Constructing Cannabis:

A Foucauldian Genealogy (critical history) of Western Cannabis discourse and knowledge

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Abstract

The twenty first century has seen dominant Cannabis discourse and knowledge across Western cultures change drastically, with drug Cannabis going from being almost universally positioned as a dangerous and illegal narcotic, to being legally sold as a valuable recreational drug and medicine in a steadily growing number of countries around the world.

This thesis is a work of Foucauldian genealogy (critical history), employing a mixed-theoretical approach drawing on Foucauldian archaeology and genealogy, Edward Said's work on Orientalism, and Bradley J. Borougerdis' 'post-commodity approach' to studying the history of the commodification of Cannabis in Western cultures. As a work of Foucauldian genealogy, this thesis intends to explain and problematize current belief systems and discourse around Cannabis, by strategically excavating the historical narratives and systems of thought (epistemes) that governed the evolution of Western Cannabis discourse and knowledge. Beginning in the 11th century AD, this thesis traces the development and evolution of dominant narratives, systems of belief, and constructions of Cannabis in Western cultures, examining how these were employed historically in relationships of power-knowledge and control, paying particular attention to the way certain historical constructions of Cannabis transmogrified over time, becoming part of the Oriental degeneracy narrative of Western imperialism.

While the episteme of Orientalism is presented as evident throughout the entire recorded history of Western Cannabis discourse, strongly influencing the evolution and development of dominant Cannabis discourse and knowledge in the West, the Western Orientalism of Cannabis is a fluid and dynamic phenomenon, changing significantly over time. Medieval European discourse and knowledge of Cannabis was largely defined by the romanticism and mysticism characteristic of early European Orientalist myths and stories, and these beliefs created a foundation of negative discourse and knowledge that was later adapted and tactically deployed in relationships of power-knowledge, to help justify Western imperialism and colonialism, and suppress and control certain minority groups. However, it was also a fascination with the Orient and 'Oriental magnificence' that led certain Western authors, artists, poets, and others to begin experimenting with Cannabis drugs during

the 19th century, eventually leading to an entirely new dominant discourse developing around drug Cannabis throughout the late twentieth and early twenty first centuries.

Acknowledgments

“Adversity is like a strong wind. It tears away from us all but the things that cannot be torn, so that we see ourselves as we really are” - Arthur Golden.

For my dad.
Thank you for showing me how to be a good man, and how to remain kind, brave, and positive, no matter what life throws at you. You are a huge source of inspiration and strength for me, and I’m so proud to be your son.

I would also like to thank my supervisor, Professor James H. Liu, for taking a chance on me, and showing incredible patience and support in the face of my stubborn determination to go down deep rabbit holes, and end up writing far more than was necessary. I could not have undertaken this journey without you.

Chapters:

relationship with the British empire, composed of both positive and negative narratives, associations, and beliefs.

6. “Indian Hemp” - page 45

This chapter examines how the discovery of a psychoactive form of Cannabis growing in India, that was consumed by the natives as both medicine and recreational drug, significantly influenced the evolution of Western Cannabis discourse and knowledge. The English empire compared and contrasted their own “industrious and resourceful Western hemp”, against the “deviant and degenerate intoxicant” that was “Indian hemp”, in a discourse employed in the services of colonialism, power-knowledge, and control. The discovery of “Indian hemp” also led to the construction of a new species of Cannabis in Western scientific discourse: “Cannabis Indica”.

7. The (first) Rise and Fall of Medicinal Cannabis - page 58

This chapter examines the conditions of possibility that allowed for a new medicinal Cannabis narrative to emerge across Europe and the United States in the early 1800s, and why, despite an initially favourable reception, this narrative struggled to hold a position in dominant Cannabis discourse and knowledge in the West, and by the early 1900s had largely fallen out of favour.

8. “Hasheesh Eaters” - The Rising Threat of the Drug Memoir - page 67

Thomas De Quincey's *Confessions of an English Opium Eater* inspired a growing Western literary genre of drug memoirs, often framed through an Orientalist lens, and with the adoption of medicinal Cannabis in Western society, Cannabis quickly joined opium as the drug of choice for aspiring new authors. This chapter examines how this

new literary-cultural phenomenon helped to exacerbate the well-established Orientalist narrative that had developed around Cannabis drugs, while also giving rise to new fears that Oriental drugs like Cannabis and opium represented an ever-growing threat to Western society.

9. Insanity & The Indian Hemp Drug Commission (IHDC) 1894 - page 75

As Britain continued to gain control over India and encountered more and more locals using various preparations of Cannabis, and Western authors and academics continued to write strange and Orientalist inspired drug-memoirs recording their experiences with drug Cannabis, the narrative positioning Cannabis as a deviant and dangerous Oriental intoxicant capable of causing insanity grew, until finally, the British established the Indian Hemp Drug Commission (IHDC), conducting a formal investigation into the negative effects of Cannabis consumption in India.

10. 'Marihuana' - page 86

At the turn off the 20th century, around the same time the IHDC were conducting their investigation into Cannabis drugs in India, a new word - 'Marihuana' - started appearing in American press, being used to describe Mexican drug preparations of the plant appearing across the border. This chapter examines how the negative Orientalist narratives that had developed around Cannabis in British India and parts of Asia were adopted in America and transferred directly onto Mexicans and Marihuana. These associations helped further solidify Cannabis as a deviant and dangerous Oriental substance.

11. Reefer Madness - page 95

Beginning in the 1930s, Commissioner of the Federal Bureau of Narcotics, Harry Anslinger, tried to eradicate Cannabis in America through extreme fearmongering and alarmist propaganda, during an anti-Cannabis campaign that has come to be known colloquially as “Reefer Madness”. This chapter examines this period of extremely racist and sensationalized Cannabis rhetoric, and its consequences for dominant Cannabis discourse and knowledge in Western culture.

12. War & Resistance - page 107

This chapter examines how Americas war on drugs helped transform the meanings and discourse around Cannabis again, first into a symbol of counter-cultural identity and resistance, and then into a highly diverse and dynamic, upscale, recreational drug. Furthermore, these new narratives sparked a renewed discourse and interest in the medicinal qualities of Cannabis, allowing the Medical narrative to become a major aspect of dominant Western Cannabis discourse and knowledge once more. By 1996 Cannabis had been declared a legal medicine in California, and in 2012 Cannabis was declared a fully legal recreational drug in Colorado, paving the way for many other states and countries to legalize both medicinal and recreational Cannabis during the first quarter of the 21st century.

13. Conclusions - page 123

14. References – page 133

Of all the plants men have ever grown, none has been praised and denounced as often as marijuana (Cannabis sativa). Throughout the ages, marijuana has been extolled as one of man's greatest benefactors - and cursed as one of his greatest scourges. Marijuana is undoubtedly a herb that has been many things to many people. Armies and navies have used it to make war, men and women to make love. Hunters and fishermen have snared the most ferocious creatures, from the tiger to the shark, in its herculean weave. Fashion designers have dressed the most elegant women in its supple knit. Hangmen have snapped the necks of thieves and murderers with its fibre. Obstetricians have eased the pain of childbirth with its leaves. Farmers have crushed its seeds and used the oil within to light their lamps. Mourners have thrown its seeds into blazing fires and have had their sorrow transformed into blissful ecstasy by the fumes that filled the air." - E. L. Abel, "Marijuana: The first twelve thousand years"

Chapter 1. Introduction

"The illegality of cannabis is outrageous, an impediment to full utilization of a drug which helps produce the serenity and insight, sensitivity and fellowship so desperately needed in this increasingly mad and dangerous world." - Carl Sagan

Cannabis holds a special place as one of the oldest recreational drugs consumed by humans, the most commonly consumed illegal drug worldwide, and arguably the most contentious recreational drug used by people today. Used by humans for thousands of years, the United Nations Office on Drugs and Crime (UNDOC) World Drug Report 2021 has an estimated 200 million global cannabis users for the year 2019, and the cultivation of cannabis plants was reported to UNDOC by 151 countries for the period 2010-2019, covering 97% of the global population (*World Drug Report 2021*). The National Survey on Drug Use and Health (NSDUH) places Cannabis as the most commonly used federally illegal drug in the United States, with 48.2 million people, or about 18% of Americans, using it at least once in 2019 (Substance Abuse and Mental Health Services Administration, 2020). And according to data gathered from the Dunedin Multidisciplinary Health and Development Study (DMHDS) (Poulton et al., 1997) and the Christchurch Health and Development Study (CHDS) (Fergusson & Horwood, 2001), the majority of New Zealanders (approximately 80%) born in the 1970s report using Cannabis at least once, despite its illegal status, with 10% going on to develop a pattern of 'heavy use' (Poulton et al., 2020).

After decades of prohibition, California became the first jurisdiction in the United States to legalise Cannabis for medicinal use in 1996 (Proposition 215). Since then (and at the time of writing this thesis), medical Cannabis has become legal in Argentina, Australia, Barbados, Brazil, Canada, Chile, Colombia, Croatia, Cyprus,

Czech Republic, Denmark, Ecuador, Finland, Germany, Greece, Ireland, Israel, Italy, Jamaica, Lebanon, Lithuania, Luxembourg, Malawi, Malta, the Netherlands, New Zealand, North Macedonia, Norway, Panama, Peru, Poland, Portugal, Rwanda, Saint Vincent and the Grenadines, San Marino, Sri Lanka, Switzerland, Thailand, the United Kingdom, Uruguay, Vanuatu, Zambia, and Zimbabwe, as well as 37 states, four territories, and the District of Columbia in the United States. Others have more restrictive laws that allow only the use of certain cannabis-derived pharmaceuticals, such as Sativex, Marinol, or Epidiolex. In 2013 Uruguay became the world's first country to fully legalise the production and sale of Cannabis. Since then, recreational Cannabis has become legal in Canada, Georgia, Malta, Mexico, South Africa, Thailand, and Uruguay, plus 21 states, two territories, and the District of Columbia in the United States, and the Australian Capital Territory in Australia. Furthermore, the commercial sale of recreational cannabis is legalized nationwide in Canada, Thailand, and Uruguay, and in all subnational U.S. jurisdictions that have legalized possession except Washington, D.C. And yet, Cannabis is still illegal at the federal level in the United States, as well as in many other countries, including New Zealand, and is still classed as a Schedule 1 drug by the Drug Enforcement Administration (DEA), meaning it is considered to have "no currently accepted medical use and a high potential for abuse" (*Drug Scheduling*, 2018), despite mounting scientific evidence to the contrary.

These seemingly contradictory and conflicting values and laws are also evident when comparing the negative health effects of Cannabis with other commonly consumed recreational drugs. Alcohol, coffee, and tobacco are all psychoactive drugs, yet they are all legal, readily available, socially acceptable, and often rarely even seen as drugs at all today in Western society, as indicated by the popular phrase "alcohol

and drugs." For example, there is “The Alcohol and Drugs History Society” (ADHS) (*Home: Alcohol and drugs*, 1970), *The Social History of Alcohol and Drugs: An Interdisciplinary Journal* (SHAD) (*University of Chicago Press*, 2003), and in New Zealand people struggling with addiction or other substance-related problems can contact the “Alcohol and Drug Helpline”. However, according to the World Health Organization (WHO), 3 million deaths every year result from harmful use of alcohol, representing 5.3% of all deaths (*Alcohol*, 2022), and tobacco kills up to half of its users, more than 8 million annually (*Tobacco*, 2022), however no scientific data has ever established a direct causal link between cannabis consumption and death.

How can we make sense of these radically conflicting beliefs, narratives, and laws that exist around Cannabis today?

In order to understand the discrepant contemporary narratives and belief systems that have evolved around Cannabis, as well as the conflicting and inconsistent state of laws that exist around this plant, we must examine the varying relationships that Cannabis has had with different cultures and societies throughout history, and understand how these different historical relationships, narratives, beliefs, and values contributed to a struggle over meaning and power that has shaped the cultural legacy of this plant for centuries. This thesis examines the history of cannabis use, its various relationships with different people and cultures, and the impact this had on the dominant discourse and knowledge that formed around this plant, through a blend of theoretical frameworks including Michel Foucault's archaeology and genealogy (itself an adaption of earlier work by Nietzsche), Edward Said’s famous

work on Orientalism, and an approach to studying history Bradley J. Borougerdi coined a ‘post-commodity approach’ (Borougerdi, 2018, p. xv).

This thesis focuses on the development of discourse and knowledge of Cannabis in Western cultures, namely, England and America. From the late 16th century through to the early 20th century, England embarked on a mission of colonisation that created the largest empire the world has ever known, and became the dominant global power for over a century (Ferguson, 2004). At the height of its power, during the 19th and early 20th centuries, it was described as "the empire on which the sun never sets," as the sun was always shining on at least one of its territories (Jackson, 2013, p. 5-6). And from the middle of the 20th century began a period of history commonly referred to as the “American Century”, largely dominated politically, economically, militarily, and culturally by the United States, especially after the dissolution of the Soviet Union when America remained the world’s only superpower (Buckland et al., 2000). Therefore, the discourse and knowledge that formed around Cannabis across the English empire and America over these periods had a significant impact on the cultural legacy of Cannabis discourse, knowledge, and legislation globally.

Chapter 2. Substances & Meaning, Knowledge & Power

“Whoever undertakes to set himself up as a judge of Truth and Knowledge is shipwrecked by the laughter of the gods” - Albert Einstein.

Theoretical Approach: the Archaeology and Genealogy of Cannabis

Scholars do not always agree on the meanings of archaeology and genealogy, and they do not agree on how to interpret Foucault’s various historical works. As Professor Emeritus Lynn Fendler wrote, “Just as some philosophers do not consider

Foucault to be a philosopher, some historians do not consider him to be a historian. The reasons for both are similar: Foucault's work challenged the rules of research in both philosophy and history. For anyone who holds traditional beliefs about philosophy or history, Foucault's work will not seem to fit properly into either one… Many people think that Foucault's work can be divided into successive periods or phases: the early work is called 'history of ideas,' the next period is labeled his 'archaeological' work, then comes the 'genealogical' work, and the last works are described as `history of thought.' Foucault himself rejected all these classifications, and he was not consistent in his uses of any of these terms" (Fendler, 2014, p. 38). As such, there is no single "Foucauldian theory" of archaeology or genealogy that can be replicated and applied by others. Rather, as Professor David Garland wrote, "what Foucault provides to us is a series of quite specific, precisely theorized analyses, each one mobilizing a customized methodology designed to address a theoretically defined problem from a strategic angle of inquiry" (Garland, 2014). In light of this, some explanation is required as to the methods employed by this thesis, and its intentions. This thesis does not intend to apply Foucauldian theory to critical discourse analysis, or social constructivism, as is often the case in Psychology. Rather, this thesis employs a multi-disciplinary approach, applying Foucauldian archaeology and genealogy as a "critical history of the present" (Garland, 2014).

As opposed to mainstream studies of history, which tend to track the progress of something longitudinally over a period of time, Foucault's archaeology employs a cross-sectional approach to studying the 'history of thought'. Just as an archaeologist studies a cross-section of different artefacts from a particular period of time, and tries to understand and explain how they all fit together, Foucault's archaeology studies a cross-section of different (mostly discursive) phenomena from a particular time (e.g.,

artefacts of dominant discourse, philosophy, economics, religion, science, culture, politics, etc.), and tries to understand and explain how they fit together, in order to highlight the dominant discursive structures and patterns of thought that operate subconsciously at an individual and societal level, that determined the conditions of possibility for knowledge at that time. Foucault used the term *episteme* to refer to the dominant/legitimate systems of thought and knowledge of a particular time. The episteme is a pattern of discursive formations and structures that can be seen across various disciplines like philosophy, economics, politics, religion, and science. According to the *Stanford Encyclopedia of Philosophy*, "The key idea of the archaeological method is that systems of thought and knowledge (epistemes or discursive formations, in Foucault's terminology) are governed by rules beyond those of grammar and logic, that operate beneath the consciousness of individual subjects, and define a system of conceptual possibilities that determines the boundaries of thought in a given domain and period. So, for example, 'History of Madness' should, Foucault maintained, be read as an intellectual excavation of the radically different discursive formations that governed talk and thought about madness from the seventeenth through the nineteenth centuries" (*Michel Foucault (Stanford Encyclopedia of Philosophy*), 2018).

As the word suggests, an episteme pertains to epistemology, as it forms the basis for distinguishing true knowledge from false knowledge, although "true" in this sense should be understood more as "accepted truth" rather than "objective truth". It is a historically specific way of knowing that defines the conditions of possibility for knowledge, and is therefore inextricably connected to various historical power-knowledge systems. A potentially elucidating analogy can be found in Thomas Kuhn's famous theory of scientific "paradigms" in the philosophy of science, which,

like Foucault's epistemes, also stresses discontinuity and structural difference. However, whereas Kuhn focuses on scientific exemplars and the shared understandings that bind communities of scientists in social processes of acculturation and replication, Foucault's epistemes focus on the unconscious operation of historically specific epistemological structures that function as the conditions of possibility for specific ways of thinking and of generating knowledge statements. Foucault's archaeology and genealogy are particularly interested in the relationship between knowledge and power. Foucault uses the term 'power-knowledge' to signify that power is constituted through accepted forms of knowledge, scientific understanding, and 'truth': "Truth is a thing of this world: it is produced only by virtue of multiple forms of constraint. And it induces regular effects of power. Each society has its regime of truth, its "general politics" of truth: that is, the types of discourse which it accepts and makes function as true; the mechanisms and instances which enable one to distinguish true and false statements, the means by which each is sanctioned; the techniques and procedures accorded value in the acquisition of truth; the status of those who are charged with saying what counts as true" (Foucault & Gordon, 1980b, p.131).

While Foucault's use of the term genealogy is usually distinguished from archaeology, the tools and methods they use are mostly the same, and there is considerable overlap between them. Essentially, genealogical studies are built on archaeological studies. Whereas archaeology attempts to study a cross-section of discursive artefacts from a given time in order to examine and understand the dominant systems of thought and knowledge (epistemes) of that time, "The point of a genealogical analysis is to show that a given system of thought (itself uncovered in its essential structures by archaeology, which therefore remains part of Foucault's

historiography) was the result of contingent turns of history, not the outcome of rationally inevitable trends" (*Michel Foucault (Stanford Encyclopedia of Philosophy*), 2018). In other words, archaeology looks to examine the “what”, while genealogy looks to examine the “why”. Foucault's genealogy was strongly influenced by Nietzsche's genealogy of morals (Nietzsche et al., 1897), particularly with its suggestion of complex, mundane, and random origins - in no way part of any grand scheme of logic or progressive history. As Professor David Garland wrote, “Genealogy was, for Foucault, a method of writing critical history: a way of using historical materials to bring about a "revaluing of values" in the present day. Genealogical analysis traces how contemporary practices and institutions emerged out of specific struggles, conflicts, alliances, and exercises of power, many of which are nowadays forgotten…. Genealogy is, in that sense, "effective history" because its intent is to problematise the present by revealing the power relations upon which it depends and the contingent processes that have brought it into being… Genealogy's aim is to trace the struggles, displacements and processes of re-purposing out of which contemporary practices emerged, and to show the historical conditions of existence upon which present-day practices depend" (Garland, 2014). Genealogy, therefore, "explicitly and self-consciously begins with a diagnosis of the current situation. There is an unequivocal and unabashed contemporary orientation" (Dreyfus et al., 1982, p. 119). Or, as Foucault explained to an interviewer in 1984: ‘‘I set out from a problem expressed in the terms current today and I try to work out its genealogy. Genealogy means that I begin my analysis from a question posed in the present’’ (Foucault et al., 1990, p. 262). So, while archaeology has a historical orientation, genealogy is firmly rooted in the present. Genealogy deploys historical discourse strategically as a critical history of the present, explaining and

problematizing contemporary systems of thought by uncovering the contingent historical and cultural belief systems and processes on which they were built.

Another significant difference between genealogy and traditional historical studies is that genealogy is operating from an epistemology of critique, as opposed to an epistemology of truth. According to Foucauldian scholar, Professor Derek Hook, "The procedures of genealogy hope to produce counter-intuitive ways of seeing, to enforce an awareness that things have not always been as they are. Genealogy thus is not directed primarily towards the cultivation of knowledge - and certainly not the 'discovery of truth' - but rather towards the generation of critique… it is the strategic 'making of critique' rather than the straightforward 'making of truth' that is the over-arching objective here" (Hook, 2005, p. 7-8). Genealogy does not try to be objective or focus on finding out the 'truth' about history. Instead, genealogy focuses on the functions, relevance, and impacts of history on the present, more than it focuses on the exact substance of what happened in the distant past. This is what history of the present means. As a critical history of the present, genealogy intends on "using history as a means of critical engagement with the present" (Garland, 2014), by showing how contemporary systems of knowledge and power are directly influenced by historically contingent processes, belief systems, and relationships of power-knowledge. As such, it is not the place of genealogy to make large, normative conclusions. The job of genealogy is to problematize contemporary systems of discourse and knowledge, by uncovering and examining the contingent historical and cultural contexts on which these systems were constructed. And yet, the historical texts and discourse that genealogy employs must still be located within a realist epistemology. As Hook explains, "The empirical materials that Foucault looks to utilize need attain a certain factuality, must qualify as documents of sorts… The

critical impetus of genealogy does not… result in a voiding of all epistemological concerns. The project of deploying oppositional knowledges that are capable of contestation – like the attempt to defamiliarize, to upturn commonplace contemporary norms and values - requires a weighty 'counter-evidence' that cannot simply be dismissed as a function of either fiction or crass subjectivism… The value, furthermore, of such documents or records is also largely contingent on how they are tactically put to use, linked to a greater strategic offensive. They constitute an important empirical resource, but one that needs to be linked to the operations of critical history, to a cogent 'epistemology of critique', if they are to be effectively utilized." (Hook, 2005, p. 7-8).

The primary sources for this thesis come from European, British, and American publications and literature related to Cannabis. In order to understand the origins and diffusion of Western Cannabis discourse and knowledge in a historical context, this thesis draws extensively from narratives across four broad categories of historical publications: medical, scientific, legal, and popular press. These publications documented the formal introduction of different preparations of Cannabis into Western culture, as well as recording the dominant institutional and societal perceptions of the plant over time.

Commodifying Cannabis

This thesis also draws from historian Bradley J Borougerdi's book C*ommodifying Cannabis: A Cultural History of a Complex Plant in the Atlantic World*, in which he introduced an approach to studying history he termed a 'post-commodity approach'. A post-commodity approach to studying history attempts to understand and explain the "cultural legacy of commodities in societies by focusing on the cultural constructions that develop around them", as well as the "cultural

transfer of knowledge about commodities from one society to another, revealing the historical interconnectedness of human social development" (Borougerdi, 2020, p. xv)

All societies view the world through their own cultural lens, and how they view and use substances endows them with meaning and normalises their use in specific social contexts. In other words, substances gain different meanings to societies through how they are commodified. Anthropologist Sidney Mintz described this phenomenon when he said, "I don't think meanings inhere in substances naturally or inevitably. Rather, I believe that meaning arises out of use, as people use substances in social relationships" (Mintz, 1986, p, xxix). Encountering different uses for these substances can lead to a struggle for power over meaning. As anthropologists William Jankowiak and Daniel Bradburd wrote, "Like other important goods, drugs are embedded in systems of meaning and power that affect the ways they are distributed and used" (Jankowiak & Bradburd, 2003). Psychologist Mitch Earleywine alluded to this when he wrote, "Each day, smiling teens buy hemp shirts… Glaucoma patients puff cannabis cigarettes in hopes of saving their sight, and many people worldwide inhale marijuana smoke in an effort to alter consciousness" (Earleywine, 2002, p. 3). Each of these different terms for the same plant have developed their own distinct associations, narratives, and cultural meanings, with 'hemp' having the strongest association with industry and business, 'cannabis' (the Latin, scientific name for the plant) the term of choice to describe the plant being used as a medicine, and 'marijuana', a more informal and Orientalist-influenced name for the plant, being used to describe it as a recreational drug.

Foucault's genealogy is a critical history of the present; an attempt to use historical materials to explain and challenge contemporary beliefs and values. And Borougerdi's "post-commodity studies are concerned primarily with analysing the

cultural legacy of commodities in societies by focusing on the cultural constructions that develop around them. They also pay particular attention to the cultural transfer of knowledge about commodities from one society to another, revealing the historical interconnectedness of human social development" (Borougerdi, 2018, p. xv). Therefore, a post-commodity approach should directly inform a genealogical enquiry regarding commodified substances. In fact, for a plant like Cannabis which provides multiple uses and has been used (commodified) by people in different parts of the world for thousands of years, including being a vital strategic resource for the British empire, a post-commodity approach should be most informing for a genealogical enquiry. By examining and understanding the dominant historical and cultural relationships that developed around Cannabis, as well as the cultural transfer of knowledge about Cannabis across different societies and cultures, and the consequent struggles over meaning and power that developed around this plant, we can start to make sense of the contentious and conflicting state of contemporary dominant Cannabis discourse, beliefs, and laws. Cannabis was once described as "a triple purpose plant" by ethnobotanist Richard E. Schultes due to the fact it "has served man long and well as a source of fiber from its stem; of an oil from its seeds; [and] of a narcotic drug from its resin" (Schultes, 1970). As we shall see, these three distinct 'purposes' that Cannabis offers humans have contributed to a struggle for meaning and power over the plant that has roots extending as far back as the 11th century.

Orientalism

This thesis also incorporates the theory of Orientalism, as introduced by Edward Said in 1978 in his influential book of the same name (Said, 1995), in which he claimed that much of the Western study and representation of the 'East', and especially Islamic civilisation, before the 20th century, was based on prejudiced

cultural attitudes of European imperialism. Said argued that western conceptions of the East “share with magic and with mythology the self-containing, self-reinforcing character of a closed system, in which the objects are what they are because they are what they are, for once, for all time, for ontological reasons that no empirical material can either dislodge or alter” (Said, 1995, p. 70). This helped create a monolithic construction of the cultures and people of the East as 'different' or 'other', from which Westerners could compare and affirm their own 'superior' identity, which was used to justify much of the exercise of power and control the latter exerted over the former during the ‘civilising’ imperial mindset of colonial Europe.

