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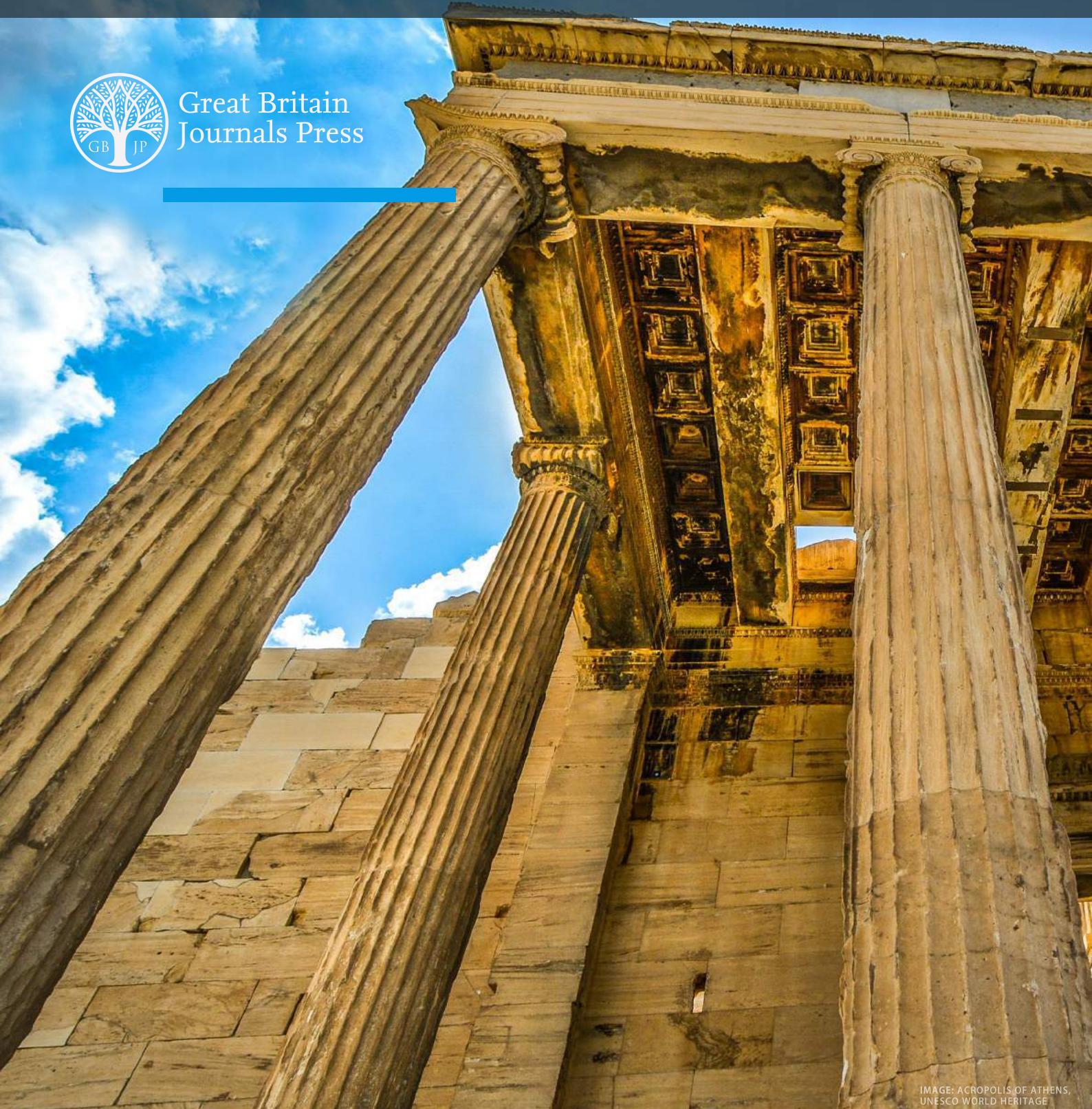


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# Do We Need Memory to Set Goals?

Huan Gu

## ABSTRACT

Based on the narrative complexity of *Memento*, this essay delves into Leonard's condition of being unable to form long-term memories. Despite this limitation, Leonard's capacity to set and pursue goals remains intact, fueled by his unwavering quest for vengeance following his wife's murder. Drawing parallels between Leonard's situation and Albert Camus' description of Sisyphus, the essay argues that both characters acknowledge, embrace, and rebel against absurdity by maintaining a persistent goal.

*Keywords:* memento, leonard, film analysis, memory, goals, sisyphus, camus, locke.

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Based on the narrative complexity of *Memento*, this essay delves into Leonard's condition of being unable to form long-term memories. Despite this limitation, Leonard's capacity to set and pursue goals remains intact, fueled by his unwavering quest for vengeance following his wife's murder. Drawing parallels between Leonard's situation and Albert Camus' description of *Sisyphus*, the essay argues that both characters acknowledge, embrace, and rebel against absurdity by maintaining a persistent goal.

**Keywords:** memento, leonard, film analysis, memory, goals, sisyphus, camus, locke.

## I. ESSAY

This essay is an analysis of Christopher Nolan's *Memento*, and particularly of its main character Leonard, through the lens of Camus's *The Myth of Sisyphus*. I argue that Leonard is a Sisyphean character because of the endless nature of his task and the way in which both Leonard and Camus's Sisyphus embrace absurdity.

In order to defend that thesis, I will argue that memory is not essential to goal setting because Leonard still has a persistent aim in life, which is to take revenge. He sticks to this aim through recognizing the absurdity of a life in which many of his actions are manipulated by those around him and even by his past self. But what makes the protagonist's persistent goal possible is the fact that he is able to carry certain information across episodes through his system of leaving notes for himself. This way of remembering is not considered a form of memory with regards to this essay because "memory" is defined as a continuous form of internally recalling past events, at least partially. For example, when we retrieve information that we do not remember from a diary, we would not consider this to be a

form of memory. We would expect someone with a normal memory to have no significant gap in between their memories. However, John Locke would consider memory to be essential for goal setting because memories allow us to be considered as a person. With Locke's argument, Leonard would not be considered as a person as he is unable to formulate memories, so the main character cannot have a goal in life. After comparing Sisyphus with Leonard, I will consider this Lockean objection. I ultimately conclude that this argument can be undermined by the fact that under the current legal code we would judge that he ought to be held accountable for his murder because his past self is not a completely different person to his present self.

In *Memento*, Christopher Nolan depicts Leonard, as a person whose life is centered around taking revenge for his wife. According to the protagonist, his wife was raped and killed by a man called John G. During this event, Leonard was knocked out on the head by the assassin, which led to his development of anterograde amnesia. This condition causes him to be unable to form any memories after his wife's death. As he is unable to have any short-term memories, he developed a system of remembering, which consists of tattooing clues for finding John G all over his body, taking polaroid of people who are involved in his life and writing down notes of mundane chores. Through creating his way of "recalling" the past, he is still able to gather evidence for his revenge on John G, which he ultimately believes to be a man named Teddy.

We, as human beings, look for values and meaning in the universe, because it gives us a sense of purpose and happiness, and provides us with a direction to achieve greater good in life. *Memento* demonstrates this with an extreme case: Leonard's whole life revolves around his goal. Albert Camus believes that there is an absence of value in the world and we should experience

disquiet about the lack of value, which he labels as “absurdity.” This reasoning stems from his belief that one can only obtain freedom and gain meaning in life when they recognize and embrace absurdity. We gain insight into Leonard as a character and, through the protagonist, humanity as a whole by considering *Memento* alongside the word of Camus.

In the *Myth of Sisyphus*, Camus states that “there is only one really serious philosophical question, and that is suicide.”<sup>1</sup> He claims that people are acting in bad faith when they perform suicide, because they are rejecting freedom of the world. Those who commit suicide see no hope or need to continue living in a meaningless world, which Camus believes to be a natural response to the absurd reality of the world. However, he argues that it is essential for us to revolt against the lack of value despite the fact that our lives are meaningless because there is a lack of freedom in the also absurd afterlife and revolt allows us to affirm a better existence through finding “values, dignity, and solidarity.”<sup>2</sup>

In Greek mythology, Sisyphus is famous for his eternal punishment in the underworld, where he is condemned to roll a rock up a mountain continuously despite the fact that it would fall back down again when it reaches the summit. Thus, he was presented with a task that will never be able to be accomplished.

Albert Camus uses Sisyphus' story to explain the reasons behind the presence of absurdity in the universe. In the story, we are able to tell that Sisyphus' life is absurd because he is assigned with an unaccomplishable task as his punishment. However, he does not perform “suicide”, which means giving up in this context, in spite of the acknowledgment of the reality of the world, where he is never able to roll the rock to the top of the mountain. Instead, he embraces the absurd punishment and revolts against the lack of value in the universe. This intense action of revolt, according to Camus, is considered as a triumph: “his scorn of the gods, his hatred of death, and his passion for life won him that unspeakable penalty in which the whole being is exerted toward accomplishing nothing.”<sup>3</sup> Therefore, he advocates

Sisyphus to continue to revolt, because absurdity brings about happiness. This is demonstrated by Camus' claim that “happiness and the absurd[ity] are two sons of the same earth. They are inseparable,” suggesting that people acknowledge absurdity as means of life and accept human frailty when they revolt, which are all components to keep us fully alive. Sisyphus demonstrates happiness in his punishment because it is the struggle to get the rock to the top of the mountain which completes one's heart. This implies that Sisyphus is happy.<sup>4</sup>

I will argue that Leonard shares three similarities with Sisyphus in regards to goals. First, both Leonard and Sisyphus live in absurd worlds because they have unachievable goals. For Sisyphus, it is through the punishment of the underworld and for Leonard, it is through the manipulation performed by other characters in the film. They recognize Leonard's condition and use this to their advantage by tricking the protagonist into believing that he is finding John G when he is merely performing dirty tasks for others. This is demonstrated by the scene when Natalie uses Leonard to eliminate Dodd. Leonard was persuaded to beat Dodd up and drive him out of town because he believes that Natalie was assaulted by Dodd and she was providing useful clues about John G. In reality, it was Leonard who hit Natalie because she purposely angered Leonard in order for him to help her with Dodd.<sup>5</sup> A similar situation occurs for Teddy in using the protagonist to catch criminals. This indicates that the main character is being manipulated because others are using his condition to their own advantage.

In addition, Leonard manipulates himself by controlling his future thoughts and actions through noting down his feelings towards people. When he does not desire to remember certain opinions, he writes it in a different handwriting, which is shown in the case of Teddy telling him to not trust Natalie.<sup>6</sup> Similarly, if he does not want to remember certain events, he simply burns the polaroid taken in the aftermaths of the real John G's and Natalie's boyfriend's deaths, whilst saying, “Can I just let myself forget what you made me do?”<sup>7</sup> Leonard experiences all kinds of absurdity

in this film, because he is constantly being manipulated. As he is unable to remember, he is coerced into living in a world where his life is meaningless and irrational with no power to escape because he is not able to act in his own interest and his own values.

Secondly, Sisyphus shares a similar value to Leonard in that they both embrace absurdity. Sisyphus demonstrates this through accepting the fact that he is performing a meaningless act that will never be accomplished. Likewise, Leonard does not note down that he had already killed John G when Teddy informed him about this information, which indicates that he would not be able to remember it, so he will continue to be manipulated because of his condition and his belief that he is yet to find the assassin. When there is no meaning in life due to absurdity, Leonard sets out a goal to create a life that is worth living for because he has a persistent aim. The protagonist follows Camus' logic of "living is keeping the absurd alive" closely by leaving his chest empty for a final tattoo.<sup>8</sup> This tattoo is going to indicate that he accomplished his goal. So by deliberately leaving it blank despite already completing this task, he is embracing absurdity. This is because he is accepting others' manipulation and allowing it to continue. Only through manipulation could he fill a sense of meaning because he believes his actions are contributing to his goal, which gives him a sense of purpose. In addition, the backward ordering of scenes further enhances the fact that embracing absurdity is enough to have a goal because the audience does not possess the background information of Leonard when we acknowledge his aim for life at the beginning of the film. Thus, suggesting that remembering past events is not essential to formulating a goal. Therefore, through keeping absurdity alive by contemplating it in the form of manipulation, Leonard is able to revolt and avoid suicide.

