



EDITORIAL

Cannabis: A multidimensional plant

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The Editorial

Of the beneficial plants known to man, Cannabis (Ganja) remains one of the most controversial, most derided and yet, its properties and ultimate role are the least understood. Except for a few places, the wisdom herb is banned in most countries. While its consumption may lead to incarceration in many forms, the entheogenic, medicinal and economic values of Cannabis remain uncontested. Interestingly, its presumed harmful effects are very minuscule, and sometimes overstated. At our current state of knowledge, the economics (Ganjanomics) and the science behind the herb's use, misuse and abuse are murky, and often shrouded in superstition, misinformation and outright obfuscation of the facts. The ultimate goal in any serious scientific endeavour is to arrive at a verifiable truth. Against the aforementioned backdrop, the Journal of Indigenous and Shamanic Studies (JISS) announces to the world the birth of a new platform for engaging in healthy and vibrant discussion and analysis of traditional and non-traditional topics of research, teaching, policy advocacy and learning that would lead to the truth. It is in this light that our first issue focusses on a miraculous plant like Cannabis that tends to heal the sick, calm the afflicted and above all, has the largest income and productivity multiplier in national income accounting and for world economic growth. The story of Cannabis' role in human history and its evolutionary path in the past four decades has been characterised by mistruths. It is now time to unveil the mystery and to put the light on the fundamental themes that should spur the debate on the multidimensional aspects of Cannabis.

So far, medical research in the leading universities and research institutes have demonstrated beyond doubt that the potential benefits of Cannabis based extracts and formulations for dealing with a host of ailments that the moribund health care system based on pushing poison pills and cutting of body parts has failed to address. Leinow and Birnbaum (2017) documented a wealth of scientific knowledge on different aspects of the medical applications and the science is crystal clear: Cannabis, when handled properly and in the right dose has almost no side effects. There is a very low risk of addiction

and the chances of a lethal overdose, compared to opiates and other widely promoted pain killers and antidepressants are significantly slim. The research is still at the very embryonic stages and armed with what is known and can be known about the plant, any responsible healer can be turned to a true magi.

The potential of Cannabis in the economic sphere is incalculable. Traditional economics has not got the tools and training to quantify it in output terms, and any attempt at such exercise would always produce more illusion in the form of seeking after the needle in a haystack. However, some conservative estimates put the economic value to zillions of Rands and Cedis and Naira. There are backward and forward linkages in each stage of the supply chain, from growing to processing to final consumption. Every part of the plant is useful. Production can occur in small, medium to large scale. Cannabis is an all-weather plant, surviving even in the harshest climates. Every stage of the plant produces multiple channels of expression that our linear models are unable to track. Two to three robust plants that are well groomed and nurtured would normally provide enough bud for most household needs. Growing is fun and the plant is a natural balancer. For the building industry, the hemp variety has already closed the housing gaps in many economies and it is returning balance to homes. The fashion and clothing industry is set for a new revolution with the shift away from wasteful and unsustainable raw material sources for the existing clothing and beauty industry. The enormous potential for job creation and export diversification, new and sustainable industry makes Ganjanomics the most exciting field to study and explore, especially in times when the global shutdown has exposed all the cracks and crevices of the predatory economic model that has held sway over the past few centuries.

This maiden issue of the Journal of Indigenous and

Shamanic Studies (JISS) is dedicated to Cannabis. JISS has arrived on a high note and is here to provide an uncensored platform for sound, ethical and rigorous research on all facets of human endeavour. The interdisciplinarity of the journal allows for the cross-fertilisation of ideas from different realms of knowledge so as to synthesize the most useful for our time. Six articles are in this Special Issue—four focussing on Cannabis and two on related but indirect themes of death rituals and Makhanda's history. The issue has a dedicated column for creative writing – poetry, drama, music and other forms of artistic expression. We combine great skill in integrating academic and practitioner research and writing, and old and modern forms of knowledge.

The lead article examines the recent legalisation of Cannabis in Ghana and the implications for the entire continent. Ghana has joined Lesotho, Zimbabwe, Zambia, Malawi, South Africa, Lesotho and many others that now belong to the legalised club. The article appraises the current state of research on the subject and unearths the myriads of ventures that can arise when handled sensibly. A two-tier legalisation model is proposed to enable those who want to target export and domestic markets to attain the required standards through self-regulation or a well-constituted, fair and equitable regulatory body that maintains standards and allows all participants to co-create. A second tier that survived all the onslaught of the crackers and has been operating underground just to escape the corporate vultures is argued to now come out of the woods and join the game formally. These are the small scale growers who have learned how to use Cannabis for a variety of domestic preparations and as a livelihood strategy. The article leaves readers with searching questions and puzzles to resolve, such as, should African countries disregard the uniqueness of their environments and simply copy and paste rules and regulations that were written for, and by the North American Cannabis industry?

The second article is by Tanya N. Augustine of the School of Anatomical Sciences, Faculty of Health Sciences, University of the Witwatersrand. Her work on cancer, thrombosis and immune regulation has received wide acclaim in the scientific literature and this article provided the searchlight on cannabinoid pharmacology. The article introduces readers to the basic pharmacology of the major components of Cannabis sativa L., 9-tetrahydrocannabinol (THC) and cannabidiol (CBD). The paper analyses the molecular targets of these compounds in the form of the endocannabinoid system (ECS) and reflect on studies exploring therapeutic benefit.

