographies to explore the reinventions and controversies involved in the global expansion of ayahuasca. Rose carried out research on the contact and alliances between indigenous peoples and urban ayahuasca groups for her doctorate (2010), which examines the Fogo Sagrado (Sacred Fire) through the encounters and intersections between the Guarani, ayahuasca, and the Caminho Vermelho (Red Path). Langdon and Rose (2012) deepen the exploration of this theme by pondering the role of the international expansion of ayahuasca in the process of the Guarani people incorporating the hallucinogenic brew.

Coutinho (2011) provides a innovative observation of the transposition of ayahuasca consumption from Kaxinawá villages to urban centers through a case study of *nixi pae* in Rio de Janeiro. Along the same lines, Aline Ferreira Oliveira (2011; 2012) discusses the reinvention of traditions and the cultural and social flows of the ayahuasca universe in the contemporary context, where urban ceremonies coexist alongside a variety of indigenous practices, and where ayahuasca shares space with many other substances, such as rapé, sananga, and kambô. In this new scenario, visits by Brazilians and foreigners to indigenous festivals in the north of Brazil are increasingly common, and the flow of Peruvian and Colombian indigenous people, including shamans, is growing in the cities.

Labate and Coutinho (2013) also observe the recent impact of the expansion of ayahuasca religions among diverse indigenous groups (Kaxinawá, Guarani, Apurinã, Kuntanawa, and Yawanawá), showing that the narrative connecting the history of urban ayahuasqueros to the traditional Amerindian universe has now been appropriated in various ways by indigenous peoples themselves, accelerating their insertion in the urban ayahuasca circuits. In the Latin American context, Alvarez (2015) produced an innovative and productive multimedia book, available on the Internet, with audio, images, and videos, concerning the impact of ayahuasca tourism on traditional ayahuasca practices. Apud (2013; 2015) and Apud, Scuro, and Sánchez Petrone (2013) provided a detailed account of the insertion of ayahuasca, the neo-ayahuasquero and neoshamanic groups in Uruguay. Also in the latter country, Scuro (2016) has produced a thought-provoking doctoral dissertation

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on neoshamanism, examining the arrival of three different Latin American traditions in Uruguay: vegetalismo, Santo Daime, and Caminho Vermelho. The author treats neoshamanism as a “device” through which the ideas of “Amazonism” and neo-orientalism are advanced to explain the presence of this religiosity within the modernist/colonialist paradigm.

Evaluating the map of the Brazilian and international neo-ayahuasquero universe, we can note an overall expansion in this field of studies. The texts cited here are a good starting point in this promising area; one, indeed, whose presence has been growing considerably in international forums and congresses.

Legal questions and regulation of ayahuasca

Each country deals with the questions of drugs and ayahuasca in a distinct way, which leads these groups to assume a variety of configurations, depending on each locality. While in Holland, which has relatively tolerant drug legislation, the Santo Daime groups are well structured and have dozens of members, Santo Daime rituals are banned in Germany, and its groups are small and sparse, with a low level of organization. On the one hand, in the United States, the UDV – and, in some states, the Santo Daime, too – have the legal right to use ayahuasca; on the other, in France, the plants used to make ayahuasca are prohibited. The examples could be multiplied. This myriad of legislation and the underlying questions – religious freedom, drug policy, human rights – make the legal and juridical aspects of the process of internationalization of ayahuasca religions one of the most fertile areas of study.

Labate and Feeney (2012) and Feeney and Labate (2013; 2014) explore the legal issues involved in the regulation of ayahuasca and the religious freedom of the groups that use it as a sacrament. They observe the narratives deployed both by the ayahuasca religions and by state agents, as well as the specificities and contrasts between different contexts of use. Jeffrey Bronfman (2007), one of the major leaders of the UDV outside Brazil, has written about the group’s legal battle with the US government for the religious right to use ayahuasca as a sacrament. This question is also examined in another work, published some years later (Bronfman, 2013), where he further discusses the relationship between the legal aspects of the brew and religious freedom. The UDV’s legal battle in the US Supreme Court was such an important landmark that it inspired various other texts and reflections, including those by Godoy (2011), Bullis (2008), and Groisman and Rios (2007), as well as the text by Labate (2012) that discusses the agreement reached between the UDV and the US Drug Enforcement Agency (DEA).