The last similarity between these two stories is that both characters revolt in order to find happiness and "gives life its value" in their absurd worlds. In the story of Sisyphus, he continues to push the rock up the hill despite acknowledging the fact that he will never be able to reach the

summit. This act is an example of revolt because he does not give up. Also, Camus states that we should consider Sisyphus to be happy because "the struggle itself toward the heights is enough to fill a man's heart."<sup>9</sup> Similarly, Leonard does not give up finding John G despite knowing the fact that he will never remember that he had accomplished his goal. This is because the goal of finding a person to take revenge on gives him a sense of purpose and happiness because his last piece of memory is of his wife being sexually abused and then killed. Through constantly seeking to accomplish this aim, he feels satisfied and happy because he loves his wife greatly and the aim fulfills him by taking revenge for his wife all the time. Therefore, it can be concluded that Leonard is using his condition to help him sustain a goal of life, which allows him to avoid suicide and to become happy.

However, some may argue that the protagonist does not have a goal and therefore cannot be a Sisyphean figure because his life does not have the kind of continuity required for that to make sense. For instance, John Locke states that one's "consciousness always accompanies thinking, and 'tis that, that makes everyone to be, what he calls self."<sup>10</sup> This would suggest that Leonard in the present is a different person to Leonard in the past because they do not share the same consciousness, so the main character can neither have a persistent aim nor embrace absurdity. Therefore, they would believe that the comparison between Leonard and Sisyphus to be incorrect.

John Locke defines a person as "a thinking intelligent Being, that has reason and reflection, and can consider it self as itself, the same thinking thing in different times and places."<sup>11</sup> This supports the argument that Leonard is not a person because Locke's way of thinking requires a person to have the ability to define his present self. In the film, Teddy accuses Leonard of only being able to define his past self, but of being unable to present himself as he is now because all of his recent actions are forgotten. Therefore, he cannot be considered as a person because he does not fulfill all of Locke's requirements. If Leonard is not a person, the comparison between the protagonist and Sisyphus will not be valid,

indicating that memory is essential to goal setting because without memories, one cannot embrace absurdity and revolt against it.

A true Lockeans might further claim that the present Leonard is different to the Leonard in the past. This is because “consciousness can be extended backwards to any past action or thought, so far reaches the identity of that person; it is the same self now it was then; and it is by the same self with this present one that now reflects on it,” meaning that as long as one has memories of the past event, they should be considered to be the same person.<sup>12</sup> This would mean that the present Leonard is not the same person as the past Leonard because he does not have any memories of the recent past. By not possessing the same consciousness at present as he does in the past despite being in the same body, it suggests that memory is a crucial aspect of goal setting.

Locke's argument presents several cogent points; however, its complete validity in this particular case may be subject to scrutiny. He is right that personhood is a “forensic term appropriating actions and their merit” in terms that we care about this topic mostly to determine when we should blame someone or hold them accountable.<sup>13</sup> However, if this Lockean notion is applied to *Memento*, we should not hold the main character accountable for murder, because they would consider the Leonard who killed John G to be a different person to the present Leonard. Thereby, for a strict believer of Locke, it would be morally incorrect to arrest the protagonist. However, the majority of us would still believe that Leonard should be punished for his acts because we would not believe him to be a completely different human being under our societal legal codes. His tattoos, polaroid and notes mean that he carries intentions across his experiences even when he loses memory, and he can still make plans to kill people using that system. Thus, we would still hold him accountable for his murder despite his condition. This suggests that, though Locke is right that we hold memory to be closely related to our conception of personhood, a Lockean analysis of Leonard not being the same person because he does not share the same consciousness with his past self cannot

be applied to the main character's situation. As a result, Leonard can still be considered as similar to Sisyphus and the argument that there is no requirement of memory for goal setting.

We need to have a goal in life because it allows us to pursue an aim in this absurd world. Only when we have a goal can, we embrace absurdity and revolt against it, which would ultimately create happiness for the individual in this meaningless world. Therefore, memory is not essential in goal setting, especially for Leonard, because without a persistent aim of taking revenge, the protagonist would most likely have taken his life, which Camus strongly opposes as it rejects the freedom of people.

As Albert Camus does not explicitly state the role of memory on Sisyphus, I interpret this as memory is not a component that Camus consider when setting goals. Therefore, a persistent aim can be formulated, in order to create meaning in this meaningless life, by recognizing, embracing, and fighting against absurdity. The character of Leonard is highly compatible with Sisyphus in terms of goals, so I argue that Leonard has a goal despite his condition. However, strict Lockeans reject this comparison because they do not believe that the main character of *Memento* is a person due to his lack of memory. Nevertheless, we would judge that Leonard should be held accountable for his murder of John G under the current law, at least in part, because he can carry information through time. Thus, rejecting John Locke's theory that you need to be in the same consciousness as our past self in order to be considered as the same person. Therefore, my claim that memory is not an essential component of goal setting remains valid.

In regards to the film, *Memento*, memory is not essential to goal setting because he is able to maintain a persistent aim through embracing manipulation and acting upon it despite his disability of remembering. However, Leonard is only able to achieve this by setting up his own system of remembering moments to act as memorandums, which is not considered as memory in this essay.

## Endnotes

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5. Nolan, *Memento*, 1:10:11-1:17:24.
6. Nolan, *Memento*, 1:09:07.
7. Nolan, *Memento*, 1:47:36 - 1:48:00.
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# The Haitian Neoliberal State

*Paul C. Mocombe*

*West Virginia State University*

## ABSTRACT

This work attempts to understand the contemporary Haitian state, which is a paragon of the neoliberal state model. Haiti's neoliberal state is a colonial state impoverished to serve American global capitalist hegemony under the auspices of a Haitian comprador bourgeoisie composed of professionals, managers, intellectuals, and business elites in Haiti and the diaspora. However, unlike Chile, which the West points to as the success of the neoliberal process, Haiti's model is a complete failure, similar to the attempt to neoliberalize Russia post the fall of the Soviet Union. Whereas Russia, under Vladimir Putin, was able to combat the deleterious effects of the neoliberal process, Haiti is unable to do so. The work posits that Haiti's failures rest on its colonial experiences under mercantilist and liberal capitalism and the embourgeoisement of its population on the island and the diaspora.

**Keywords:** vodou ethic and the spirit of communism, structurationist, vodou, dialectical, anti-dialectical, affranchis, bois caiman, boukman dutty, phenomenological structuralism, haitian epistemology, haitian/vilokan idealism.

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**Author:** West Virginia State University, The Mocombeian Foundation, Inc.

## I. INTRODUCTION

Like the Africans of North America who were enslaved by the British, the Africans of Haiti were enslaved by the French on plantations to reproduce the colonial mercantilist system of global capitalism, which became juxtaposed against an emerging liberalization of the latter (Du Bois, 2004, 2012; Mocombe, 2016). Whereas the former, mercantilist capitalism, promoted colonies and protective measures in trade to protect those colonies for the development of the colonial nation, i.e., metropole; the latter, promoted specialization and free trade

(McMichael, 2008). The dialectical struggles between capitalists promoting either model have shaped geopolitics since the eighteenth century (Chase-Dunn, 1977; Wallerstein, 1982; McMichael, 2008). Contemporarily, the distinction is drawn between protective measures and Keynesian economics, with an emphasis on social welfare programs, state interventions into the economy, import substitutions, and nationalization, on the one hand; and neoliberal identity politics, on the other, with an emphasis on trade liberalization, austerity, financialization of economies, privatization, specialization, and identity politics (Sklair, 1995; McMichael, 2008). The latter has been promoted by America, the hegemon of the contemporary global capitalist world-system, to countries seeking to develop and increase the well-being of their citizenry over the former, which America itself used to develop its economy and society against European (British) colonialism (McMichael, 2008). To date, the consequences for countries using the neoliberal model for development have been disastrous: seeing, the rise of identity politics, with an emphasis on the queerification and feminization of the work force; the privatization of state resources and the rise of a small oligarchy, working for, and with, foreign capital to ascertain and (privately) control these resources; increased poverty for the masses; and a weak state unable to provide social welfare for its citizenry who are dependent on outside foreign and domestic private non-profit companies, i.e., nongovernmental organizations (NGOs), and other non-state organizations for these services. In essence, contemporarily, neoliberalism has become mercantilism in an effort to colonize the states of the world for American, the new metropole replacing the Western European states of previous centuries, agricultural, industrial, and post-industrial interests, against state nationalism and the Keynesian model.

This work posits that the contemporary Haitian state is a paragon of the neoliberal state model. Haiti's neoliberal state is a colonial/vassal state impoverished to serve American global capitalist hegemony under the auspices of a Haitian comprador bourgeoisie composed of professionals, managers, intellectuals, and business elites in Haiti and the diaspora. However, unlike Chile, which the West points to as the success of the neoliberal process, Haiti's model is a complete failure, similar to the attempt to neoliberalize Russia post the fall of the Soviet Union in 1991. Whereas Russia, under Vladimir Putin, was able to combat the deleterious effects (poverty, unemployment, death, etc.) of the neoliberal process by gaining control of the state, curtailing the powers of the oligarchy created by the West, nationalizing its natural resources, and implementing Keynesian economic policies, Haiti is unable to do so. The work posits that Haiti's failures rest on its colonial experiences under mercantilist and liberal capitalism and the embourgeoisement of its population on the island and the diaspora against the African Vodou Ethic and the spirit of communism in the mountains and provinces of the country.

## II. BACKGROUND OF THE PROBLEM

Unlike the black American, which became a structurally differentiated black other in America. In Haiti, given that sixty-seven percent of the population were directly from Africa when the Revolution commenced, following the Haitian Revolution, many of the Africans were able to maintain and institutionalize their practical consciousness in the mountains and provinces of the island via the Kreyol language, the lakou system, and the Vodou Ethic and the spirit of communism (Mocombe, 2016, 2017; Du Bois, 2004, 2012). Hence two opposing forms of system and social integration (i.e., social class language games), each with their own mode of production, language, ideology, ideological apparatuses, and communicative discourse, would constitute the Haitian social structure (Du Bois, 2004, 2012; Mocombe, 2016): the Vodou Ethic and the spirit of communism of the Africans; and the Protestant Ethic and the spirit of capitalism of the *Affranchis*, mulatto elites and petit-bourgeois

blacks in control of the state apparatuses (Mocombe, 2016). The latter, given their interpellation and embourgeoisement in European languages, mode of production, ideology, ideological apparatuses, and communicative discourse, sought to continue their participation in the global capitalist processes of the Europeans via mercantilism and liberalism and control of the state and its apparatuses of control. The former, the majority of the Africans, sought to constitute an alternative form of system and social integration, i.e., a libertarian communal social class language game, by which they sought to interpellate and socialize the masses, outside the state and its apparatuses of control under the *Affranchis*, for subsistence living and sustainable development of the material resource framework over capitalist exploitation. Dessalines, the founding father of the nation-state, attempted, in a Kojèvian sense, to synthesize the two positions (Mocombe, 2023).

This Kojèvian constitution of Haiti by Dessalines did not sit well with the *Affranchis* who desired their pre-war status and wealth, which tied them to the (mercantilist and liberal) global capitalist world-system. Instead of focusing on fortification of the island, national production, food security, and agricultural production for local consumption as Dessalines attempted to do with his equitable redistribution of land among the population, the *Affranchis* assassinated him over his land and economic reforms, and the masses of Africans fled to the mountainsides and provinces of the island (Du Bois, 2012).

With the assassination of Dessalines, the majority of the productive land was divided among the mulatto elites, who took over their fathers' land and estates, and the black commanding officers of the revolution (Du Bois, 2004). They kept intact the export based economic arrangements which existed under colonialism and Toussaint's regime with the mulatto elites—because of their status as mulattoes—serving as the middle persons between the nation-state and outside merchants. What emerged in Haiti, following the Revolution, was the same colonial (mercantilist/liberal free-trade) class structure under the leadership of the *Affranchis* and their adversarial partnership

with an emerging foreign white merchant class, which assisted in the acquisition of manufactured goods, petit-bourgeois blacks who converted their plantations into agribusinesses, and the Africans in the provinces and mountains whose products were heavily taxed by the emerging nation-state under the leadership of the Affranchis (Du Bois, 2012).

### III. THEORY AND METHODS

Haiti, since 1804, has been marked by this struggle between agents of these two forms of system and social integration, the Protestant/Catholic Ethic and the spirit of capitalism and the Vodou Ethic and the spirit of communism, with the merchant and landowning classes (agents of the former) constantly seeking to supplant the Vodou Ethic and spirit of communism of the African majority via what Karl Polanyi calls the fictitious commodities (land, labor, and money) of (liberal-bourgeois) capitalism: the commodification of the land of the island, the labor of the African masses, and money (dollarization of the economy), which ties Haiti to the global Protestant capitalist world-system of the Europeans and Americans. In other words, Haiti is caught between the libertarian communism of the Africans in the mountains and provinces; the mercantilism, guised under the umbrella of black nationalism, of the landowning Affranchis, both blacks and mulattoes; and the liberalism of a merchant class (Arabs, mulattoes, and a few blacks) seeking to (neo) liberalize trade as they control the export and import trade on the island. The latter two seek control of the state and its apparatuses backed by their American and European handlers seeking to neoliberalize the country and its institutions or state apparatuses of control.