Is the emerging Cannabis industry in Africa a mirage or a real entrepreneurial opportunity? This is the question posed in the article by Wits Business School Senior Lecturer and serial entrepreneur, McEdward Murimbika. In his own words "... I grew up in rural Zimbabwe knowing that cannabis leaves, flowers, seeds, bark, fibres and roots were strong medicines or ingredients of effective traditional medicinal remedies for a variety of ailments. I witnessed first-hand the miracles of traditional medicines and I believe the emerging cannabis value chain has similar potential as an economic force fraught with entrepreneurial opportunities..." There are few plants and drugs that have wide presence and universal appeal as cannabis'. He delves into the global value chains and articulates numerous ventures that can spin off from just one plant.

Karl Rumbold, head and lead researcher at Industrial Microbiology Laboratory of the University of the Witwatersrand and his collaborator, Philasande Cele, Cannabis grower and a researcher provides insights into the science of Cannabis. They trace the main scientific channels through which Cannabis performs its most effective actions and provide pointers to questions such as: Can cannabinoids cure cancer and other

non-communicable diseases? How effective are cannabinoids in pain treatment? Is Cannabis an untapped resource for mental health? How important is cannabis fibre and oil as a source for sustainable materials and commodities.

Emmanuel Quarshie, a doctoral researcher at the Wits Business School and a leading scholar on international migration with the International Organisation of Migration (IOM) takes a comparative look at Cannabis and pharmaceutical drugs for migraine treatment. Drawing on a single-case self-reported monitored wellbeing, he argued that a series of activities by groups of overworking brain cells that trigger chemicals such as serotonin that narrows the blood vessels can be eased with Cannabis-based compounds. He suggests that while pharmaceutical drugs provide relief, they do not guarantee a cure and also, they are mostly associated with negative side effects. To be sure, his patient under study showed improved health and wellbeing after ingesting medicinal Cannabis formulated for migraine treatment. He makes a case for the use of medical Cannabis in pain, anxiety, depression conditions while accounting for the causality and reverse causality that arises in such studies.

Masixole Zinzo Patrick Heshu, a graduate student of history and an award-winning performing artist looks at the history of Makhanda and demonstrates how a small corner of the eastern tip of South Africa produced large scale reverberations that changed not only the history of the country but also the continent at large. A personal narrative and reflection awaken the souls of men and women to embrace the reality of the rainbow nation and to use the past wounds and hurts as points of advancing to a new future which is already here. Cannabis breaks down the walls of separation in the human psyche and brings to light all unconscious elements in life. It is this return journey home to native knowledge and lore that Masixole terms the coming together of all as brothers and sisters as we once were. A reconnection to the ancestral lands and wisdom and honouring of truth above self-serving missions.

George Meyiri Bob-Milliar, head of the department of political science, and Director of the Centre for African and Cultural Studies of the Kwame Nkrumah University of Science and Technology, and his two colleagues Victor Selorme Gedzi and Seth Tweneboah examined how ritual observances of death has become part of the livelihood strategies among the Asante of modern Ghana. They argued, after analysing a large survey of participants of the funeral market, that funeral celebrations have become a survival tool among many dwellers of Kumasi with funeral enterprises providing handsome financial rewards. Although the paper doesn't tackle the demand and supply forces that give birth to funeral enterprises, it opens the doors for further investigation, and especially on the role of Cannabis in funeral rituals and businesses.

From this modest collection and many other works on the subject, we are of the view that the war on Cannabis is largely a war on consciousness, orchestrated by unconscious elements to hide the keys and clues to the kingdom of heaven within. That war has spent its force. The dark days of the human race are over, and we need clarity more than ever. Until we make peace with the second exponent of the human family in the plant kingdom, no progress is worth contemplating. The war on Cannabis has proved to be a monumental waste of public resources no amount of suppression can keep THC down.

Cannabis is a shared plant that defies monopoly control. It overturns years of mind control in seconds and opens dimensions for new expression and escapes from the devils' illusion that has been foisted on the minds of humans. The plant is here to stay. The teenagers who are still thinking of making laws to restrict its use, and or turn it over to few monopolist's hands are playing a catch-up game.

The robotic garbage about its lack of medicinal value in the Schedule 1 stipulation is no longer a defensible position.

We are privileged to offer this new journal to the public. It is the culmination of years of work on creating a sacred platform for scholarly work on the more important but often neglected area of indigenous knowledge and intelligence. The journal emphasizes alternative paradigms and encourages scholarship that accounts for the variety of experiences accommodated by the planet earth.

To be sure, JISS is here to provide avenues for connecting the dots between the known and unknown, and the above and below dimensions. For readers and contributors who are interested in mind mending ideas and conscious knowledge, this is the vehicle for dissemination. The scholarship advanced in this journal transcends conventional reality, giving intelligent beings endless opportunities for manifestation.

Published under the auspices of Porthologos Press, JISS addresses itself to the plant people, the stone tribes, the creepy crawlers, the winged ones, the finned and shelled clans and the two-legged family. As the voice of native culture, art and mystery, JISS creates a unique blend for raising frequencies and vibrations, transcending the time-space duality, and uniting the manifest with the unmanifest. We offer this as a true sign of the arrival of the White Buffalo and the fulfillment of the prophecy of the coming together of the Earthlings as a single species.

References

1. Leinow, Leonard and Birnbaum, Juliana (2017). CBD: A patient Guide to Medical Cannabis, Healing without the High. North Atlantic Books ISBN 9781623171834.