For reasons that are discussed in more detail throughout this thesis, most of the recorded history of Western Cannabis discourse and knowledge, dating back to at least the 11th century AD, saw a dichotomy between Western Hemp (Cannabis Sativa), which was largely considered a useful and industrious strategic resource, vital for European naval superiority during the Age of Exploration, and Eastern or “Oriental” Cannabis (Cannabis Indica), which was largely considered to be a degenerate and dangerous intoxicant, used mostly by deviant and lower class people. This dichotomous narrative was employed by England and America in multiple relationships of power-knowledge, being used as evidence of European superiority and the degeneration of Eastern civilizations, and justifying exercise of control and power of the former over the latter. These beliefs and narratives, understood through the framework of Orientalism, strongly influenced discourse and knowledge of drug Cannabis in the West right up to the modern day.

While the post-commodity approach to studying history is rooted in Cannabis as a “thing” - a legitimate or illegitimate substance, or commodity - the Orientalism of Cannabis is rooted in people - intergroup relations, social control, and “othering”

(Rohleder, 2014). The term “Orientalism” is used throughout this thesis, however, the Orientalism evident throughout the history of Western Cannabis discourse is in fact a fluid and dynamic concept, presenting itself in different forms at different times. As British historian John M. MacKenzie argued, Orientalism is not always negative but is in fact a complex colonial fetish, which includes both attraction and revulsion (MacKenzie, 1995). For example, during the time of the Crusades, the early Orientalism of Western Cannabis discourse was characterized by European romanticism and mysticism, being built upon popular stories, myths, and legends. Later, during the Age of Exploration, the Orientalist beliefs evident throughout Western Cannabis discourse were more focused on issues of class, power, and control, and were employed in the service of British colonization. And during the late 1800s, it was an attraction to and fascination with the Orient that contributed to a rising popularity of Cannabis drugs within certain Western subcultures.

To summarize, this thesis intends to be read primarily as a work of genealogy (critical history) of contemporary Western Cannabis discourse and knowledge: an intellectual excavation of the radically different discursive formations that governed talk and thought about Cannabis in Western culture from the eleventh through the twenty-first century, informed through the theoretical frameworks of Orientalism and a post-commodity approach to studying the history of Cannabis, and intended to both explain and problematize contemporary Cannabis beliefs and values. Through the archaeological excavation of historical Cannabis discourse, five common themes, or dominant narratives, were identified. Similar to Foucault's epistemes, these narratives are historically and culturally located patterns of belief and discourse that significantly influenced the evolution of dominant Cannabis discourse and

knowledge in the West, continuing to shape the ongoing cultural legacy and struggle for power over meaning of this plant to the modern day:

1. The Orientalist Narrative

As the oldest dominant narrative that evolved around Cannabis, the Orientalist narrative had a significant impact on the development of Western Cannabis discourse and knowledge. Framed through mostly negative perceptions and beliefs, this narrative primarily positioned specific drug preparations of Cannabis as harmful, degenerate, and dangerous Eastern intoxicants, consumed by the natives of countries in Asia, India, the Middle East, and the Orient in a manner associated with deviant behaviour, violence, murder, and insanity. Although, as discussed in chapter 12, from at least as early as the 19th century the Orientalization of Cannabis also attracted certain subcultures and individuals in Western society, who experimented with recreational use of Cannabis drugs in a desire to "play Eastern". Examples of the Orientalist narrative can be found throughout Western Cannabis discourse, from as early as the 11th century to the late 20th century, and evidence of the continued use of this discourse is still visible today.

2. The Industrial/Economic Narrative

The Industrial/Economic narrative was a significant dominant discourse around Cannabis in Western cultures from the early 14th century through to the early 19th century. The Industrial/Economic narrative was mainly situated around Cannabis as "hemp", which was used to produce fiber in Europe, a resource vital for many things, including shipping. Although a primarily positive discourse, positioning hemp as a vital, strategic, and industrious resource and promoting its cultivation, this narrative became highly complex and nuanced, developing associations with poor and "lower-class" people, and being employed in the service of systems of power and control by

the British empire. This narrative lost much momentum as new trade routes and fiber-producing plants were discovered throughout the late 18th to early 19th century; however, examples of the Industrial/Economic narrative have re-emerged in the 21st century in different forms, most notably around recreational drug Cannabis, with sales of legal recreational cannabis expected to reach an estimated 25 billion U.S. dollars in America by 2025 (Statista, 2022).

3. The Lower-Class Narrative

While this could be considered a sub-narrative of the previous two narratives, different versions of the Lower-Class narrative developed independent of each other, and some form or the other of this narrative existed in Western culture from at least the 16th century through to the 20th century, making it an essential part of the cultural legacy of Cannabis. As the name suggests, this discourse associated Cannabis with criminals, prostitutes, labourers, slaves, and other poor and seemingly lower-class people. Two different versions of the lower-class narrative developed in Western culture, across two continents, around two different uses of Cannabis, and with complete independence and ignorance of each other. In Europe, this discourse developed around hemp fiber (the primary use of Cannabis in Europe at the time), due to it being a vital yet dirty and labour-intensive crop to process. Thus, Western governments began encouraging (and sometimes forcing) poor laborers and criminals to cultivate and process the plant. This discourse also spread to America, where Cannabis quickly developed associations with black slaves. However, in India the Lower-Class narrative developed around preparations of drug Cannabis and its perceived status by Westerners as a degenerate Eastern intoxicant, primarily used by native slaves and labourers to ease the burdens of life, as well as whores and other

"deviant" and lower-class people, to promote sexual indulgence and inspire acts of violence.

4. The Medicinal/Scientific Narrative

While there are records of medicinal cannabis use having existed across different cultures for thousands of years, the medicinal narrative did not become a dominant discourse in Western culture until briefly during the early 19th century, when new innovations in science and medicine across Europe allowed some enterprising Europeans stationed in India to begin experimenting with native drug preparations of Cannabis, in an attempt to take this "deviant Eastern intoxicant", and turn it into an industrious and valuable resource. Despite initial success, a lack of knowledge around drug preparations of Cannabis, and failure to isolate the active chemicals, meant that medicinal preparations of Cannabis at the time varied wildly in their reliability, effects, strength, and results, frustrating scientists, doctors, and patients alike, and the medicinal narrative quickly fell out of favour. By the time the active chemicals were isolated in 1964, the primary dominant discourse across Western cultures had positioned Cannabis as a dangerous Eastern intoxicant. The medical narrative did not reappear as a dominant discourse until the early 21st century when the discovery of the endocannabinoid system and other breakthroughs in science caused a massive resurgence of interest in the medicinal properties of Cannabis.

5. The Resistance/Rebellion Narrative

Throughout the late 19th century, a growing fascination with the Orient and “Oriental magnificence” led some Western authors, academics, and artists to begin experimenting with Cannabis drugs as an *avant garde* form of artistic and literary expression, and a fashionable trend of “playing Eastern”. This transgressive symbolism followed Cannabis to America at the start of the 20th century, where a

racist anti-cannabis campaign designed to demonize the plant caused strong associations with Cannabis and Mexicans, African Americans, jazz musicians, and nightclub workers, adding more cultural and racial dimensions to the plant. However, this only served to reinforce a growing narrative positioning drug Cannabis as a symbol of countercultural identity and resistance to convention and the state. This narrative continued to grow over the 20th century, transmogrifying to fit the needs and agendas of various countercultural movements that developed in opposition to Americas "War on Drugs", and becoming popular with college students across the country. Despite this growing symbolism, the DEA were so successful in suppressing international supplies of Cannabis into America, that by the late 1970s they effectively forced Cannabis enthusiasts to begin growing their own crops, domestically and discretely. This sparked a revolution in indoor hydroponics Cannabis cultivation, which in turn helped develop a new narrative, with a connoisseurship subculture developing around artisanal Cannabis drug consumption as a respectable, upscale, and social activity. This also allowed for a lot of new high quality Cannabis strains and data to support the growing Medical Marijuana Movement of the 1970s and 80s, laying the foundation for Cannabis to be considered a legitimate Western medicine once more.

Chapter 3. Cannabis Origins

And God said, "See, I have given you every herb that yields seed which is on the face of all the earth, and every tree whose fruit yields seed; to you it shall be for food - Genesis 1:29

The actual historical origins of Cannabis are not really of great concern to a genealogical enquiry and so will only be discussed briefly. A recent study published

in *Vegetation history and archaeobotany* suggests that cannabis originated in the Tibetan Plateau as long as twenty-eight million years ago (McPartland, Hegman, & Long, 2019). Most 20th-century analysis has placed the centre of genetic diversity for Cannabis somewhere in Central Asia, with differences in specific locations, including the Pamir plain in current-day Tajikistan, bordering Afghanistan, Kyrgyzstan, and the Xinjiang Uighur Autonomous Region of Western China (Camp, 1936); current day Kazakhstan, Mongolia, Northwest China, and the Russian Far East (*UNODC - Bulletin on Narcotics - 1950 Issue 4 - 002*, 950); the Himalayan foothills (Sharma, 1979); and Central Asia, Northwest India including the Punjab and Kashmir, all of Afghanistan, Tajikistan, Uzbekistan, and the Western Tian Shan mountain range (Vavilov, 1951, p. xviii). Palaeobotanical studies attest that Cannabis was already present about 12000 years ago in Central Asia near the Altai Mountains (Pisanti & Bifulco, 2018). However, South-East Asia has also been proposed as an alternative region for the primary domestication of Cannabis (Bonini et al., 2018).

The origins of human Cannabis use have been lost to antiquity, with Cannabis products of some kind or another being used throughout recorded history, leading some authors to even put forward an argument for the co-evolution of Cannabis with the human species (McPartland & Guy, 2004). Cannabis use in China has been traced back to at least 4000 BCE (Wolfson, 2011), with its earliest use and cultivation appearing to originate in the steppe regions of Central Asia or China (Fleming & Clarke, 1998; Lu & Clarke, 1995; Schultes, 1969). There is evidence for the Neolithic use of Cannabis in many other cultures and geographic locations, including Greece and India (Merlin, 2003); Africa (du Toit, 1976); the early inhabitants of the Eurasian steppes, the Sredny Stog culture (Sherratt, 1997); and the prehistoric and early historic pastoral peoples of central Eurasia (Sherratt, 1991), to name just a few.

There is also evidence of Cannabis being selectively cultivated specifically for its psychoactive properties at least as far back as around 750 BC. An archaeological excavation near the Flaming Mountains, in the Xinjiang-Uighur autonomous region of China, uncovered a middle-aged European-looking man (the tomb was associated with the Tocharian culture, a nomadic population depicted as blue-eyed and fair-haired in ancient Chinese records) with a large cache of Cannabis. Further analysis revealed that the man carried almost 800 g of cultivated Cannabis with a high Δ^9-tetrahydrocannabinol (THC) content. The consequent phytochemical and botanical analysis indicated humans selectively cultivated the Cannabis from strains known to have a high THC content, with all the male plants also having been selectively removed (being far less psychoactive than females) (Russo et al., 2008)

Chapter 4. Hashish and the Assassins

"Then as now, someone who's high on marijuana or hashish is only a threat to your safety if you happen to be a Dorito" - Kyle Williams, *Tremble the Devil.*

One of the earliest known uses of Cannabis as a drug that Europeans became aware of, and strongly associated with the Orient, is Hashish. Found throughout many cultures around the world, there are a variety of different ways to prepare Hashish. Essentially, it is all the psychoactive resin glands that grow on the flowering tops of the female plants, isolated from the rest of the plant to form a fine powder which can then be smoked, and is usually considered the most potent form of Cannabis as a drug. This chapter examines how, before Europeans were even largely aware of Cannabis as a psychoactive plant, a strongly orientalist-influenced discourse had already begun forming in Europe around Hashish, associating its use with violence, murder, and a

sect of Nizari Ismaili Muslims from the late 11th century who would come to be known as the ‘assassins’.

The history of the Nizari Ismailis is very long and complex and would need an entire dedicated thesis itself to even begin to do it justice. Furthermore, the origins and stories of the assassins and their founder Hassan Sabbah are shrouded in mystery and legend, and it is difficult to distinguish fact from fiction for several reasons. The Ismailis' were a minority Muslim group who challenged the hegemony of the majority Sunni Muslims of the time; thus, they were a heavily persecuted and outnumbered group operating in a hostile environment, and were forced to engage in strict secrecy regarding their practices, beliefs, and literature. This, combined with the almost total destruction of the assassins' books and records at Alamut after the capture of the fortress by the Mongols in A.D. 1257, meant that nearly all European knowledge of the assassins came from the reports and stories of their sworn enemies, primarily the majority Sunni Muslims, who began a propaganda campaign against the Ismailis', perpetuating misinformation and contributing to an overall narrative placing Hassan Sabbah and his assassins as dangerous, deceitful, and deviant heretics, and as users of Hashish.

From early in the 9th-century Muslim authors began creating myths of the Ismailis, especially regarding their origins and aims. Sunni Muslims, in particular, wrote more polemical works against the Ismailis than any other Muslim group, portraying them as a mysterious group with dubious founders and secret initiation rites that made them nihilistic and irreligious (Daftary, 1995, p.5). One common feature of the anti-Ismaili polemicist propaganda was the portrayal of Ismailism as an *ilhad* (arch-heresy) designed to destroy Islam from within (Daftary, 1995, p.6). As Professor of Sociology Jerry Mandel wrote: “The Assassins were the red-baited

victims of their time, analogous to the Tito'ists of 1950 - labelled barbaric murderers by their Western adversaries and a hated and maligned radical sect by their fellow, if more orthodox, members of the larger religious order" (Mandel, 1966, p. 154). This is important to understand, and relevant to a genealogical examination into Cannabis, as it sets the context for the European orientalist myths and legends that came to form around this group, of which Hashish became inextricably involved.

It was within the context of this dominantly negative set of beliefs and discourse that had formed around the Ismaili community that many of their enemies began referring to them as the "Hashshāshīns" (Arabic for "hashish smokers or users"). This term was initially applied to the Nizari Ismailis by the rival Mustali Ismailis at the beginning of the 12th century, during the fall of the Ismaili Fatimid Empire and the separation of the two Ismaili streams (Daftary, 1992, p. 12), and the word seems to be employed in a generally derogatory sense, to simply refer to 'enemies' or 'bad people' (Burman, 1988, p. 70; Daftary, 1998a, p. 12, 39; Daftary, 2007, p. 354), in the same way someone might call a person a bastard in English, without making any actual reference to their parentage. In his book on the subject, *The Assassins – Holy Killers of Islam*, Edward Burman states that "Many scholars have argued, and demonstrated convincingly, that the attribution of the epithet 'hashish eaters' or 'hashish takers' is a misnomer derived from enemies of the Isma'ilis and was never used by Muslim chroniclers or sources. It was therefore used in a pejorative sense of 'enemies' or 'disreputable people'. This sense of the term survived into modern times with the common Egyptian usage of the term Hashasheen in the 1930s to mean simply 'noisy or riotous'. It is unlikely that the austere Hassan-i Sabbah indulged personally in drug taking ... there is no mention of that drug hashish in connection with the Persian Assassins – especially in the library of Alamut ('the

secret archives')" (Burman, 1988, p. 70). There is little evidence that Hashish was ever actually used by the Ismailis, and Hassan Sabbah was known for living a very austere and ascetic religious lifestyle (Daftary, 1992, p. 353; Daftary, 1998b, p. 11-12).

However, this simple pejorative nonetheless created an association between the assassins and Hashish at a time when the Europeans, or the Latin Franks, then engaged in the crusades to liberate the holy lands of Muslims, first made contact with members of the Shi'i Muslim community in Syria. Due to the highly secretive nature of the Ismailis, most of the information the occidental observers acquired about them came from distorted half-truths and fabricated legends obtained from their numerous Muslim and Christian enemies. The anti-Ismaili legends of the Sunni polemicists, combined with the general hostility of the majority Sunni Muslim society, helped contribute to the Europeans imaginative stories about the 'Order of Assassins' and their mysterious, murder-inducing drug from the Orient, which formed a foundation for many of the European's more fanciful stories and beliefs about both the assassins and Cannabis. The crusaders and their occidental observers, who were in no way concerned with acquiring and transmitting accurate information about any of the Muslim communities they met, began to construct a multitude of legends and fanciful tales of mystery and murder around these so-called 'assassins', the followers of a mysterious 'Vetus de Montanis' or 'Old Man of the Mountain,' who's most devoted conscripts used Hashish in order to engage in deadly acts of murder and self-sacrifice (Daftary, 1995, p.5). These assassin legends were transmitted back to Europe, where the knowledge of nearly all things Islamic at the time verged on complete ignorance, and the romantic and fascinating stories and myths told by the returning crusaders of the murderous, Hashish consuming 'Order of Assassins' from the Orient quickly gained popularity. As early as the twelfth century, Provencal poets compare

themselves to the assassins in their self-sacrificing devotion to their ladies (Chambers, 1949), and western historians have at times blamed the assassins for being involved in a number of purely western political intrigues with which the Isma'ilis were certainly not concerned (Nowell, 1947). As noted Ismaili scholar Dr Farhad Daftary wrote, "The Assassin legends, rooted in the general hostility of the Muslims towards the Ismailis and the Europeans' own fanciful impressions of the Orient, evolved persistently and systematically during the middle Ages. In time, these legends were taken, even by serious western chroniclers, to represent accurate descriptions of the practices of an enigmatic eastern community … The Assassin legends thus acquired an independent currency, which persistently defied re-examination in later centuries" (Daftary, 1995, p.2).

These popular European narratives placing the assassins as an exotic, mysterious, and murderous sect, of which Hashish was becoming firmly entrenched, culminated in the famous work of orientalist traveller Marco Polo who wrote extensively about this phenomenon in his 13th-century travelogues (Polo & Latham, 1958). Polo describes a powerful old man who drugged his disciples and then sent them out in a violent, murderous rage to commit political assassinations after convincing them he held the keys to the Prophet Mohammed's paradise. This man was Hassan Sabbah, leader of the assassins, whom Polo called the 'Old man of the mountain' and described as a charlatan (Polo & Latham, 1958, p. 70-73):

"You shall learn all about the Old Man of the Mountain, as I Marco heard related by many persons. He… had caused to be formed, in a valley between two mountains, the largest and most beautiful garden that ever was seen. There grew all the finest fruits in the world, and it was adorned by the most beautiful houses and palaces… It contained several conduits through which flowed respectively water,

wine, honey, and milk, Here were ladies and damsels unequalled in beauty and in the skill with which they sung and played on instruments of every description. Now the Old Man made his people believe this garden was paradise…. Into this garden he admitted no man except those who he wished to make assassins… He kept in his court all the youths of the country between twelve and twenty years of age, and when he thought proper selected a number… He gave them a beverage which threw them into a deep sleep, then carried them into the garden, and made them be awakened. When anyone of them opened his eyes…. he really believed himself in the state of blessedness. When again, however, he fell asleep, he was bought out into the castle, where he awoke in great wonder, and felt deep regret at having left that delightful abode. He then went humbly to the Old Man, worshiping him as a prophet. Being asked whence he came, he told that he had been in the paradise described by Mohammed… saying that he desired much to die and return hither. The chief then named to him a great lord whom he wished to kill. The youth cheerfully obeyed, and if in the act he was taken and put to death, he suffered with exultation, believing that he was to go into the happy place". Polo went on to describe the destruction of Alamut and the death of Hassan Sabbah at the hands of the Mongols, claiming that "since that time there has been no assassin; and thus ended his dominion and his wickedness" (Polo & Murray, 1845, p. 227-229)

Interestingly, Hashish is never actually mentioned by Polo, and close reading of his description suggests the presence of two drugs: most likely an opiate used for inducing sleep, and free-flowing wine. However even if Polo had explicitly mentioned Hashish, there is still scant reason to believe his tale. Versions of this legend existed before Polo's rendition, with Sir Henry Yule, a scholar on Marco Polo, noting that "Romantic as this story is, it seems to be precisely the same that was

current all over the East (Yule et al., 1993, p. 143). Bernard Lewis, a noted historian who specialised in Oriental studies, also stated: “The stories told by Marco Polo and other eastern and western sources of the ‘gardens of paradise’, into which the drugged devotees were introduced to receive a foretaste of the eternal bliss that awaited them after the successful completion of their missions are not confirmed by any known Isma'ilite source” (Lewis, 2016, p. 108-109). Despite this, and the fact that Polo admittedly heard his story “related by many persons”, and didn’t visit Alamut himself until well after the death of Hassan Sabbah and the destruction of the fortress at the hands of the Mongols, his rendition of this popular legend spread far and wide over the following centuries, adding to the associations between the assassins, the Orient, Hashish, violence, and murder. By the fourteenth century, the 'Old man of the mountain' and his sect of hashish consuming assassins were so well established in European lore that they could be incorporated into a work of fiction with no introduction or explanation necessary (Boccaccio & Orson, 1914, p. 172-173).

Despite a humble origin of simple pejoratives and hearsay, this narrative positioning Cannabis as a dangerous, murder-inducing Eastern drug used by a mysterious sect of assassins spread across Europe and grew in popularity over the following centuries, until finally in the early 19th century, French orientalist traveller and writer Silvestre de Sacy firmly established the link in European minds between Cannabis (in the form of Hashish), and the words “Hashshāshīn” and “assassin”, that had started forming around the Nizari Ismailis roughly 700 years prior. On May 19th, 1809, Sacy presented a lecture on the “Dynasty of Assassins and the Etymology of their Name” at the Institut de France in Paris, the country’s leading academic society since its creation in 1795 (de Sacy, 1809). As mentioned, Polo's mythic accounts of the assassins had already circulated widely through Europe. However, until now, no

one had been able to explain with any certainty the origin of the term 'assassin' or the contents of the mysterious sleeping potion used by the Old Man to drug and deceive his followers. In the lecture he presented to the Institut, Sacy declared confidently that he had solved both these mysteries.

Influenced strongly by the writings of Marco Polo and other orientalists, Sacy cited five pages verbatim from Polo's account of the Old Man of the Mountain, the fortress paradise he had created at Alamut, and his use of an "intoxicating potion" to drug his followers and turn them into fanatic assassins (de Sacy, 1809, p. 56-60). He then argued that Arabic manuscripts from the Thirteenth and Fourteenth centuries referred to the assassin cult as al-Hashishiyya (translated from Arabic as "hachichins" in French, "hashish-eaters" in English) because of the sect's regular and ritualistic hashish use, claiming that "the intoxication produced by the hashish [can lead to a] state of temporary insanity [such that] losing all knowledge of their debility [users] commit the most brutal actions, so as to disturb the public peace"(Freiherr von Hammer-Purgstall, 1835, p. 233). This led to Sacy's conclusion "that among the Ismailis, called Hachichins or Haschasch, there are people that are specifically raised to kill, that were delivered, through the use of hashish, to this absolute resignation to the will of their leader" (de Sacy, 1809, p. 83). Sacy's assumption that Hashish induced a violent state in its users led him to conclude that the word "assassin" derived from the Arabic word Hashshāshīn, which he claimed signified a hired killer.

In his book *Silencing the Past,* Haitian anthropologist Michel-Rolph Trouillot examined the production of facts and narratives from French history, from the moment of fact creation (i.e., creating and recording sources) to the moment of fact retrieval and assembly through narrative (i.e. researching and writing histories) (Trouillot, 1995, p. 28). Drawing from Foucault's notion of discourse as a "unifying

instance of knowledge and power," Truillot presents the production of historical facts and narratives as a process primarily determined by the power to define what is and what is not a source (Foucault et al., 1972). In other words, "in history, power begins at the source" (Trouillot, 1995, p. 28). At the turn of the nineteenth century, Sacy likely had more power over the legitimate sources of discourse and knowledge about the Orient than any other European scholar. A professor of Arabic at the *École spéciale des langue Orientales vivantes,* and of Persian at the Collège de France, as well as the resident Orientalist in the French Foreign Ministry since 1805, Sacy was widely considered the father of the academic discipline of Oriental studies in France and throughout the continent, and spoke that day as the country's (and arguably Europe's) leading expert on the Orient, its languages, and its history (Irwin, 2003; Said, 1995, p. 123-130; *SILVESTRE DE SACY Antoine-Isaac | Dictionnaire Des Orientalistes*, n.d.). As Said once said, "every major Arabist in Europe during the 19th century traced his intellectual authority back to him... [He] was one of the builders of the field, creators of a tradition, progenitors of the Orientalist brotherhood" (Said, 1995, p. 123, 130). So, when Sacy spoke or wrote about the Orient, most took what he said at face value as scientifically verified facts. Therefore, Sacy's lecture and subsequent publications on the Assassins and their etymological connection to Hashish offered European scholars certified "facts" about the Orient and Hashish, which, as we shall see, had a direct influence on western Cannabis discourse and knowledge right through to the late 20th century.

To summarise, before Europeans were even largely aware of Cannabis as a psychoactive drug, a dominant negative discourse and set of beliefs had developed in European culture around Hashish, influenced largely by the pattern of beliefs and discursive formations (epistemes) prevalent in the holy lands during the 11th - 13th

centuries. This discourse associated hashish use with violence, murder, and terrorism, in a narrative that positioned it as a dangerous and deviant Oriental drug used by a mysterious Eastern group known popularly as the "assassins". Because Cannabis as a psychoactive drug was still largely unknown to Europeans during the time of the assassins, this mysterious, intoxicating, Eastern drug that could produce visions and inspire murderous rages became a quintessential symbol for how medieval Europe viewed the Orient - an unknown, mysterious and dangerous, but also intoxicating and fascinating entity. Myths and legends of the murderous, Hashish consuming assassins spread across Europe, appealing to the romantic orientalist beliefs Europeans held of the Middle East, so much so that they survived and grew over the centuries, becoming a common part of European lore, and considered by many to be factual accounts of a mysterious Eastern sect. Finally, in the early 19th century, famous French Orientalist Silvestre de Sacy firmly established this link between Hashish and the assassins, presenting a lecture on the topic that would strongly influence Western Cannabis discourse and knowledge to the modern day. Despite having its origins in simple pejoratives and hearsay, the discourse and knowledge that had formed around Hashish in Europe and the Holy lands became the foundation for a discourse rooted in Orientalism, which would come to be used in the service of European colonisation, and Western imperialism, and would go on to influence cannabis laws and regulations right into the 21st century.