### IV. DISCUSSION AND CONCLUSION

Contemporarily, the continuous struggle between the mulatto (and Arab) merchant/professional class and the black landowning managerial classes for control of the state and its apparatuses, at the expense of the African masses in the provinces and mountains whose children they arm and use against each other as they migrate to

Port-au-Prince amidst American neoliberal policies seeking to displace the masses off their land for diversified consumerism, i.e., tourism, agro and textile industries, and athletics (basketball and soccer), and trickle-down economics, continues to be a hindrance for the constitution of a sovereign Haitian nation-state amidst global climate change. The former two, interpellated and embourgeoised in Western ideological apparatuses, seek to constitute Haiti and the Haitian state, with the aid of whites (France, Canada, and America), as an export-oriented periphery state within the capitalist world-system under American hegemony through the queerification and feminization of the labor force, privatization of state assets and services, austerity measures, militarization, and liberalization of trade with France, Canada, and the United States (Du Bois, 2012; Mocombe, 2016). This neoliberal/mercantilist/colonial process stands against the desires of the masses of Africans who have been ghettoized in the urban slums, provinces, and mountains while seeking to maintain their *komes*, subsistence agriculture, and husbandry, which are deemed informal, against the gentrification of the country. The new *grandon* class, composed of educated professionals, former drug dealers, entertainers, and police officers attack the former Affranchis class, which is now a comprador (oligarchical) bourgeoisie (composed of Arab merchants) seeking to build, own, and manage hotels (to promote Haitian culture) and assembly factories producing electronics and clothing for the US market, under the moniker the children of Dessalines against the children of Pétion in the name of the African masses of the island, the majority of whom are peasant farmers interpellated and ounGANIFIED by the Vodou Ethic and the spirit of communism. Instead of focusing on infrastructure (artificial lakes, potable water, food security, mache—modern market spaces for *komes*, universities, and state-owned companies for the peasant class to sell, etc.) to augment national agriculture and the productive forces of the latter group, who constitute eighty-five percent of the population, the mulatto/Arab elites and petit-bourgeois blacks emphasize austerity,

job creation through foreign direct investment in tourism, agro and textile industries, privatization of public services, infrastructure for an export-oriented economy similar to the one they had under slavery, and the constitution of a political bourgeoisie in control of the state apparatuses. However, their inabilitys—given the voting power of the majority—to constitute two dominant rotating political parties, between the grandon and the black professional/managerial classes, to implement the desires of their former colonial slavemasters, leaves Haiti in perpetual turmoil and poverty. As in slavery, the African masses continue to protest and fight, against their interpellation, embourgeoisement, and differentiation as wage-earners (commodities) in the tourism trade and textile factories of the Catholic/Protestant Ethic and spirit of capitalism of these two power elites seeking equality of opportunity, recognition, and distribution with whites at their expense, for the Vodou Ethic and the spirit of communism of *ougan yo, manbo yo*, and *granmoun yo* of Bois Caiman. As the current historical conjuncture parallels the conjuncture of 1791 either a unifying national conference that parallels Bois Caiman or a second war of independence will determine the outcome of this perpetual economic and cultural civil war in Haiti. As for now, the masses of Port-au-Prince, galvanized by the grandon class, protest against the neoliberal capitalist world-system under American hegemony under the moniker, the children of Pétion v. the children of Dessalines. Although viewed within racial and nationalistic terms by the majority of the governing elites, Pétion representing the mulatto elites and Dessalines the African masses, this work suggests that the metaphor, contemporarily, have come to represent Marxist ideological categories for racial-class (nationalistic) struggles on the island of Haiti against dictatorship, the Haitian oligarchs, and American neoliberal policies on the island: the ideological position of Pétion representing the neoliberal views of the mulatto elites and petit-bourgeois blacks; and Haitian nationalism, economic reform, and social justice representing the ideological position of Dessalines as articulated by educated segments of the petit-bourgeois class, such as Moïse Jean-Charles,

Assad Volcy, etc., claiming to speak for the African masses, the majority of whom are more so the descendants of Macaya and Sans Souci (the African leadership during the Revolutionary period) than Pétion or Dessalines (Kreyol blacks of the island). However, in the final analysis, both positions stand against the interests of the African masses as they seek to maintain their subsistence agriculture, komes, and well-being amidst the desires of the two bourgeoisies fighting for equality of opportunity, recognition, and distribution with whites within the global capitalist world-system under American neoliberal hegemony (Fraser, 1997; Mocombe, 2016, 2017).

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# 'Mo fire' than Smoke: Liberating the Politics and Development of Cannabis in South Africa

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## ABSTRACT

This article tells a story about cannabis that illuminates two dimensions of its development that are often overlooked for a truly liberating development plan post legalization for the majority of people in South Africa. Firstly, by its nature cannabis is political and has a black revolutionary history that is not being adequately acknowledged in the contemporary literature, even though it is deeply embedded in how the plant is understood in the geographic diaspora of the Global South. Secondly, any serious social scientific analysis of contemporary cannabis development must think through how the ways of knowing and work, produced during prohibition, will become a part of the plant's future. Innovative and alternative models of practical development are agencies of the marginalized majority that should become a standard part of the geographies of all work economies.

**Keywords:** cannabis; just development; political geography; contemporary south african history.

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# 'Mo fire' than Smoke: Liberating the Politics and Development of Cannabis in South Africa

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## ABSTRACT

*This article tells a story about cannabis that illuminates two dimensions of its development that are often overlooked for a truly liberating development plan post legalization for the majority of people in South Africa. Firstly, by its nature cannabis is political and has a black revolutionary history that is not being adequately acknowledged in the contemporary literature, even though it is deeply embedded in how the plant is understood in the geographic diaspora of the Global South. Secondly, any serious social scientific analysis of contemporary cannabis development must think through how the ways of knowing and work, produced during prohibition, will become a part of the plant's future. Innovative and alternative models of practical development are agencies of the marginalized majority that should become a standard part of the geographies of all work economies.*

*The article shows that because prohibition narratives, particularly regarding recreational usage, continue to hold substantial power over how societies understand cannabis, delinking from these inscriptions onto the plant is essential for its future development. The article argues further that the current trend towards the medicalisation of cannabis is not fully transformative for Global South development because it reforms rather than stamp out gatekeeping models. Lastly, it exposes the realities of gaining access into the industry for black people, the poor working class and women. It argues that ownership, just employment and leadership of cannabis industries in South Africa must also be performed by ordinary people for a truly sustainable contemporary development.*

**Keywords:** cannabis; just development; political geography; contemporary south african history.

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## I. INTRODUCTION

There is new literature that is being produced that is forging ahead and giving a new sense of direction to the discourse about cannabis from a South African, African and Global South perspective (see for instance Chattopadhyaya 2019; Coogan, MA dissertation 2016; Duvall 2016; Duvall 2019; Moore, PhD thesis, forthcoming; Nkosi, MA dissertation 2019; Nkosi, Devey & Waetjen 2020; Patterson, MA dissertation 2009; Singh, MA dissertation 2019; Waetjen 2019; 2022). This literature is – as the intention of this article also illuminates – beginning to show that cannabis can exist and has existed as a more complex feature of development and political geography than is popularly acknowledged. Offering a critical discussion of cannabis, applicable to more than just its recreational<sup>1</sup> part, is imperative to reimagining the role the plant will play in contemporary development.

This means also providing new theoretical and methodological ways of understanding the plant.<sup>2</sup> These must illuminate the often-conspicuous historiography and theories of black revolution and resistance that are nonetheless encompassed in the study of cannabis. Regrettably, the lessons

<sup>1</sup> Recreational goods including tobacco, alcohol and cannabis have long been a part of most societies. Western development particularly made use of them to maintain control over labour regimes and people. For example, the 'tot system' in the Cape Province, as well as the opium trade of the British Empire in Asia. See for example Mills (2005) discussion of Great Britain's trade and prohibition of cannabis in the 19<sup>th</sup> century.

<sup>2</sup> In forthcoming articles these theoretical and methodological aspects will be dealt with fully and respectively. This article only provides an overview of the importance of cannabis studies to emancipatory politics and development more generally.

from such activities are often far too easily dismissed in most disciplines in the academic institute (see Morris 2015). By arguing for a theoretical, yet practical pedagogy for cannabis studies produces a more tangible output that calls out the concerns of the Global South. A micro-analysis of a plant and its interaction with bigger forces that influence it offers fresh methods with which to positively critique the analysis of agrarian transformation in post-apartheid South Africa. By using cannabis as a conduit through which to understand various aspects of South Africa's contemporary politics and socioeconomics is an innovative method of assessing the ongoing challenges of development. These include the need to increase black ownership, access to just pro-poor employment opportunities for the poor working class and ensuring women occupy real leadership positions (see for instance Buxton et.al. 2020; Clarke & Riboulet-Zemouli 2021; Dills et.al. 2021; Jelsma et.al. 2021; Kay et.al. 2020; Manu et.al. 2021; Riboulet-Zemouli et.al. 2019). Similarly, this article points to a new world of cannabis development that could be used to bolster a country, continent and diaspora and add original solutions to political, economic and social woes.

## II. MORE TO CANNABIS STUDIES THAN SMOKE

There is much more fire to cannabis<sup>3</sup> than smoke! Nevertheless, all the uses of the plant (recreational, medicinal or industrial – and even spiritual and cultural usages) are generally ostracized in South Africa based on colonial and post-colonial stereotypes about its psychedelic abilities. Moreover, South Africa in the main still adheres to 'Prohibitionist drug policy' (Scheibe, Shelly & Versfeld in Buxton et.al. 2020). These negative narratives continue to have great

<sup>3</sup> Cannabis describes the entire range of uses of the plant; industrial, medicinal, recreational and spiritual (see Chouvy 2019 for the continued confusions about classifying the plant). Moreover, there is significant interrelationship between all these uses of the plant that highlights that cannabis is more than just a psychoactive substance. To provide distinction, the term hemp is used to describe industrial cannabis. Marijuana (more commonly called dagga in South Africa), when used, will be in reference to recreational but also medicinal cannabis.

resonance over the plant's contemporary and future development.<sup>4</sup> So even though cannabis is a potentially useful agricultural crop, the obstructive link to smoking recreational marijuana to get high warrants, for regulators and the public alike, that the entire uses of the plant's development are kept separated and side-lined, rather than unified and consolidated. Illuminating new ways of thinking through the legacy's prohibition geographies inscribed onto the plant is thus essential to the plant's future.

Honing the skills learnt while labouring for cannabis during prohibition so that they become a permanent feature of its contemporary development is one way to rethink the plants future. Ordinary people's struggles have created ways to exist that are progressive because they tend to be labour centered and viewed from a lens that reveals the emancipation and 'rebellion of the poor' (see Alexander 2010; Neocosmos 2016). In this way, legal contemporary cannabis development is not solely about entering 'the market' or gaining liberal democratic capitalist consent. In fact, the international cannabis movement<sup>5</sup> is generally disconcerted that the parameters of the current development program for the plant are still largely being decided upon by those with wealth and power. While those without, continue to struggle, unethically, to have ownership, just employment and influence in legalized cannabis industries (Bewley-Taylor et.al., in Buxton et.al 2020; Clarke & Riboulet-Zemouli 2021; Jelsma et.al., 2021; Kay et.al., 2020; Riboulet-Zemouli et.al., 2019). Critiquing such development challenges the authority of inadequate contemporary liberal

<sup>4</sup> Narratives are framed in history and produced, reproduced, repackaged and changed over time (see London 2009). The notion of 'narratives' is a leitmotif that can also be used to explore broader issues of contemporary South Africa such race and identity or gender and sexuality. Michel Foucault understood narratives as genealogy whose concern, (and in terms of this understanding of Cannabis), is clearly not history, but trying to understand the present by using 'historical materials to rethink the present' to reconstruct how these are produced (Garland 2014: 373).

<sup>5</sup> The cannabis movement is defined as those people and ideas who have supported the plant even during prohibition rather than those who are only advocating for the plant since the start of global legalization.

democratic capital expansion. It further scrutinizes how it is possible that the system (politics) that prohibited cannabis, for various legal, moral and economic reasons, remains in control of the contours of the plants development in the legalization era.