Anderson et al. (2012) wrote the *Statement on Ayahuasca*, a document arguing for the non-criminalization of ayahuasca religions from a human rights perspective, based on a survey of the anthropological and biomedical literature. Clara Novaes (2012), for her part, explores the topic in the

French setting. Though based on research in psychology, the work includes information on the French legislation, discussing how ayahuasca practices are treated as cults in that country. MacRae (1998; 2008) takes an original approach, contrasting the legality of the religious consumption of ayahuasca with the illegality of cannabis use in the context of Santo Daime, where it is known as “Santa Maria.” His texts remain benchmarks on the topic.

Biomedicine, psychology, and health

Another prolific area of studies on ayahuasca in the international setting is health. Anthropologists, psychologists, psychiatrists, and medical researchers and doctors have all been contributing to a flourishing literature on the theme. *Ayahuasca y salud*, edited by Labate and Bouso (2013), is a recent collection of articles addressing therapeutic and health aspects from a multidisciplinary viewpoint. Comprising 22 chapters, it ranges from anthropology to biochemistry and pharmacology, including clinical studies, the first such work discussing health in the ayahuasca universe.

Investigating the potential benefits of ayahuasca for human well-being, Halpern, Sherwood, Passie, Blackwell, and Rutenber (2008) undertook a quantitative study with US members of Santo Daime to assess ayahuasca’s psychological benefits and its ability to help fight depression and problematic drug use. However, the study lacked a control group, limiting its validity. The same year saw completion of a doctoral dissertation by Barbosa (2008) that assessed and conducted a follow-up of the mental health of 23 people who experimented with ayahuasca for the first time, both in Santo Daime and in União do Vegetal. The evaluation of the health of UDV and Santo Daime neophytes is the focus of other works by the author (Barbosa, Giglio, & Dalgalarondo, 2005; Barbosa, Cazorla, Giglio, & Strassman, 2009), who also reported on the health condition of ayahuasca users in a more recent article, based on bibliographic research using the PubMed database (Barbosa, Mizumoto, Bogenschutz, & Strassman, 2012).

In the North American context, Harris and Gurel (2012) used quantitative questionnaires to examine the relationship between ayahuasca use and personal habits like diet, alcohol consumption, and feelings like compassion and self-acceptance. Bouso Fábregas, Antonijoan, Rodríguez-Fornells, and Riba (2013), in turn, compared groups of regular and occasional ayahuasca consumers, investigating the effects of the ayahuasca brew on neuropsychological activities: for instance, those related to memory.

Working in the same area, Bouso et al. (2012) conducted a longitudinal neuropsychological study of ayahuasca consumption in control groups from Santo Daime (Céu do Mapiá, Amazon) and Barquinha (Rio Branco, Acre), while Santos, Landeira-Fernandez, Strassman, Motta, and Cruz (2007) assessed the effect of ayahuasca on people’s emotional sphere by monitoring Santo Daime adepts. Dobkin de Rios et al. (2005), Silveira et al. (2005), and Doering-Silveira et al. (2005a; 2005b) all undertook neuropsychological

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evaluations of adolescent users of ayahuasca in the UDV, while Camargo (2003) wrote a master's thesis on the relation between ayahuasca and psychosis in the UDV and Santo Daime. Although an interesting and little studied topic, this study suffers from an absence of specialized bibliographic research and the lack of analytic distance from the study object.

Following the expanding wave of publications on ayahuasca from a health perspective, in 2014, Labate and Cavnar released *The Therapeutic Use of Ayahuasca*, a collection of 13 chapters analyzing the therapeutic use of ayahuasca and its relation to the health and well-being of the people who consume it. Researchers from different areas discuss ayahuasca's potential in combating depression, problematic drug use, and other ailments. Blainey (2015), for example, uses a case study of Santo Daime in Belgium to discuss the contrasts and conflicts between prohibitionist policies and the emergence of a therapeutic subculture based on the consumption of entheogens.

Another area where we can observe the emergence of an academic literature on ayahuasca religions is psychology. Panneck (2014), for instance, analyzes the curative potential of ayahuasca use in Santo Daime rituals in the United States and its efficacy in stressful situations, while Villaescusa (2002; 2003) analyzes the psychotherapeutic aspects of Santo Daime ceremonies in the United Kingdom. Others pursuing similar lines of research include Méndez (2014), who speculates on the meaning of the Queen of the Forest through Jungian psychology and archetypes, and Oliveira (2015), who undertakes a psychological evaluation of Santo Daime children living in the Céu do Mapiá (Amazonas state) community.