Chapter 5. Hemp & the Age of Exploration

"Whilst our properties, our lives, and (which ought to be more dear to us) the freedom and glory of our country, depend on the superiority of our navies, the subject of hemp should not for a day be neglected." - Lord Somerville.

The new dominant discourse developing around Cannabis, founded on myths and legends, and rooted in the episteme of romantic Orientalism prevalent in medieval Europe, began spreading across Europe from the late 11th century, positioning Cannabis in the form of Hashish as a mysterious, deviant, and dangerous Eastern drug. However, during the late middle-ages and the Age of Exploration, an entirely different discourse developed across Europe around Cannabis in some of its other forms, namely in the form of fiber. Genetic varieties of Cannabis in Europe at this time lacked the psychoactive chemical compound known today as tetrahydrocannabinol (THC). Interestingly, this phenomenon does not seem restricted to Cannabis, with the early landscape and cultures of Europe uniquely poor in indigenous hallucinogenic compounds, mainly limited to the highly toxic tropane alkaloids found in plants such as mandrake, henbane, and deadly nightshade (La Barre, 1970; Schultes, Hofmann & Rätsch, 2001). This itself could be considered an influential factor in the eventual discourse and relationships that early European society developed towards many indigenous psychoactive plant drugs, and could be an avenue of potential examination for another genealogical enquiry. It is, perhaps, no coincidence that a society whose early access to indigenous psychoactive plants was mainly restricted to highly toxic and dangerous substances, went on to develop a largely intolerant and punitive attitude towards a lot of psychoactive drug use.

Whatever the case, without being aware of it, European society had placed Cannabis in two completely independent and vastly opposing narratives, based entirely on who was using the plant (West vs East), and how it was being used (industrial resource vs psychoactive drug). As a psychoactive drug (Hashish), Eastern Cannabis had developed a reputation as a mysterious and dangerous Oriental intoxicant associated with deviancy, violence, and murder. However, at the same time

Europeans considered their Cannabis plant, which they called ‘Hemp’, an incredibly useful resource, used to make a variety of commodities both medicinal and industrial. The durable fiber and nutritious seeds provided by Cannabis were common commodities in medieval Europe. In fact, the fiber was so ubiquitous that it became common practice among the English to label all fiber-producing plants as hemp (Borougerdi, 2018, p. 3), and phrases such as African hemp, New Zealand hemp, Sisal hemp, Sunn hemp, Bengal hemp, Bombay hemp, Nettle hemp, and Brown Indian hemp, were all used in reference to fibrous plants that have no botanical relationship to Cannabis (Duvall, 2014). Cannabis (hemp) in Europe was situated in a discourse that was so strongly associated with fiber and the various industries it provided for that this industrial meaning became dominant and overshadowed any other meanings it may have had. Cannabis *was* fiber to early Europeans.

One of the most essential industries Cannabis fiber provided for was shipping. "Rope, duck canvas, and sailcloth were essential commodities for strong naval powers, and properly processed Cannabis fiber was needed to manufacture them all. The sturdy fibers that can be extracted from the plant… were regularly needed for transatlantic voyages… Even the caulking (oakum) used to repair the seams of wooden vessels came from this plant” (Borougerdi, 2018, p. 16). This meant that during the age of exploration, an age characterised by Europe's relentless ambition to penetrate, map, and chart bodies of water they believed would connect them to the riches of Asia, hemp fiber was more than just an important resource; it was the foundation upon which European naval superiority could be constructed. In other words, “until the technological developments of the second industrial revolution allowed for more innovative means of travel to replace traditional shipping, cannabis was to the Atlantic world what uranium was to the interconnected world of the 20th

century: a practical and strategic necessity for becoming a dominant power on a large scale" (Borougerdi, 2018, p. 16).

The demand for hemp fiber to fuel Europe's vast naval exploration and trade meant that enormous quantities had to be cultivated and processed. However, Europe, and especially Britain, could not produce enough hemp domestically to supply their naval needs and were forced to rely on foreign imports, mainly from Russia. This was primarily due to two reasons: First, domestically produced European cannabis fiber was of a much inferior quality to the imported Russian cannabis fiber, to the extent that it was often not of a standard suitable for use in shipping. The Russians used a technique called water retting to process their crops, which produced a far superior fiber, while most Europeans used dew retting and were resistant to taking up water retting even when it was known to produce a superior product. This seems to be due to entrenched cultural practices and beliefs around processing crops (Quincy, 1765, p. 17; Tusser & Mavor, 1812, p. 20). As historian John Hopkins states, "the foul smell emitted from the water of rotting cannabis stocks was thought to be poisonous, which also prejudiced farmers against abandoning their traditional practices" (Hopkins, 2021, p. 57). The cultural belief that water retting produced hazardous waste was too entrenched in traditional Western farming, and well into the 19th century, both British and American farmers were resistant to taking up this method.

The second reason is that the process involved in turning raw cannabis plants into usable fiber was a very time-consuming, dirty, and difficult task. Discourse from at least as early as the seventeenth century indicates Europeans considered Cannabis a very labour-intensive and arduous plant to work with, better suited to the lower classes. For example, a group of seventeenth-century London hemp dressers complaining about Dutch competition claimed that "many thousands have been set to

work [on hemp] and have lived thereby very well with their hard labour", adding that they considered it "a means to set to work many thousands of idle and vagrant people that are by authority sent into the hospitals and houses of correction in this kingdom according to the statute in that case provided" (Thirsk, 1972, p. 254). The "house of correction" was a type of establishment built after the passing of the Elizabethan Poor Law (*The 1601 Elizabethan Poor Law*, 2002) as a place where those who committed minor offences such as theft, prostitution, or "loose, idle and disorderly conduct", and those who were "unwilling to work" including vagrants and beggars, were sent and forced to work, and beating hemp quickly became a typical job required of inmates (*England Illustrated,* 1764, p.21). English painter William Hogarth depicted one of these correction houses in 1732 in a copper plate engraving from his series *A Harlot's Progress,* which shows a young woman beating hemp in a correction house, surrounded by other inmates. The tendency to force inmates housed at correctional facilities to beat Cannabis indicates that it was indeed considered a difficult and undesirable task, associated with criminals and lower-class people.

By the end of the 18th century, Russia was exporting 60,000 tonnes of hemp annually (Crosby, 1965). As one scholar put it, "Russian aristocrats… constructed and maintained their fiefdoms, based in no small part, on their success with hemp production" (Hashim, 2017, p. 66). This reliance on a foreign power to provide such an essential strategic resource was becoming a source of alarm for many, causing England to quickly turn to its colonies as an alternative source of domestically produced hemp fiber. In 1611 lawmakers in England instructed colonists in Jamestown to cultivate Cannabis (Gray & Thompson, 1958, p. 5-6), and in 1633 another law was created by the Virginia Assembly, instructing "every planter as soone (*sic*) as he may, provided seede (*sic*) of flaxe hempe (*sic*) and sowe (*sic*) the same"

(*The Statutes at Large: 1619-1660,* 1969, p. 218). Some forty years a similar law was passed, instructing colonists that "before the twentyeth (*sic*) day of October which shalbe (*sic*) in the yeare (*sic*) 1675, [they were to] procure one quart of flax and one quart of hempe (*sic*) seed for every tithable (*sic*) person within their countyes (*sic*) and the same cause to be distributed amongst the inhabitants, and that the courts failing to procure the said fflax (*sic*) seed and hempe (*sic*) seed, and thereof make distribution in manner as aforesaid, be fined five thousand pounds of tobacco" (Hening, 1823, p. 306.). In other words, the English empire was now so concerned that relying on foreign powers for such a vital strategic resource could prove disastrous that it was attempting to make the cultivation of Cannabis in its colony's compulsory.

However, roughly a century later, in 1758, the problem still persisted, prompting member of the Royal Society for Promoting Arts and Commerce, William Bailey, to publish *A Treatise on the Better Employment, and More Comfortable Support, of the Poor in Workhouses. Together with Some Observations on the Growth and Culture of Flax,* in which he promoted hemp manufacturing as a means of providing gainful employment for the poor. Bailey also voiced concerns over the reliance on foreign powers for such a strategically important resource, drawing attention to the "vast quantities we still take of it from foreign Nations" (Bailey, 1758, p. 43), Bailey claimed that "the Poor, when taken out of Habits of Idleness, and taught to know the Comforts of honest Industry, would rejoice to be employed in it" (Bailey, 1758, p. 50), and "As Children of Six or Seven Years old are capable of spinning Flax or Hemp, and as Four of them require no more Room to perform this Work than One Spinner of Wool, there can be no better Employment for the Children of the poor Cottagers. It is fit also for old and infirm Persons, and in general for the numerous Poor which are maintained by Parishes" (Bailey, 1758, p. 46). This sense of

urgency in promoting domestic Cannabis cultivation is echoed by member of the Royal Council of North Carolina, John Rutherfurd, in a similar publication the following year, in which he claimed "this nation cannot subsist as a maritime power without importing materials for manufacturers, such as hemp… the late czar of Muscovy, who believed that we must have our hemp from him, made a monopoly of it; which, as we are under a necessity of having, ought (in the event of quarrelling with the Russians) to put us on all imaginable care and study how to provide so necessary an article independent of them"(Rutherfurd, 1761, p. 5). According to Rutherfurd, "in the year 1759, about 25,000 tons of hemp were imported from Russia… the amount of which is 450,000 sterling", yet cannabis fiber was a commodity that "in our present situation as a maritime power, we must have, cost what it will" (Rutherfurd, 1761, p. 8).

The discourse placing Cannabis as a necessary yet undesirable, labour-intensive commodity best suited to the lower classes, had made its way across the Atlantic to America as well, with Edmund Quincy mentioning in his 1765 treatise on hemp-husbandry that the “Hemp-brake is a laborious exercise, and consequently the labour is a great addition to the charge of preparing the Hemp for a market” (Quincy, 1765, p. 19). A similar publication roughly a decade later claimed that "HEMP is one of the most profitable productions the earth furnishes…as it employs a great number of poor people in a very advantageous manner…It may also furnish a ready remittance to the mother country, and become a reciprocal advantage to both", yet also mentioned how hemp is "more troublesome in the handling” than coarse flax (*Select Essays: Containing: The Manner of Raising and Dressing Flax, and Hemp*, 2012). And another article some 20 years later claimed the reason America could not provide enough hemp for Britain "probably arises more from the indolence of the

people, than any other cause. Hemp affords much labour in the winter, on which account it would be particularly valuable to an industrious people; but here, particularly the reverse" (Strickland, 1801, p. 65). In other words, America could not provide enough hemp fiber for England because the American colonists were simply too lazy to properly cultivate and process such a difficult crop as Cannabis. The associations with poor and lower class people had also extended to American slavery, where white slave owners believed this kind of hard and dirty labour was better suited to the black slaves they held in bondage, so much so that by the end of the 19th century, according to historian James Hopkins, Americans in the South referred to "hemp as a 'nigger crop,' owing to a belief that no one understood its eccentricities as well or was an expert in handling it as the Negro" (Hopkins, 2021, p. 24).

The examples presented above illustrate how the cultural legacy of Cannabis in Europe from the Age of Exploration through to the 19th century directly contributed to specific societal problems, which in turn influenced the ongoing development of Cannabis discourse in the West. The European cultural tradition of dew retting and continued resistance to water retting, combined with the reputation Cannabis had developed as an undesirable, labour intensive, and dirty commodity, directly contributed to Britain's inability to produce enough Cannabis fiber to meet the demands of its burgeoning maritime industries, leading to its reliance on Russian imports, which was both very expensive and a great source of strategic concern. This led to the development of a new dominant narrative, positioning Cannabis as a most vital strategic resource and promoting a sense of urgency in its domestic cultivation. In order to meet these demands, poor and lower-class citizens were being encouraged and sometimes forced to cultivate and process Cannabis in a narrative that was being employed in the service of systems of power and control. In what was commonly

being described as a mutually beneficial relationship between subject and empire, England believed that encouraging and forcing poor and lower-class citizens to cultivate and process Cannabis would solve two problems: removing the reliance on foreign exports by increasing domestic hemp cultivation, while also raising certain types of people up and teaching them to be "better subjects."

By the end of the 18th century dominant Cannabis discourse across Europe and America had become engaged in a complex and dynamic struggle between two quite different sets of beliefs and narratives. On the one hand, Cannabis was an industrious, vital, strategic resource, with England and America promoting a sense of urgency in encouraging its domestic cultivation. On the other hand, Cannabis was an undesirable, labour intensive, and dirty commodity, developing associations with criminals, harlots, deviants, slaves, and others generally considered to be morally deficient lower-class citizens. All the while, Cannabis as a psychoactive drug in the form of Hashish had its own distinctly negative narrative and set of beliefs that had developed independently, and with complete ignorance of the fact that the mysterious, murder-inducing Hashish of the East, and the vital yet laborious Western hemp fiber, were in fact produced by the same plant. Examining and understanding these forces shaping the use, cultivation, production, and consumption of Cannabis across the Western world reveal the cultural conditions under which the plant came to be understood as a commodity. Analysing these different narratives and relationships is also necessary to understand and explain how and why cannabis discourse and knowledge transformed so radically once again, after knowledge of its different uses across India made its way into Western culture.

Chapter 6. “Indian Hemp”

"Make the most of the Indian hemp seed, sow it everywhere" - George Washington.

The quote attributed to Lord Somerville at the start of the preceding chapter may have been better situated here. The date was March 2nd, 1808 (Somerville & Wissett, 1808, p. 281), roughly five years after the Court of Directors of the East India Company had been instructed to promote the cultivation of Cannabis for fiber in India, which "is at present cultivated for the purpose of obtaining an intoxicating drug" (Wissett, 1804, p. v). At this time, England was importing around £600,000 worth of cannabis fiber annually from Russia (Somerville & Wissett, 1808, p. ii), and the Napoleonic wars were disrupting trade routes to such an extent that even this source was dangerously close to being cut off (Borougerdi, 2018, p. 39). England, having recognized the thirteen American colonies as an independent country, losing them as a viable source of domestic Hemp, was desperately looking elsewhere for a new colonial outlet through which they could engage in hemp cultivation, and the lush and bountiful landscapes of India seemed to present the perfect opportunity. However, British explorers quickly encountered a distinct variety of Cannabis growing in India that indigenous cultures there had been using for a very long time, although for very different purposes. The clash between these different cultural uses laid the foundation for a new kind of discourse, and another change in the dominant narratives that were forming around Cannabis, contrasting the Indian's so-called degenerate and deviant uses against the Europeans' own industrial and productive ones.

Part 1. "Bhang":

Historical publications indicate that certain members of European society were vaguely aware of Cannabis as an intoxicating Eastern herb, rumoured to be popular among the natives of the lands they generally referred to as Asia, the Orient, and the East Indies, before England's reorientation towards India as a fiber producing colonial

outlet. However, there was a lot of confusion regarding what exactly this substance was, what plant it came from, how it was prepared, and how it was consumed. Often referred to as variations of "Bhang" (which is an Indian name for a specific drug preparation of the Cannabis plant, rather than the name for a corrupted Eastern version of Cannabis, or an entirely different plant, as it was frequently employed), discourse indicates that from as early as the 16th century Europeans believed this Eastern drug was used by the native peoples of the Orient primarily to increase ones appetite, and to promote "venery", encouraging deviant acts of sexual indulgence. Furthermore, just as it had in Europe and America, Cannabis also began developing associations with poor and lower-class people, albeit for different reasons. Previously these associations had developed primarily due to hemp fiber (the dominant use of Cannabis in these places) being such a labour-intensive and dirty commodity to process. However, in India, these associations developed due to the perceived ability of drug Cannabis to help slaves and poor labourers endure pain, poor nutrition, illness, and physically demanding but mentally dulling jobs. Despite these arguably being considered medicinal uses of the plant, this is rarely reflected in the Western discourse of the time, which instead primarily positions Eastern preparations of drug Cannabis as dangerous and degenerate intoxicants, consumed mostly by deviant and lower-class people.

One of the earliest published accounts of Cannabis in India by a European comes from 16th-century Portuguese physician Garcia de Orta, once physician to the King of Portugal, who published a treatise on India's medical and economic plants in 1563, titled *Colóquios dos simples e drogas da India.* In this book de Orta mentions a plant called Bangue, stating that "the Indians eat either the seeds or the pounded leaves to assist or quiet the women. They also take it for another purpose, to give an

appetite… The profit from its use is for the man to be beside himself, and to be raised above all cares and anxieties, and it makes some break into a foolish laugh. I hear that many women take it when they want to dally and flirt with men…Those of my servants who took it, unknown to me, said that it made them so as not to feel work, to be very happy, and to have a craving for food. I believe that it is so generally used and by such a number of people that there is no mystery about it. But I have not tried it, nor do I wish to do so… this is not one of our medicines and we had better not waste any more time over it" (Orta, 1913, p. 54-56). This book, the earliest published treatise on the medicinal and economic plants of India, was translated into Latin by famous Artois physician and botanist Carolus Clusius 4 years later in 1567 (Orta et al., 1567) and was widely used as a standard reference text on medicinal plants.

A similar publication in 1598 by Dutch explorer, merchant, and historian Jan Huygen van Linschoten included a chapter on Bangue, stating that "Bangue is also a common meate (*sic*) in India…. The Indians eate (*sic*) this seede (*sic*) or the leaves thereof being stamped, saying, that it maketh (*sic*) a good appetite, but useth (*sic*) most to provoke lust… The common women [or whores] use it when they meane to have a mans companie (*sic*), [thereby] to be [lively and] merrie, and to set all care aside…It causeth (*sic*) such as eate (*sic*) it, to reele (*sic*) and looke (*sic*) as if they were drunke (*sic*), and halfe (*sic*) foolish, doing nothing but laugh and bee merrie, as long as it worketh in their bodies. It is verie (*sic*) much used by the Indians, and likewise by some Portingales, but most by the slaves thereby to forget their labour : to conclude it is a [certaine (*sic*)] small comfort to [a] melancholy [person]" (Linschoten, et al., 1885, p. 115-116). Examples like these show that, like Hashish, drug cannabis in the form of Bhang was being positioned as a mysterious, deviant, Eastern intoxicant. However, unlike Hashish, Bhang was believed to be used

primarily by lower-class and poor natives to bring relief from the harsh realities of life as a labourer or slave, or to engage in acts of sexual indulgence, and was not much worthy of European attention.

In the 1670s English merchant and mariner Thomas Bowrey wrote perhaps the first ever account of drug Cannabis being consumed by a European, when "Eight or tenne of us (Englishmen) to try practice, wee wold (*sic*) need drinke (*sic*) Every man his pint of Bangha (*sic*)".However, these English sailors seemed to consider this something of a clandestine and private experiment and were worried about being observed while under the influence, as they recruited a local fakir to protect and monitor the experiment, and after "Wee dranke (*sic*) Each man his proportion, and sent the Fackeere (*sic*) out of dores (*sic*), [they] made fast all dores (*sic*) and Windows, that none of us might runne (*sic*) out into the Street, or any person come in to behold any of our humors (*sic*) thereby to laugh at us", indicating that Cannabis in the form of Bhang had already established a reputation as an unpredictable, mysterious, and disreputable eastern intoxicant. The men had mixed reactions, with Bowrey recounting that one of them “wept bitterly all the Afternoone (*sic*)”, one was so “terrified with feare (*sic*)” that he “did runne (*sic*) his head into a great Mortavan Jarre (*sic*), and continued in that Posture 4 hours or more; 4 or 5 of the number lay upon the Carpets… highly Complementinge (*sic*) each other in high termes(*sic*), each man fancyinge (*sic*) himself now lesse (*sic*) than an Emperour (*sic*)... One was quarrelsome (*sic*)”, while “My Selfe (*sic*) and one more Sat sweatinge (*sic*) for the Space of 3 hours in Exceedinge (*sic*) Measure”. This experience led him to conclude that Bhang “is of Such a bewitching Scottish nature, that whoever Use it but one month or two cannot forsake it without much difficultie (*sic*)” (Bowrey, 1905, p. 79-81). According to historian Richard Davenport-Hines, “Bowrey’s *bhang* trials were more significant

than he could imagine… Their party was a pioneering episode in Western use of medicinal substances to satisfy curiosity and the desire for oblivious joy… Already, in the 1670's, puritan self-consciousness had turned such experimental pleasures into an illicit pursuit… Bowrey's companions at his *bhang* party were also exemplary. Their behaviour was variously joyful, mindless, psychotic, and violent. The sailor that fancied himself an emperor, and his distracted colleague who hid his head inside the jar, provided prototypes of Western behaviour that have endured over three centuries" (Davenport-Hines, 2004, p. 1-2).

Accounts such as the ones presented above illustrate that while Europeans had some limited knowledge of certain drug preparations of Cannabis before the 18th century, there was a lot of confusion and misunderstanding over the nature of these substances, and what was known came primarily from the exotic descriptions of European travellers, who had little accurate understanding of, or first-hand experience with, these substances. Drug cannabis in the form of Bhang had been placed in a narrative positioning it as a mysterious and exotic, but also deviant and degenerate Oriental intoxicant, used primarily by poor and lower-class natives to promote "venery" and ease the burdens of life as a labourer or slave.

Part 2. Birth of a New Species - The Construction of Cannabis Indica:

While throughout the 16th and 17th centuries a small number of Europeans were gaining limited knowledge of Eastern preparations of drug Cannabis, mostly in the form of Bhang, none of the accounts above specifically mention Hashish, Cannabis, or Hemp, indicating that just as with the infamous, murder-inducing Hashish of the assassins of old, Europeans were still largely unaware that Bhang came from the same plant they were so desperately trying to cultivate for fiber. Hashish, Bhang, and Hemp were considered entirely different substances by most Europeans,

with Hashish being positioned in a discourse determined by a type of romantic Orientalism, Hemp being positioned in a discourse determined by colonialism, military and financial expansion, class, power, and control, and Bhang having been positioned in a discourse determined by a type of imperialistic Orientalism, interested much more in the construct of the "other" as degenerate and inferior, than the earlier Orientalism of the assassins. However, as the English pushed further and further into India and came across drug preparations of Cannabis more frequently, the knowledge that they came from a plant at least similar to their own hemp started to spread.

For example, esteemed Scottish horticulturalist, botanist, and member of the Royal Society, Phillip Miller, wrote one of the earliest recorded examples of Bangue being acknowledged as a "species of hemp" in his early 18th century *Gardener's Dictionary*. Miller included some notes on Bangue under the entry for Hemp (Cannabis Sativa), stating that "The famous *Bangue*, which is much used by the *Indians* and *Persians* to promote Venery, is a Species of Hemp; and, by the descriptions given of it, not much differing from the common Sort". Miller also reiterated some of the discourse previously established around hemp in Europe and the U.S., claiming that "As hemp is of such a singular Use in this Kingdom, it is great Pity that a much greater Quantity of it is not cultivated in *England*;… this might employ many of the Poor, who are, at present, a great Burden to their Parishes; and hereby a considerable Sum might be saved to the Nation" (Miller, 1760, p. 52). Influenced by the writings of Garcia de Orta, 18th-century English physician Robert James also included "Bangue" in his three-volume *Medicinal Dictionary* (1743–1745), in which it is identified as a plant given the Latin names *cannabis fimilis exotica* and *cannabis indica trifoliate.* It is described as "almost like Hemp" but clearly stated to be "a different plant from hemp", claiming that "The Indians… eat the seed and leaves

to increase their vigour in love affairs and excite an appetite to their food" (*A medicinal dictionary,* 1745). According to Borougerdi, the works of de Orta and James "became the most authoritative sources for British knowledge on eastern uses for cannabis in the early 18th century" (Borougerdi, 2018, p. 66).

At first, there was a lot of confusion and debate over this "Indian hemp", with some arguing that the Indian plant was an entirely different species, while others argued the differences were the result of a kind of "Asiatic" condition. As this happened, the various narratives and belief systems that had developed around Hemp, Indian Hemp, Cannabis, and Bhang, began to mingle and overlap, causing a struggle for power over meaning around the Cannabis plant, until finally in 1785 after decades of confusion and debate, French naturalist Jean-Baptiste Lamarck officially published a description of a second species of Cannabis, which he named Cannabis Indica (Lamarck, 1783, p. 695). To this day, there is still debate over whether the polytypic classification of Cannabis is correct (Pollio, 2016; McPartland & Guy, 2017), with Dr Ernest Small and others arguing for a single species classification (Gilmore et al. 2003; Merzouki, 2001; Small & Cronquist, 1976), while others believe that there is, in fact, a third species, Cannabis Ruderalis (McPartland & Guy, 2017). Whatever the case, the polytypic division between the two species, Cannabis Sativa and Cannabis Indica, has become the dominant discourse today (Erkelens & Hazekamp, 2014, p. 14). Lamarck, most famous for the theory of evolution that bears his name, was sent a sample of cannabis from India, and based on this he concluded that the Indian hemp was morphologically distinct from Cannabis Sativa, describing it as being smaller, having narrower, alternating leaves, and a firmer stem that renders it unsuitable for the purpose of producing fiber. Lamarck also claimed that "The principal effect of this plant consists of going to the head, disrupting the brain, where it produces a sort of

drunkenness that makes one forget ones sorrows, and produces a strong gaiety" (Lamarck, 1783, p. 695) repeating and reinforcing the Orientalist discourse positioning Cannabis Indica, or Indian hemp, as a non-fiber producing, Eastern intoxicant used only for deviant reasons, as opposed to Cannabis Sativa, the industrial, fiber-producing hemp of Europe. Lamarck emphasized this distinction between the European and Oriental species by using the Latin epithet *Indica*, modern Latin for "of India", which is in stark contrast to *Sativa*, which means "cultivated".

