

Brazilian Children with Past-Life Memories

It is more common than generally realized for people to have what they feel are memories of previous lives. In the better cases of this nature, memories can be confirmed and the previous incarnations identified. This article presents a series of investigated claims of children's past-life memories from Brazil, reported from the 1920s until the early twenty-first century, and compares them to cases reported from elsewhere in the world. In general, Brazilian cases conform to the patterns seen elsewhere, although an unusual number of them are international cases with apparent past lives in Europe.

Introduction

Reincarnation Beliefs in Brazil

The belief in some form of rebirth or [reincarnation](#) is ancient and widespread. Reincarnation beliefs are common in West Africa, from where the majority of the slaves brought to the New World came. Their cultures had a major influence on the culture of Brazil and contributed to making that country the Western country most open to psychic experiences, including past-life memories.¹

The strongest influence on Brazilian reincarnation beliefs, however, derives from the Spiritism of [Allan Kardec](#), which, unlike Anglo-American Spiritualism, embraced reincarnation. Spiritism was exported from France to Brazil in the later decades of the nineteenth century. Although Spiritism no longer has an important presence in France, in Brazil a good percentage of the population identify themselves as Spiritist even today.²

Overview of Brazilian Reincarnation Cases

Reincarnation beliefs typically are supported by apparent past-life memories and other signs, which are of interest to psychical research as evidence for reincarnation. Systematic [research on reincarnation cases](#) began in the 1960s with the investigations of [Ian Stevenson](#). Stevenson first went to Brazil in 1962 and included two Brazilian cases (Paulo Lorenz and [Marta Lorenz](#)) in his first volume of case reports, *Twenty Cases Suggestive of Reincarnation*.³ Stevenson made contact with [Hernani Guimarães Andrade](#), a Brazilian engineer and Spiritist who founded the [Instituto Brasileiro de Pesquisas Psicobiofisicas](#) to undertake parapsychological investigations. Andrade modelled his reincarnation research on Stevenson's methods and reports, but he published exclusively in Portuguese. Two of Andrade's reincarnation cases have been translated into English;⁴ others have been summarized by [Guy Lyon Playfair](#),⁵ although some are described in Portuguese only. Almost all Brazilian reincarnation cases were investigated and reported by either Stevenson or Andrade and his team.

Brazilian reincarnation cases share many [common features and patterns](#) of cases reported elsewhere. The common features include [dreams announcing rebirth](#); [birthmarks and other congenital physical traits](#); [behavioural traits](#); and [past-life memories](#). Some children recall being [members of the opposite sex](#). There may be [memories of the intermission period](#) between lives, in which the [selection of new parents](#) is recalled. The remembered previous lives generally passed in the same region, ethnic and religious group as the present life, although [international cases](#) have been reported as well. With international cases, children may use languages from the previous life, but to which they have not been exposed in their present lives (a phenomenon known as [xenoglossy](#)).

This article represents the first comprehensive inventory of Brazilian reincarnation cases reported in Portuguese as well as in English and provides the opportunity to compare their features to the features of cases reported from [elsewhere in the Americas](#), from [Europe](#), and from [Asia](#). The eighteen cases are organized according to the relationship between the case subject and the person whose life is recalled. Nine cases have family relationships, whereas three have acquaintance relationships. There are no reported 'solved' Brazilian cases – cases in which the previous incarnation has been identified – with stranger relationships. Six other cases are 'unsolved', meaning that it has not been possible to trace the person of the remembered earlier life.

An important cross-cultural variation in reincarnation cases is the duration of the period between lives. Globally, most past lives ended not long before the present life began. Stevenson reported a median of only fifteen months in a series of 616 child cases, predominantly from Asian and Middle Eastern countries.⁶ However, the median intermission length is much longer in European and American cases. The median length of 32 solved European cases is 33 months, just under three years, more than twice the length of the global median in Stevenson's collection.⁷ For the 22 solved American cases for which reliable information on the intermission is available, the median interval is 8.5 years.⁸ The median intermission of the twelve solved Brazilian cases surveyed in this article is about six years.