The US psychologist Clancy Cavnar has engaged in pioneering studies of sexuality and gender identity in the context of ayahuasca religions, having written her dissertation (2011) and other works (2014a; 2014b) on the topic, based on her personal experience with Santo Daime in California, Europe, and Brazil. Her work points to a broad and fertile field of studies almost entirely overlooked in the anthropological literature, one that may become increasingly important in the future. A more recent study examining the issues of gender and health is Echazú Boschmeier's doctoral dissertation (2015). Based on her ethnographic experience in Tamshiyacu, Peru, the author examines ayahuasca shamanism from the viewpoint of gender. This perspective encompasses the relation between men and women in shamanism, and the perspective of women in this context, as well as the universe of plants and traditional medicines. In the process, the author seeks to deconstruct the myth of "the male-shaman-who-heals-with-ayahuasca."

Native literature and religious texts

Parallel to the academic literature on the topic, the ayahuasca religions produce their own texts and books from a "native" perspective. These publications are important guides for members of each religion, and also provide information on their internal organization, as well as their values, symbols,

beliefs, and so on. In terms of Santo Daime, in the last few years, a small book was released, written in the form of *cordel* folk literature by the movement's main leader, Alfredo Gregório de Melo, more generally known as Padrinho Alfredo. *Viagens ao Juruá* (2007) narrates the first two journeys made by Alfredo to the Juruá River region to meet his family members. It contains illustrations by the author and a glossary with explanations of Amazonian plants and wildlife. The book is bilingual, highlighting the impact of Santo Daime's internationalization within the religion itself.

Another publication by ICEFLU is *Jornal do Céu*, published sporadically, with news on Céu do Mapiá, the church's projects and the most important events involving the community and its leaders. It is run by the Vila Céu do Mapiá residents' association and sometimes contains information on foreigners who visited the locality. ICEFLU has also published works outside Brazil, some already dating back decades, especially the texts of Alex Polari de Alverga (1994; 1999; 2000) that, published in more than one language, translate into poetic and literary form the author's visionary experiences with daime (ayahuasca) and the teachings of Padrinho Sebastião Mota de Melo, the main leader of this expansionist branch of Santo Daime.

The União do Vegetal has the newspaper *Alto Falante*, containing a variety of information, chronologies, and institutional reports, as well as news on the diverse UDV hubs around the planet, demonstrating its strong organizational structure. An interesting publication that touches on the theme of the internationalization of the UDV is the book *Hoasca: The Sacrament of the União do Vegetal – Science, Society and Environment*, edited by Joaze Bernardino (2013). This book stemmed from the Second International Hoasca Congress, organized by the UDV in 2008, in Brasília. The work divides the texts by 44 authors into three sections: Hoasca and Science, Hoasca and Society, and Hoasca and the Environment. It includes discussions on the religion's history, the plants used in preparing the brew, and important contributions on the UDV's expansion and internationalization, such as, for example, the number of followers and places where the UDV is present worldwide.

Final remarks

After evaluating 117 works, we may obtain a panoramic overview of this literature. A change can be detected in the nature of the publications on the theme since the release of *Ayahuasca Religions: A Comprehensive Bibliography & Critical Essays* (Labate, Rose, & Guimaraes dos Santos, 2009), the largest assessment available on the specialized literature. First, we can observe a growing academic literature on health-related issues, including the increasing involvement of professionals linked to biomedicine and pharmacology. Simultaneously, there is an expanding number of works discussing juridical and legal aspects of religious ayahuasca use. This terrain remains extremely fertile, given the multitude of different contexts in which the UDV

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and Santo Daime are active, the diversity of legislations and legal interpretations in each national setting, and the increasing dialogue between the studies of sacred plants and drug and health policies, including the steady increase in funding and international events focused on these areas.

In the specific context of anthropological and sociological studies, a certain academic endogamy existed for many years; in other words, the field of studies on ayahuasca religions was relatively self-contained. Moreover, many of the texts seem to have an enthusiastic or “promotional” tone, in part because of the difficult legal situation faced by these groups in Brazil. This has changed recently, and research on these groups has started to dialogue with critical topics of contemporary anthropology and the sociology of religion, as well as the literature on the diaspora of other religious phenomena and cultural expressions. A further point worth stressing is that, precisely because of its internationalization, more foreign scholars have become interested in this field of studies, conducting master’s and doctoral research among Brazilian groups or with Brazilian groups abroad.