While it was the drive to promote domestic cultivation of Hemp for fiber that initially occupied the minds of the British on the Indian subcontinent, just as it had before in America, the push to cultivate Cannabis for fiber in India did not have much success. This was largely due to the fact that new fiber-producing plants were discovered in India, providing alternative sources of fiber to the English empire, but was primarily blamed on entrenched local cultural practices, in a discourse that situated Indians as too indolent to use Cannabis for industry, and instead were naturally only attracted to its degenerate and deviant uses. For example, replying to inquiries from members of the East Indian Company (EIC) on how best to cultivate Hemp in India, member of the Edinburgh Philosophical Society and prominent figure in the Scottish Enlightenment, James Anderson, reported that "Indians cultivate hemp . . . for the sake of the flowers" that produce "one of those narcotics which, like opium and tobacco, are coveted by the natives of Asia", while "for the purposes of thread, cordage, or coarse cloth, they prepare the bark of crotularia juncea, asclepias gigantea… and a variety of other plants, nearly in the same manner as the bark of hemp and flax is prepared in Europe" (Anderson, 1800, p. 232). Grouping all "the natives of Asia" as people who covet narcotics like opium and tobacco reflects the Orientalist discourse of the time, reinforcing the British imperial narrative of Oriental

deviancy and degeneracy that drug Cannabis had become a part of. Other reports on the cultivation of Hemp in India at the time further reflect these beliefs, with EIC officials reporting that the "Natives were not inclined to depart from their established usage" (Wissett, 1804, p.viii), and were "notoriously wedded to their customs and habits" and "averse to innovation of any kind" (Wissett, 1804, p.42).

This significantly impacted the ongoing development of Cannabis discourse and knowledge across Western culture. As mentioned, the discovery of alternative fiber-producing plants meant that Hemp was no longer as vital a resource to the Western world as it had been, and the Industrial/Economic narrative around Cannabis fiber quickly lost momentum, allowing the Orientalist narrative to essentially rise unchallenged, becoming the dominant foundation for Cannabis discourse and knowledge in the West. Furthermore, this narrative was employed by the British in relationships of power and control, being used as proof of the degeneracy of the natives, and justification for continued colonial presence across India. Certain members of English society were starting to express concern and doubt over the intentions of the British occupation of India and the East India Company (Nechtman, 2010, p. 11, 16), and the British in India were able to contrast their own use of Cannabis as a productive, industrial commodity with that of the local people who 'only' used Cannabis in a ‘deviant’ way, eventually creating a kind of corrupted ‘Asiatic’ version of the plant. This helped further solidify the idea that the local people were degenerate savages who needed to be civilized by Britain, hence justifying the need for a civilizing mission and continued British presence on the subcontinent.

Part 3. Violence, Insanity, and “Running A-Muck”:

Throughout the 18th century, as the British continued to establish control over cultures that had a tradition of using cannabis drugs to alter consciousness, the narrative positioning Cannabis as a deviant Oriental intoxicant which caused violence and insanity in the natives who consumed it started to become more frequent. In 1782, English physician and "Madhouse" owner of Leicester Lunatic Asylum, Thomas Arnold, mentioned Cannabis in his *Observations on the Nature, Kinds, Causes, and Prevention of Insanity, Lunacy, or Madness*, as one of the "vegetable poisons" that "are likely…to be productive of insanity", further claiming that it is used by "some Indian nations, whose sovereigns... inebriate and stupefy (*sic*), the mental faculties of their younger brothers, and of others... by a preparation of a poisonous vegetable called Bangue". In a footnote, he states that Bangue comes from cannabis Sativa, describing it as a "narcotic, productive of ideal delirium, madness, anodyne, and repellent" (Arnold, 1786, p. 254).

In 1779, the *Portable Instructions for Purchasing the Drugs and Spices of Asia and the East Indies* described 'Bangue' as "A species of opiate in much repute throughout the East for drowning care. It is the leaf of a kind of wild Hemp little differing as to leaf and seed (except in size) from our Hemp. The effects of the drug are to confound the understanding, set the imagination loose and induce a kind of folly or forgetfulness. Mr. Grose speaks of it in the following manner: 'Bangue is an intoxicating herb; in the use of which it is hard to say what pleasure can be found, it being very disagreeable to the taste and violent in its operation which produces a temporary madness, that in some, when designedly taken for that purpose, ends in running, what they call a muck, furiously killing every one they meet without distinction till they themselves are knocked on the head like mad dogs." (Steel, 1779, p. 14). According to historian James H. Mills "this account of a narcotic preparation

of cannabis would have been read by merchants and colonial officers serving in India for well over a century after its publication in 1799… because the *Portable Instructions* were regarded as such a useful publication that they were constantly reprinted as an appendix to other guides" (Mills, 2003, p. 21). This article is also one of the earliest recorded examples of "running a-muck" being applied to cannabis use. Running a-muck, which historian Isaac Campos called "perhaps the most famous of the so-called culture-bound syndromes (Campos, 2014, p. 27), at the time referred to a phenomenon in which, after consuming a drug (usually a preparation of cannabis or opium), an individual loses their mind and lashes out in spontaneous and uncontrollable rage and violence, killing everyone until they themselves are killed or subdued (Campos, 2014, p. 26-27), which Borougerdi claimed "belonged to a historical tradition in western thought of constructing Asiatic otherness through perceptions of drug use" (Borougerdi, 2020, p. 96).

As mentioned above, Silvestre de Sacy was a significant source of power over legitimate Western discourse and knowledge about both the Orient and Cannabis. Just one year after Sacy presented his lecture, an article published in *The Belfast Monthly Magazine* in 1810 recounts the story of Hassan Sabbah and the etymological argument employed by Sacy, stating, "Haschisch, in Arabic, signifies… an herb; and, by way of eminence, hemp, as also the inebriating preparation of it used in the east: and it is natural to infer, that, from their being accustomed to intoxicate themselves with this preparation previous to the desperate acts they were known to perform, they were called, in the plural, Haschischin" (*The Belfast Monthly Magazine,* 2018, p. 375). In 1818 English surgeon William Marsden published a book on the travels of Marco Polo that quoted extensively from Sacy's essay (Marsden, 1818, p. 118). The same year, German Orientalist Joseph von Hammer published a book on the history of the

assassins that also included a reprint of Sacy's essay. (Freiherr von Hammer-Purgstall, 1818) This book became hugely popular, with reviews and discussions on it appearing throughout various publications, all of which mentioned Sacy and his etymological argument connecting hashish to the assassins (*Athenaeum,* 1833, p. 644; *Museum of Foreign Literature and Science,* 1828, p. 302-307; *The Foreign Quarterly Review,* 1827, p. 449-472). This narrative, in which Cannabis was again being placed as a dangerous, violence-inducing, Oriental drug, was not restricted to Europe either. In 1821, an article published in *The Christian Journal* in New York mentioned Marsden's book, Sacy's essay, Polo's travels, and the "name of Haschisch" as a "preparation of hemp [used] throughout all of the East." ("The Story of the Old Man of the Mountain," 1821).

Through examining this historical Cannabis discourse, we can see that, as England penetrated further and further into India and encountered more and more cultures using drug preparations of Cannabis, the British began to realize that these substances were derived from a plant at the least very similar to their own Hemp. Discovering Cannabis drugs being consumed by the locals in India created a new discourse that complemented the degeneracy narrative of British imperialism, by comparing and contrasting the Indian's degenerate and deviant uses of the plant with the European's industrial ones. Furthermore, most Western knowledge of "Indian Hemp" came from European travellers returning from Asia, who viewed these substances through an Orientalist lens, and, eager to sell their stories, often embellished their accounts abroad with lurid tales of exotic drugs and deviant behaviour. As this was happening, new fiber-producing plants were discovered, causing Cannabis in the form of hemp to lose its status as a vital strategic resource to the British empire. This had massive consequences for the ongoing development of

Cannabis discourse and knowledge in the Western world. As Cannabis was replaced by other fiber-producing plants, the Industrial/Economic narrative that had promoted the cultivation of this once vital plant lost most of its momentum. Subsequently, the new dominant Orientalist narrative that had developed in British India associated deviant forms of Cannabis use with the supposedly degenerating savages of the East, offering further justification for the British occupation of India as a civilizing mission. As this happened, the old Orientalist narrative that had formed around Hashish all those centuries ago began to re-emerge, influenced heavily by the writings of Marco Polo and Silvestre de Sacy, and quickly became part of the new dominant Orientalist narrative that was forming around Cannabis in the West, associating deviant forms of Cannabis use with insanity, violence, and murder.

Chapter 7. The (first) Rise and Fall of Medicinal Cannabis

"Of all the powerful narcotics, it is the safest to use with boldness and decision". - Sir William Brooke O'Shaughnessy, 1843

As we have seen, before the 19th century Europeans used Cannabis primarily for industrial purposes, and there had been very little discourse around Cannabis as a medicine in Western culture. Examples of medicinal Cannabis use did exist, however, the dominant Western discourse and knowledge around Cannabis until now had either been as an industrial and vital resource in the form of hemp fiber, or as a mysterious, deviant, and degenerate, Eastern intoxicant, mainly in the forms of Hashish or Bhang. However, innovations in medicine and science across Europe during the early 19th century opened the potential for enterprising Europeans stationed in India to begin experimenting scientifically with indigenous drug preparations of Cannabis, in the hopes of taking this 'deviant Oriental intoxicant' and turning it into an industrious and

valuable Western medicine. This marks the beginning of yet another important, albeit short-lived, shift in dominant Western discourse and knowledge around Cannabis, with a new narrative developing positioning Cannabis as a useful, scientific, Western medicine.

One of the earliest and most influential proponents of this new narrative was an Irish physician named William Brooke O'Shaughnessy, who is credited for bringing medicinal Cannabis to the attention of the Western world, and writing "the definitive account of cannabis of the early nineteenth century" (Mills, 2003, p. 39). Born in Limerick in 1809, O'Shaughnessy graduated from Edinburgh University as an M.D. at the age of 21 and left for India as an assistant surgeon just two years later. The ambitious young doctor was quickly made a Professor of Chemistry and Medicine in the Medical College of Calcutta and embarked on a number of research projects, including research on electricity and the telegraph system, which eventually saw him knighted in 1856, and earned him a reputation as “The Person Who Saved The British Empire In India During The 1850s” (*Ancestral Line - Sir William O’Shaughnessy Brooke*, n.d.). This is relevant to a genealogy of Cannabis, as it explains how O'Shaughnessy was able to have such a large influence over Western Cannabis discourse. Like Sacy before him, O'Shaughnessy was considered an authority over the legitimate sources of knowledge around particular topics in Western society. One of his many areas of interest was indigenous drugs and medicines, and once in India, O'Shaughnessy began eagerly running experiments with local preparations of drug Cannabis on both animal and human subjects. In 1839 he published the results of this work in an essay titled *On the Preparations of the Indian Hemp, Or Gunjah (Cannabis Indica) Their Effects on the Animal System in Health, and Their Utility in the Treatment of Tetanus and Other Convulsive Diseases.* This

work represents the first serious scientific examination of Cannabis by any European, as well as the most comprehensive examination of the effects of Cannabis as both drug and medicine by a British scientist in India across the entire period of colonial rule (Mills, 2003, p. 41).

His introduction to the essay reflects much of the dominant Orientalist discourse that had come to form around drug Cannabis in Western cultures, claiming that "the narcotic effects of Hemp are popularly known in the south of Africa, South America, Turkey, Egypt, Asia Minor, India, and the adjacent territories of the Malays, Burmeses, and Siamese. In all these countries Hemp is used in various forms, by the dissipated and depraved, as the ready agent of a pleasing intoxicant" (O'Shaughnessy, 1839, p. 1). However, after observing the European ritual of condemning the deviant Eastern uses of Cannabis drugs, O'Shaughnessy also mentioned in the same paragraph that "in the popular medicine of these nations we find it extensively employed for a multitude of affections", and on the next page he refers to Cannabis as a "powerful and valuable substance". This pattern of shifting between negative-Orientalist and positive-medicinal descriptions of Cannabis continues. O'Shaughnessy described "Gunjah", which he claimed, "is used for smoking alone", as a "debauch" and a "vice", stating that "the habitual smokers of *Gunjah* generally die of diseases of the lungs, dropsy and anasarca". He also mentioned Sacy's etymological argument and "Hasheesha, which is still greedily consumed by the dregs of the populace, and from consumption of which sprung the excesses which led to the name of 'Assassin' being given to the Saracens in the Holy Wars" (O'Shaughnessy, 1839, p. 11). However, when discussing liquid preparations of the drug O'Shaughnessy is much more positive, claiming that "these are mostly used by the Mahomedans of the better classes", and "almost invariably the inebriation is of the most cheerful kind… the intoxication lasts

about three hours, when sleep supervenes. No nausea or sickness of stomach succeeds, nor are the bowels at all affected; next day there is slight giddiness and vascularity of the eyes, but no other symptoms worth recording" (O'Shaughnessy, 1839, p. 7).

After citing various examples of successful application of medicinal Cannabis by others, O'Shaughnessy then introduced his own experiments, stating that "Hemp possessed in small doses an extraordinary power of stimulating the digestive organs, exciting the cerebral system, of acting also on the generative apparatus. Larger doses, again, were shewn by the historical statements to induce insensibility, or to act as a powerful sedative. The influence of the drug in allaying pain was equally manifest in all the memoirs referred to. As to the evil sequelae so unanimously dwelt on by all writers, these did not appear to me so numerous, so immediate, or so formidable, as many which may be clearly traced to over-indulgence in other powerful stimulants or narcotics, viz. Alcohol, opium, or tobacco." After first experimenting with cannabis extracts on animals to ascertain safe dosages, O'Shaughnessy concluded that "no hesitation could be felt as to the perfect safety of giving the resin of Hemp an extensive trial in the cases in which its apparent powers promised the greatest degree of utility", which included experimenting with Cannabis extracts to treat human patients with rheumatism, hydrophobia (from rabies), cholera, tetanus, and infantile convulsions. He reported positive results and no adverse side effects for all these conditions, concluding that the experiments "led me to the belief that in Hemp the profession has gained an anti-convulsive remedy of the greatest value" (O'Shaughnessy, 1839, p. 36).

While, at first, this shifting discourse may seem contradictory or at odds with itself, O'Shaughnessy's comments contrasting the seemingly inherent Asiatic drive to consume narcotics, and the deviant Eastern methods of preparing and consuming

Cannabis with his own and others' experiments involving medicinal Cannabis extracts, reflects and even reinforces the British imperial narrative of European superiority and Oriental degeneracy that had become central to the way the British viewed their colonies. O'Shaughnessy never intended to challenge the established dominant Western discourse that positioned Cannabis drugs as deviant Eastern intoxicants, but rather, to show that in *Western* hands Cannabis had the potential to be turned into a valuable medicine. O'Shaughnessy's comments contrasting the effects and consequences of smoking Cannabis with taking liquid preparations of the plant also reflect a cultural hierarchy of acceptable means of consuming psychoactive drugs that existed in British society, with smoking considered a primitive and degenerative means of consumption, favoured by the natives of the East. However, taking extracts and liquid preparations of the same drug was often considered by Europeans to be acceptable, and in this form, the drugs were considered to be useful Western medicines instead of harmful Eastern intoxicants. This pattern can also clearly be seen with opium, which Europeans transformed into a liquid substance (laudanum) consumed widely across Europe as a medicine, while smoking opium was simultaneously condemned by Europeans as a degenerative Eastern vice. It also explains why O'Shaughnessy made liquid extracts, tinctures, and pills for all his Cannabis experiments, as these were considered acceptable, scientific, European methods of preparing and consuming drugs, as opposed to using them in their more deviant, primitive form. Thus, even though many Eastern cultures had a history of using cannabis drugs for both recreational *and* medicinal purposes, the discourse employed by O'Shaughnessy positioned medicinal Cannabis extracts as a specifically Western construct, distinct from the deviant and degenerate preparations of drug Cannabis employed by the natives of the Orient.

At first, O'Shaughnessy's work was largely met with excitement and an overall positive reception across Europe and the U.S. and was succeeded by an unprecedented flurry of research and publications on medicinal Cannabis. Just months after publishing his essay, journals in America began reprinting his work, with *The Boston Medical and Surgical Journal* (O'Shaughnessy, 1840a), *The Lancet* (O'Shaughnessy, 1840b) *Maryland Medical and Surgical Journal* (O'Shaughnessy, 1840c), and the *Medical Examiner* (O'Shaughnessy, 1840d) all crediting O'Shaughnessy with discovering Cannabis as a treatment for tetanus and other convulsive orders in 1840. An updated version of his essay was included in his book *The Bengal Dispensatory and Companion to the Pharmacopoeia,* which was published in 1842 and included twenty-five pages on Cannabis (O'Shaughnessy, 1842). The following year his research also appeared in an article in the *Medico-Chirurgical Transactions*, which credited O'Shaughnessy as being the first "to lay the results of accurate observations [of the value of medicinal cannabis] before the public" (Clendinning, 1843, p. 190). The author, John Clendinning, was a doctor and Friend of the Royal Society, and building on O'Shaughnessy's research, Clendinning reported using a cannabis extract to successfully treat eighteen various cases involving insomnia, rheumatic diseases, headaches, nightmares, opioid addiction, and fever, as well as being used as a painkiller, appetite stimulant, and to generally help patients rest and recover. Thus, the author concluded, "I have no hesitation in affirming that in my hands its exhibition has usually, and with remarkably few substantial exceptions, been followed by manifest effects as a soporific or hypnotic in conciliating sleep; as an anodyne in lulling irritation; as an antispasmodic in checking cough and cramp; and as a nervine stimulant in removing languor and anxiety, and raising the pulse and spirits; and that these effects have been observed in both acute and chronic affections, in young and

old, male and female…I should say that these useful, and in several cases most salutary effects have been obtained without any important drawback or deduction on account of indirect or incidental inconvenience" (Clendinning, 1843, p. 190).

Over the next decade, a plethora of similar journal articles and publications expounding the virtues and usefulness of medicinal cannabis extracts exploded across the Western world (Carpenter, 2017, p. 81; Duhamel, 1844, p. 259; Eve, 2018, p. 194, 196, 216, 627-29, 655-59; Ley, 1843, p. 487; Ranking, 1844, p. 204; *The American Journal of the Medical Sciences, Volume 23,* 2015, p. 260; *The British and Foreign Medical Review,* 1844, p. 14; *The Lancet,* 1844, p. 29-30, 241-242; *Western Lancet, 1844–5, Vol. 3*, 2016, p. 32-33), and by 1854, Cannabis had officially become part of the American Pharmacopoeia, being listed in the U.S. Dispensatory that year (Bache & Wood, 1854, p. 339), which also stated: "It is unfortunate that the name of *Indian hemp* has been attached to the medicinal product; as, in the United States the same name has long been appropriated to A*pocynum cannabinum;* and some confusion has hence arisen" (Apocynum cannabinum is a poisonous plant that can cause cardiac arrest if ingested, and was used as a source of fiber by Native Americans). Thus, within 15 years of O'Shaughnessy first publishing his essay, a new dominant narrative had developed around Cannabis in western cultures, positioning specific Cannabis preparations and extracts as industrial, valuable, and officially recognized medicines in Western society. Cannabis was once again being placed in a positive discourse in Western culture, but for the first time as a psychoactive drug (medicine) rather than an industrial resource (fiber).

While this may seem like a complete U-turn on previously held beliefs and values, it is important to remember that the dominant Western discourse and knowledge of the time still largely condemned Eastern preparations and uses of drug

Cannabis, positioning them as deviant, degenerate, and dangerous, and it was only the medicinal Western extracts that were considered acceptable. Most Western descriptions of medicinal Cannabis also still came with some negative Orientalist narrative, condemning the deviant and degenerate effect of its use as a recreational drug in the East. For example, while *The Dispensatory of the United States of America* did include Cannabis in 1854, it also stated that "Extract of Hemp is a powerful narcotic, causing exhilaration, intoxication, delirious hallucinations, and, in its subsequent action, drowsiness and stupor", and that "In Hindostan, Persia, and other parts of the East, Hemp has long been habitually employed as an intoxicating agent… under the name of *gunjah*. The *hashish* of the Arabs is essentially the same… (Bache & Wood, 1854, p. 339). Even O'Shaughnessy, staunch proponent of the virtues of medicinal Cannabis, felt the need to warn others of the delirium that can be bought on by continued hemp inebriation, "especially among young men", which he claimed "is at once recognized by the strange balancing gait of the patient, a constant rubbing of the hands, perpetual giggling, and a propensity to caress and chafe the feet of all bystanders of whatever rank… In a few cases, the patients are violent; in many, highly aphrodisiac; in all that I have seen, voraciously hungry" (O'Shaughnessy, 1839, p. 36).

Furthermore, doctors quickly started reporting inconsistency in the effects and effectiveness of medicinal cannabis extracts, with an article from 1843 in the *Pharmaceutical Journal and Transactions* reporting a lack of success using medicinal cannabis extracts in England due to "a difference in the action of the Indian hemp in this country, from what he had been accustomed to in Bengal" (*The Pharmaceutical Journal and Transactions,*1843, p. 190). Another article in the *American Journal of the American Sciences* from the same year claimed that cannabis "sent to this country

from Calcutta, and not immediately used, has been deteriorated by age" (*The American Journal of the Medical Sciences, Volume 23,* 2015, p. 189). Modern research on Cannabis indicates that the active chemicals do deteriorate with time and exposure to heat and light; however, as THC wasn't isolated and identified until the 1960s, doctors and academics during the 19th century had no way of knowing this, and the plant's psychoactive and medicinal properties remained largely a mystery, clearly illustrated by the title of an article which appeared in the *British Medical Journal* in 1857, aptly named "Uncertain Actions of Cannabis Indica" (T. H. Jackson, 1857). By 1875 Scottish physician William Lowe published an article in *The British Medical Journal* in which he stated, "at one time, Indian hemp was said to do wonders," but like so many other medicines, had "fallen into disuse" (Lowe, 1875, p. 176). The same year British physician and historian Robert Scoresby-Jackson stated of Indian Hemp that "the great drawback to its employment is its exceeding uncertainty of action, small doses in some cases causing marked symptoms, whilst in other instances full doses produce no effect" (Jackson, 1875, p. 523). And one year later, in *A dictionary of hygiene and public health,* Chief Medical Officer and Public Analyst, Alexander Blyth, claimed of "Indian Hemp" that "as an intoxicant it is certainly not used to any extent in England, and as a medicine it has much disappointed practitioners," adding that it is "ascertained to be the cause of a very large proportion of the cases of acute mania admitted to the native lunatic asylums of Bengal" (Blyth, 1876, p. 311). While some western doctors continued to administer and experiment with medicinal cannabis extracts throughout the late 19th century, the lack of knowledge regarding its medicinal and psychoactive properties significantly influenced the erosion of the Medicinal narrative. As drug preparations of Cannabis continued to produce unreliable results, frustrating doctors and academics alike,

mounting complaints over the medicinal use of this eastern drug caused many doctors to begin dismissing Cannabis as a safe and viable Western medicine.

Chapter 8. "Hasheesh Eaters" - The Rising Threat of the Drug Memoir

"It is this process of symbolization which, in certain hasheesh states, gives every tree and house, every pebble and leaf, every footprint, feature, and gesture, a significance beyond mere matter or form, which possesses an inconceivable force of tortures or of happiness." Fitz Hugh Ludlow - The Hasheesh Eater

The rise of medicinal Cannabis in the western world also coincided with a rising western literary genre of drug memoirs, often framed through an orientalist lens and motivated in no small part by the considerable success of Thomas De Quincey's book, *Confessions of an English Opium-Eater*, published in 1821 (De Quincey, 1885; Zieger, 2007). With the adoption of medicinal Cannabis in the West, aspiring European and American authors suddenly had readily available access to psychoactive Cannabis extracts, and Cannabis quickly joined opium as the drug of choice for those looking to contribute to the field. Many western authors and academics started recording strange and exotic experiences after experimenting with Cannabis extracts, most of which seem bizarre from a modern understanding of its effects as a psychoactive drug, and these were often combined with scientific descriptions, negatively influencing the ongoing evolution of Western Cannabis discourse by increasing perceptions of Cannabis as a mysterious, dangerous, deviant, Oriental intoxicant.

Historian Isaac Campos explains this phenomenon through what he calls the "psychoactive riddle", stating that "decades of research and observation have

demonstrated, the effects of psychoactive drugs are actually dictated by a complex tangle of pharmacology, psychology, and culture—or “drug, set, and setting”—that has yet to be completely deciphered by researchers” (Campos, 2014, p. 28-30). As we know today, while THC is the main active chemical in Cannabis, there are dozens of other cannabinoids and psychoactive chemicals produced by this plant which all work together with the individual's biology, psychology, and cultural setting, to produce a unique and subjective "high", which can be a very positive, enjoyable, and healing experience for some, while being an entirely unpleasant, terrifying, and disorienting experience for others (Agrawal & Lynskey, 2006; Becker, 1967; McPartland & Guy, 2004; Russo, 2003; Weil et al., 1968). However, people in the 19th century had no way to make sense of these subjective differences in experience. Given the narratives of Oriental deviancy and degeneracy that had become dominant in Western cultures around Eastern drug preparations of Cannabis, many Western consumers of Cannabis drug extracts, whether for medicinal, experimental, or recreational reasons, would have had their own subjective experiences influenced through their beliefs and expectations, framed through this well-established negative Orientalist discourse. Indeed, it is very telling that nearly every Western author from the 19th century who wrote extensively on Cannabis mentioned Silvestre de Sacy and the connection between Hashish and the assassins, indicating that by the 19th century, the narrative that had developed around Hashish in the holy lands, positioning it as a dangerous and deviant oriental drug, capable of inspiring acts of violence and murder, had become a well-integrated part of Western cannabis lore, accepted as verified fact by many.