With both European and American cases, the median intermission in family cases is below that of solved stranger cases, which is well below that of unsolved cases. The absence of solved stranger cases in Brazil makes it impossible to compare Brazilian cases on intermission length in family versus stranger cases as such, but the median intermission (18 months) in Brazilian cases with a family connection is considerably under the apparent 25-year median in unsolved Brazilian cases, all of which are stranger cases.

The most unusual feature of Brazilian cases is the high percentage of international cases. Only one solved case is an international case, but five of the six unsolved cases have claimed past lives in Europe. A movement between lives from Europe to Brazil would follow embodied migration patterns, which is consistent with the conscious intent or motive for reincarnating abroad seen in solved international cases generally.⁹ However, in two unsolved Brazilian international cases (Marcos and Patrícia), the reincarnation is assisted by other spirits during the intermission and so is not strictly elective.¹⁰

Eric Vinícius Ávila-Pires re-interviewed eighteen of Andrade's subjects when they were adults, 48.5 years after the original case records were made. Their average age at the time of this follow-up study was 53 years, 4 months. There were an equal number of men and women. Six subjects reported that they still recalled some of what they had spoken about when younger. Of their recalled memories, 55.8% corresponded to statements recorded for them in childhood. Phobias persisted in 22% of cases and phobias in 28% of cases. The subjects reported a good quality of life, similar to that of their relatives. In questionnaires, they demonstrated high levels of intrinsic religiosity, greater non-organizational religious involvement than participation in organized religion, and beliefs in reincarnation as the explanation for their past-life memories.[11](#)

Brazilian Cases with Family Relationships

Cora Schumacher

This 1920s case is one of the earliest reported from Brazil. A girl named Ciria Schumacher died of croup in 1925. Her mother was upset for months, until she gave birth to another daughter, Cora. When Cora was three years old, Mrs Schumacher took her on holiday to the lakeside town of São Laurencio. They were accompanied by another woman. At a certain spot on the beach, Cora exclaimed, 'Mama, does the lady remember when we here bathing with Mrs F, and the water carried away my little white knickers?' She went on to describe how the lady had told Mrs F to catch the knickers, whereupon Mrs F had replied that it was just as well that it was only a piece of linen, and not Ciria in the knickers. This event had indeed occurred as Cora described, although she had not heard the story told before.[12](#)

Dráusio Miotto

Three-year old Maria Aparecida Miotto left her father's barbershop on her tricycle one morning, heading for her home nearby, when she was run over by a newspaper delivery van. She lived long enough to be carried to hospital, but her spleen had been crushed and other vital organs damaged and she could not be saved. Although they were not Spiritists, her distraught parents followed advice and consulted [Chico Xavier](#), the famous Brazilian medium, who advised them that Maria Aparecida would be reborn to them. Her parents doubted this, because her mother had been told she could have no more children without an operation she could not afford, but in October 1970, sixteen months after Maria Aparecida's death, her mother gave birth to a son whom they named Dráusio.

From infancy, Dráusio seemed to recognize people, places and articles familiar to his sister and claimed her toys as his own. He liked and disliked the same foods. When he passed the site of Maria Aparecida's fatal accident, he experienced a sharp pain in his abdomen. He had a marked fear of motor vehicles, although this declined as he grew older. In his early years, he enjoyed playing with dolls, wearing lipstick and trying on his mother's clothes, as his sister had done, but he grew out of this behaviour after his third year. By middle childhood, he was developing normally as a boy, and in adulthood was a heterosexual male.[13](#)

Dulcina Karasek

This is another early case, from the 1920s, investigated by Stevenson in the 1960s and 1970s. Dulcina recalled the life of her paternal grandfather's brother, who had died about 22 years before her birth. Dulcina identified herself as this man and wished to be addressed by his nickname, Zena. She recalled numerous things about Zena's life. When taken to visit his family, she showed her father the road that led to their house, although neither of them had ever visited it before. In his report, Stevenson emphasized Dulcina's masculine behaviour and appearance, which began to manifest by later childhood. Dulcina insisted that she was a man and could not understand why she had become a girl. She had an unusual amount of body hair for a girl and a very small pelvic outlet. In adulthood she married and became pregnant, but had to give birth by Cesarean section and died, along with her baby, during the delivery or shortly thereafter.[14](#)