Such a critical view of cannabis development rehabilitates 'other' discourses about the plant to initiate their use in a post-legalization era that seems to be side-lining them. Firstly, cannabis has political ideas steeped in slave and colonial history, pan-Africanism, and black consciousness that are often not referenced in its mainstream development.<sup>6</sup> Secondly, the important labour agency black people, the poor working class and women have given to the plants global recognition are being dispossessed in the plant's contemporary development plans. Contemporary South African cannabis development illustrates how ordinary people's history and labour is flouted when policies are written.<sup>7</sup>

Much more inspired academic inquiry is thus needed to direct the process of cannabis development since the landmark South African Constitutional Court judgement that legalized cannabis for private use on 18 September 2018.<sup>8</sup> Essentially cannabis is now able to mingle with free-market economies; which is a positive development. However, it also allows capital the enterprise to maintain 'power over' merchandises; even those it formally dismissed. What is more, party politics, the state, as well as broader neoliberal agendas remain reliant on free market economic planning that have benefited a minority, rather than most black people (Chatterjee, Czajka & Gethin 2020; Gordan 2008; Neocosmos 2016;

<sup>6</sup> See particularly reggae music that has long conceptualized cannabis within a black revolutionary historic framework.

<sup>7</sup> See Jeremy Acton's verbal submission to the South African Ministry of Justice and Parliament and to the Public, in regard to the proposed Cannabis for Private Purposes Bill 2021 (See <https://daggaparty.org.za/2021/08/31/cannabis-for-private-purposes-bill-2021/or>, the Cannabis for Private Purposes Bill 2020).

<sup>8</sup> However, the Constitutional Court Ruling is not very clear about cannabis use in public spaces or when ordinary citizens want to sell it privately (Schindlers Attorneys, 29 Nov 2018, <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=YVIcs7iETRk> Accessed 28 September 2021).

Schneider 2003).<sup>9</sup> Cannabis development in South Africa therefore has to escape the capital limitation of materialism if it wants to include the lessons of its history into its contemporary drive. Innovative approaches to (cannabis) development enhance more inspired forms of positive change because "We must look for solutions and a way of life elsewhere" (Sinwell 2022: 6), so (South Africa) the world can make it through its current quagmire.

### III. SOME BACKGROUND TO UNDERSTANDING CANNABIS

Cannabis has been cultivated for thousands of years, this accentuates the close relationship this plant has had to human societies and agrarian development (Paterson MA Dissertation 2009: 16).<sup>10</sup> Plants are cultivated because the goods they produce add intrinsic value to the society in which they are being farmed. Hemp cannabis for example has been and still is renowned throughout the world for its multiple product capabilities. These include, "agro-industrial fields such as agriculture, textile, bio composite, paper-making, automotive, construction, bio-fuel, functional food, oil, cosmetics, personal care, and [the] pharmaceutical industry" (Bouloc, Allegret and Arnaud eds., 2013; Salentijn et.al., 2015). Cannabis also has, besides its recreational usage, significant medicinal properties for critically ill patients, pain relief, multiple sclerosis, nausea and epilepsy for instance (Chapkis & Webb 2008; Crowther, Reynolds, Tansey eds., 2010).

However, it is the chemical compounds found in cannabis that have caused much of this plant's controversy. The two primary chemical components found in cannabis are Tetrahydro cannabinol (THC) the principal psychoactive constituent of recreational marijuana (Agricultural Research Council 2014) and CBD (Cannabidiol) that is not psychedelic (i.e., it cannot make a person high). Both THC and CBD have health benefits and work to improve the

<sup>9</sup> The cannabis literature that recognizes this include for instance (Bewley-Taylor, Jelsma & Kay in Buxton et.al. 2020; Clarke & Riboulet-Zemouli 2021; Jelsma et.al. 2021).

<sup>10</sup> See (Pollio 2016 or Chouvy 2019) for more about the taxonomy of Cannabis.

bodies endocannabinoid system that has an important "... role in regulating many functions and processes, including, sleep, mood, appetite, memory, reproduction, and fertility" (First Crop, Accessed 05 January 2022). Warf (2014: 433) therefore surmises that "While it has been accepted and tolerated more often than not, cannabis has also been repeatedly demonized in different historical contexts; attempts to restrict its usage have invariably reflected political and moral agendas rather than established science."

The cycle of victimizing cannabis eventually resulted, in the 20<sup>th</sup> century, in the total and global prohibition of even those parts of the plant that could not be used for psychedelic purposes.<sup>11</sup> South Africa had a very important part to play in the scheduling of cannabis as a 'dangerous drug' by the League of Nations in 1925 (Chattopadhyaya 2019; Duvall 2016; Duvall 2019; Nkosi et.al.,2020; Waetjen 2022). The plant was so heavily 'demonized' because it was regarded as a leading cause of the 'breakdown in racial and cultural boundaries' (Nkosi et.al., 2020: 73). Prohibition therefore had a definite racial slant and was portrayed as a means of preventing black men from coming into physical contact with white women during the interwar years in South Africa as well as in the United States of America and Great Britain (see Cross in Manning (ed) 2007).<sup>12</sup>

Popular (mostly American) discourse argued that the plant was prohibited because textile, paper and plastic industries supported by bankers and politicians, as well as a growing medical industrial complex more interested in synthetic drugs, wanted to remove its products' commercial threat from the marketplace. To do this, politicians and big business linked the psychedelic and recreational use of marijuana to all cannabis products. According to this narrative, it was this combination of power and wealth that eventually saw to it that the entire plant was scheduled as a

<sup>11</sup> For more detailed discussion about the criminalization of cannabis see London (2009: 63-67), also Decorate Potter & Bouchard (2011) and Fijnaut & De Ruyver (2015).

<sup>12</sup> Linking drug use to minority groups occurred also in the history of cannabis in Nigeria in the early twentieth century (see Klantschnig in Klantschnig, Carrier & Ambler 2014).

'hard drug' almost throughout the world (Herer (1985 [2010]); London 2009).

Relating cannabis to 'otherness', drugs and criminal behaviour became a useful leverage tool for politicians throughout the cold war, reaching its apex in the 1980s (London 2009: 83-89). However, since the 1990s increasing societal pressure has forced many policy makers to reevaluate recreational and medicinal marijuana regulations. Today, legal, essentially legal, or decriminalized cannabis policies are now fully fledged in many countries of the world as well as in several American states (Amaducci et.al., 2015; Bouchard et.al., in Decorate et al. 2011; Dills et.al.,2021; Fijnaut & De Ruyver 2015). For Warf (2014: 433) this reappraisal shows that "As the historical record of this drug makes clear, the open, legal use of marijuana is less a matter of moral equivalency than a return to the historical norm."

South Africans also began to challenge the legal basis for cannabis prohibition after establishing a majority government in 1994. These challenges were set in motion by Gareth Prince in the late 1990s and through the 2000s all of which were dismissed by the courts (see Mia 2020). However, since the 2010's the legality of cannabis in South Africa has begun to gain ground much more swiftly. The 31 March, 2017 Western High Court judgement declared "the prohibition of the cultivation, use and possession of cannabis within the privacy of the home, unconstitutional" (Myrtle Clarke, Accessed 05 January 2022). And finally, on 18 September 2018, the Constitutional Court of South Africa made it a citizen's right to use recreational cannabis in their private space.

However, many African countries continue to maintain the prohibition of recreational, medicinal and industrial cannabis regardless of the current international debates surrounding the plant have illuminated (Adebisi & Olaoye 2022). African countries inherited colonial prohibitionist policies towards not just marijuana, but also alcohol and khat for example. Khat is prominent in East Africa and when chewed acts as a stimulant for recreational and work contexts (Carrier p. 105-123 in Klantschnig et.al. 2014). The

legacies of colonial agrarian agricultural development therefore still have influence in South Africa, Africa and the black diaspora. Some of the most prominent crops that have directly aided 'colonial accumulation' in Africa and former slave economies have been maize, sugar cane and cotton but also opium, cocoa and cannabis (Mills 2003). The debate about the various relationships that specific products or crops have (had) in the development of societies, economies and politics therefore cannot be ignored. These include for example, Kurlasky's (2003) presentation of the multiple and global linkages of salt. Beinart & Wotshela's (2011) localized social agrarian history of the prickly pear in South Africa's Eastern Cape region. Or, McCann's (2005) important discussion about the encounter and production of maize in Africa from the sixteenth century.<sup>13</sup> Likening cannabis to other plants and agrarian products is important because it is always viewed out of the context of nature due to the persistent framing of the plant as a drug substance. These agrarian frameworks that decide which plants can and cannot be used continue to hold substantial power over 'developing' countries agricultures (see Duvall 2016). They also present a challenge to 'emergent economies' to rethink how they participate in the global economy, and, with what products they will base their development plans on.<sup>14</sup>

#### IV. THE WEAKNESSES IN CONTEMPORARY CANNABIS DEVELOPMENT

Development is defined here as how societies create and sustain progressive change, including economically and politically, within and without.<sup>15</sup>

<sup>13</sup> Interestingly, "Maize is so widespread, and so widely considered by Africans as an African crop, that it is difficult to see its adoption, and subsequent infiltration to the heart of many production systems, as enforced" (Beinart & Middleton 2004: 20).

<sup>14</sup> The terms 'lean' and 'fat' is a noteworthy terminology for describing 'developing' and 'developed' nations (see Olopade 2014).

<sup>15</sup> Development is defined as many things. It has been defined as a simple process of progress of society and the attainment of basic needs such as food, water, shelter, health care and education. It has also been argued to be about fundamental change of social, economic and political institutes and the

Unfortunately the term development is also associated to the negative discourses created by over half a millennium of hegemonic liberal democratic capitalism (Willis 2005). As a result, global mainstream cannabis expansion is using this Eurocentric development discourse and steering the plants future towards being just another commodity. As such apolitical recreational and medicinal categorizations that are disassociated from the plants natural agrarian labour setting are being ushered into the plant's development. Such cannabis development is flawed for three fundamental reasons:

- They still rely on prohibition era accounts of the plant that remain heavily attendant to the false association to drugs and criminality (Scheibe, Shelly & Versfeld in Buxton et.al. 2020).
- The discourse of cannabis medicalization remains the preserve of a problematic liberal democratic capitalism and big pharmacies attempt to get a slice of the lucrative cannabis market (see London 2009).
- They rarely promote black people, the poor working class and women as the driving force behind the development of a labour centred cannabis sector (see Transform Drug Policy, Accessed September 30, 2021).

Thus, cannabis is being included into liberal democratic capitalism's vision for development more broadly. Such development practice is *prima facie* the dominant motivation behind contemporary South African and African agrarian policy regarding cannabis (see Adebisi & Olaoye 2022). Under a liberal capital democratic development model cannabis is becoming just another commodity to be incorporated into capital markets. Changing how cannabis development occurs therefore is an important part of progressive cannabis movement's agenda (Bewley-Taylor et.al., in Buxton, Chinery-Hesse & Tinasti eds. 2020; Clarke & Riboulet-Zemouli 2021; Jelsma et.al.,2021). Nonetheless, many cannabis companies throughout the world are already participating within the development

conscious activity of people in order to ensure the continuation of such ideals for the future generations (Emeh 2013: 116-117; see also Willis 2005).

framework that liberal democratic capitalism has shaped (Kay et.al., 2020). The archeology and genealogy, in a Focaultian sense, of 20<sup>th</sup> century prohibition therefore still exists and functions within liberal democratic capital development which is furthermore built on difference rather than unity. Essentially, this type of development has historically been designed to let only a few people ever own, lead or labour freely.

As a result of this exclusionary process, it is possible to view cannabis development in South Africa as a microcosm of the unequal reality of the countries contemporary economic geography. Cannabis research then becomes a conduit through which critique of the various sets of relations that continue to have influence over South Africa's history, political geography and development can be made. Once problems such as unemployment and poverty are exposed alternative forms of development may be stimulated into practice (see Clarke & Riboulet-Zemouli 2021). Cannabis is an important member of this deliberation because its usages neatly fit into the vital spaces occupied by agriculture, the medical industrial complex and the functional goods produced by non-food crops, besides the spiritual and traditional healing practices the plant also has meaning for.<sup>16</sup> Cannabis development, if managed correctly, can arguably become a potentially valuable non-food crop for South Africa that can be used to the countries advantage (Clarke & Riboulet-Zemouli 2021).

African development must insert itself into the global discussion about cannabis because of the impact this plant already has for social, economic and political systems, that is besides its proven track record of providing an income for black people, the poor working class and women. Cannabis also feeds directly into the highly charged agrarian questions related to food security; the domination of the largely Western medical industrial complex over medicines and

<sup>16</sup> Non-food crops are those plants that produce recreational, medicinal or industrial goods and whose main function is not to provide humans with food. Cannabis, is unique because it is able to produce all three of these types of non-food crop goods.

the practice of medicine; land; as well as the development of practical, innovative, and productive solutions for African and South African socio-economic change.