For example, famous French poet and novelist Theophile Gautier published an article in 1843 in which he claimed that "Orientals", for "whom the use of wine is forbidden by their religion", consumed instead Hashish, "an extract of flowers of

hemp (*Cannabis indica*)… which was fed by the Old Man of the Mountain to the executioners of the victims designated by him, and from it is derived the word *As sassin*, i.e., *hashashin* or eater of hashish" (Baudelaire, 2019, p. 55-56). Gautier described the effects of Hashish as "peculiar in that it is not continuous: it takes you and leaves you, raises you to heaven and restores you to earth without a transition - not unlike the lucid moments in a fit of madness" (Baudelaire, 2019, p. 60-61). In 1850, Scottish diplomat, writer, and politician David Urquhart published his book *The Pillars Of Hercules; Or, A Narrative Of Travels In Spain And Morocco In 1848*, which included almost 20 pages on Hashish (Urquhart, 1850). After also mentioning Silvestre de Sacy and the story of the assassins, Urquhart described his experiences with Hashish in similarly strange and exotic terms, claiming that "images came floating before me - not the figures of a dream, but those that seem to play before the eye when it is closed, and with those figures were strangely mixed the sounds of a guitar…There was a wind going by, blowing over the table, and carrying away the sounds, and I saw the words tumbling over one another down the falls" (Urquhart, 1850, p. 129, 131-132). In 1854 American diplomat, travel author, and poet Bayard Taylor published a similar article titled "The Vision of Hasheesh". After attending to the well-established ritual of mentioning that cannabis "was frequently used by the Saracen warriors to stimulate them to the work of slaughter, and from the Arabic term of '*Hashasheen*' or Eaters of Hasheesh, the word 'assassin' has been naturally derived", Taylor described his experience with "*Hasheesh* - that remarkable drug which supplies the luxurious Syrian with dreams more alluring and more gorgeous than the Chinese extracts from his darling opium pipe (Taylor, 1854, p. 402)". Taylor described being transported through beautiful oriental landscapes, claiming that "The spirit (demon, shall I not rather say?) of Hasheesh had entire

possession of me. I was cast upon the flood of illusions, and drifted helplessly whithersoever they might chose to bear me" (Taylor, 1854, p. 404), before concluding that "in the character of this paradise, in the gorgeous fancies of the Arabian Nights, in the glow and luxury of all Oriental poetry, I now recognize more or less of the agency of hasheesh" (Taylor, 1854, p. 404-405). In other words, rather than just expounding the usual narrative associating deviant drug preparations of Cannabis with the Orient, Taylor claimed that the very nature of the Orient itself could be understood and experienced through Hashish intoxication, a belief that would come to be repeated by other western authors. Towards the end of the experience, he sunk "deeper and deeper into a pit of unutterable agony and despair" (Taylor, 1854, p. 406), stating that he "had passed through the Paradise of Hasheesh, and was plunged at once into its fiercest hell" (Taylor, 1854, p. 407).

As mentioned, many of these lurid and exotic, Orientalist inspired descriptions of Cannabis drug experimentation were being combined with scientific descriptions of Cannabis, negatively influencing the Medicinal/Scientific narrative that was developing in the West at the same time. Despite its obvious literary character, *The Athenaeum* published a favourable review of Taylor's article in 1855, less than a year after it was published (*The Athenaeum,* 1855, p. 481-482). The *North American Journal of Homeopathy* included his entire article in their volume in 1856, which was published in seven different cities (*The North American Journal of Homeopathy*, Volume 4, 1856). An article from *The Eclectic Magazine of Foreign Literature, Science, and Art* in 1858 cited Taylor and other authors as evidence that “hemp (that is, hashish)” was an Eastern, Oriental, and Asiatic “narcotic” of the most dangerous kind (*The Eclectic Magazine,* 1858). And an article from the American Provers’ Union in 1859 titled *Provings of Cannabis Indica* cited Taylor as an

authority for understanding the drug's medical properties (American Provers' Union, 1859).

The Orientalist influenced drug memoir in regard to Cannabis was exemplified in the book *The Hasheesh Eater* (Ludlow,1857), published in 1857 by American author Fitz Hugh Ludlow, which sparked an interest in recreational Hashish consumption amongst certain members of Western society, which contributed to an entirely new narrative that was forming around Cannabis that will be discussed further in chapter 12. However, this was a source of alarm for many in England and America, who saw this growing popularity of experimenting with Eastern drugs as a new threat to Western society. De Quincey had already shocked many Western readers with his frank and often alluring account of opioid addiction and his claims that in England, "the number of *amateur* opium eaters…was at this time immense", causing many Western authors to strongly criticize his book, voicing concerns over the Western use of these Oriental drugs. A review of his book from *The Asiatic Journal and Monthly Register for British India and Its Dependencies* stated that "the use of this baneful drug is common among Turks and Asiatics of all classes" who go "running a-muck" after "excessive use of opium (*The Asiatic Journal,* 1922, p. 579)." And *The Eclectic Review* from 1823 described De Quincey's "debauchery" with opium as an object of "pity and scorn", raising concerns that "the seductive picture he presents, is but too likely to tempt some of his readers to begin the practice (Stowell, 2015, p. 371)."

Soon after its publication, similar articles and reviews started appearing around Ludlow's book. A discussion in *Harper's New Monthly Magazine* warned that "the use of such drugs of enchantment is one of the most fatal of all diabolic illusions. If any of our readers are ignorant of the deadly herb whose infernal power is here recorded, let them know that Hasheesh is the juice of the Indian Hemp…This has

been used for ages in the East as a narcotic and stimulant, and at this day forms a habitual indulgence with all classes of society in India, Persia, and Turkey ("Literary Notices," 1857)." In 1858, an article from *The Knickerbocker: Or, The New York Monthly Magazine* described Hashish as a "soul-exciting, soul-subduing drug" and voiced concern over "opium-eaters simulators" and the rising interest in the consumption of Oriental drugs in western society ("Literary Notices," 1858), and another article from *The Saturday Review* claims of Ludlow that “in the depths of his depression, he warns us against the drug that produced it… There will always be a number of young enthusiasts ready to adopt anything, from a creed to a medicine, that may be sufficiently *outre*…Hasheesh is the very thing for these young persons… to prevent them from fuddling what brains they have on hasheesh pills… he would have done better in refraining from mentioning the subject at all” (Hasheesh, 1858).

Thus, throughout the 19th century, while the medicinal narrative was struggling to carve out and hold a position in dominant Western Cannabis discourse and knowledge, the rising trend of Western authors experimenting with Eastern drugs, and writing drug memoirs, further exacerbated the Orientalist narratives around Cannabis, fuelling new fears that this Eastern drug represented a threat to Western society. This is exceptionally well illustrated in an article published in *The North American Review* in 1862, titled simply *Narcotics*, which seems to bring together all the disparate Orientalist beliefs and narratives that had formed around Cannabis up until this point. This article included a discussion of De Quincey and Ludlow’s books, as well as M. C. Cooke’s book *Seven Sisters of Sleep*, opening with a warning on the very first page “that the abuse of such powerful narcotics as opium and hemp concerns us more closely than we may be willing to acknowledge… the Caucasian races, no longer content with tobacco, coffee, and tea, are beginning to crave and use

the stronger narcotics", just as "the races of India, the Persians, and the Turks stimulate the imagination to frenzy with hemp" ("Narcotics," 1862, p. 374-375). Attending to the well-established ritual of mentioning the assassins, and the supposedly eastern, drug-induced phenomenon of 'running amok', the article stated that "during the wars of the Crusades, certain of the Saracen army, while in a state of intoxication from the use of this drug, rushed madly into the Christian camp, committing great havoc, without themselves having any fear of death. They were called *Hashasheens,* and hence *Assassins.* This conduct is precisely the same as that of the Javanese hasheesh-eaters, who, when mad with Hemp, sometimes plunge into the streets, and *run amok*, as it is called, killing all whom they meet." (p. 379-380). The articles claim "that the peculiar imaginative turn of the Arabian Nights was due to the influence of a narcotic… these stories are the product of an Eastern, mind under the influence of hemp" (p. 382) reflects the same narrative that Ludlow and Taylor employed, positioning cannabis drugs as a part of the very nature of the Orient and Oriental literature. The article also reflects the Lower-class narrative that had developed around cannabis drugs in India, describing how "The native bearers in India…The Tartar couriers… Even the horses in the east" use opium and Hemp to "give also the power of enduring long and exhausting physical labor to the body" (p. 383). The article concludes with a warning of the associations between Cannabis use and insanity, stating that "Hasheesh visions seem to be more active than those induced by opium, and quite as fantastic. Tremendous and awful apparitions alternate with scenes of mirth and tranquility…The Hasheesh-Eater says that there are only three ways of escape from the drug, - insanity, death or abandonment. If he succeeded in the last, we must be permitted to say, that we think he came very near the first." (p. 407). This article offers a clear example of all the different yet convergent orientalist

narratives that had developed around Cannabis coming together to create an overall "master discourse", firmly positioning cannabis drugs as deviant and degenerate oriental intoxicants, which caused violence, insanity, and murder, and represented an emerging threat to western society.

The discourse and examples presented in this chapter and the last illustrate how throughout the 19th century, the newly developed Medicinal/Scientific narrative struggled to hold its position in dominant western cannabis discourse and knowledge. A lack of understanding of the psychoactive and medicinal properties of Cannabis, leading to undesirable results and inconsistencies in its effects and effectiveness, combined with the already well-established Orientalist and Lower-class narratives around Cannabis in the Western world, eroding the initial fervour and positive reception of the Medicinal narrative. Furthermore, the rising Western literary genre of drug memoirs was a growing source of concern for many, further exacerbating the Oriental narrative and fuelling fears that oriental drugs like opium and Hashish were invading and corrupting western culture. Over time this negative Orientalist narrative, positioning Cannabis as a dangerous, deviant, and degenerate eastern intoxicant, and a rising threat to western society, came to form the dominant source of Western discourse and knowledge around this plant once more, at the expense of its industrial and medicinal meanings, causing Cannabis to become something to be feared and laying the foundation for its complete transformation into a fully illegal narcotic.

Chapter 9. Insanity & The Indian Hemp Drug Commission (IHDC) 1894

"Had the wisdom of the Indian Hemp Drugs Commission's recommendations prevailed, we would have prevented a lot of misery by erroneous drug control

policies..." International Drug Policy Consortium (https://twitter.com/IDPCnet/status/1046778515612291072?s=20)

Towards the end of the 18th century there was a rising belief that Cannabis use caused violence and insanity in some of the natives of the Orient, influenced in no small part by the discourse that had previously developed around Hashish and the assassins from the late 11th century, itself greatly exacerbated and afforded further authority by the works of Marco Polo and Silvestre De Sacy. Throughout the early 19th century, as the rising literary genre of drug memoirs further augmented the dominant Orientalist discourse around Cannabis, more and more articles were being published recounting the old story of Hassan Sabbah and his assassins and describing many of the exotic representations of violence and insanity that were a central theme to this narrative (e.g., *Chambers's Edinburgh Journal,* 1849, p. 63; Johnston, 1878, p. 88-103; Littell, 2017, p, 449-461; *The Home and Foreign Record,* 1850, p 200), and the belief that Cannabis use caused violence and insanity in the natives was becoming a significant concern for the British in India.

By the middle of the 19th century this belief had entered Western scientific discourse, with publications providing statistics and examples, usually pulled from native asylums under British control, explicitly positioning cannabis use as a leading cause of insanity. In 1852 Scottish physician and medical author Dr Thomas Wise published an article in the *London Journal of Medicine* titled "Insanity as It Occurs among the Inhabitants of Bengal". Repeating much of the dominant Orientalist narrative that had developed around Cannabis, Wise claimed that "The use of the preparations of Indian hemp, or gunjah, (*Cannabis Sativa),* has a much more pernicious influence on the mental faculties than opium or spirits…it is also well known that a constant or large consumption of it, makes the person unfit for business,

and, if continued, produces insanity". Wise included statistics to back up this claim, stating that "In my enquiries, in the Dacca Insane Asylum, as to the cause of such persons' insanity… nearly a third, had been rendered insane by the pernicious use of gunjah, to which the lower classes are so often habituated" (*London Journal of Medicine,* 1852, p. 661-662). In 1858 a similar article titled "Hasheesh and Its Smokers and Eaters" was published in *Scientific American*, which stated "The drowsy appearance and indolent character of Eastern nations is not only due to the climate of the countries, and the almost spontaneous production by the earth of everything necessary for the life of man, thus in a great measure rendering labor unnecessary, but it is aided and increased by the use of powerful narcotic drugs". This article also recounted the story of Hassan Sabbah and the assassins, before concluding that "persons who are in the habit of using this drug usually terminate their existence as lunatics, and since the French have had Algeria their insane hospitals have been filled with the victims of hasheesh" (Hasheesh and its Smokers and Eaters, 1858)

These growing concerns around Cannabis came at a time when the British government started gaining more control over India and was establishing a legal framework and institutional network through which locals considered "insane" could be dealt with and detained. In 1858 the "Indian Lunacy Act" (act XXXVI) was passed as the first act specifically designed to provide the British in India with a framework for incarcerating locals for insanity without other criminal behaviour. Furthermore, the opening of the Lucknow Lunatic Asylum in 1859 saw the beginning of two decades of unprecedented construction of asylums across India, with 16 of the 26 asylums that operated under the jurisdiction of the Government of India in this period being constructed in the 1860s and 1870s (Mills, 2000, p. 12). Foucault writes about the genealogy of medicine and knowledge about the human body in *The Birth of the*

Clinic: An Archaeology of Medical Perception, identifying the clinic as a place which made possible the inspection, examination, and analysis of the human body, under what Foucault termed *Le regard médical* (The medical gaze) (Foucault, 2003). In *Colonizing the Body: state medicine and epidemic disease in nineteenth century India,* historian David Arnold argued that “over the long period of British rule in India, the accumulation of medical knowledge about the body contributed to the political evolution and ideological articulation of the colonial system” (Arnold, 1993, p. 8). As Mills states, "The body was a site for the construction of difference and difference lay at the heart of the power relations of the nineteenth century" (Mills, 2000, p. 35). In other words, like prisons, clinics and asylums were one of the few places where the British had unlimited access to inspect, examine, and analyse the Indian body. As such, the knowledge gathered there was seen as rare, privileged information, which often came to be regarded as representative of Indians and Indian society, and Cannabis had become a central part of this discourse.

By the 1870s cultural perceptions that consuming Cannabis was a leading cause of insanity amongst the locals were widespread, leading to Allan Hume, secretary to the government of India's Department of Agriculture, Revenue, and Commerce, writing a letter to colonial authorities in 1871, in which he stated: "It has frequently been alleged that the abuse of ganja produces insanity and other dangerous effects." Hume called for a "complete and careful inquiry into the matter", adding that "The inquiry should not be simply medical, but should include the alleged influence of ganja and bhang in exciting to violent crime" (*East India (consumption of Ganja),* 1893, p.8). This led to a series of correspondences over the next three years between various government officials in India on the use of cannabis drugs by the natives. The results were incredibly diverse and inconsistent, ranging from "No instances of

insanity, or of crime committed under the influence of ganja", and "ganja possesses valuable medicinal properties, if used in moderation; that it is considered to be an excellent febrifuge by the jungle tribes, and does not produce insanity or aggravate crime" (*East India (consumption of Ganja),* 1893, p.12), to “insanity, or permanent disorder of the mind, is a result of the evil habit of over-indulgence in this narcotic” (*East India (consumption of Ganja),* 1893, p.15). However, most of the replies simply reflected confusion and uncertainty. For example, “the reports received are most contradictory, the civil and police officers differing greatly in opinion as to the influence of these preparations in exciting to crime; while the medical officers disagree as to their effect in inducing mania or mental derangement” (*East India (consumption of Ganja),* 1893, p. 13); and “that there is but a slender ground-work of facts for the opinion. Even the returns of the lunatic asylums are based on hearsay reports and have no scientific value” (*East India (consumption of Ganja),* 1893, p. 18). Others argued that “even if the consumption of these drugs could be virtually abolished by any restrictions, there would still remain many intoxicating liquors which are so cheap that no person need ever have the slightest difficulty in making himself intoxicated” (*East India (consumption of Ganja),* 1893, p. 62), and “if people are prohibited the use of hemp and opium, they will in all probability take to some other stimulant, such as alcohol, the amount of violent crime resulting from the abuse of which, as English statistics unmistakeably prove, is more than that of all stimulants used in India put together” (*East India (consumption of Ganja),* 1893, p. 13). It is quite ironic, given the beliefs and policies held around Cannabis and alcohol by many Western countries today, that one of the reasons given by the British to not prohibit Cannabis was the fear that doing so would cause more people to take up drinking, which was considered even more deleterious and likely to cause violent crime and

social disruption. In the end, it was decided there was not enough evidence to make Cannabis illegal, especially when, as one response pointed out, "it is difficult to see in what manner the law can interfere to restrict their use in a country where opium is a monopoly of the Government, and the effects of which are perhaps as injurious when taken in excess as those of hemp" (*East India (consumption of Ganja),* 1893, p. 13). However, everyone agreed that further regulation and taxation were required to control and manage Cannabis consumption (and, of course, make money). As a result, the British government passed Act II in 1876, which required cultivators in India to obtain a license to legally grow Cannabis plants (*East India (consumption of Ganja),* 1893, p. 114-115).

By the turn of the 20th century, Cannabis had a very complex and contested relationship with western cultures; Cannabis extracts remained part of western pharmacology, despite mounting complaints of inconsistency in their effects and effectiveness, and Cannabis fiber was still being used for a variety of commodities, although several replacements had been found that were cheaper to import and less cumbersome to process for naval stores. As Borougerdi points out, "These are critical aspects of cannabis history because they draw attention to the negotiation process or struggle for meaning that was taking place in the Atlantic world regarding its usefulness as a commodity" (Borougerdi, 2018, p 117). And the usefulness and legitimacy of Cannabis as a Western commodity significantly impacted the dominant discourse and knowledge that developed around Cannabis in the Western world. Despite not being made illegal, perceptions of Cannabis as a dangerous and unpredictable Eastern drug were widespread, and this negative Orientalist narrative became the foundation for dominant Cannabis discourse and knowledge, at the expense of its other meanings.

These negative beliefs and narratives coincided with a rise in the European temperance movement (Mills, 2003, p. 93-94), and Cannabis entered British political discourse again when veteran temperance campaigner Mark Stewart MP stood up in the House of Commons on 16th July 1891 "To ask the Under Secretary of State for India whether his attention has been called to the statement in the 'Allahabad Pioneer' of the 10th May last, that ganja, 'which is grown, sold, and excised under much the same conditions as opium,' is far more harmful than opium, and that 'the lunatic asylums of India are filled with ganja smokers'" (*East India (consumption of Ganja),* 1893, p. 3). This alarming claim sparked another series of correspondences between British officials, which eventually led to the establishment of the Indian Hemp Drugs Commission (IHDC) in April of 1893, “to inquire into the cultivation of the hemp plant in Bengal, the preparation of drugs from it, the trade in those drugs, the effect of their consumption upon the social and moral condition of the people, and the desirability of prohibiting the growth of the plant and the sale of ganja and allied drugs” (Young, 1969, p. 1).

The IHDC was composed of four British members (the Chair and three members) and three 'nonofficial Indian gentleman', officially beginning their study on 3rd July 1893. Over the following year evidence was gathered, primarily through a detailed questionnaire covering nearly every aspect of Cannabis imaginable, from cultivation and consumption to its moral, physical, and psychological effects, religious uses, and economic benefits (Shamir & Hacker, 2001, p. 439). This questionnaire was publicly distributed throughout India to Indians and Europeans from various walks of life, and as "the Commission were especially enjoined to thoroughly examine the testimony in support of the commonly received opinion that the use of hemp drugs is a frequent cause of lunacy…. Every asylum in British India

was visited either by the Commission or by some members of the Commission, and careful inquiries were conducted on the spot in every case of insanity attributed to the use of hemp drugs for a given period" (Young, 1969, p. 7). In the end, the Commission gained the written testimony of 1,193 "witnesses", publishing the results in 1894 in an extensive 8 volume report (Young, 1969).

Similar to the results of the official Cannabis inquiries from 1871, the results of the IHDC were incredibly mixed and indecisive, and in no way whatsoever answered the question of whether cannabis use caused insanity, with some witnesses supporting the insanity thesis and others denying it outright, even suggesting that Cannabis could be used as an intellectual aid to help scholars concentrate and meditate. Furthermore, almost half the witnesses skipped the questions on insanity entirely, or claimed to have no reliable information to offer on the topic (Shamir & Hacker, 2001, p. 442 - 443). Of those witnesses who did support the insanity thesis, asylum statistics were again cited by the majority to support their claims. However, further examination by the IHDC into the origins of these statistics raised serious concerns about their validity, concluding that the information provided "is not an inquiry conducted by a professional man from the persons likely to know most about the lunatic. The information consists often merely of the guesses of police officers as to the history and the habits of a friendless and homeless wanderer… It would be absurd to accept without great distrust the statements, especially as to the cause of insanity, compiled by such an agency as has been described" (Young, 1969, p. 231) . It was further found that due to pressure on police officers and asylum staff to provide all necessary information on recorded instances of "lunacy", Cannabis was often being blamed simply when no other cause could be identified (Mills, 2000, p. 60). As Shamir and Hacker wrote, "the commission inadvertently performed a brilliant

exercise in the sociology of knowledge, uncovering the process whereby popular beliefs, through the medium of bureaucratic imperatives, were transformed into statistical-scientific data, which in turn fed back into the convictions of both lay persons and medical experts" (Shamir & Hacker, 2001, p. 445). Or, as Mills more simply stated, “the irony of the IHDC was that the process which led to the establishment of the Commission was identified and heavily criticized within the final report of the Commission” (Mills, 2000, p. 60).

In the end, the Commission considered the physical, mental, and moral effects of cannabis drugs separately, and distinguished between moderate and excessive use, concluding that moderate use had no significant adverse effects in any of these three areas. However, excessive use "tends to weaken the constitution and to render the consumer more susceptible to disease… indicates and intensifies mental instability… [and] indicates and intensifies moral weakness or depravity" (Young, 1969, p. 263-264). The final verdict, drafted and endorsed by a majority of the Commission, including four British and one Indian member, recommended in favour of regulation and taxation, not prohibition, claiming that the adverse effects of cannabis drugs were either unfounded or had been exaggerated, and were not sufficiently serious to justify prohibition. The Commission also added several political and practical reasons, arguing that as the medicinal and religious use of Cannabis was a widely accepted cultural practice, prohibition would likely cause political unrest and opposition in the Indian population, and that it would also be impossible to suppress Cannabis entirely, as "the hemp plant grows readily in India, in many places wild without cultivation of any kind" (Young, 1969, p. 269).

However, two of the Indian members strongly opposed this conclusion and wrote lengthy dissertations claiming that the evidence gathered did indeed support the

insanity hypothesis, including statistical data and charts to support their claim. The majority view argued that this data was based on hearsay and speculation, but even those favouring regulation still seemed to be rooted in a discourse of Oriental degeneracy. For example, during the conclusion it was claimed that "Vague statements are made by a small minority of the witnesses regarding the stupidity or moral weakness of consumers [of ganja] whom they have met. But after making allowance for the fact that these observations have often been of excessive consumers, and for the lower mental and moral tone found generally among the lower orders to which the consumers, or at all events the smokers of hemp drugs, almost exclusively belong, there is little left in the evidence on which to base any opinion" (Young, 1969, p. 202). They also claimed that "even if the absolute prohibition of the use of the drug could be enforced, the result might be to induce the use of still more noxious drugs. India abounds with plants growing wild from which drugs can be produced which are more deleterious in their effects than ganja", which, if Cannabis was prohibited, "might be largely resorted to by the poorer classes as a means of satisfying their craving for stimulants", (Young, 1969, p. 269). In other words, it was only the morally depraved and lower classes of India who used cannabis drugs in the first place, and as only the excessive users met with ill effects, the British simply needed to regulate and control distribution and consumption, rather than prohibit Cannabis outright. Furthermore, as the Indian landscape naturally "abounds with plants growing wild from which drugs can be produced", it was believed that prohibiting Cannabis would simply cause native Cannabis consumers to turn to more dangerous drugs to "satisfy their craving for stimulants". Thus, the British concluded that the best that could be hoped for was to minimize and manage the problem through imperial

regulations, allowing them to continue to exercise control over the Indian population while also making money.

In *Colonialism and its forms of knowledge* anthropologist Bernard Cohn examines the colonial production of knowledge in India, arguing that “from the eighteenth century onward, European states increasingly made their power visible not only through ritual performance and dramatic display, but through the gradual extension of ‘officializing’ procedures that established and extended the capacity to govern” (Cohn, 1996, p. 3). These officializing procedures, or “investigative modalities” as Cohn called them, “includes the definition of a body of information that is needed, the procedures by which appropriate knowledge is gathered, its ordering and classification, and then how it is transformed into useable forms” (Cohn, 1996, p. 5). As anthropologists Ronen Shamir and Daphna Hacker write, "the civilizing mission, in short, was coupled with and performed through these various 'investigative modalities'… [they] created the framework for asserting an enlightened form of governance, based on defining, classifying, and registering space… counting and classifying populations… and licensing some activities as legitimate and suppressing others as immoral or unlawful… [and] the IHDC was a dramatic example of the way an investigative modality had been undertaken and performed” (Shamir & Hacker, 2001, p. 436-437). According to professor of law John Kaplan, “what the Hemp Drugs Commission did was essentially make a cost-benefit analysis of the marijuana issue and to conclude that, in view of the dangers of the drug, the social costs of criminalizing it would far outweigh the benefits” (Young, 1969, p. xiii).