Jacira Silva

Jacira Silva was precocious in speaking and by eleven months was relating her memories of her mother's brother, Ronaldo, who had killed himself at 28 by drinking formicide mixed in a red soft drink. In mediumistic communications five years after his death, Ronaldo complained of pains in his throat and stomach and declared that he had failed as a man. He asked Jacira's father if he might reincarnate as his child. Her father did not see how this was possible, as his wife was in her late forties and was already in menopause. Nevertheless, Jacira's mother became pregnant and gave birth nine months after this communication.

Jacira suffered no physical effects of the suicide, although as a child she suffered from strabismus and was cross-eyed, as Ronaldo had been. She was a precocious child who began speaking early and at eighteen months told her parents she had two mummies. She was confused about how she could have the same grandmother as her mother and why she should call her 'mummy' when in actuality, as she saw it, they were brother and sister. She liked to wear her hair short and was tomboyish and energetic, constantly running through gardens, climbing trees and jumping over walls. She did not mind being a girl, though she showed little interest in boys. She had a phobia of red liquids and attributed her suicide to weakness from having been male before. She disliked the notion of suicide and, as she grew older, began to speak out against it.[15](#)

Paulo Lorenz

Paulo Lorenz recalled the life of an elder sister, Emilia, who had killed herself at nineteen, saying she wished to be a boy. Her mother then received a series of mediumistic communications from a spirit claiming to be Emilia, who stated that although she regretted her suicide, she would return to the family as a boy. Paulo was born about eighteen months after Emilia's death, but in his early years was not happy as a boy. He steadfastly identified himself as Emilia and preferred to dress as a girl. Although his behaviour gradually shifted toward the masculine, and he became heterosexual in adulthood, he continued to be notably effeminate and never married. At 43, he took his own life.[16](#)

Paulo Oliveira

Paulo recalled having been a grand-uncle, Roberto, who had been murdered in his workplace with a shot to the back of the head nineteen years before Paulo's birth. Paulo was born with a palpable depression on his head in the spot where the bullet landed. Investigators arranged for had this area scanned by computerized tomography (CT) when he was nine years old. The scan revealed a 'concavity in the median region of the lower occipital bone and a rectification of the parietal skullcap in the paramedian left region', in other words, Paulo's skull was deformed consistent with the fatal injury to Roberto.

Paulo's mother dreamed about Roberto four years before Paulo was born, an unusually long time in advance for an announcing dream of this sort. When Paulo was fifteen months old, his mother dreamed that she was told by an unknown person that Paulo had returned as her son, which at the time she was reluctant to believe.

Between the ages of three and six, Paulo made thirteen statements about Roberto's life, nine of which were shown to be correct and four were unverified. The correct statements included the circumstances of Roberto's murder, a wooden horse he had owned, and a real horse that had been stolen from him. The unverified statements included details of the murder, which was not witnessed by anyone. None of Paulo's memory claims were shown to be incorrect. Paulo also exhibited eight distinctive behaviour characteristic of Roberto, including play at fixing tricycles, bicycles, and cars, with Roberto's business had been concerned.[17](#)

Rodrigo Marques

Rodrigo identified himself as the return of his brother Fernando, who had been four years and ten months old when he died of gastroenteritis complications, eleven months before Rodrigo was born. Fernando had been very close to his older sister Antônia, who took care of him in their large family. Fernando and Antônia slept together and after his death Antonia began to see Fernando's apparition climb into bed with her when she awoke during the night. She made the mistake of telling her sceptical father about these visits, however, and Fernando stopped visiting her. Rodrigo was darker in complexion than Fernando, but was very similar to him in character. He related many memories of Fernando's short life and recognized many of his belongings, insisting that they were his own. His father recorded many of these reincarnation signs in a document he had notarized and presented to a Spiritist organization at the time. Rodrigo retained all his memories until he was twelve, longer than most children, and recalled some events in his fifties, when he was interviewed by Andrade's team. [18](#)