## V. REARRANGING CONCEPTUAL AND THEORETICAL DESIGNS

Making sense of the complex interactions that are incorporated in the study of cannabis in South Africa requires a multifaceted conceptual approach. The study of cannabis is dominated by Western discourse, so any discussion of it in South Africa requires historical and theoretical frameworks able to interpret these to fit the circumstances faced in Africa.<sup>17</sup> Although some authors such as Bewley-Taylor, Jelsma & Kay (2020); Buxton, Chinery-Hesse & Tinasti (Eds.). (2020); or Clarke & Riboulet-Zemouli (2021) do offer more radical alternatives for cannabis they do not express these in the black revolutionary experience.

The work of James (1984) as well as Gilroy (1993) for example pay special attention to assembling a history of blacks in the diaspora that is not separate to world history but necessarily a part of it.<sup>18</sup> Likewise, the "international herb"<sup>19</sup> is infused into the wider geopolitics of oppressed people's history from the end of slavery, through the anti-colonial nationalist struggles, to the contemporary struggles of the new millennium.

Rodney's (1973) analysis of black historiography can be used to understand prohibition histories as

<sup>17</sup> Important international cannabis literature has little discussion of the plant from the point of view of Africans, see for instance, (Decorate, Potter & Bouchard 2011; Fijnaut & De Ruyver 2015; London 2009). Furthermore, the more limited literature of the plant in Africa is mostly concerned with recreational marijuana, see for instance, (Legget 2002; Klantschnig, Carrier & Ambler 2014; Clarke & Riboulet-Zemouli 2021). But new scholarship is emerging that is challenging popular Americanized discourses of cannabis and its prohibition (see Chattopadhyaya 2019; Duvall 2016; 2019; Moore, PhD thesis (forthcoming); Nkosi et.al., 2020; Waetjen 2019; 2022).

<sup>18</sup> Achille Mbembe ideas about the 'Postcolony' can perhaps also be included here for his explanation of Africans place in the world (see Mbembe 1992; 2005; Mbembe & Balakrishnan 2016).

<sup>19</sup> Culture, 'The international herb' *International herb*, Virgin Records: 1979.

well as the continuation of ‘underdevelopment’ in contemporary development more generally. Revisiting the notion of underdevelopment, makes it possible to pose the argument that development consciously removed what it did not want from participation in its imperial efforts. Thus, it became taboo for black revolutionary history and action, past and present, to affect how economic development proceeds. The terms and conditions of underdevelopment remain deeply engraved onto the lexicon of peoples understanding of marijuana. Dependency schools of thought therefore proposed that delinking from capitalist ‘world systems’ was a means of correcting such entrenched underdevelopment.<sup>20</sup> Similarly, cannabis development needs to delink from flawed prohibition standards if it is to propose a way forward for the entire plant’s usages.

C.L.R. James (1938 [1980]; 1984) work can also be used to understand cannabis because he emphasised a black Marxist perspective that remained principally about the revolutionary worker and the usefulness of revolutionary action to the world. Gordon (2008: 165) states that “James’s intellectual contributions consisted of his continuous production of oppositional histories and diagnoses of political phenomena through which he articulated his notion of ‘the creative universal,’ which, he argued, manifested itself in the resilience of the working classes and the peasantry”. This perspective is essential to the critique that a truly equitable and sustainable development future not only for cannabis, but also other commodities, ideas and inventions, must be labour centred and include black revolutionary thought and action into its strategies. Proposing methods of action designed by and for the Global South is what both Rodney (1969 [1996]; 1973) and James (1938 [1980]; 1984) as well as Fanon offered in their “...alternative models of revolution with shared premises [with Marxism] but

<sup>20</sup> Immanuel Wallerstein coined the notion of a ‘world-system’ to explain how leading (core) countries interacted in an unequal basis with middle income (semi-periphery) and poorer (periphery) countries. Ultimately, this ‘world system’ maintained the power of the few (core countries) particularly over the majority (periphery regions of the world).

different conclusions” (Gordon 2008: 165). Such theoretical positioning’s provide a grounding with which to plant critiques of prohibition geographies conceptualization of cannabis as first and foremost a deviant recreational good.

Following from the ‘groundings’ provided by Rodney (1969 [1996]; 1973) and James (1938 [1980]; 1984), an updated version of Cooper’s (2002) notion of gatekeeping problematizes contemporary cannabis medicalization. Using the ‘gatekeeper thesis’ for understanding cannabis highlights how the otherwise useful contemporary drive towards the medicalization of cannabis operates as just another effort aimed at ensuring the gate to liberal democratic capitalism is kept intact. The medicalization of cannabis therefore still does not do enough to consolidate all the plant’s usages or combat failed development ideals. Thus, the acceptance of a medicinal categorization of cannabis is welcomed but still constrains and controls what can and cannot be incorporated into the plant’s development (see also London 2009). It likely also means access to ownership of cannabis industries, will still largely be the prerogative of the elite over the marginalized.

London (2009) emphasizes that the drive towards the medicalization of cannabis does little to rearrange who controls the development design for the plant. As such, formerly prohibited goods such as cannabis remain regulated by the very same liberal paradigms that made them illegal in the first place. The medicalization of cannabis is only acceptable now because the liberal capital system has been able to decide the extent to which the boundaries of their system can be pushed. Therefore, the relatively recent ‘medicalization of society’ (Conrad 2008) fashions new boundaries for formerly criminalized practices such as alcoholism or gambling, rather than deal with the root causes of their persistence. Extrapolating from this idea illustrates how political goods, particularly black revolutionary history, or black ownership of key labour markets, are allowed access to legalized capital markets only once new boundaries for their reach are configured. Black revolutionary practices that continue to challenge the basis of liberal capitalism and its

developmental paradigms remain excluded. Thus, even with the medicalization of cannabis, inaccessibility exists. Povinelli (2011) offers that these non-inclusions are a way that 'late liberalism' continues to manage global economic development through political, economic and social control mechanisms.

And more importantly than that, what Alcock (2018) and Povinelli (2011) as well as the arguments being made here introduce, is how access to employment opportunities also means extending these to include the ideals and designs of work that the most marginalized groups have energized.<sup>21</sup> This can reduce the apathy inherent in the alienated labour force created by liberal democratic capitalist paradigms. It also makes work, labour and employment an ethical necessity of life rather than an arrangement people only engage in to survive the money driven lifestyle of contemporary society.

## VI. ESTABLISHING A NEW ETHICS FOR CANNABIS STUDIES

The South African Constitutional Courts decision on 18 September, 2018, birthed a new ethical standard for industrial, medicinal and more especially recreational cannabis. Nonetheless, the Constitutional Courts judgement is still fragile in terms of what is and what is not legal for cannabis.<sup>22</sup> Hence, Povinelli's (2011: 13) notion of 'quasi-events' that "They neither happen nor not happen" is useful to understanding the uncertainty still surrounding cannabis in South Africa. A similar notion is noted by Carrier & Klantschnig (2018) who use the term 'quasilegality' in their discussion of Cannabis and khat. Carrier & Klantschnig (2018: 3) use this term because of "... its ability to capture a key aspect of not just drugs like khat and cannabis,

<sup>21</sup> Buju Banton ('Destiny' *Inna Heights*, Germain Records: 1997) therefore sings defiantly, "I wanna rule my destiny".

<sup>22</sup> Until the Cannabis for Private Purposes Bill (2020) is passed into law there is effectively no blueprint for what is and is not permissible for cannabis. It is for this reason that multi-million-dollar cannabis companies have not rushed into South Africa's opening market. Legally it is only the decision of the Constitutional Court that has set the precedent for cannabis, but it has no legislative ability, thus making its ruling ambiguous.

but other commodities, activities and even people whose relationship to the state and law is ambiguous." Like 'other' things and groups Cannabis remains 'ambiguous' to the law and the state. The debate about cannabis is therefore still highly polarised between those for or against.

However, Fijnaut & De Ruyver (2015) argue that rather than explaining these two extremes a 'third way' must be found that takes account of both polarized views. Such a 'third way' is a more ethical positioning to take than the two extremities, either for or against the plant. Consequently, it would be unethical for cannabis research not to concern themselves with how the benefits of a legal cannabis market will accrue to the marginalized. Bewley-Taylor, Jelsma & Kay (2020) for example speak about this new ethics as an issue of igniting fair trade practices to benefit the most marginalized cannabis producer. As such, questions of ethics have everything to do with the practical effort they seek to achieve. If development increases the economic, as well as social and political well-being of those already with these capabilities then it has done a disservice, ethically speaking. Producing engaged, political and black understandings about cannabis is therefore an ethical necessity and a new positive way of conceiving cannabis; even if these face a daunting uphill travail.

## VII. CONCLUSION

It is essential that black people, the poor working class and women have a say in the designs of contemporary development. At the moment these groups still do not have enough power to decide the parameters of developments that directly affect them. This is also true for contemporary cannabis development which is failing to ensure all those who worked with the plant even during prohibition are justly incorporated into its future sites of trade. These people will likely be left out of key decision or implementation practices regarding the plant.

Legalizing cannabis has not meant that marginalized people who seek access to the industry will be duly accommodated. As such the process of development itself must be at fault and

it is the academics obligation to critique its system and seek viable alternatives. This article argued that when development includes a) black revolutionary history and b) the labour creation that informal economies have made functional, its pursuit will benefit the most marginalized in society.

South Africa is at a crossroads that requires every bit of help it can from all sectors. Continuing to do development in a way that benefits the few rather than the majority will only breed more faults rather than solve the various crises that plague South Africa, Africa and the Global South. Getting the contemporary development of cannabis right can offer to people of colour some certainty (even if it is minuscule) that their history and labour were for a just cause.

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# Invisible Cities as a Postmodern Text: A Multidimensional Approach

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## ABSTRACT

Famous Italian author Italo Calvino's popular novel *Invisible Cities* opens itself up for multidimensional theoretical and critical interventions due to its interesting and multifarious providence of scope for such interventions. Considering the diversity of interpretative scope the text offers, its reception in classroom both by students and teachers is equally critical and variegated. The text thus offers itself for multiple and divergent critical receptions and some of the critical receptions that can be made to the text include spatiality, temporality, magic realism, and a few other postmodernist approaches. My specific approach in this article shall be to explore and analyse the various possibilities of postmodernist critical receptions of the text through many interesting and revelatory postmodernist notions and concepts propounded by many famous postmodernist thinkers and philosophers like Michael Foucault, Deleuze and Guattari and Jean Baudrillard. In this article, I will explore how certain philosophical and theoretical postulates propounded by these philosophers/theorists become potent and effective critical tools to study the mentioned novel of Calvino and how these concepts open up new vistas of critical, comprehension, reception and interpretation of the text.

*Keywords:* simulation, simulacra, postmodernism, reality, image, deterritorialization.

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*Famous Italian author Italo Calvino's popular novel Invisible Cities opens itself up for multidimensional theoretical and critical interventions due to its interesting and multifarious providence of scope for such interventions. Considering the diversity of interpretative scope the text offers, its reception in classroom both by students and teachers is equally critical and variegated. The text thus offers itself for multiple and divergent critical receptions and some of the critical receptions that can be made to the text include spatiality, temporality, magic realism, and a few other postmodernist approaches. My specific approach in this article shall be to explore and analyse the various possibilities of postmodernist critical receptions of the text through many interesting and revelatory postmodernist notions and concepts propounded by many famous postmodernist thinkers and philosophers like Michael Foucault, Deleuze and Guattari and Jean Baudrillard. In this article, I will explore how certain philosophical and theoretical postulates propounded by these philosophers/theorists become potent and effective critical tools to study the mentioned novel of Calvino and how these concepts open up new vistas of critical, comprehension, reception and interpretation of the text.*

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**Author:** Ravenshaw University.

## I. INTRODUCTION

After completing reading Italo Calvino's Invisible Cities, a student asked inquisitively: "Sir, are the cities narrated by Marco to Kublai Khan real or imaginary?" I understood quite well that though

the question sounded novice and simplistic on the surface, the student's critical engagement with the text and its effective comprehension won't be possible unless he/she is introduced to the fundamental notions and concepts of postmodernity and their categorical dismantlement of this antiquarian reality/imaginary distinction. To enter into the practice of reading a postmodern text, one has to inculcate a thorough and probing comprehension of how in the realms of postmodernist thought and philosophy, the 'imaginary' is incorporated into the ambit of the 'real' so that their traditional distinctions get summarily dissolved and the 'imaginary' becomes an integral part of our cumulative perception of reality. And a thoroughgoing comprehension of such a dismantlement of binary oppositions at various levels (of which the reality/imaginary binary is only one) is not possible unless the student is again introduced to the Derridean poststructuralist/postmodernist advocacy of the decentered formations, of Deleuze and Guattari's concept of rhizome, of Foucault's notion of heterotopia and of French sociologist Jean Baudrillard's concept of simulation and simulacra etc. with their collective and principal advocacy for decentered structures in various ways.