Many authors have since analyzed the IHDC, and as Borougerdi wrote, "Especially since the surge of marijuana activism in the 1960s, the tendency has been to isolate the report's conclusions from the imperial context in which they were

formed and to use them as evidence of a conspiracy by governments today to decommodify the plant" (Borougerdi, 2018, p.118). However, in *Cannabis Britannica* Mills examined the politics that were behind the formation and conclusions of the IHDC in-depth, arguing that "the conclusions of the IHDC must be viewed with a healthy dose of suspicion. They must not be treated as if they were objectively arrived at or as if they were formed in circumstances that were free of the political pressures of the period" (Mills, 2003, p. 123). Mills claimed the British government used the evidence from the IHDC selectively to achieve the result they wanted, which was to adopt a policy of regulation, not prohibition, stating that it is likely "the IHDC was a diversionary tactic on the part of the Government of India and the British government", as "attracting attention to the issue of hemp drugs was to offer them as a sacrifice to temperance campaigners that would not have such a serious impact on excise revenue as would prohibition of opium" (Mills, 2003, p. 103-104). In other words, the conclusions drawn up by the IHDC were heavily influenced by specific interests of the British government, primarily economic and diversionary.

Whatever the reasoning behind the conclusions arrived at by the IHDC, when these conclusions were finally published there was very little interest shown for them in the Western world (Borougerdi, 2018, p 123; Mills, 2003, p. 124-125). Indeed, the entire temperance movement, whose fierce drug campaigners originally championed the IHDC, lost a lot of momentum shortly after its release, with 1895 marking the beginning of what has been described as "a decade of stagnation for the movement" (Berridge & Edwards, 1981, p. 188). Several journals across England and America did publish articles which mentioned how the results of the IHDC did not seem to line up with popular opinion around Cannabis (Borougerdi, 2018, p 123). However, the Orientalist narratives that had formed around Eastern preparations of drug Cannabis

were too entrenched in dominant Western Cannabis discourse by this point. Despite the moderate conclusions drawn by the IHDC on the use of Cannabis drugs, the negative associations with oriental deviancy and insanity prevailed and even strengthened, and by 1905 the plant had become officially criminalized in parts of the British Empire (*The Acts of Ceylon,* 1901, p. 465). At the same time as this was happening, a new word was beginning to appear to describe Mexican preparations of Cannabis making their way into America: 'Marihuana'.

Chapter 10. Marihuana

"The political upheaval in Mexico that culminated in the Revolution of 1910 led to a wave of Mexican immigration to states throughout the American Southwest. The prejudices and fears that greeted these peasant immigrants also extended to their traditional means of intoxication: smoking marijuana." – Eric Schlosser, *Reefer Madness*

At the turn of the 20th century Cannabis use in America was still largely confined to medicinal applications, and there was no significant degree of recreational Cannabis use. Instead, Americans at this time usually used alcohol, tobacco, opium, morphine, and cocaine as recreational drugs (Bonnie & Whitebread, 1974, p. 9). However, in Mexico smoking Cannabis as a recreational drug had become common from the mid to late 19th century, and the practice of Cannabis smoking was imported from Mexico to the United States along the Rio Grande River in the early-1900s (Bonnie & Whitebread, 1974, p. 32-34).

Cannabis already had a very troubled history and reputation in Mexico before reports of Mexican preparations of Cannabis drugs, known locally as "Marihuana", started to appear in America. Interestingly, the history of Cannabis discourse and

knowledge in Mexico has very strong similarities to that of Britain and British India. Cannabis was first introduced to Mexico by the Spanish around 1530 primarily as a fiber-producing plant, and by 1545 the Spanish crown was ordering its subjects to cultivate Cannabis fiber, which was used from the late 16th to the early 18th century to help construct the largest naval empire in the world. However, by the 18th century, Cannabis in Mexico had also found its way into local medicinal and religious cultural practices, and there were growing rumours that Cannabis drugs could cause visions, communion with the devil, and insanity. Throughout the 19th century, the practice of smoking Cannabis was adopted by locals who referred to the plant as *rosa maría* or *mariguana.* However, by the end of the 19th century, the overwhelming view across Mexico was that Cannabis was a dangerous indigenous narcotic capable of causing madness, violence, and mayhem, and in 1920 Cannabis was declared a fully banned intoxicant (Campos, 2012, p. 1-4) (for a detailed examination of the history of Cannabis in Mexico, see Isaac Campos' *Home Grown: Marijuana and the Origins of Mexico's War on Drugs)*.

At the end of the 19th century, around the same time the IHDC was conducting its investigation of Cannabis in India, certain British and American sources were becoming aware of the relationship between Cannabis and Mexican Marihuana, the former of which was still firmly placed within a dominantly Orientalist narrative positioning certain parts and uses of the plant as deviant, degenerate, and dangerous Eastern intoxicants. Several American and British journals published articles mentioning the connection between Marihuana and Cannabis (*American Journal of Pharmacy*, 1886, p. 21; *Proceedings of the American Academy of Arts and Sciences*, 1883, p.155;), with an article from the Mexican department of *Meyers Brothers Druggist* claiming that the “smuggling of marihuana (cannabis medica) into the

barracks has recently caused a number of murderous assaults among the soldiers" (*Meyer Brothers Druggist,* 1898, p. 293). An article published in 1908 titled "The Hashish Plant in Arizona and Mexico" clearly illustrates how the Orientalist narratives that had developed around Cannabis in India and parts of Asia were being combined with the poor reputation of Marihuana and Mexicans in America, to further exacerbate the plants reputation as a dangerous Eastern narcotic, and a growing threat to Western society. The author, a man named Herbert Brown, claimed his work as a prison guard in Yuma (along the Mexican border) gave him "cause to become familiar with a plant known as 'marijuana'… an exceedingly dangerous" drug whose "presence in penal institutions is as much to be dreaded as the plague… Under its baneful influence reckless men become bloodthirsty, trebly daring, and dangerous to an uncontrollable degree". At first unaware of the identity of this drug and "its hypnotic power for evil", Brown convinced an ex-convict to help him find samples of the plant, and expressed his shock at having them identified as Cannabis indica in vividly Orientalist terms, claiming that "Had a cobra raised his spectacled hood the surprise could not have been more startling. Here was the Oriental dream making, murder inspiring bhang of Indian song, story and thuggism (*sic*), taking root in the far west; a household plant grown at every cottage door in the vale of Kashmir found thriving before the door of a mud hovel on the desert begirt (*sic*) banks of the Santa Cruz… it was of common growth in central and southern Mexico, where however, 'taboo' had been placed upon it by the Mexican government. Under flaring headlines a recently published newspaper article recites the seizure of 'eight large boxes of marijuana, the largest collection of the national dope weed of the Mexican peon ever captured in a single haul… Enough of this brainwrecking (*sic*) weed was seized to have caused any number of murders had it reached the poor persons for whom it was

intended. The effects of marijuana are like, but worse than those of opium. It has a tendency to craze the brain of the smoker . . .in the end it produces a murderous mania" (Brown, 1908, p. 180-181).

The orientalization of Mexicans became a more and more popular motif in America throughout the first quarter of the 20th century (Borougerdi, 2014, p. 126, 132; Francaviglia, 2011), and just like it had previously throughout parts of Asia and India, Cannabis became an integral part of that narrative. The dominant Orientalist narrative positioning Cannabis drugs as dangerous, deviant, Eastern intoxicants capable of producing violence and insanity in the degenerate natives who consumed them was adopted in America and transferred directly onto Mexicans and Marihuana, with the belief that Cannabis drugs caused violence and insanity amongst the natives of Mexico becoming widespread. This was the same discourse that had developed around Cannabis in the holy lands and across parts of India and Asia. Essentially, Mexico became for the US what India had been for the UK, an image from which they could construct and compare their own superior identity with that of a degenerate 'other' who used an otherwise productive plant for dangerous and deviant purposes. As Campos wrote, "scholars who date the War on Drugs to Richard Nixon's formal declaration of that 'war' in 1971, or to the Reagan-era militarization of the conflict, are missing the forest for the trees. Nixon merely intensified an anti-drug crusade that formally began at the federal level in the United States (and Mexico) in the early twentieth century" (Campos, 2012, p. 4). Furthermore, this "twentieth century" anti-drug crusade was itself built upon a foundation of Orientalist narratives of deviancy, degeneracy, violence, and insanity that had been developing around Cannabis in Western cultures from as early as the 11th century, since the time of Hassan Sabbah and his infamous hashish consuming assassins.

In 1912 the *El Paso Herald* published an article detailing patterns of drug use in the border towns of El Paso, Texas and Ciudad Juarez, Mexico, focusing on cocaine, opium, and "a drug fiend of another type… the Marihuana victim… Of all the drugs, Marihuana, Cannabis Indica, or commonly called Indian hemp, experts declare to be the most deadly in its effects. It is so deadly the white man turns it down, but the lower class of Mexicans eagerly seek it…The tendency of the drug is to throw the user in a frenzied and uncontrollable state, and his desire to satiate himself runs to the Commission of murders or other crimes. The drug in the end drives them insane" (Herald News Co., 1912). In 1916, *The Popular Science Monthly* published an article claiming that "hundreds of heartbroken 'dope fiends' watched" as Los Angeles police set fire to a "$25,000 bonfire, the flames of which were fed by confiscated marihuana… Marihuana is a weed with narcotic properties, is closely akin to Hasheesh, and is smoked when dry. It is in particular favor with Mexicans" (*The Popular Science Monthly*, 1916, p. 64). In 1922, a medical textbook titled *A Manual of Pharmacology and Its Applications to Therapeutics and Toxicology* mentioned how the "oriental use of Cannabis ('Hashish,' Bhang, Charas, etc.) antedates history", and that "Cannabis smoking is becoming prevalent in Mexico and is said to be a national menace in Brazil… the subject often has hallucinations of double personality [which] seems to be much more marked in orientals" (Sollmann, T. H, 1922, p. 294). And in 1924, famous American novelist Peter B. Kyne published his novel *The Enchanted Hill,* which mentioned "Marihuana" as "a drug . . . a hemp product, a cousin to Hasheesh. It's the curse of Mexico, as opium is the curse of China" (Kyne, 1924, p. 230). Despite this growing negative discourse, neither the Harrison Narcotics Tax Act of 1914 in America nor the Defence of the Realm Act 1914 (DORA) in Britain included Cannabis in any of their legislation. However, laws banning the plant had

formed in certain American states and British colonies by this time, marking the beginning of its rapid transformation into a fully banned intoxicant.

In 1924 Cannabis became a topic of international concern after a letter for the League of Nations Advisory Committee on Traffic in Opium and Other Dangerous Drugs arrived at The Hauge, stating that "from the point of view of the Union of South Africa, the most important of all the habit-forming drugs is Indian hemp or 'Dagga' and this drug is not included in the International List" (Mills, 2012, p.161). In *Cannabis Britannica* Mills explains how "the reason for the South African concern in the first place is explained by the labour politics of the region during the establishment of the colonial economy there". Indian migrants sent to South Africa to work on the plantations took the habit of using Cannabis with them. However, "white employers loathed anything that they feared would interfere with the docility and effectiveness of their work force", and as "the local African population also enjoyed cannabis preparations, the plant caused colonial owners no end of anxiety" (Mills, 2012, p.161). When the advisory committee convened again in August 1924, it was the British and Indian delegates (who still controlled large markets in both Opium and Cannabis trade) who pursued the issue of Cannabis. However, "the sudden British interest in cannabis in 1924 had little to do with the issue itself, and more to do with bargaining positions on opium" (Mills, 2012, p.165). Similar to the motivations behind the formation and conclusions of the IHDC, Mills believes the primary motivations behind the British interest in Cannabis at the committee were once again diversionary and economical (for a detailed analysis of the international drug-trade politics behind the inclusion of Cannabis at a conference that was supposed to be concerned solely with opium, see Mills' *Cannabis Britannica*, p. 161-165).

Whatever the case, Cannabis was bought into international attention, and when the Second Opium Conference convened in Geneva at the end of 1924, the head of the Egyptian delegate, Dr Mohamed A. S. El Guindy, gave a lengthy and detailed speech supporting the proposal that Cannabis be included on the committee's list of dangerous drugs. Reflecting well the interplay of the different dominant historical narratives that had developed around cannabis up until this point, this speech was full of alarmist and orientalist rhetoric, with El Guindy stating that Cannabis "is a problem of capital importance for a large number of Eastern peoples… Hashish absorbed in large doses produces a furious delirium and strong physical agitation; it predisposes to acts of violence… In general, the absorption of hashish produces hallucinations, illusions as to time and place, fits of trembling, and convulsions" (Opium Conference & League of Nations, 1925, p. 132-133). Many of the more alarming statements seem to be entirely fabricated, such as the claims that the Cannabis addict "has no muscular power ; suffers from physical ailments, heart troubles, digestive troubles, etc. ; his intellectual faculties gradually weaken and the whole organism decays. The addict very frequently becomes neurasthenic and, eventually, insane… Chronic hashishism (*sic*) is extremely serious, since hashish is a toxic substance, a poison against which no effective antidote is known" (Opium Conference & League of Nations, 1925, p.133). Throughout the speech the medicinal and scientific potential of Cannabis were only alluded to briefly and in a disparaging manner, with El Guindy mentioning that "From the therapeutic point of view, science has not made much use of hashish with good results… Generally speaking, hashish is not very much used in medical practice, and its results are a matter of controversy" (Opium Conference & League of Nations, 1925, p.133). Furthermore, completely ignoring the results of the IHDC, which wasn't mentioned at all, El Guindy also claimed that "The illicit use of hashish is the

principle cause of most of the cases of insanity occurring in Egypt… Generally speaking, the proportion of cases of insanity caused by the use of hashish varies from 30 to 60 percent of the total number of cases" (Opium Conference & League of Nations, 1925, p.134). He finally concluded by stating that his government could not find "any serious obstacle to the addition of hashish… to the list of narcotics and injurious drugs with which we are now dealing… As regards the industrial point of view, I do not think this plant has any qualities which cannot be found elsewhere… Moreover, I am sure that, if we take a decision regarding opium and the drugs mentioned in the schedule of the Advisory Committee, without adding hashish, the latte will soon replace the other narcotics and will then become a terrible menace to the whole world… I am certain that you, gentleman, who work under the aegis of the League of Nations, will help us in the struggle we have undertaken against this scourge, which reduces man to the level of brute and deprives him of health and reason, self-control and honour" (Opium Conference & League of Nations, 1925, p.134-135).

This speech was met with applause by the other delegates, with many showing immediate support for the proposal despite a lack of personal knowledge of the plant. For example, the Chinese delegate claimed that he was "greatly moved by the statement made by the honourable delegate of Egypt. While I know next to nothing about the subject, I wish, in view of the statement the Egyptian delegate has made about the danger which this drug is to humanity, to second his request… and do everything possible to put an end to this dangerous form of drug" (Opium Conference & League of Nations, 1925, p.135). The American delegate similarly claimed that "My knowledge of hashish and its use is quite limited. The very carefully prepared statement of the delegate of Egypt, together with my own knowledge on the subject,

have satisfied me that we are under an obligation in this conference to do everything we can to assist the Egyptian and Turkish people to rid themselves of this vice" (Opium Conference & League of Nations, 1925, p.135). With Cannabis officially included on the League of Nations list of dangerous drugs, the negative Orientalist narrative positioning the plant as a dangerous, deviant, Eastern drug was even further exacerbated and afforded official authority. More states in the US begin to outlaw Cannabis, and new Cannabis legislation was drawn up in the UK in 1925 and again in 1928 (Borougerdi, 2018, p. 128). By the early 1930s more than forty states and municipalities across America had enacted legislation to restrict, regulate, and prohibit the plant (Rathge, 2017, p. 131-133).

To summarize, by the end of the 19th century, around the same time the British government were conducting their investigation into Cannabis in India, the negative Orientalist narrative that had developed around Cannabis in the holy lands, India, and parts of Asia was being adopted in America, and transferred onto Mexicans and "Marihuana". Throughout the first quarter of the 19th century as the Orientalization of Mexicans became more popular in America (Borougerdi, 2014, p. 126; Francaviglia, 2011), perceptions of Cannabis as a dangerous Oriental drug that caused violence and insanity in its users grew. These beliefs culminated in a speech delivered at the Second Opium Conference in Geneva, which ensured Cannabis was included in the League of Nations list of dangerous drugs. While many of the alarming claims made during this speech were entirely fabricated, they reflected and perpetuated the dominant historical beliefs and narratives that had developed around Cannabis in the West, and were generally accepted as fact by most of the other delegates. This kind of fabricated or greatly exaggerated, alarmist, Orientalist rhetoric became characteristic of Cannabis discourse over the following decades, in an important period of Cannabis

history which had a significant impact on dominant Cannabis discourse and knowledge in the Western world right through to the modern day.

Chapter 11. Reefer Madness

"Marijuana is the most violence-causing drug in the history of mankind"- Harry J. Anslinger

The early 1930s saw the beginning of a new form of dominant Cannabis discourse and knowledge spread throughout America, characterized by extremely racist and alarmist narratives and media coverage demonizing Cannabis and positioning it as a national threat, and colloquially referred to as "reefer madness". (Borougerdi, 2018, p.11; Stringer & Maggard, 2016, p. 1). Unlike other aspects of historical Cannabis discourse and knowledge examined throughout this thesis, the reefer madness anti-Cannabis campaign spearheaded by Harry Anslinger and the Federal Bureau of Narcotics (FBN) has been extensively written about by academics and activists alike. Generally speaking, there are four leading schools of thought as to the causes behind the extremely racist and alarmist rhetoric employed by Anslinger and others during this period, which led to the consequent prohibition of Cannabis in America, although they are not mutually exclusive and there is considerable overlap between them:

1). The Mexican hypothesis (Himmelstein, 1983, p. 24; Johnson, 2019, p. 2), which has already been discussed in the last chapter, places the origins of Reefer Madness rhetoric and Cannabis prohibition in racism and xenophobia towards Mexicans, and a desire to criminalize and control the large numbers of Mexican immigrants who bought the practice of smoking Cannabis with them to America.

2). The Criminality hypothesis (Patton, 2020, p.6), which has significant overlap with the Mexican hypothesis, is the belief that consuming Cannabis caused violent behavior and crime among racial minorities and lower-class people, and that along with Mexicans, Cannabis drugs were primarily consumed by "Negroes, prostitutes, pimps, and a criminal class of whites" (Sloman, 1998, p.30). Between 1920 and 1930 there was a growing concern about the "marijuana menace" in Eastern and Southern states, especially New Orleans - a panic that developed around the alleged spread of Cannabis consumption among African Americans, jazz musicians, criminals and white youth, with Cannabis being made illegal in New Orleans as early as 1923 (Falck, 2010, p. 81-82; Lee, 2013, p. 9-14; Rathge, 2018). In fact, just as 'marijuana' was a Mexican term for Cannabis, 'reefer' was an African American slang term for the plant, so the very term "reefer madness" demonstrated racial prejudice (Mathre & Byrne, 2002, p.5).

3). The Anslinger hypothesis (Himmelstein, 1983, p. 24) focused on Harry Anslinger, the U.S. Treasury Department's Federal Bureau of Narcotics (FBN) first Commissioner, as the primary proponent of the reefer madness era. Beginning as early as 1963 when sociologist Howard Becker wrote about the "moral entrepreneurship" present in public policy, arguing that "the Treasury Department's Bureau of Narcotics furnished most of the enterprise that produced the Marihuana Tax Act" (Becker, 1963, p.138), the Anslinger hypothesis generally claims that Anslinger and the FBN acted on their own initiative to facilitate a climate of fear around Cannabis, turning it into a public issue and sparking a call for legal action that may not have otherwise existed (Bonnie & Whitebread, 1970, p. 1053).

4). And finally, the Mellon/DuPont/Hearst hypothesis is a popular belief that the economic interests of Andrew Mellon, the Dupont Corporation, and William

Randolph Hearst were a leading cause of the reefer madness era and consequent Cannabis prohibition in America. One account of this theory claims that Henry Ford opened a plant in the 30s, which proved hemp could be used as an alternative to fossil fuels. This discovery threatened the economic interests of Secretary of the Treasury Andrew Mellon, who owned much of the Gulf Oil Corporation, a company that had just recently opened its first drive-through gas station (*Exposed: The Full Story Behind Why Marijuana Is Illegal*, 2017). Another account of this theory, made widely popular by Jack Herer's book *The Emperor Wears No Clothes* (1998), claims that DuPont, a major timber and paper company, had invented various synthetic fibers (like nylon), and patented a new process in 1937 to make paper from wood pulp. However, new technologies in the mid-1930s enabled producers to manufacture hemp into affordable pulp. Therefore "if hemp had not been made illegal, 80 percent of DuPont's business would never have materialized" (Herer, 1998, p. 26). Mellon was also one of DuPont's largest investors and owner of the Mellon Bank, one of the DuPont Corporation's banks. It was Mellon (who also happened to be Anslinger's uncle by marriage) who appointed Anslinger as director of the FBN (Anderson, 2017, p. 36). Furthermore, DuPont and Mellon both had close links to William Randolph Hearst (Robinson & Scherlen, 2007, p. 12), another timber and paper magnate who controlled the largest journalism empire at the time, dwarfing any modern media conglomerate (Solomon, 2020, p. 2). As described in *The Nation*, "By the twenties and early thirties Hearst had expanded his media empire to include twenty-six daily newspapers in eighteen cities. All told, almost one in four U.S. families read a Hearst paper every day" (*The Devil and Mr. Hearst*, 2015). However, others have argued that these popular stories are not true, or at least greatly exaggerated, including one of today's leading cannabis proponents and director of California National Organization

for the Reform of Marijuana Laws (NORML), Dr Dale Gierenger, who claimed that "Herer has never produced an iota of evidence to substantiate this theory. To the contrary… it would actually have been in Hearst's interest to promote cheap hemp paper substitutes, had that been a viable alternative" (Gieringer, 1999, p.285). Others have labelled the connection between DuPont and Cannabis prohibition a conspiracy theory (Weimer, 2003, p. 238-239; Vankin & Whalen, 2004, p. 347-351). Nonetheless, whether for economic reasons or otherwise, there is no denying that during the early 20th century, "Hearst and Mellon were at the center of a vicious anticannabis campaign based on racism, sensationalism, and social control of racial minorities" (Solomon, 2020, p. 2).

While each of these arguments has been put forth at one time or another as a leading cause of the reefer madness era, they are not mutually exclusive, and likely all contributed to this significant period in the history of Cannabis discourse and knowledge. However, placing the roots of reefer madness and Cannabis prohibition in any of these theories is missing the forest for the trees. As opposed to being entirely new discursive phenomenon that can be analyzed independently from their historical and cultural contexts, the dominant discourse during the reefer madness era was built upon historical narratives that had previously developed around Cannabis in the Western world. Furthermore, this discourse perpetuated the Orientalist degeneracy narratives of Western imperialism, supporting the belief of European superiority and justifying ongoing social control of racial minorities, through a discourse that positioned Mexicans and African Americans as violent and deviant drug addicts. Anslinger even published an article in 1937 titled *Marihuana: Assassin of Youth* that referred back to Hassan Sabbah and his infamous assassins, stating, "In Persia in 1090 was founded the military and religious order of the Assassins, whose history is one of

cruelty and murder. Its members are confirmed users of hashish, and it is from the Arab 'hashishin' that we have the English word 'assassin'" (Anslinger & Cooper, 1937, p. 150). In other words, the unsubstantiated Orientalist narrative that had begun developing in the Middle East and Europe from the 11th century, positioning Cannabis as a deviant Oriental drug used by a mysterious sect of Eastern assassins to inspire acts of violence and murder, was being publicly stated as fact by the head of Americas Federal Bureau of Narcotics, some 800 years later. Whether racism and xenophobia, associations with rising crime, the zealous campaigning of a staunch prohibitionist, or the economic interests of powerful companies contributed to the reefer madness era, the discourse employed during this period relied and built upon the pre-existing narratives that had already developed around Cannabis over centuries, applying similar racist and Orientalist themes of deviancy, crime, violence, and insanity towards Cannabis use by racial minorities.

As we have seen, associations with crime and racial prejudice against Mexicans and African Americans contributed to rising calls for Cannabis prohibition throughout the early 1900s, and when Anslinger was appointed commissioner of the FBN in 1930, he eagerly answered that call. At this time in American history, most regulatory power was still wielded by individual states, so instead of trying to enforce a federal policy, Anslinger immediately campaigned and lobbied for passage of the Uniform State Narcotic Act (Patton, 2020, p.7), the purpose of which was to "make uniform the law across the various states with respect to controlling the sale and use of narcotic drugs", including Cannabis (Swain, 1937, p. 835). Under Anslinger's influence the Uniform Act was passed in 1932, and he began vigorously lobbying for its inclusion in State legislatures. However, by 1935 only ten states had adopted it (Bonnie & Whitebread, 1974, p. 94-95). Undeterred, Anslinger recognized the

potential in a new government agency that had the opportunity to define both the problem and the solution, and the FBN intensified their campaign against Cannabis, adapting the dominant historical narratives that had developed around Cannabis drugs by employing sensationalized themes of racism, violence, and insanity, drawing national attention to the problem they wanted to create.