Yvonne Ehrlich / Karen

Yvonne was recognized as the reincarnation of her grandmother's sister, Martha, who had been killed in an air raid on Vienna, Austria, in 1944, nine years before her birth. After the war, her family moved to Brazil, so this is an international case with a family relationship between the previous person and the case subject. Yvonne was born two weeks post-mature, on Martha's birthday. Martha had died in a blast from

the bombing, which left her with injuries on her temple and the back of her head. Yvonne had birthmarks in these places. In her habits and demeanor, she was considered to be very much like Martha. However, she did not relate any memories of Martha's life, except on one occasion when she was seven years old and her grandmother reprimanded her for talking with her in a certain way. 'What do you mean "grandmother"?' she said. 'I am your sister.'[19](#)

Brazilian Cases with Acquaintance Relationships

Kilden Alexandre Waterloo

This case was investigated by Andrade, who wrote *Reborn for Love* about it. He regarded it as his most important case. It concerns a priest, Father Jonathan, who died after fracturing his skull in a motorcycle accident. Father Jonathan had been a good friend of Marine Waterloo, who heard his disembodied voice in her apartment at a time she later learned he had been in a coma. Her son Kilden was born seven years after Father Jonathan's death and although she did not then believe in reincarnation, she gave Kilden her pet name for Father Jonathan, Alexandre, as a middle name. As he grew older, Kilden would sometimes identify himself as Alexandre or 'the priest', but still Marine did not see the connection. It was only after he insisted that he had died in an accident with his motorcycle, rather than in a car crash as the radio news had reported, that she began to take the possibility seriously. She wrote to Father Jonathan's old parish for details about what had transpired and determined that Kilden was correct about the motorcycle accident. Many things about Kilden's personality and behaviour then fell into place and she started corresponding with Andrade about the case.[20](#)

Marta Lorenz

[Marta Lorenz](#) is a sister of Paulo Lorenz (see above). When she was about two and a half years old, she started talking about having been a woman who had been a close friend of her family. This woman had deliberately contracted tuberculosis, from which she died at 28, after her father had forbidden her, for the second time, to marry a man she loved. Prior to her illness, her lover had killed himself. Marta was born ten months after the woman's death. She was given to upper respiratory infections and when she contracted the common cold, her voice would become hoarse or she would get laryngitis, things the woman whose life she recalled had had to endure before her death.[21](#)

Rogério Borges

When Rogério was four, watching a television programme with his family, he surprised them with the announcement, 'I am Mané Jerônimo; I cared for my father when he was little.' Mané Jerônimo was the nickname of Manoel Jerônimo Rodrigues Nunes, a herbalist and healer who, indeed, had treated Rogério's father as a child. In addition to using herbs, Mané Jerônimo appealed for the blessings of a saint, Nossa Senhora da Aparecida, to whom he was devoted. Shortly before his death, he gave his statuette of the saint to his younger brother and fellow healer, Antônio, with the request to keep it until his return. Mané Jerônimo had been

bitten on the leg by a venomous pit viper. He was treated quickly and his life was saved, but a large ulcer developed in the location of the bite. This hurt him, forcing him to limp and use crutches to walk. The ulcer then became infected, leading to his death at 83 years of age. Rogério's father was seven at the time.

Rogério was born in July 1977, 32 years on. After identifying himself as Mané Jerônimo, he recounted several things from the healer's life and it became clear that he had retained many elements of his personality. He pleaded so insistently to visit Antônio that finally his mother took him there. Rogério recognized Antônio's house and Antônio himself. He told Antônio several things, all accurate, about his brother, and picked out Mané Jerônimo's saint statuette from a row of similar statuettes. Andrade met Rogério when he was a teenager, but he was still talking about the previous life and he walked with a limp, using a stick for support. Rogério explained that this was because he experienced a sharp pain in his leg in the place the snake had bitten Mané Jerônimo and his ulcer had developed.[22](#)