The text offers the students not only an amusing and phantasmagoric reading, but also absorbingly opens them up into a possible postmodern world along with its telling denunciation of all arbitrary binary oppositions, its escapade from all centered formations and its transgression of all spatio-temporal enclosures, barriers and demarcations. But the students' comprehension and critical reception of the text shall be most effective through their exposure to the mentioned theoretical postulates and propositions and their complex workings in Calvino's said text like invisible undercurrents imbued with the twisted patterns of his psychedelic and hallucinatory

narrative. Based on these precepts, this article shall primarily focus on the critical reception of Italo Calvino's *Invisible Cities* as a postmodern text in classrooms and academia by the use of the cited theoretical templates and frameworks that facilitate the fundamental assertion of the text's postmodernist character and quintessence.

## II. CITIES WITHOUT CENTRE: DE-CENTERED STRUCTURES IN INVISIBLE CITIES

One major way of critically approaching the text *Invisible Cities* is to study Marco's narrated cities as centerless constructions, in the particular context of postmodernist/poststructuralist theorist Jacques Derrida's avant-garde and iconoclastic advocacy for universal, structural de-centrality. In this connection, a keen look at the cities' eclectic and heretical formations would easily divulge their archetypal elusiveness to the traditional system's arbitrary and predetermined centrality and their obstreperous non-adherence to all endeavours for obligatory centering and totalization; the cities en masse promulgate vague, esoteric and arcane configurations that are unabatedly in flux.

In this context, one can notice that the city of Eutropia is an appropriate enunciator—through its unabated relinquishment of its own mythic and pseudo-centrality—of a typical postmodern/post-structural configuration that is decentered, topsy-turvy and amorphous. The city exudes the shifting appearance of a “vast, rolling plateau” that possesses neither a center nor a fixed circumference for “Eutropia is not one, but all these cities together; only one is inhabited at a time, the others are empty; and this process is carried out in rotation” (56). Through its emphatic denunciation of an all-inclusive topographic fixity and stubbornness, the city undergoes multiple intra-territorial movements, deterritorializations and reterritorializations etc. through the rotational and periodic, territorial reshufflings made by its ever-transmogrifying citizenry—a praxis that evinces an “acentered, nonhierarchical, non-signifying [spatial] system” (Deleuze & Guattari 23) of postmodernity. The city's exemplary territorial and topographic

de-centrality is also a suitable illustrator of Derrida's path-breaking and oft-cited post-structural cliché: “The Center is not the center” (90). Such architectural de-centrality is also adumbrated by cities like Sophronia, Clarice, Leonia, Theodora, and Olinda. In Sophronia, for instance, a yearly alteration between the complete demolition and subsequent reconstitution of the two halves of the cities are an exemplification of its peculiar non-adherence to an ostensible, permanent locus or center which remains amenable to endless processes of displacements and inter-substitutions.

Along with the cities mentioned above, the city of Olinda also possesses and exudes the character of a decentered formation. It is of course obvious that a postmodern edifice does not allow its inner space to be part of a resolute and cohesive organizational pattern, and this notion's conspicuous elucidation through the city's unremitting, non-arborescent architectural metamorphosis is worth noticeable. Olinda's original city-space is progressively disassembled by the outwardly escalating growth of its trunk in “concentric circles” (Calvino 117) through the annual addition of rings at the periphery such that the city's austere and prototypical arborescence (connotative of a stable archetype) remains thoroughly destabilized. In addition, the periphery gets crammed with the evolution of new centers along with their concomitant new peripheries dispersing in all directions thereby making the city's primary arborescence eventually indecipherable. The root remains no more a root; the stem remains no more a stem and the trunk remains no more a trunk and what remains instead is a ‘rootless,’ a ‘stem-less’ and a ‘trunk-less’ “totally new Olinda” and also “all the Olindas that have blossomed one from the other” (Calvino 117). In this systematic destabilization of Olinda's centered construction, the city's preexisting centrality gets relegated, substituted and superimposed by the proliferative evolution of new centers and peripheries all across, along with a concomitant blurring of the center/periphery distinction. So, the generation of an intricate and composite and ever-shifting terrain inside Olinda attributes the city a typical,

postmodern de-centrality thereby allowing the insemination of new, multiple and subversive spatial formations inside itself.

Marco's prophetic reconstructions of his visited cities generate a postmodernist labyrinth that unfolds and percolates through the novel's immense, textual landscape. The cities' collective subjection to continual transfigurations does indicate towards postmodernism's characteristic non-reliance on an orthodox and stubborn structural intransigency and simultaneously asseverates our inextricable submersion in a scrambled and chaotic condition of postmodernity. The cities are an incoherent assemblage of floating signifiers that apparently look phantasmal or imaginary, yet they baffle us with their incredible semblance to reality and verisimilitude to material facticity. They are bereft of customary beginning or end, and of stable epistemological foundations as critic Teresa De Lauretis points out that they have "no presence, no origin, no moment of plenitude, and no absolute form of knowledge" (25).

### III. CITIES AS RHIZOMES: DECENTERED CITIES IN ITALO CALVINO'S INVISIBLE CITIES

Another potent theoretical approach for the critical reception of *Invisible Cities* that would establish the postmodernist, de-centrality of the cities can be Deleuze and Guattari's famous notion of rhizome, as explained by them in their combined work *A Thousand Plateaus*. The intricate and rootless network of a rhizome befittingly demonstrates a postmodern fabric's clear and "provocative assault on the systems of structuralist . . . signification" (Stivale20). In this context, the cities narrated by the 14th Century Italian traveler Marco Polo before Kublai Khan imitate and emulate rhizomes by abjuring concrete and stable structuralist significations and absolutions and becoming clichéd and paradigmatic emblems of destabilized postmodernist constructions.

Kerstin Pilz, while explaining the rhizomatic topography and architecture of the cities, pertinently remarks: "The topography of Calvino's

cities indicates that the real, even in the form of man-made architecture, is resistant to rigid structuring. The lay-out of a city—the result of chance and the process of historical layering—is more akin to a naturally grown labyrinth like that of a rhizome" (115). It goes without saying that the fundamental tenet of a rhizome is its characteristic recalcitrance towards and nullification of structural singularity and binary-producing arborescence. The complex and immense multiplicity of the city of Dorothea is a case in point. In Dorothea, the narrator's edifying disclosure of the city's subversion of edificial symmetry through its incognito and enshrouded network of multiple openings instead of a single one is a precise testimony to its ingrained and symptomatic rhizomatic miscellany: ". . . but I know this path is only one of the many that opened before me on that morning in Dorothea" (Calvino 8). The narrator's statement is a compelling vindication of Deleuze and Guattari's emphatic explications that: "The rhizome itself assumes very diverse forms, from ramified surface extension in all directions . . . Perhaps one of the most important characteristics of the rhizome is that it always has multiple entryways" (14).

The rhizome's heterocline spatial open-endedness, its incendiary disruption of territorial circumscriptions, its evasive escapade from paradigmatic, geometrical models and designs, can be witnessed in the city of Zoe which is "without figures and without form" (Calvino 29). This is precisely why a newcomer traversing across its city-space "has nothing but doubts," neither is he able "to distinguish the features of the city" as they "also mingle" (Calvino 29). The city's territorial irresoluteness is further ascertained through the narrator's confessional inability to "separate the inside from the outside" (Calvino 29); it is a categorical reassertion of this rhizomatic city's typical and slithery elusiveness to shapes, outlines and features, and its manifestation as "a force of pure transgression" (Sheehan 36).

Like Zoe, Cecilia is a city that "stretches between one city and the other" (Calvino 137) in a way that its territorial demarcation or boundary remains both unrecognizable and inconclusive—a scenario

that is ratified by both the narrator and the goatherd who conjointly fail to perceive the city's well-circumscribed, territorial enclosures: ““That cannot be! I shouted. “I, too, entered a city, I cannot remember when, and since then I have gone on, deeper and deeper into its streets. But how have I managed to arrive where you say, when I was in another city, far far away from Cecilia, and I have not yet left it?”” (Calvino 138). Cecilia possesses neither a beginning nor an end, neither a center nor a periphery, it is a rhizomatic space that spills, spreads and diffuses into other spaces like a patch of oil ; it reaffirms its “anarchic relationship to space” (Kaplan 87).

A rhizomatic structuration, according to Deleuze & Guattari, is not indentured by obligatory centers or loci; rather, it is constantly disassembled into intertwined lines and segments that constitute a tangled multiplicity—a multiplicity that “undergoes metamorphosis, changes in nature” (D & G 23). The city of Ersilia possesses a similar configuration through its reduction into an assemblage of enmeshed and interwoven strings—an assemblage that becomes “more complex” (Calvino 68) through the city’s proliferating metamorphosis in the form of its consistent fragmentation and miniaturization, following a rhizomatic pattern. As Deleuze and Guattari explain: “An assemblage is precisely this increase in the dimensions of a multiplicity that necessarily changes in nature as it expands its connections. There are no points and positions in a rhizome, such as that found in a structure, tree, or root. There are only lines” (9). They further enunciate: “The multiple must be made, not by always adding a higher dimension, but rather in the simplest ways, by dint of sobriety, with the number of dimensions one already has available—always  $n-1$  (the only way the one belongs to the multiple: always subtracted)” (D & G 7). Such multidimensional and labyrinthine assemblages or networks are further witnessed in Esmeralda that manifests through an assembled and jumbled up “network of routes” through the tousled and interpenetrative convergences between its awry transport network, its curvilinear canals, its curled “underground passages” (Calvino 79), and its contorted areal trajectories netted by the

swallows’ continual and twisted flights. Thus, the rhizomatic city of Esmeralda extends in all directions as: “The rhizome itself assumes very diverse forms . . . [through] ramified surface extension in all directions . . .” (Deleuze & Guattari 7).

These rhizomatic networks proliferate and extend into the terrestrial, the subterranean and the celestial spheres too, as witnessed in the cities of Beersheba and Andrea. The city of Beersheba forms intricate, ever-shifting rhizomatic interconnections between its subterranean, terrestrial and celestial extensions and projections like the routes of “human bowels” prolonging “from black hole to black hole” and splattering against “the lowest subterranean floor” (100) and also the celestial objects like the “long-tailed comets . . . released to rotate in space” (101).

According to Deleuze and Guattari, a rhizome is a ‘map without tracing’—a notion that is the figurative illustrator of the typical, postmodernist discernment that the territory and its cartographic representations can never be correctly reciprocal; they can never be each other’s metonymic doppelgangers; rather, they are incongruous and antithetical to the norms of mutual reflexivity and reciprocation. They are perennially subject to shifts, changes, modifications and transformations, like the rhizome as Deleuze and Guattari explain:

The rhizome is altogether different, a map and not a tracing. . . . What distinguishes the map from the tracing is that it is entirely oriented toward an experimentation . . . It fosters connections between fields, the removal of blockages on bodies without organs, the maximum opening of bodies without organs onto a plane of consistency. It is itself a part of the rhizome. The map is open and connectible in all its dimensions; it is detachable, reversible, susceptible to constant modification. It can be torn, reversed, adapted to any kind of mounting . . . (13)

The map displayed by Kublai to Marco towards the conclusive portions of the novel is indeed a rhizomatic ‘map without tracing’ that embodies

multiple shifts, exchanges, overlappings and inter-substitutions across time and topography such that an ever-shifting spatio-temporal loop percolates through its trans-territorial, cartographic body. From its perusal by Marco, one can notice interesting interchanges and inter-substitutions between the mythological/historic cities of Troy and Constantinople along divergent spatio-temporal coordinates scattered across the vast expanses of history and mythology such that one city becomes the other and vice versa. We learn that Marco, 'while speaking of Troy,' is able to 'give the city the form of Constantinople and foresee the siege which Mohammed would lay [there] for long months' (Calvino125) (an event that happened nearly 130 years after the former's death). The atlas, by effectuating the randomized collapse of different historic/mythological spaces and times on each other on its de-stratified cartographic body, truly presents itself as a rhizoamtic 'map without tracing' through its willful infringement of history's obdurate and adamantine spatio-temporal determinism.

Thus, Italo Calvino's novel *Invisible Cities* is replete with a plethora of individual cities that present themselves through ever-shifting, rhizomatic patterns that percolate through the text's enormous, postmodern textual terrain. The cities, through their display of rhizomatic structurations, do substantiate postmodernism's essential repudiation of centered frameworks and through the portrayal of such de-centered cities, Calvino undoubtedly remains an important writer of postmodernity.