Anslinger gathered not only the Hearst newspaper chain to aid him in his campaign against Cannabis, but also the Women's Christian Temperance Union, the World Narcotic Defense Association, the General Federation of Women's Clubs, the Young Women's Christian Association, the National Parent-Teacher Association, and the National Councils of Catholic Men and Women, who collectively became known as Anslinger's Army (Patton, 2020, p.9). Hearst had his own reasons for wanting to see Cannabis and Mexicans vilified, and had already turned his attention towards Cannabis before the formation of the FBN, with a Hearst paper from 1923 claiming that "Marihuana is a short cut to the insane asylum. Smoke marihuana cigarettes for a month and what was once your brain will be nothing but a storehouse for horrid specters" (Solomon, 2020, p.2). Another Hearst paper from 1928 claimed that "marijuana was known in India as the 'murder drug,' it was common for a man to 'catch up a knife and run through the streets, hacking and killing every one he [encountered]", further claiming that one could grow enough cannabis in a window box to "drive the whole population of the United States stark, raving mad" (Solomon, 2020, p.2). Not only did “yellow journalism" (*Yellow Journalism | Definition, History, & Facts,* 2022) style stories of the horrors of Cannabis drugs sell papers, Hearst and Anslinger were also both vocal racists. The Hearst newspaper had been denouncing Spaniards, Mexican-Americans, and Latinos since the 1898 Spanish-American War, and after Hearst lost 800,000 acres of Mexican timberland to the

"marihuana" smoking army of Pancho Villa, this campaign only intensified. Over the next three decades, Hearst printed stories depicting the stereotype of the lazy, marijuana-smoking Mexican, while simultaneously running a similar smear campaign against Chinese, calling them the "Yellow Peril" (Herer, 1998, p. 41). Anslinger's racism was even more extreme, making public statements such as "Marihuana influences Negroes to look at white people in the eye, step on white men's shadows and look at a white woman twice", and "Reefer makes darkies think they're as good as white men" (Newton, 2017, p. 183). In fact, Anslinger's racism was so overt that Senator Joseph Guffey of Pennsylvania sent a letter to the Assistant Secretary of the Treasury calling for Anslinger's dismissal from the FBN, claiming that "I am being deluged by complaints from our colored population because Mr. Anslinger has been so indiscreet as to refer to one of their race as a 'ginger-colored nigger.'… I doubt very much that one so indiscreet should be allowed to remain in such a responsible position" (Sloman, 1998, p. 46).

The second half of the 1930s saw a significant rise in media propaganda condemning Cannabis drugs, including sensationalist newspaper articles, alarming imagery in posters, and the production of anti-cannabis propaganda films. A few of the most notable films of the era were *Marihuana* (1936), *Reefer Madness* (1936), and *Assassin of Youth* (1937, based on Anslinger's article of the same name) (Däumichen, 2016, p. 11). The historical Orientalist narratives of deviancy, degeneracy, violence, insanity, and sexual indulgence are evident throughout all these movies, which featured roughly the same plot: Innocent, upstanding, and unwilling middle-class white youth fall victim to marijuana, often ending with them killing unsuspecting strangers, committing suicide, turning to prostitution to finance their addiction, or

(especially in females) losing all moral inhibition and becoming drug-addled sex fiends (Däumichen, 2016, p. 18).

Adding to the sense of fear and panic this kind of alarmist propaganda created, Anslinger promoted and frequently read from his "Gore Files" - a collection of stories taken from police reports graphically describing cases attributed to Cannabis use, including themes of racism, rape, violent crime, suicide, murder, and insanity (*Anslinger's Gore File - State of NEW YORK,* n.d.; Provine, 2008, p.84). The most infamous story, which appeared in *The American Magazine*, reported that "An entire family was murdered by a youthful addict in Florida. When officers arrived at the home, they found the youth staggering about in a human slaughterhouse. With an axe he had killed his father, mother, two brothers, and a sister. He seemed to be in a daze ... He had no recollection of having committed the multiple crimes. The officers knew him ordinarily as a sane, rather quiet young man; now he was pitifully crazed. They sought the reason. The boy said that he had been in the habit of smoking something which youthful friends called 'muggles,' a childish name for marijuana" (*Victor Licata's Strange Legacy*, 2014; Kaplan, 1975, p. 97). It has since been discovered that the boy, Victor Licata, murdered his family due to severe mental illness, which had been diagnosed early in his youth, and not because of Cannabis use (Kaplan, 1975, p. 94-96; *Victor Licata's Strange Legacy*, 2014). Furthermore, according to the *Thursday Review* "There were 200 violent crimes documented in the series, and researchers would eventually discover 198 of the stories were wrongly attributed to marijuana usage. The other two cases could not be disproved, because no records existed concerning the crimes" (*Victor Licata's Strange Legacy*, 2014). This claim is backed up by Herer, who claimed that "Not one of Anslinger's marijuana

"Gore Files" of the 1930s is believed to be true by scholars who have painstakingly checked the facts (Herer, 1998, p. 45).

In 1936 the World Narcotic Defense Association (WNDA) joined the moral war against Cannabis under the direction of Richmond Hobson and including many former government leaders (Mathre & Byrne, 2002, p.2). The following passage from one of their pamphlets that was sent to virtually every state legislator also displays many fabricated and sensationalized claims, built upon the historical Orientalist narratives that had developed around Cannabis in the Middle East, India, and parts of Asia: "The narcotic content in marihuana decreases the rate of the heart beat and causes irregularity of the pulse. Death may result from the effect upon the heart. Prolonged use of marihuana frequently develops a delirious rage, which sometimes leads to high crimes, such as assault and murder. Hence marihuana has been called the 'killer drug'. The habitual use of this narcotic poison always causes a very marked mental deterioration and sometimes produces insanity. Hence marihuana is frequently called 'loco weed' (loco is the Spanish word for crazy). While the marihuana habit leads to physical wreckage and mental decay, its effects upon character and morality are even more devastating. The victim frequently undergoes such moral degeneracy that he will lie and steal without scruple; he becomes utterly untrustworthy and often drifts into the underworld where, with his degenerate companions, he commits high crimes and misdemeanors. Marihuana sometimes gives man the lust to kill, unreasonably and without motive. Many cases of assault, rape, robbery, and murder are traced to the use of marihuana" (*Marihuana or Indian Hemp and Its Preparations*, 1936)

While early efforts by Anslinger and the FBN focused on prohibiting Cannabis at the state level by including it in the Uniform Narcotics Drug Act, as

mentioned, by 1935 only ten states had signed on, and so Anslinger turned his attention to a new approach which would effectively prohibit Cannabis at a federal level. Enacting federal legislation was quite difficult due to constitutional restraints that allowed individual states significant control over their domestic laws. However, precedence for a prohibitive tax had been set in 1937 in *Sonzinsky v. United States* (Patton, 2020, p.10; *Sonzinsky v. United States*, 1937), and that same year the National Marijuana Tax Act was passed, the purpose of which was not to raise revenue, or even regulate the use of Cannabis, but instead, to provide the legal structure to enforce the prohibition of all Cannabis use (McWilliams, 1990, p. 67-80). The brief, three-day Congressional hearing surrounding the Act did not rely on any substantiated evidence or scientific inquiries, not once even mentioning the results of previous studies like the IHDC (Bonnie & Whitebread, 1970, p. 1054; *The Marihuana Tax Act of 1937*, n.d.).

One of the main arguments supporting the Tax Act was the belief that Cannabis caused violent crime, and again, the dominant historical narratives that had developed around Cannabis were evident throughout the hearings. For example, Anslinger testified to a House of Representatives committee that under the influence of marijuana, "some people will fly into a delirious rage and may commit violent crimes" and that "It is dangerous to the mind and body and particularly dangerous to the criminal type, because it releases all of the inhibitions" (McWilliams, 1990, p. 70). Anslinger further reported, "Most marijuana smokers are Negroes, Hispanics, jazz musicians, and entertainers. Their satanic music is driven by marijuana, and marijuana smoking by white women makes them want to seek sexual relations with Negroes, entertainers, and others. It is a drug that causes insanity, criminality, and death – the most violence-causing drug in the history of mankind" (Sperling & Gerber, 2004, p.

9). Anslinger relied on three different sources to support his claims: " (1) a variety of horror stories from newspapers… about atrocious criminal acts committed by individuals under the influence of the drug; (2) studies by Eugene Stanley, the District Attorney of New Orleans; and (3) some inconclusive experimentation on dogs" (Bonnie & Whitebread, 1970, p. 1056).

The Stanley study (Stanley, 1931) repeated so much of the Orientalist history of Cannabis that it is reminiscent of much of the academic writings of the 1800s, claiming that "In the year 1090, A. D., the religious and military order or sect of the Assassins was founded in Persia, and the numerous acts of cruelty of this sect was known not only in Asia, but in Europe as well. This branch of the Shiite sect, known as Ismalites, was called Hashishan, derived from Hashish, or the confection of hemp leaves (Cannabis Indica). In fact, from the Arabic "Hashishan" we have the English word 'Assassin'" (Stanley, 1931, p. 254); "Its effect upon the Malays has been terrific, and the natives of the Malayan Peninsula have been known, while under its influence, to rush out and engage in violent or bloody deeds, with complete disregard for their personal safety, or the odds arrayed against them. To run 'amok' in the Malay Peninsula is synonymous with saying one is under the influence of this drug" (Stanley, 1931, p. 255); "Large doses produce excitement, delusions, hallucinations, rapid flow of ideas, a high state of ecstasy, psychomotor activity with a tendency to wilful damage and violence" (Stanley, 1931, p. 256); "It is commonly used as an aphrodisiac, and its continued use leads to impotency" (Stanley, 1931, p. 256); and " It is an ideal drug to cut off inhibitions quickly" (Stanley, 1931, p. 256). Furthermore, Stanley used Marco Polo's 14th-century story of Hassan Sabbah and his secret gardens of paradise to support his claim that "At the present time, the underworld has been quick to realize the value of this drug in subjugating the will of human derelicts to that of a

master mind. Its use sweeps away all restraint, and to its influence may be attributed many of our present day crimes" (Stanley, 1931, p. 256). Finally, the scientific study on the effects of Cannabis on dogs may well be the most ludicrous evidence presented at the hearings. The Treasury Department presented Dr James C. Munch, a pharmacologist whose experiments with Cannabis drugs on dogs led him to conclude that "Continuous use will tend to cause the degeneration of one part of the brain". However, he also stated that "only about 1 dog in 300 is very sensitive to the test". Moreover, upon further questioning, Munch could not make the crucial link between how a dog responds to Cannabis and how a human does. And finally, when asked whether "the continued use of it [Cannabis], as you have observed the reaction on dogs, has resulted in the disintegration of the personality?", Munch replied, "Yes. So far as I can tell, not being a dog psychologist…" (Bonnie & Whitebread, 1970, p. 1057; *Statement of Dr. James C. Munch*, 1937). Despite the questionable evidence presented, the 1937 National Marijuana Tax Act passed with very little debate and even less public attention (Routh, 2016, p. 165). Although Cannabis could technically still be legally cultivated, the excessive restrictions and costs essentially created a *de facto* prohibition (Routh, 2016, p. 165). As a result of the Tax Act, which remained in effect until 1969, when it was declared unconstitutional in *Leary v. United States* (*Leary V. United States, 395 U.S. 6 (1969)*, n.d.; Pullman, 1969), the transfer of cannabis became a federal crime, and further research on medicinal Cannabis became virtually non-existent (Patton, 2020, p. 10).

To conclude, from the late 1920s and early 1930s, a new period in the history of Cannabis discourse and knowledge began, which has become popularly known as “Reefer Madness”, characterized by often entirely fabricated or greatly exaggerated stories of the horrors of Cannabis drugs. While several different theories have been

put forward as to the leading contributions of the reefer madness era, the dominant discourse employed around Cannabis during this period was built upon the historical narratives that had already developed around Cannabis in the West over centuries, positioning Cannabis drugs as dangerous, deviant, Eastern narcotics, capable of causing violence and insanity, and primarily consumed by racial minorities, criminals, and lower-class people. This discourse also perpetuated the Western imperialism narrative of Oriental degeneracy, supporting ongoing social control of racial minorities. Growing fear around Cannabis drugs culminated in the 1937 Marijuana Tax Act, effectively making Cannabis illegal across America at the federal level. By the end of the 1930s, the negative Orientalist narratives positioning Cannabis as a deviant Oriental narcotic capable of causing violence and insanity had come to dominate nearly all meaning surrounding the plant, fully completing the transformation from important strategic commodity, to medicine, to dangerous illegal drug.

Chapter 12. War & Resistance

"I have always loved marijuana. It has been a source of joy and comfort to me for many years. And I still think of it as a basic staple of life, along with beer and ice and grapefruits – and millions of Americans agree with me." – Hunter S. Thompson

By the start of the 1940s the negative Orientalist narratives that had historically developed around Cannabis were strongly influencing nearly all meaning surrounding the plant in the West. However, from at least as early as the mid-19th century another narrative began developing around Cannabis in the West, in which experimenting with Cannabis drugs was seen as a kind of *avant garde* form of literary and artistic expression, and a fashionable way of "playing Eastern". During the mid to

late 19th century there was growing evidence that Cannabis was becoming something of a transgressive substance that held a fascination and desire among certain Western subcultures. As discussed in chapter 8 of this thesis, Thomas De Quincey's *Confessions of an English Opium Eater* (1821) had inspired a growing literary movement of Western authors, academics, poets, and artists experimenting with Eastern drugs, and recording their experiences in vividly Orientalist-inspired drug-memoirs. However, even before De Quincey's book was published, "opium had already developed a reputation for heightening creativity and inspiring visions, as depicted by the cultural concept of the 'drugged genius'" (Borougerdi, 2018, p. 96; *Kubla Khan and Coleridge's Exotic Language*, n.d.).

French Romanticism, which reached its peak in the first half of the 19th century (McCoy, 2018), provided the perfect cultural background for these ideas and experiments to spread and flourish. One of the earliest popular examples came from famous French poet Theophile Gautier in his 1843 article "Hashish", in which he claimed Hashish use "raises you to heaven and restores you to earth without a transition - not unlike the lucid moments in a fit of madness" (Baudelaire, 2019, p. 60-61). Just three years later, in 1846, Gautier published *Le Club des Hachichins* (translated alternately as "Club of the Hashish-Eaters"(Gautier, 2013), and "The Club Of Assassins" (Baudelaire, 2019, p. 19)), in which he described his first encounter with "the secret club of which I had recently become a member", who regularly met at an old building in Paris to experiment with Hashish (Baudelaire, 2019, p. 19). Upon arrival Gautier described being served morsels of greenish paste on Japanese saucers by a doctor who declared, "This will be deducted from your portion of Paradise", after which "coffee in the Arab style was served" (Baudelaire, 2019, p. 24). Gautier described how "the green paste which the doctor had just distributed to us was the

very same with which the Old Man of the Mountain had secretly dosed his fanatics, leading them to believe that it was within his power to bestow on them the paradise of Muhammad and the houris of the three ranks – in a word, hashish from which is derived hashishin, the eater of hashish, the origin of our word assassin… those who had seen me leave my home at the hour which ordinary mortals take their dinner had no inkling that I was going to consume a strange food which had been used centuries ago by an impostor of a sheik as a means of exciting his illuminati to murder. Nothing in my perfectly bourgeois rig could have made me suspect of such an excess of orientalism; I had rather the appearance of a nephew going to dine with his elderly aunt than of a believer on the point of tasting the joys of Muhammad's heaven in the company of a dozen very French 'Arabs'" (Baudelaire, 2019, p. 25-26).

As mentioned near the beginning of this thesis, Orientalism is a complex colonial fetish, which includes both attraction and revulsion (MacKenzie, 1995), and this form of "playing Eastern" began growing in popularity and spreading across America throughout the second half of the 19th century (Nance, 2009). During the 1850s, American diplomat, travel author, and poet Bayard Taylor also wrote about his experiences with Cannabis, describing "the fine sensations which spread throughout the whole tissue of my nervous fibre, each thrill helping, to divest my frame of its earthly and material nature" (Taylor, 1854, p. 402). After experimenting with a stronger dose, Taylor claimed that "the thrills which ran through my nervous system became more rapid and fierce, accompanied with sensations that steeped my whole being in unutterable rapture", after which "I suddenly found myself at the foot of the great Pyramid of Cheops… I wished to ascend it, and the wish alone placed me immediately upon its apex, lifted thousands of feet above the wheat-fields and palm-groves of Egypt" (Taylor, 1854, p. 402).

Around the same time, American author and explorer Fitz Hugh Ludlow published *The Hasheesh Eater*, describing his experiences with "the hasheesh referred to by Eastern travelers, and the subject of a most graphic chapter from the pen of Bayard Taylor, which months before had moved me powerfully to curiosity and admiration". In the preface to the book, Ludlow, who described himself as a "pharmaceutical Alexander" (Ludlow, 1857, p. 17) due to all the exotic drugs he had experimented with, refers to De Quincey as "that most wondrous, most inspired Dreamer", stating that "My own career, however far its recital may fall short of the Opium Eater's… still ran through lands as glorious, as unfrequented, as weird as his own, and takes those who would follow it out of the trodden highways of mind" (Ludlow,1857, p. v). Ludlow described the "tendency to stimulants" such as Hashish as "the perception of the soul's capacity for a broader being, deeper insight, grander views of Beauty, Truth, and Good than she now gains through the chinks of her cell" (Ludlow,1857, p. 270). Like Taylor, Ludlow also described being transported to magical Oriental landscapes after consuming Cannabis, claiming that "Oriental gardens waited to receive me. From fountain to fountain I danced in graceful mazes with inimitable houris, whose foreheads were bound with fillets of jasmine. I pelted with figs the rare exotic birds, whose gold and crimson wings went flashing from branch to branch, or wheedled them to me with Arabic phrases of endearment. Through avenues of palm I walked arm-in-arm with Hafiz, and heard the hours flow singing through the channels of his matchless poetry" (Ludlow,1857, p. 42-43).

The Hasheesh Eater contributed to a growing fascination in Cannabis amongst certain members of Western society, and by 1862 the Gunjah Wallah Co. in New York began advertising "Hasheesh Candy" in *Vanity Fair*, describing them as a "pleasurable and harmless stimulant" (*Enhanced Confections: Then and Now,* 2019;

HASHEESH CANDY:, n.d.). Just one year later the advertisements had become much more extensive and descriptive, with a full-page advertisement for Hasheesh candy on page 2 of *The Baltimore Sun* that read "THE EASTERN 'GUNJ'H' OF ENCHANTMENT has for ages been the theme of Song and Story among the Turks, Arabs, Persians and Hindoos (*sic*), and is for the first time introduced to this country in a medicated and agreeable form. A most delightful exhilarant confectionized (*sic*)…Who has not heard of the marvelous (*sic*) courage and fortitude with which the Arab, the Turk and the Hindoo meet fatigue, danger, and even death? Who has not read oriental stories and felt a longing to enjoy such inspiration and such visions of celestial beauty? Then, if you would reach those peaks of sublimity which hover over the path of oriental story… you would be better fitted to endure life's trials and enjoy its pleasures. Try it, try it, and life will seem a blessing, its changes like pleasant dreams" (*Enhanced Confections: Then and Now,* 2019; *The Baltimore Sun 12 Dec 1863, Page 2,* n.d.). Interestingly, this article seems to adapt some of the old Orientalist narratives that had previously been used to condemn Cannabis drugs to promote them, claiming they produce "marvelous (*sic*) courage and fortitude" and inspire "visions of celestial beauty", rather than producing murderous violence and insanity.

The discourse from the second half of the 19th century presented above clearly positions drug Cannabis as a kind of mystical and fascinating substance, and a means to visit (mentally) and understand the nature of the Orient and Oriental literature. It also positions particular (Western) users of Cannabis drugs as brave explorers, risking danger and defying convention to venture into new and unknown territories of the mind. By the late 19th century, clandestine "hashish-houses" had begun to open across America (*Dr. H. H. Kane and the 19th Century "Hash-Heesh" Smoking Parlors Of*

NYC, 2021), which one account described as "packed with obviously well-connected New Yorkers, some wearing masks, all dressed in Oriental costumes, all smoking marijuana and eating hashish" (Kimmens, 1977, p. 233). Rather ironically, while Cannabis drugs had been dominantly placed in negative Orientalist narratives for centuries, it was the association with the Orient and "Oriental magnificence" that "sparked subcultural uses among those seemingly at odds with the protestant work ethic mentality of western cultures in the late 19th century" (Borougerdi, 2018, p. 135).

This newly developing narrative continued to follow Cannabis drugs throughout the 20th century, transmogrifying over the decades to fit the needs and agendas of various minority groups and countercultural movements of the time. As discussed in the previous chapter, strong associations with Mexicans, African Americans, jazz musicians and nightclub workers were used by anti-drug crusaders during the early 20th century, in a racist campaign to demonize Cannabis and position it as a dangerous threat to society. Yet despite the growing national concern under Anslinger and the FBN, its popularity continued to grow amongst certain subcultural groups. Throughout the early 20th century references to Cannabis were common on jazz and blues recordings, with song titles like "Reefer Man", "Muggles", "Smoking Reefers", "Here Comes the Man with the Jive", and "If You're A Viper", to name just a few. According to music historian Harry Shapiro, "In the early 20's, marihuana, muggles, muta, gage, tea, reefer, grifa, Mary Warner, Mary Jane or rosa maria was known almost exclusively to musicians" (Shapiro, 1988, p. 29). After The Volstead Act of 1920 raised the price of alcohol, secret "tea pads" where people could buy Cannabis for 25 cents or less became more common across America, particularly as part of the Black "hepster" jazz culture. According to a PBS report on the history of drugs in America, by 1930 there were at least 500 of these "tea pads" in New York

city alone (Phillips, 2009, p. 648 - 649; *The Buyers - a Social History of America's Most Popular Drugs | Drug Wars | FRONTLINE | PBS,* n.d.). As historian Emily Dufton wrote, "In part because of its hyperbolically bad reputation, 'smoking tea' was celebrated in cities like Los Angeles and New York as the new way to enjoy the Jazz Age" (Dufton, 2017, p. 7).

In 1937 the Marijuana Tax Act was passed, effectively making Cannabis illegal across America. During the 1940s and 50s, the old narrative linking Cannabis use with insanity and crime (the Criminality theory) traditionally used to argue for prohibition started losing a lot of its credibility, as more and more Westerners began experimenting with cannabis drugs, however this was quickly replaced with the Gateway Drug Theory, which claimed Cannabis use would inevitably lead to harder drugs like cocaine and heroin (Patton, 2020, p. 12). Furthermore, while the narratives surrounding the people who used such drugs still positioned them as dangerous and deviant, there was a growing emphasis on the victimization of these people by drug dealers, which was largely being blamed on "negroes and Mexicans" (Borougerdi, 2018, p. 137). However, the racist and sensationalized propaganda and criminalization of Cannabis under Anslinger only served to reinforce a growing "nonconformist countercultural mentality in opposition to the hegemonic representation of recreational drug use as a reprehensible act of antisocial behavior" (Borougerdi, 2018, p. 140).

During the 1940s and 50s Cannabis started to become popular with the "Beat Generation" (Lee, 2013, p. 65-66), who "expressed their alienation from conventional, or 'square,' society by adopting a style of dress, manners, and 'hip' vocabulary borrowed from jazz musicians. They advocated personal release, purification, and illumination through the heightened sensory awareness that might be induced by

drugs, jazz, sex, or the disciplines of Zen Buddhism" *(Beat Movement | History, Characteristics, Writers, & Facts,* n.d.). Authors like Alan Watts, Jack Kerouac, Aldous Huxley, William Burroughs, Norman Mailer, and Allen Ginsburg all began writing extensively about their experiences with Cannabis and other drugs. According to American author Martin Lee, "Kerouac and his cohorts got high together in small groups, much like the bohemian writers who congregated at the Hashish Eater's Club in mid-nineteenth-century Paris. The Beats were conscious of their link to this great stoned lineage of European artists… They stayed up all night smoking fat marijuana bombers, listening to jazz, reciting poetry, and confiding their deepest secrets, their hopes and fears, in protracted, stoned rap sessions" (Lee, 2013, p. 65-66). Allen Ginsberg captures the spirit of the Beat generation in his poem "America", in which he wrote "America when will we end the human war? Go fuck yourself with your atom bomb. I don't feel good don't bother me", writing further down "I smoke marijuana every chance I get", and "I have mystical visions and cosmic vibrations" (Poetry Foundation, 2001). Norman Mailer once described in an interview how "in the late 40s and 50s when some of us started smoking it we felt wonderfully criminal, as if we were truly breaking a frontier" (*Norman Mailer on Marijuana and Whiskey,* 2009).

Throughout Western history Cannabis had been an important industrial and strategic resource, a dangerous Eastern intoxicant, and a valuable Western medicine. Now this multifaceted plant had transformed once again, first becoming an *avant garde* form of artistic and literary expression in the late 19th century, and then slowly evolving over the first half of the 20th century into a symbol of counterculture resistance to convention and the state, at around the same time the hippy movement and Nixon's war on drugs were beginning. As historian Emily Dufton wrote,

"everything changed in the 1960s, when marijuana was transformed from an avant-garde trend into a national phenomenon… Smoking pot in the sixties symbolized rebellion against everything straight in American culture… Disgusted by the wastefulness and conformity driving America's consumer culture and devastated by the wars raging at home for civil rights and abroad in Vietnam, young pot smokers of the 1960s embraced the drug as a signifier of protest" (Dufton, 2017, p. 9-10).

In stark contrast, building on the narratives employed by Anslinger and the FBN, Nixon made law and order central to his 1968 campaign in which he saw drugs as a major contributor to crime. Once president, he declared that "America's public enemy number one in the United States is drug abuse. In order to fight and defeat this enemy, it is necessary to wage a new, all-out offensive" (*Remarks About an Intensified Program for Drug Abuse Prevention and Control. | the American Presidency Project,* n.d.). However, it seems this anti-drug crusade was once again mostly due to racism and social control of certain "undesirable" minority groups. As John Ehrlichman, a top Nixon aide, revealed in a 1994 interview that was published in 2016, the war on drugs was specifically designed to target Black people and "hippies": "The Nixon campaign in 1968, and the Nixon White House after that, had two enemies: the antiwar left and black people…We knew we couldn't make it illegal to be either against the war or black, but by getting the public to associate the hippies with marijuana and blacks with heroin, and then criminalizing both heavily, we could disrupt those communities. We could arrest their leaders, raid their homes, break up their meetings, and vilify them night after night on the evening news. Did we know we were lying about the drugs? Of course we did" (*A History of the Drug War*, n.d.). Thus, as Borougerdi wrote, the War on Drugs "really refers to a war on culture, or, more specifically— in the case of marijuana— a war against subcultural uses for

cannabis, which were tied to the meanings behind its consumption" (Borougerdi, 2018, p. 136).