In addition, studies have adopted a more distanced and critical stance in relation to the subject matter, an approach illustrated by this new phase of research on the religious use of ayahuasca, more multidisciplinary and less “native.” However, it is worth noting that, at least from the viewpoint of the social sciences, the literature on the UDV continues to be largely endogenous and institutional. There also exists a wide spectrum of texts and conferences that are hybrid in nature: partly academic, partly New Age and native.

As in Brazil, so too internationally, Santo Daime has been more widely studied academically than the UDV. While this obviously results from the choice of research topic by individual scholars, it also reflects the organizational style and international reach of each group. While the expansionist branch of Santo Daime is generally easy to access and allows reasonable freedom to researchers, the UDV strongly controls academic production about itself. However, we can also note a recent tendency for change in this area, with the UDV now appearing more open to research.

It is worth noting that, although Santo Daime rituals are performed on several continents, the studies on this religion outside of Brazil are mostly concentrated in the United States and Europe. Other contexts where Santo Daime groups are present remain to be better explored, including various South American countries, Israel, Scandinavia, Central Europe, South Africa, and Japan. These contexts undoubtedly afford a good opportunity to analyze the Santo Daime diaspora and can contribute to the construction of comparative analyses, currently scarce in the academic literature.

In relation to native perspectives, the most recent publications also reveal particular structural characteristics of the two groups in question. The Santo Daime publications are sporadic and closely linked to its charismatic leaders. Not coincidentally, the recent, more notable publications have been written by its principal figure, Padrinho Alfredo, and important leaders like

Alex Polari de Alverga. For its part, the UDV maintains a more regular output of official publications, as well as books on the group's identity and institutional makeup.

Due to its wide-ranging and fragmented nature, this literature is sparse and frequently lacks any internal dialogue. Indeed because of its “ethnographic novelty,” the research on ayahuasca religions in different countries and localities ends up being largely descriptive, repeating observations and reflections already made by anthropologists years earlier. Many foreign authors do not read Portuguese, and thus fail to cite basic references in the field. Along the same lines, the international literature still lacks a “hard core” of research, though we can identify an original set of concepts being produced and very interesting lines of research for exploration. One of the aims of this chapter has been precisely to reveal these research possibilities and promote dialogue between the works already published. We hope, therefore, to stimulate future works on the highly contemporary and intriguing phenomenon comprised by the diaspora of the ayahuasca religions; an area capable of revealing fascinating relations between language, music, religion, law, health, subjectivity, and the ritual use of psychedelics in the twenty-first century.

Notes

- 1 This chapter is a modified and extended version of the text “Um panorama da literatura sobre a internacionalização das religiões ayahuasqueiras brasileiras,” originally published as Assis, G. L. & Labate, B. C. (2017). Um Panorama da Literatura sobre a Internacionalização das Religiões Ayahuasqueiras Brasileiras [An overview of the literature on the internationalization of the Brazilian ayahuasca religions]. *Ciências Sociais Unisinos*, 52(2), p. 242–252.
- 2 Beatriz Caiuby Labate is a Visiting Professor at the Center for Research and Post Graduate Studies in Social Anthropology (CIESAS), in Guadalajara and Adjunct Faculty at the East-West Psychology Program at the California Institute of Integral Studies in San Francisco. blabate@bialabate.net +52 (33) – 3268 0600 ext. 3039. Glauber Loures de Assis has a PhD in sociology at the Federal University of Minas Gerais, Belo Horizonte, Brazil, and currently is a postdoctoral resident at UFMG and a Research Associate at the Nucleus for Interdisciplinary Studies of Psychoactives (NEIP). glauberloris@hotmail.com + 55 (31) 99571–98533.
- 3 Unlike Santo Daime and the União do Vegetal, Barquinha's expansion has been very limited and confined to Brazil. For this reason, it will be omitted from this text, which is concerned with the international diaspora of the other ayahuasca religions.
- 4 Santo Daime is a plural religion, divided into diverse “lines.” This chapter focused on its expansionist branch, namely, *Igreja do Culto Eclético da Fluente Luz Universal* (Church of the Eclectic Cult of the Universal Flowing Light), or ICEFLU.
- 5 Within the area of biomedicine, psychology, and health, we have considered the areas of neurosciences, psychology, biomedicine, and biochemistry. The literature from these fields is fairly wide-ranging and has been growing in recent years, making it impossible to consider its entirety within the bounds of the present chapter. Our focus has been on texts produced over the last 15 years in English, Spanish, and Portuguese that deal with Santo Daime and/or the UDV, the two ayahuasca religions that have acquired a transnational presence.

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