#### IV. HETEROTOPIC CITIES IN CALVINO'S INVISIBLE CITIES

Another important postmodernist critical reception of Calvino's *Invisible Cities* can be to peruse the text through Foucault's notion of heterotopia (which appeared in his essay "Of Other Spaces: Utopias and Heterotopias" published posthumously) and to envisage the cities in the novel as de-centered representations of Foucauldian heterotopic spaces. Heterotopia, as per Foucault's own fascinating elucidations is, unlike the utopic space, an ambivalent and

conflictual one where the 'real' and the 'unreal' coincide, where an order and its transgressions are isochronous, where a space encounters both its real and mythic antitheses and antinomies. Foucault explains:

... we are in the age of the simultaneous, of juxtaposition, the near and the far, the side by side and the scattered. A period in which ... the world is ... destined to grow in time ... as a net that links points together and creates its own muddle. It may be, in fact, that our lives are still ruled by a certain number of unrelenting opposites, which institution and practice have not dared to erode. I refer here to ... opposites that are ... actuated by a veiled sacredness (330-331).

As per Foucault's own circumspections, nevertheless, a 'heterotopia' cannot be essentially pigeonholed into one intransigent type or category, rather can be inordinately miscellaneous and variegated in its nature and kind; it evinces a wide and divergent spectrum of categories: "It is evident, though, that heterotopias assume a wide variety of forms, to the extent that a single, absolutely universal form may not exist" (Foucault 332).

It is evident that the Chinese emperor Kublai Khan desires to encode his empire and his cities through a chessboard-model that can order, quantify and measure the formers' spaces through precisely calculable, geometrical codifications. It is revealingly discovered nevertheless that Marco's enchanting narrations run contrary to Kublai's self-presumed and erroneous conceptualizations of his empire and his cities through determinable, geometrical orderings and thoroughly abrogate the remotest possibilities of coherent architectural formations. Contrary to Kublai's idiosyncratic presumptions regarding fixity and resoluteness, the cities exhibit asymmetrical and inherently self-contradictory domains, just like Foucauldian heterotopias.

In this scenario, we can examine the heterotopic configurations of the cities of Zoe and Cecilia. Zoe is a heterotopic city that is "without figures and without form" because of which its novice visitor

harbors in his mind “nothing but doubts;” neither is he able “to distinguish the features of the city” for they “also mingle” (Calvino 29). Moreover, the narrator’s inability to “separate the [city’s] inside from . . . [its] outside” (Calvino 29) and he getting lost in its incomprehensible labyrinth bespeaks the city’s dubious closed-ness and open-ended-ness, simultaneously. Thus, Zoe’s ‘inside’ opens into its ‘outside’ and on the contrary, its ‘outside’ encroaches into its ‘inside’ such that the city evinces a prototypical, heterotopic ambivalence and innate contradictoriness.

The composite city of Cecilia exudes similar heterotopic attributes because its cryptic terrain “stretches between one city and the other” (Calvino 137) in a way that its circumference remains virtually obfuscated and quintessentially deterritorialized. Cecilia’s city-space trespasses into those of the other cities, while simultaneously allowing the neighbouring city-spaces to encroach into its own premise; it inheres and displays the peculiar heterotopic character and “creates its own muddle” (330), to use a typical Foucauldian expression. In other words, the heterotopic city of Cecilia includes in its premises spaces of ‘otherness’ as according to Dana Badulescu: “. . . Foucault’s heterotopia refers to spaces of otherness, which are neither here nor there . . .” (2). The uninhibited overspill of different city-spaces into each other’s restricted territories leads not only to the rupture of their respective boundaries making them territorially unrecognizable, but also to each city’s dubious inclusion of heterogeneous and contradictory spaces of ‘otherness’ in its premise. It is corroborated by the narrator and the goatherd’s candid admissions regarding their failure in identifying comprehensible territorial demarcations between individual cities: ““That cannot be! I shouted. “I, too, entered a city, I cannot remember when, and since then I have gone on, deeper and deeper into its streets. But how have I managed to arrive where you say, when I was in another city, far far away from Cecilia, and I have not yet left it?”” (Calvino 138). Cecilia does not possess a clearly recognizable inside or an outside; it is elusive of restrictive

territorial confinements; it is a heterotopia. Foucault explains:

. . . heterotopias, on the contrary, have the appearance of pure and simple openings, although they usually conceal curious exclusions. Anyone can enter one of these heterotopian locations, but, in reality, they are nothing more than an illusion: one thinks one has entered and, by the sole fact of entering, one is excluded. . . . Finally, the last characteristic of heterotopias is that they have, in relation to the rest of space, a function that takes place between two opposite poles. (335)

It must be comprehended at this juncture that the Foucauldian heterotopia possesses “the power of juxtaposing in a single real place different spaces and locations that are incompatible with each other” (334). In this scenario, cities like Eudoxia, Beersheba and Andria behave like heterotopias by being the simultaneous occupiers of divergent and incongruous spaces—the subterranean, the terrestrial, and the celestial—that are inherently antithetical to each other, or are ‘other’ spaces to each other. Like a heterotopia, Eudoxia demonstrates a dubious spatial character by initially displaying “symmetrical . . . patterns” and then, by emulating the universe’s vast, shifting and asymmetrical designs. The city that initially replicated “the carpet’s harmonious pattern” now becomes “the true map of the universe” (87) and looks like “a stain that spreads out shapelessly” (87) thereby implicating its concomitant possession of two coexisting but mutually contravening attributes—one stable (represented through the image of the carpet), the other fleeting (represented through the map of the universe). The city is a heterotopia.

The city of Andria also displays the same, heterotopic terrestrial/celestial interminglings through a simultaneous and concomitant explosion/implosion of spaces between its inner and outer spheres. The narrator describes:

The astronomers, after each change takes place in Andria, peer into their telescopes and report a nova’s explosion, or a remote point in the firmament’s change of colour from orange

to yellow, the expansion of a nebula, the bending of a spiral of the Milky Way. Each change implies a sequence of other changes, in Andria as among the stars: the city and the sky never remain the same. (Calvino 136).

Evidently, Andria's city-space and the sky are so absorbingly intertwined that any change in the former results in corresponding alterations in the latter's firmament in a way that Andria's inner terrestrial designs open up or explode into the sky. On the other hand, we learn that the city follows "an astral rhythm" in a scenario where ". . . its every street follows a planet's orbit, and the buildings and the places of community life repeat the order of constellations and the position of the most luminous stars" (136) which indicates the implosion of the celestial designs into Andria's inner city-space, thereby making themselves 'localizable' (to use a typical Foucauldian terminology). The city of Andria, therefore, displays a complex and ambivalent arrangement of space; its city-space explodes into the sky whereas, contrarily, the celestial space implodes into Andria's city-space such that the city possesses not a stable, uniform and centered character, but an unstable and diversified one, like that of a heterotopia. Earlier in the text, we have encountered the city of Lalage where such heterotopic terrestrial/celestial interfusions are noticed through a peculiar, incredible and outlandish juxtaposition of celestial objects like the moon (deviated from its normal planetary orbit) and the terrestrial objects like the city spires (loosened and elevated from the Earth's binding, topographic grid) such that Lalage's city-space becomes a decentered, heterotopic terrestrial/celestial spatial conundrum.

According to Foucault, "Museums and libraries are heterotopias . . ." (335) for they create a conglomerate heterotopic domain of heterogeneous spaces and times juxtaposed in a single space, and the city of Fedora is perhaps its most explicative instance. We learn that Fedora exists only as a museum where multiple mini-models of the already-disappeared bigger Fedora are preserved and contained inside glass globes as the vestigial assemblages of its symbolic remnants. Intriguingly however, these

mini-models are endowed with the innate capacity to potentially burgeon into bigger Fedoras in consonance with the shifting fantasies of the city's visitors. Fedora's maverick existence in the form of a museum replete with multiple, potentially regenerative mini-models makes it a heterotopia as these mini models are encoded with the heterotopic possibilities of generating divergent and mutually incompatible spaces, times and worlds juxtaposed in a single space.

As is evident in the case of Fedora, a heterotopia is not just a conglomeration of anomalous and antithetical spaces, but also of disparate times. Foucault explains:

The idea of accumulating everything, on the contrary, of creating a sort of universal archive, the desire to enclose all times, all eras, forms and styles within a single place, the concept of making all times into one place, and yet a place that is outside time, inaccessible to the wear and tear of the years, according to a plan of almost perpetual and unlimited accumulation within an irremovable place, . . . (334)

Such heterotopic multi-temporality is demonstrated by the strange and enchanting city of Laudomia—a city that is an aberrant combination of the city of the living, the city of the dead and the city of the unborn in a scenario where there are recurrent cross-territorial movements, migrations etc. by each city's citizenry into other cities leading to the creation of a spectacle of multigenerational polyvalence. This, in turn, results in each city's loss of its own spatio-temporal reclusiveness and its territory becomes divergent and multifaceted such that Laudomia becomes a heterotopia, a complex, decentered zone of interlocked spaces and mingled times.

Thus, the cities in the said novel exude, demonstrate and epitomize postmodernism's characteristic disavowal of the conventional space-time continuum. Their spatio-temporal patterns are "disorganized, heterogeneous and highly fragmented" (Bazzicchetto 98)—a tenet that itself is the defining feature of a heterotopia

and such fluid, incongruous and heterotopic spaces presented in the novel makes it a postmodern text.

## V. HYPERREAL CITIES: SIMULATION AND SIMULACRA IN INVISIBLE CITIES

Another curious and stimulating critical reception that Calvino's *Invisible Cities* can receive is its perusal through French sociologist Jean Baudrillard's path-breaking notion of simulation and simulacra, introduced by him in his famous book *Simulacra and Simulation*. A perusal of the mentioned novel along these lines would grippingly divulge that the narrated cities are neither real nor imaginary; they are in fact simulations of the cities; they are hyperreal cities which are indeed more real than the real. Such a presentation results in a thoroughgoing dismantlement of the real/imaginary binary or dialectic that has historically captivated our perception of the whole corpus of the vast and expansive world of materiality.

In the Baudrillardian parlance, the imitation, effacement and ultimate substitution of reality by images and signs through an act of simulation is the essential precondition of our postmodern mode of existence. Baudrillard's stern emphasis on the redundancy and virtual impossibility to trace, approach or unravel reality in its material absolution and on the only possible perception of the world through acts of simulation is explained by himself as: "By crossing into a space whose curvature is no longer that of the real, nor that of truth, the era of simulation is inaugurated by a liquidation of all referentials—. . . It is a question of substituting the signs of the real for the real . . ." (2).

One can examine the hyperreal existence of the city of Tamara in its context. Marco's mesmerizing encounter with this city and his perception of the same only through clusters of signs, his inability to envisage the city through its exclusive material manifestations, the city's material adumbrations being completely camouflaged beneath a "thick coating of signs" (Calvino 12) etc. make the city manifest itself only in its hyperreal revelation, not though its concrete, material representations.

Marco's visual experience of the city through its hyperreal exposition is further affirmed by its airy, orphic and sign-mediated appearance before him where he recognizes its components like "a sailing ship, a hand, an elephant" (12) etc. in the air such that city demonstratively eludes any binding incarceration by its sheer and overweening materiality. A simulacrum rescinds "any underlying "real" reality" (D'haen 4) and the city of Tamara's tangible materiality getting thoroughly masqueraded by clusters of its emblematic, representational and substitutive, real signs makes it a hyperreal city. Apart from Tamara, Marco also encounters hyperreal cities like Zirma and Olivia which evince themselves only through their signs and images and particularly after visiting Olivia, Marco realizes that "Falsehood is never in words; it is in things" (54). The complete substitution of the real, material objects by an entire gamut of signs and images in the simulacral world of *Invisible Cities* is further acknowledged by the narrator in the following lines with absolute clarity and unequivocation: "As time went by, words began to replace objects and gestures in Marco's tales: first exclamations, isolated nouns, dry verbs, then phrases, ramified and leafy discourse, metaphors and tropes. (32)

One important point that must be emphasized at this juncture is that the postmodernist, hyperreal representation of the cities thwart Kubali's self-stultifying and egomaniac predilection to captivate his empire and cities through stable and finite models, through diagrammatic prefigurations, or through binding cartographic circumscriptions. Such free-flowing patterns of the cities sufficiently attest to the Baudrillardian dictum of hyperreality that postmodernist space "is utterly divorced from any underlying reference to an original model or archetype . . ." (Murphet118). These simulacral city-spaces also thwart, circumvent and dismantle the notions of subjective positioning, formation of corporeal, objective realities and central axes of power through panoptic surveillance etc. on which Kublai relied too heavily on, while contemplating for a fanciful delimitation of his empire through

well-formulated models and diagrams. Baudrillard explains:

No more subject, no more focal point, no more center or periphery: pure flexion or circular inflexion. No more violence or surveillance: only "information," secret virulence, chain reaction, slow implosion, and simulacra of spaces in which the effect of the real again comes into play.... We are witnessing the end of perspectival and panoptic space (which remains a moral hypothesis bound up with all the classical analyses on the "objective" essence of power), and thus to the very abolition of the spectacular. (29-30)

It is important to mention at this juncture that in the postmodern world of simulation and simulacra, it is not just a space whose predetermined centrality gets contested and infringed, but time's chronology and linearity also confront similar fragmentations, disjunctions, inter-substitutions and resufflings. All coordinates—whether spatial or temporal or anything else—become subject to such disruptions as Baudrillard explains: "One does not see an alternative cosmos, . . .—one is from the start in a total simulation, without origin, immanent, without a past, without a future, a diffusion of all coordinates (mental, temporal, spatial, signaletic)— . . ." (125). Regarding a simulacrum's purposive repudiation of the traditional distinctions between past/present/future, Baudrillard writes: "These new objects are the poles of simulation around which is elaborated, . . . a hyperreality, a simultaneity of all the functions, without a past, without a future, an operability on every level" (78).