Unsolved Brazilian Reincarnation Cases

Celso

When he was three years old, Celso wandered away from his play and did not reappear for hours. Upon his return, he was asked where he had been – which in Portuguese can also mean, 'Where do you come from?' 'Norway,' the boy answered, using the Norwegian '*Norge*' rather than the Portuguese '*Noruega*'. Thereafter he spoke frequently about having been a Norwegian priest, living in a monastery, apparently in the vicinity of Lake Femunden. He disliked the heat of Brazil, but was reconciled to living there in his present life. He gave his previous name as Father Herculano. He was killed when his monastery was bombed, possibly by the Nazis when they invaded Norway in April 1940. When Celso was born in June 1943, his hair was completely blond and his face was pale, Nordic in appearance, very different from his parents and siblings. Andrade documented the Brazilian side of his case, but it was never properly investigated in Norway and the accuracy of Celso's memories has not been determined.[23](#)

Gustavo

This is another case with past-life memories in Europe. Gustavo was born in January 1969. His first words were German, although his parents had no immediate European ancestry and spoke Portuguese. When he first heard 'The Blue Danube' waltz, he became very excited, dancing about and beating time. At a children's carnival, he performed what looked to observers like a German peasant dance rather than the traditional Brazilian samba. When he was five, he cheered for Germany during football matches. When shown pictures of the world's flags and asked to pick his favourite, he immediately chose the German. When he went to the beach, he drew a swastika in the sand. As a young child, he would draw battle scenes of battleships being attacked by torpedoes, the sky full of V1 and V2 rockets. At the same time, he was terrified of real military hardware and of aeroplanes and helicopters. Unfortunately, he did not recall enough details about his apparent

German life to allow it to be traced, but if he died during World War II, the intermission in his case would have been 26-27 years.[24](#)

Lucila

Lucila was born in 1983. There are no clues to the length of the intermission, although her past life would appear to have been in recent decades. While on a road trip with her family when she was three, she said she had made many such excursions with her 'other' mother. Gradually she added details about the past life she recalled. Her mother was Leila, her father was Roberto, and she had two sisters, one named Gabriela. She herself was called Mariana. They lived in São Paulo in a beautiful mansion, with a balcony overlooking a landscaped yard with a 'dorideira' tree. She died in an auto accident when she was eleven, apparently on the way to the coastal city of Santos. Her aunt, who was driving, tried to pass a car ahead of them, and they were hit head-on by a truck travelling in the other lane. She and her cousin were thrown from the car and her legs were broken. Lucila often complained about pain in her legs, especially when running. Despite Lucila's detailed memories of Mariana's house, family and death, Andrade was not able to trace her family, and the case remains unsolved.[25](#)

Marcos

This is another of the several Brazilian cases with the suggestion of a death in Europe during either World War I or II. Marcos was born in 1966. One morning when he was three, he awoke crying. He had remembered crawling through a forest with his father when he was spotted by a soldier, who shot him in the chest and killed him. He had been reborn after his mother from that life sent him to his present parents, telling him: 'Go, my prince, you must fight hard against the evil that exists on Earth.' When he was five, Marcos instructed his mother on how to prepare a chicken dish with beer, a recipe he said was known 'in parts of Europe', but not in Brazil. Unfortunately, he did not recall enough about his previous life to allow it to be traced. According to Marcos, he had once been a father to his father, but if this is so, it must have been in a life of which his father had no recollection.[26](#)

Patrícia / Tina

Patrícia was born in Araraquara, Brazil, on 14 November 1939. She was strongly drawn to France from a young age, preferring French foods to her family's Italian fare, and learned to speak French without difficulty. She was just shy of her third birthday in November 1942, when she awoke at dawn, crying that her 'real city' of Vichy had been invaded. A few hours later, her parents heard a radio announcement about the Nazi occupation of Vichy. Patrícia demonstrated a strong aversion to anything German. She had been killed when she opened the door of her house in Vichy, she asserted. A soldier entered, pointed his rifle at her heart, and pulled the trigger. This might have happened in 1914, when Germany invaded France during the World War I, meaning that the intermission between lives would have been 25 years. Patrícia had two birthmarks, one on the left side of her chest, the other on her back, resembling entry and exit wounds from a bullet.