Nixon's War on Drugs saw incarceration rates across America increase substantially, with severe punishments and selective law enforcement combining to disproportionately target people of colour (*Nixon Adviser Admits War on Drugs Was Designed to Criminalize Black People,* 2022; *The Drug War, Mass Incarceration and Race (English/Spanish),* 2018). However, this draconian policing only served to further strengthen the countercultural symbolisms of resistance to convention and the state which had been forming around Cannabis since the late 19th century, creating a culture of grassroots activism that has existed ever since (Dufton, 2017, p. 11-15). As Dufton wrote, Cannabis "quickly became a natural extension, and prominent feature, of the protests that defined the era. At antiwar and free speech gatherings, smoking marijuana became an inherently political act… As marijuana became central to antiwar protests and free speech gatherings, the drug itself became a focus of civil protest" (Dufton, 2017, p. 11-12). The first official protest for Cannabis legalization was in San Francisco, in August 1964, and by the late 1960s Cannabis use had become associated with middle and upper-class college students across America (Patton, 2020, p. 13). For many of these students and activists, "recognizing that marijuana didn't cause the criminal insanity, murderous rage, or direct line to heroin addiction that officials and teachers had been warning about for years… marijuana became one of the clearest signs that the government could lie to its citizens, and they saw in protesting marijuana laws the potential to correct decades of information" (Dufton, 2017, p. 12-13).

While the *Controlled Substances Act* was being drafted in 1970, Nixon "temporarily" classed Cannabis as a Schedule One drug, defined as "drugs with no

currently accepted medical use and a high potential for abuse" (*Drug Scheduling*, 2018), pending review by a commission he appointed led by Republican Pennsylvania Governor Raymond Shafer. However, that same year he stated "I am against legalizing marihuana. Even if the Commission does recommend that it be legalized, I will not follow that recommendation" (Abel, 1980, p. 257). On May 26, 1971, while awaiting the results of the Shafer commission, Nixon had a conversation with White House Chief of Staff H. R. Haldeman, in which the president stated "I want a Goddamn strong statement on marijuana. Can I get that out of this sonofabitching (*sic*)… I mean one on marijuana that just tears the ass out of them… You know it's a funny thing, every one of the bastards that are out for legalizing marijuana is Jewish. What the Christ is the matter with the Jews, Bob, what is the matter with them?… By God we are going to hit the marijuana thing, and I want to hit it right square in the puss" (*Conversation 498-005 | Richard Nixon Museum and Library*, n.d.). In 1972 the Shafer Commission presented their report, unanimously rejecting both the Criminality Theory and the Gateway Drug Theory, and recommending decriminalization of the possession and distribution of marijuana for personal use (*Marihuana: a Signal of Misunderstanding: First Report,* 1972; Patton, 2020, p. 17). However, true to his word, Nixon ignored the report and rejected its recommendations (*A History of the Drug War*, n.d.; Patton, 2020, p. 17).

Despite Nixon's unwavering anti-Cannabis stance, a pivotal moment in the changing discourse and beliefs around Cannabis drugs came in 1970, when Robert F. Kennedy Jr., and his cousin Sargent Shriver, III, were arrested for Cannabis possession. As Chief Legal Officer David Patton wrote, "Once children of privilege began publicly using cannabis, the old stereotypes of the typical cannabis user were no longer valid. Consequently, cannabis use became less identified with any particular

race, class, or age" (Patton, 2020, p. 14). By 1970 thirty-two States had reduced their criminal penalties for cannabis possession, and during the early and middle 1970s, there was a growing consensus that criminal punishments for pot were too harsh (Patton, 2020, p. 14). By 1977 Cannabis seemed so commonplace and the fears around the plant so archaic that President Jimmy Carter called for the decriminalization of the plant. As Carter pointed out in a message to Congress in 1977, anti-Cannabis laws cause more harm to Cannabis users than the drug itself (*Drug Abuse Message to the Congress. | the American Presidency Project,* n.d.).

In 1974 a "mercurial and brilliant marijuana smuggler, Thomas King Forçade" (Gianakos, 2018), founded a new magazine called *High Times*. That year the magazine published its first two editions, introducing itself as "the only magazine dedicated solely to getting high. Really high. High times is a lavish new magazine devoted entirely to the exploration of psychoactive drugs… with an international network of underground sources" (*High Times — Fall 1974,* 1974, p.10). Some of the articles mentioned in the first two editions include: "Hemp Paper Reconsidered-Hemp (the World's Finest Paper) Could End the Rape of our Forest" (*High Times — Summer 1974,* 1974, p. 17-21), "Marijuana: Wonder Drug? Recent studies continue to indicate that marijuana is a medical 'wonder drug'" (*High Times — Summer 1974,* 1974, p. 36), "'smokeasies,' the increasingly popular dope boutiques where heads while away the current pot prohibition" (*High Times — Fall 1974,* 1974, p. 10), and "A Connoisseur's Guide to Growing: Indoors and Outdoors" (*High Times — Summer 1974,* 1974, p. 2). Taken together, these headlines indicate how the triple-purpose meaning of Cannabis as industrial resource, medicine, and recreational drug, was being reclaimed by Cannabis enthusiasts trying to re-establish the plant as a legitimate Western commodity. Furthermore, the use of the word "dope" in the quote represents,

as Borougerdi put it, “how a semantic loop developed that transformed it from a disparaging term into a powerful signifier of countercultural authenticity” (Borougerdi, 2018, p. 141). Despite the fact that a magazine dedicated to Cannabis is still taboo is some countries today, and was revolutionary in 1974, the “now-legendary” first edition sold out its initial print run of 10,000 copies, and two subsequent reprints. The second issue saw 50,000 prints also quickly sell out. According to American academic and author Albert Goldman, “Starting the magazine on a $20,000 shoestring, Forçade would see the circulation double with every issue for years, until at its peak, in 1978, High Times was read by four million people a month, grossed five million dollars a year, and had been acclaimed as the ‘publishing success story of the 70s’” (Gianakos, 2018).

In June 1976 an article appeared in *High Times* titled “The Rising Cost of Getting High”, describing how escalating pressure by the DEA “has brought terror to the fields abroad and tension to the lines of supply at home” (*High Times — June 1976,* 1976, p. 8). Another article from the same year mentioned how “smart money is going out of the import game and into domestic cultivation… Imported dope is becoming as much a luxury as French wine. If people in America want to get high, they’re going to have to Grow their own” (*High Times — November 1976,* 1976, p.8). In other words, by the late 1970s the DEA had been so successful at cutting off international supplies of Cannabis in their war on drugs that they effectively forced Cannabis enthusiasts to begin cultivating their own plants domestically and discretely. This sparked a new interest in hydroponics and other indoor grow products, with the first advertisement for indoor hydroponic growing systems appearing in the *High Times* 1976 May edition*,* which claimed to grow “super stoning pot… closets and attics become your own secret Eden” (*High Times — May 1976,* 1976, p. 16). These

competing forces of repression and resistance are reflected in an article from the 1977 February edition of *High Times,* which stated "America's Bicentennial will be remembered by potheads as the year of the Great Drought. Enforcement crackdowns, growers' wars, and an expanding market kept imports low and prices high… But the American agrarian ingenuity has come to the rescue. Last summer's crop of domestic marijuana exceeded all previous harvests in quantity and quality, and introduced a number of hybrids that could shake the bottom out of the import market" (*High Times — February 1977,* 1977, p. 83).

By the end of 1977, *High Times* had a monthly publication, with a large variety of different companies advertising all sorts of products designed to improve discrete domestic Cannabis cultivation and consumption, which in turn allowed growers to start producing a far superior product and in much greater variety. This revolution in domestic indoor Cannabis growth helped shift the meanings and associations around Cannabis once again. More articles started to appear describing the superior quality and variety of cannabis that was being cultivated domestically in the US, and in May 1978 a new column titled "Dope Connoisseur" appeared, "devoted to a connoisseur's consciousness of cannabis". The author described how "for years I've been waiting for someone… to bring to the appreciation of fine marijuana the attention to nuance and personality that wine tasters bring to writing about fine vintages… Most dope smokers I know have reached a point where it's not enough just to get high, it's not even *how* high you get, it's the quality of the high when you get there that counts", (*High Times — May 1978*, 1978, p. 38). A new narrative was forming around Cannabis drugs once again, with a connoisseurship subculture developing around artisanal Cannabis drug consumption as a respectable,

upscale, and social activity, even as the criminal justice system continued to disproportionately incarcerate racial minorities for possessing the plant.

Throughout the early 80s advances in hydroponics and other indoor growing equipment allowed growers to continue creating more sophisticated and controlled environments in which they could discretely grow Cannabis on a scientific scale (Borougerdi, 2018, p. 145), further improving the variety and quality of their crops. Throughout the 70s and 80s varietal names became common for different popular strains such as “Maui Wowie”, “Northern Lights”, “Big Bud”, “Skunk”, and “Haze” (Etter, 2019; *Top 8 Weed Strains From the 80s: The Undying Classics*, 2022). Many celebrities and countercultural figures also began endorsing/popularizing Cannabis in magazines and movies, and famous musicians and bands wrote songs about Cannabis including Bob Marley, Willie Nelson, Bob Dylan, Neil Young, The Beatles, and Black Sabbath, to name just a few. Famous comedy duo Cheech and Chong released their first Cannabis themed comedy movie *Up in Smoke* in 1978, which went on to become a huge success. And the film *Reefer Madness*, which had originally been released as a serious warning about the dangers of Cannabis, was now being employed as an unintentional satire among Cannabis advocates, and was being enjoyed as a comedy on college campuses around the country (*Reefer Madness History,* n.d.).

The more sterile environments and greater variety of powerful domestic Cannabis strains being provided by hydroponics also improved the medicinal quality of Cannabis drugs, and provided high quality samples and data to support what has become known as the Medical Marijuana Movement (Borougerdi, 2018, p. 146; Dufton, 2017, p. 207-225). After discovering Cannabis was the only thing that could relieve the pressure in his eyes, thus preventing eventual blindness, Glaucoma sufferer

Robert Randall became the first medical Cannabis activist in America after being busted cultivating his own plants in August 1975. Randall successfully defended his Cannabis use in court as a "medical necessity", and in 1976 won a law case that allowed him legal access to federally supplied marijuana through the Compassionate Investigational New Drug (IND) Program. Another important medical Cannabis activist of the time was the presciently named Mary Jane Rathburn, who discovered that Cannabis baked into brownies could ease the pain and combat the "wasting syndrome" caused by the HIV/AIDS epidemic of the 80s. Baking and distributing as many Cannabis brownies to sick individuals as she could, Rathburn quickly became known as "Brownie Mary", and as Dufton wrote "through her activism and numerous arrests, she transformed marijuana into a sympathetic cause. By exuding compassion for the sick, Rathburn was able to transform perceptions of marijuana… into a powerful force driving the passage of new drug laws" (Dufton, 2017, p. 208). Around the same time new drugs were being developed to fight cancer (chemotherapy), however these produced horrific nausea and vomiting. Chemotherapy patients also began to discover that Cannabis could be used to end the nausea and regain an appetite (Mathre, 2001, p. 4).

Between 1978 and 1980 more than 30 states passed legislation allowing the medical use of marijuana, granting doctors access to medicinal Cannabis through the government. During this period six of those states were able to conduct research on the medical utility of Cannabis on cancer patients receiving chemotherapy. While all these studies found Cannabis to be a safe and effective medicine, the researchers were unable to get their studies published at the time (Dansak, 1997; Musty & Rossi, 2001). However, reports of the medical benefits and potential of Cannabis such as those presented above, along with breakthroughs in research on cannabinoids, bought the

Medicinal narrative back into dominant Cannabis discourse and knowledge in the West, helping transform Cannabis once again into a legitimate and socially acceptable Western medicine. By 1996 the Medical Marijuana Movement had gained enough support to start changing state laws in America, and that year California became the first state to legalize medicinal Cannabis, allowing patients to grow and use their own plants (Mathre, 2001, p. 5). Other states quickly joined, and in 2012 Colorado became the first state to legalize Cannabis for recreational use. Over the last 10 years many other states and countries have followed suit, with medicinal and recreational Cannabis now available in a steadily growing number of countries worldwide (refer to the introduction for a full list), with Germany being the latest country to announce plans to legalize recreational Cannabis use (BBC News, 2022). In other words, the war against Cannabis had failed miserably, first helping to transform Cannabis into a popular symbol of counter-cultural identity, then into an upscale, diverse, and dynamic recreational drug, and back into a legitimate Western medicine.

Chapter 13. Conclusions:

This thesis would not have been possible without the previous work of Cannabis scholars, historians, and academics such as Bradley Borougerdi, James Mills, Emily Dufton, Charles Whitebread and Richard Bonnie, and many others, and it is my hope that, if nothing else, this work represents a positive and novel contribution to the field, which other Cannabis researchers, activists, and enthusiasts can use to inform their own research. This thesis set out to answer the question, “How can we make sense of the radically conflicting beliefs, narratives, and laws that exist around Cannabis today?”, through a genealogical enquiry into contemporary dominant Cannabis discourse and knowledge in Western culture. As a work of

genealogy, this thesis is a critical history of the present, intended to “problematise the present by revealing the power relations upon which it depends and the contingent processes that have brought it into being” (Garland, 2014), and illustrate “that a given system of thought was the result of contingent turns of history, not the outcome of rationally inevitable trends" (*Michel Foucault (Stanford Encyclopedia of Philosophy)*, 2018).

The history of Western Cannabis discourse and knowledge has been strongly shaped and influenced over centuries by many competing forces, but most consistently through the systems of thought and knowledge (epistemes, or discursive formations) of Orientalism. Beginning in the 11th century AD, before Europeans were even aware of Cannabis as a psychoactive drug, the Oriental myths of the enigmatic sect of Eastern assassins and their mysterious murder-inducing drug spread from the Holy Lands into Europe, appealing greatly to the mysticism and romanticism characteristic of European Orientalist thought of the time. Later, a Western imperialistic mindset of the Orient also shaped cultural perceptions of drug Cannabis discovered in parts of Asia and India, associating it with Oriental deviancy, degeneracy, insanity, and violence, often at the expense of any other meanings the plant may have had.

While Cannabis in the form of hemp was considered a vital strategic resource throughout the middle ages and the Age of Exploration, the discovery of other species of Cannabis being consumed as a psychoactive drug by natives of India and parts of Asia only further exacerbated the associations between drug Cannabis and the Orient, and the belief in European superiority, with Europeans comparing their industrial, fiber-producing hemp (Cannabis Sativa), with the “non-fiber producing”, Eastern intoxicant used only for “deviant” reasons, that was Indian hemp (Cannabis Indica).

These narratives were employed by the British in the service of systems of power and control, with the Oriental degeneracy narrative of Cannabis being used to help justify the "civilizing' mindset of colonial Britain. These narratives grew and spread over time, and by the 19th century the belief that Cannabis use caused violence and insanity in the natives of the Orient was so widespread that the British empire in India felt it necessary to conduct a formal inquiry into the matter. Despite the IHDC reporting the dangers of Cannabis drugs had been exaggerated, the Orientalist narratives of deviancy, degeneracy, violence, and insanity were well established by this point, offered academic authority by authors and scholars such as Marco Polo and Silvestre de Sacy, and accepted as scientific fact by many.

The significant impact Polo and Sacy had on the development of dominant Cannabis discourse and knowledge in the West reflects Foucault's notion of discourse as a "unifying instance of knowledge and power (Foucault et al., 1972)". As mentioned, in his book *Silencing the Past,* Haitian anthropologist Michel-Rolph Trouillot presents the production of historical facts and narratives as a process primarily determined by the power to define what is and what is not a source, claiming that "in history, power begins at the source" (Trouillot, 1995, p. 28). As highly regarded travel authors and authorities on the Orient, Polo and Sacy were able to control significant power over the legitimate and illegitimate sources of Western discourse and knowledge around certain subjects. O'Shaughnessy offers another example of this phenomenon, with his experiments into medicinal Cannabis creating the conditions of possibility which allowed for certain forms of drug Cannabis to be (temporarily) seen as legitimate, scientific medicines in Western society.

At the beginning of the 20th century, the dominant negative Orientalist narratives that had developed around Cannabis across England and Europe were

adopted in America and transferred directly onto Mexicans and “Marijuana”, with reports of Mexicans committing acts of violent crime and insanity under the influence of Cannabis drugs becoming common. Mexico became for the US what India and parts of Asia had been for the UK - an image of a perceived lower-class and degenerate “other” from which Americans could construct and compare their own superior identity, and once again Cannabis was an integral part of this narrative. These negative narratives and beliefs were employed by Harry Anslinger and the Federal Bureau of Narcotics (FBN) to justify waging an all-out offensive on the plant. The anti-cannabis Reefer Madness campaign employed by Anslinger and the FBN was characterized by racist and sensationalized horror stories of the effects of Cannabis drugs (often entirely fabricated), built off the well-established foundation of Orientalist discourse that had already developed around the plant. This in turn lay the groundwork for President Nixon's “War on Drugs” - which really referred to a war on culture, or more specifically in the case of Cannabis, a war against new subcultural uses of the plant which were developing in the West. While this discourse was in part simply a continuation of the well-established Western discourse positioning Cannabis drugs as deviant and dangerous Oriental intoxicants, it also reflected the racism and xenophobia prevalent in America at the time, and was tactically deployed in an attempt to demonize and maintain control and power over Mexican immigrants and certain other minority groups. Thus, while dominant Western discourse had positioned Cannabis drugs as deviant Oriental substances for centuries, the Orientalism of Cannabis changed over time, becoming weaponized, and being deployed strategically in relationships of power-knowledge and control. Early Western Cannabis discourse was largely determined by the romanticism and mysticism of medieval Orientalism across Europe. However, while the later discourse

deployed by Anslinger and the FBN was built upon these old Orientalist narratives, it was mostly determined by racism and xenophobia, and employed in an attempt to maintain social control and power over Mexican immigrants. Likewise, Nixon's war on drugs deployed much of the old negative Orientalist narratives that had developed round Cannabis, however these narratives were also adapted and deployed tactically in order to maintain social control over certain undesirable minority groups.

Despite dominant Western discourse and knowledge positioning Cannabis as a dangerous, degenerate, and deviant Oriental narcotic, capable of causing violence and insanity in those who consumed it, from as early as the late 19th century Cannabis drugs were also starting to become something of a fashionable and transgressive substance among certain Western academics, poets, and artists. Seen as an *avant garde* form of artistic and literary expression, and a means to visit and understand the nature of the Orient, many authors started recording strange and Orientalist inspired experiences after consuming Cannabis. By the late 1800s discrete hashish houses where Westerners could "play Eastern" - dressing up in Oriental garb and experimenting with Cannabis drugs - had become popular across parts of Europe and America. As mentioned, Orientalism is not always negative but is in fact a complex colonial fetish composed of both attraction and revulsion, and from the late 19th century the attraction of the Orient was creating a new narrative around Cannabis drugs amongst members of certain Western subcultures. Due to its Oriental associations, drug Cannabis was developing an exotic, alluring quality among Western academics, artists, poets, and authors who held a fascination with "Oriental magnificence", creating new subcultural uses and narratives around Cannabis drugs "among those seemingly at odds with the protestant work ethic mentality of western cultures in the late 19th century" (Borougerdi, 2018, p. 135)

This transgressive symbolism continued to follow drug Cannabis into the 20th century, transmogrifying to become a symbol of countercultural identity and resistance to convention and the state. As Harry Anslinger and the FBN waged their racist Reefer Madness campaign, Cannabis drugs started becoming popular with musicians and entertainment workers, especially as part of the Black "hepster" jazz culture. The criminalization of Cannabis in 1937 only served to strengthen this newly developing narrative, creating a "nonconformist countercultural mentality in opposition to the hegemonic representation of recreational drug use as a reprehensible act of antisocial behaviour" (Borougerdi, 2018, p. 140). Throughout the 1940s and 50s Cannabis drugs were celebrated as a form of rebellion by the Beat generation, with many famous "Beatnik" authors such as Jack Kerouac, Allen Ginseng, and Norman Mailer writing extensively about their Cannabis use.

The 1960s and 70s were a period of huge social change and protest in America, with the emergence of social movements around opposition to the Vietnam War, civil rights, feminism, the hippy movement, Mexican American activism, and environmentalism, to name a few. By this time Cannabis had developed a strong, well-established symbolism of resistance and countercultural identity, and became a "signifier of protest" at many of these movements, with smoking Cannabis being seen more and more as a political act, especially on college campuses, where its popularity exploded. The first official protest for the legalization of Cannabis was in San Francisco in 1964, and by the late 1960s, Cannabis was becoming associated with middle and upper-class college students across the country. In stark contrast, President Nixon declared an all-out "War on Drugs", which as mentioned, was really a war on subcultural uses of the plant that had developed in the West, designed to vilify and control African Americans and other "undesirable" social minority groups.

Although these policies destroyed the lives of millions of people and cost billions of dollars, they only strengthened the countercultural reputation of the plant, creating a culture of grassroots activism that continues today.

Furthermore, by the late 1970s the DEA had been so successful at reducing international supplies of Cannabis into America that they effectively forced Cannabis enthusiasts to start growing their own plants, domestically and discretely. This, along with new technological advancements in hydroponics, helped growers to start producing a much wider variety of distinct and powerful psychoactive Cannabis strains. This helped Cannabis transform once again, creating a new narrative with a connoisseurship subculture developing around Cannabis drugs as highly diverse, respectable, upscale, recreational intoxicants. The growing availability of powerful and diverse domestic Cannabis strains also provided high quality samples and data to what has become known as the Medical Marijuana Movement, allowing the Medical Narrative to return to dominant Western Cannabis discourse and knowledge. Throughout the 70s and 80s knowledge that medicinal Cannabis could help with a variety of ailments was becoming more common, including Aids/HIV, and the awful side effects of chemotherapy, and activists like Robert Randall and "Brownie Mary" Rathburn helped shift perceptions of Cannabis back to a legitimate Western medicine.

The war against Cannabis failed miserably, first helping to transform Cannabis into a popular symbol of counter-cultural identity, then into an upscale, diverse, and dynamic recreational drug, and back into a legitimate Western medicine. However, it's important to note that the Orientalism of Cannabis is evident throughout this modern discourse as well. As mentioned, it was an association with the Orient and "Oriental magnificence" that led many of the authors, artists, and academics of the late 19th century to begin experimenting with Cannabis drugs. A strong fascination

with the Orient is also evident in much of the writings of the Beatniks and the Hippie generation, and many of the articles from *High Times* magazine. For example, one article from the January 1978 edition, titled "Interview With a Dope Guru", described India as the "land of ganja smokers, bhang drinkers, charras yogis, [and] high holy hemp gurus." The interviewee, Ganesh Baba, the head of an order of Naga Babas ("dopesmoking devotees of Shiva"), described how "nobody was more surprised than we Indians who had for centuries of British rule been called filthy beggars and told to bloody well push off," when suddenly "tens of thousands of westerners came to India seeking verities and drugs from our gurus and merchants," and "during summer months fellows may see naked hipsters running gleefully through the fields of ganja…, falsely believing that such is the native manner (*Interview With a Dope Guru | High Times | January '78,* 1978)". While it was breakthroughs in science and hydroponics that allowed Cannabis to transform back into a legitimate Western medicine, and a varied and upscale recreational drug, it was countercultural attraction to the Orientalism of Cannabis that helped fuel consumption of the drug long enough for these transformations to take place.

As these new countercultural narratives and beliefs around Cannabis spread and grew in popularity over the 20th century, the old Orientalist degeneracy narratives of Western imperialism began to lose credibility and surrender their power over dominant Western Cannabis discourse. Consequently, the 21st century has seen dominant Western discourse around Cannabis changing rapidly, with the Medical and Industrial/Economic narratives returning in a big way. As mentioned above, medicinal and recreational Cannabis are now legal in a growing number of states and countries, and the commercial sale of recreational cannabis is legalized nationwide in Canada, Thailand, and Uruguay, and in all subnational U.S. jurisdictions that have legalized

possession except Washington, D.C. The evolution of this process, as well as the fluidity with which this multifaceted plant transmogrified over the centuries, illustrate the significance of cultural constructs and power-relations in determining how societies and communities decide to approve and condemn certain commodities. While many countries are adopting more liberal Cannabis laws, the meanings and discourse behind this plant are still very contentious today. This was clearly illustrated in New Zealand in 2020, when a referendum was held on whether to legalise the sale, use, possession and production of recreational Cannabis. The referendum was split almost exactly down the middle, with 50.7% of voters opposing the legalisation and 48.4% in support, ultimately rejecting the proposal and ensuring Cannabis production and consumption remained criminal offences.

The ongoing criminality of Cannabis has huge consequences for many people. With the battle over the commodification and legal status of Cannabis still happening, it is important to understand the historical and cultural roots of the dominant narratives that have shaped contemporary Cannabis discourse and legislation, so that rather than repeating the mistakes of the past, we may recognize the flaws within them, and make changes accordingly. As Mills concluded in an article discussing the use of history to justify contemporary drug policy, "If those addressing contemporary problems want to tackle drugs and their consumption in a fresh way then the lesson from the past is to reject it. Put aside the status quo as something that is tainted by the confusion and connivance of previous generations rather than formed by their wisdom, and start with a blank sheet of paper and an honest declaration of interests. Even if what emerges from such a process resembles what is in place today, at least it will have been arrived at through a fully-informed and transparent process, rather than warped by the flows of world history" (Mills, 2012), or, as Emeritus Professor of Sociology Jerry Mandel

more succinctly stated in an article on the assassins from 1966, “Eleventh century folklore cannot be a basis for an important twentieth century prohibition” (Mandel, 1966).

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