Patrícia said she had come to Brazil in an all-white craft that flew over a ‘great river’, dropped two passengers off in São Paulo, then proceeded to Araraquara. She was advised that she was to be reborn there and she disembarked. Attracted by window curtains, she entered a house, whose interior made a strong impression on her. She then lost consciousness and remembered nothing more until she was two and a half to three years old, and began talking about her life in France. Her present-life house had been remodelled shortly after her birth, but its old scheme was exactly as she described seeing on her arrival there. She evinced an extreme fondness for the window curtains and other articles from that time and asked that they not be removed.[27](#)

Simone / Silvia / Viviane Silvino

Simone was born in March 1963. When her Portuguese-speaking grandmother picked her up for the first time, she surprised herself by greeting Simone with the Italian phrase *amore mio* (my love). Simone appeared to respond with a happy smile, as if she had understood. When she began to talk, she often used Italian words and expressions. She used fourteen Italian words before her third birthday, when her grandmother presented her an Italian dictionary. Simone’s grandmother accepted that they had been known each other before, but had no idea when. Neither of them had visited Italy, but Simone recalled living in the Capitoline Hill section of Rome. She was afraid of aeroplanes flying overhead, as she first showed in a reaction when she was less than a month old. Shortly after her third birthday, she told her grandmother how she had died, when a miniature bomb disguised as a pen dropped by Allied bombers had detonated. She had gone up to the sky then, and recalled nothing more before coming to her present life. The Allies dropped explosive devices over Rome in 1943 and 1944, so Simone would have had a nineteen- or twenty-year intermission between lives.[28](#)

James G Matlock

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Endnotes

Footnotes

- [1](#). Playfair (2011).
- [2](#). Spiritism ([2003, Geographic Distribution](#)).
- [3](#). Stevenson (1974).
- [4](#). Andrade (2010a, 2010b).
- [5](#). Playfair (2006, 2011).
- [6](#). Stevenson (2001), 120.
- [7](#). Matlock ([2020b, Cross-Cultural Comparisons](#)).

- [8.](#) Matlock ([2020a, Cross-Cultural Comparisons](#)).
- [9.](#) Haraldsson & Matlock (2016), 229-35.
- [10.](#) See Matlock (2019, 170-71) on the distinction between elective and assisted reincarnation.
- [11.](#) Ávila Pires (2024).
- [12.](#) Muller (1970), 64-65.
- [13.](#) Andrade (1988), 150-69; summarized in Playfair (2006), 69-70.
- [14.](#) Stevenson (1997), vol. 2, 1875-81.
- [15.](#) Andrade (2010). This case is summarized by Playfair (2011, pp. 167-169) under the name Julia Moriera.
- [16.](#) Stevenson (1974), 203-5.
- [17.](#) Moraes et al. (2024). The Oliviera surname was supplied in a personal communication from Lucam Moraes.
- [18.](#) Andrade (1988), 98-127.
- [19.](#) Stevenson (1997), vol. 1, 263-69, under the name Yvonne Ehrlich; Playfair (2011), 164-65, under the name Karen.
- [20.](#) Andrade (2010). Summaries are given by Playfair (2011, 169-71) and by Haraldsson & Matlock (2016, 204-8).
- [21.](#) Stevenson (1974), 183-203; Muller (1970), 62-64.
- [22.](#) Andrade (1988), 128-49; summarized in Playfair (2006), 70-71.
- [23.](#) Andrade (1988), 204-32; summarized in Playfair (2006), 68.
- [24.](#) Andrade (2002), 137-49; summarized in Playfair (2006), 68-70.
- [25.](#) Andrade (2002), 150-60.
- [26.](#) Playfair (2011), 166.
- [27.](#) Andrade (1988), 170-203, under name Patrícia; summarized in Playfair (2011), 163-64, as Tina.
- [28.](#) Andrade (1988), 23-68, under the name Simone; summarized by Playfair (2006), 59-64, as Simone; Playfair (2011), 159-63, as Silvia; Stevenson (1974b), 18, as Viviane Silvino.