The simulacral distortion of time's normal chronology is perhaps most fittingly demonstrated in the city of Adelma where its mingled populace is constituted by the living and the dead in a scenario where their shambolic amalgamation demystifies temporal chronology and distinctiveness. The strange, seemingly implausible and hallucinatory resemblances between the sailor on the dock and the dead soldier, between the old man holding a basket of sea urchins and a fisherman of Marco's childhood

time (now presumably dead), between the bearded fever victim and Marco's dead father, between the vegetable vendor and Marco's grandmother and finally, between the vegetable-buying girl and the already-dead, love-blinded girl in Marco's village are bright instances of such simulacral, non-chronological mix-ups. Even the city's denizens recognize Marco as someone who has returned from his death: "Perhaps, for each of them, I also resembled someone who was dead" (Calvino, *Cities* 85). The mix-up of the living and the dead populace in Adelma bespeaks the inception of a simulacral world order where the dead reenter into and represent themselves in the ambit of lived realities through their repetitive acts of simulation.

Thus, through their peculiar of simulacral characters, the cities establish that our postmodern condition of existence is representable only through floating chains of signs, images and signifiers that have replaced or substituted the entire corpus of traditional material reality which has lost its physical form, centrality and uniformity.

## VI. CONCLUSION

In conclusion, it can be said that Calvino's novel *Invisible Cities* can be read through multiple theoretical frameworks, as mentioned above, that would make the novel a representative postmodern text. These theoretical formulations collectively entail the total collapse of centered, monolithic and stable architectural textures; they establish the said novel as a palimpsest where there are randomized displacements and superimpositions of divergent topographic and temporal layerings; they demonstrate the steady destabilization of centered ontology at all levels and illustrate the thoroughgoing abrogation of coherent and logical episteme in a postmodern world. These theoretical templates, to which Calvino's said text astonishingly predates, curiously make the same available for multiple critical exegeses in the light of the fundamental conceptual fabrics of postmodernity. Calvino's ingenious anticipations and phenomenal fictional illustrations, in *Invisible Cities*, of the prevalence or the imminent advent of postmodernity into the

realms of our existence make him one of the pioneering fictional exponents of postmodernity.

**Notes:**

- i. In simple terms, arborescent model is a tree model. The arborescent model has remained very popular in the western epistemological practices (popularized by Descartes in particular) to denote a system of knowledge or structure that operates on the basis of a few fixed and rigid principles; it maintains a hierarchy within that structure. However, postmodern philosophers like Gilles Deleuze and Felix Guattari discard this kind of model calling it no more tenable in a scenario where a postmodern system does not conform to any particular form or model and remains thoroughly formless and open-ended. A heterotopic spatiality exudes a similar morphology that does not conform to any particular structural principle or model, may it be the arborescent model or anything else.
- ii. It is D & G's master metaphor for a rhizome's unregulated and irregular growth along its exteriority. Rhizome's spilling over along its ruptured boundaries like a patch of oil shows its inherent defiance to any regular and concrete pattern of movement.
- iii. Explosion and implosion are typical Baudrillard terms which refer to the erasure of the distinction between a particular space's inner and outer spaces. This is because the outer space implodes into the inner space of any territory whereas the restricted inner space of the territory explodes into the outer space such that each other's typical distinctiveness is lost. Similarly, the city of Andria is not able to separate its internal space from its external space in a scenario where the former explodes into the latter and the latter implodes into the former.
- iv. Foucault frequently uses this expression in his mentioned essay to denote a defining feature of the heterotopia through which it includes extra-territorial qualities and attributes into itself—qualities which challenge and contest its own, inherent spatial character. In other words, heterotopia has this strange but unique ability to 'localize' outer and other spaces.
- v. Panopticon is a prison-house model of eternal surveillance provided by French philosopher Jeremy Bentham where the prison guard sits at the central-top position and surveys the activities of the guards eternally. Kublai Kahn's desire for being the centrally positioned, eternal surveyor of his empire can be compared to this panoptical model of eternal surveillance.

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# Marc Chagall: Where Art Thou?

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## INTRODUCTION

Marc Chagall (Old style. June 24, 1887, Viciebsk, Bielarus) — (New style. March 28, 1985, St. Paul-De-Vence, France) has been a worldwide known modernist artist since the early twentieth century. On top of his mastery of fine art, he was a poignant poet and prose author of articles, letters, and memoirs.

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# Marc Chagall: Where Art Thou?

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## I. INTRODUCTION

Marc Chagall (Old style. June 24, 1887, Viciebsk, Bielaruš), — (New style. March 28, 1985, St. Paul-De-Vence, France) has been a worldwide known modernist artist since the early twentieth century. On top of his mastery of fine art, he was a poignant poet and prose author of articles, letters, and memoirs.

Indeed, finding a fine-art lover who doesn't appreciate the artist's contribution to Modernism<sup>1</sup> and world fine-art culture is impossible. Every museum of stature owns Chagall's paintings and drawings. Thus, the museum in Nice has Chagall's seventeen original canvases on permanent display. Visitors to North American and European Art museums could admire the artist's work from different times in Washington, New York, Dallas, Chicago (the latter museum has 114 of Chagall's original works), and Toronto. Moscow and Petersburg art museums permanently display his art. Bielaruš (his birth country) exhibits Marc Chagall's works in Viciebsk's and Minsk's museums.

It is a part of human nature to seize something we like and to claim possession of it. Thus, Russia and France persistently claim the artist's creative art. Both countries have insisted on exclusivity to the artist's creativity, philosophy, and career for decades. In truth, the artist appreciated a short shelter in Russia's Moscow and Petersburg in the 1910s, the early 1920s and the refuge in the USA during WWII. Chagall also cherished his sixty-three years of habitation in France. However, the artist insisted in his epistolary, articles and, mainly, in his autobiography that no

matter where he lived, his motherland, historic Bielaruš, always had a primary place in his life and creative work.

It is also true that compared to Russia and France, Bielaruš, Chagall's birth country, began to return the artist's name and work to his Bielarusian-Jewish roots only recently. Bielarusian, French, and Russian claims are based on Chagall's work at various times in these countries (each culture uses a different spelling of the artist's name).<sup>2</sup> Bielaruš, due to the Tsarist and Soviet (Russian) forceful dependence, was late in joining this entitlement to the artist's origin, birthplace, first steps to maturity, education, and artistic inspiration. Currently, the country strongly asserts the evidence that his life and career began and flourished in historic Bielaruš.<sup>3</sup> Chagall himself perpetually propagated his Bielarusian-Jewish roots. Thus, the artist's letters, articles, and autobiography *Moja žyzń* (My

<sup>1</sup> Modernism is an art movement of the late 19<sup>th</sup> and early 1950s of the 20<sup>th</sup> century. Modernism encompassed philosophy, fine art, and literary cultures.

<sup>2</sup> Mojše Sehal (Yiddish); Mark Šahał (Bielarusian); Mark Шагал (Russian); Marc Chagall (English & French).

<sup>3</sup> The Soviet Bielarusian government (following Moscow's instructions) considered every emigrant to be "an enemy of the Soviet people." In this respect, Stalin's politics continued by next Soviet and post-Soviet rulers. Further on we will discuss this point in more details.

Life)<sup>4</sup> concentrate on his love and nostalgia for his birth country, historic Bielaruš. When asked about his origin, he immediately and enthusiastically responded: "Viciebsk!" (Russified: Vitebsk). The memoir and epistolary work, built on the artist's phenomenal memory, powerfully fortified and transpired in his fine art and writings dedicated to his birthplace. Thus, he states: "Every artist was born somewhere, and even if later he is influenced by a new environment, a certain essence, the specific odour of his native land will always be in his work."<sup>5</sup> Indeed, no matter which style or direction — Surrealism, Suprematism, Cubism, fantasy, fairy tales, or any other he used in his creativity — the viewer finds an image of Viciebsk in each of Chagall's artworks and writings.

The current study aims to elaborate on and confirm the artist's relation to his homeland.

## II. VICIEBSK (BIEŁARUŚ)

Chagall's native Viciebsk has a rich but primarily tragic history. Every European country (Western and Slavic alike: distant and close "neighbour") would try to occupy this beautiful place, surrounded by forests and lakes. In this respect,

<sup>4</sup> *My Life* is subtitled as *A Novel of My Life*. It was written in Russian. The artist's written Russian and French were rather shaky. All of his writings were edited by his wife, Bella Rosenfeld-Chagall (1895, Viciebsk--1944, New York). Bella Rosenfeld-Chagall was much better educated compared to her husband. Her written and oral Russian and French were near-native. She edited the Russian version of the memoir and translated *My Life* into French. From that on, *My Life* was translated in many languages (predominantly from her French translation). *My Life* was first published in 1931 by Parisian press Stock. Da Capo Press is one of the most active presses that from the late 1940s, continued to produce the artist's autobiography in various languages. Currently, all the editions are out of print except for the latest translation into English by Elisabeth Abbott (New York: Da Capo Press). The only problem with this edition is the lack of publication data. The last edition (in original Russian) that is used here was published in 1994. *My Life* (Moscow: Ellis Luck, 1994). It is a carbon copy of the 1931 first edition. As above mentioned, Chagall left behind a rich heritage of epistolary and scholarly works. Please see: Lev Berinskii. *Mark Chagall. The Angel Over the Roofs. Poems, Prose, Articles, Letters, Presentations*. Translated from Yiddish into Russian by L. Berinski. (Moscow: LiveLib, 1989).

<sup>5</sup> *The Artist, The Works of the Mind*. (Chicago: the University of Chicago Press , 1947) p. 21.

Russia was particularly aggressive from ancient times.

The city, founded in 974, has a river, Vičba, from which the town received its name. At the time of Chagall's birth, Viciebsk had 66 000 inhabitants. More than half of them were Jews (52.3%). The others were (predominantly) Orthodox Christians and Catholics. A smaller number of Germans, Latvians, Lithuanians, Russians, Tatars, Ukrainians, and other ethnicities also lived there for ages. They established smaller communities centred around prayer houses, churches, and synagogues. Currently, the city's population is 373 674, where Jews are about 5,000 citizens.

Notwithstanding religious and cultural differences, the Viciebsk population did not experience hostility toward each other. Each ethnicity had a traditional place and trade in the city. Despite invasions and partitions, churches, prayer houses, and synagogues of ancient times were well attended and preserved for a long time. The town's architecture survived the horrors of the Russian Civil War and WWI but was utterly ruined in WWII.

During his long creative Life, Chagall produced numerous artworks in various genres: paintings on canvases, drawings, graphics, book illustrations, and stained glass (to name a few). He was also a unique iconographer; though a devoted Jew, the artist wholeheartedly respected Christianity. To him, it was a younger and more energetic branch of Judaism. Thus, the artist was sorry that he was too shy to ask a famous rabbi a few burning questions while meeting him. The first question was: "Is it true that Israeli people are chosen by God?" And the second quest was: "It would be nice to know his (rabbi's) thoughts concerning Christ, whose bright and shiny image has lived in my soul forever."<sup>6</sup>

While in France, his home was always open to generations of Bielarusians of later emigrations. A telling example is his meeting with open arms

<sup>6</sup> The reader of his memoir would understand that Chagall himself responded positively to these questions. *My Life*, pp. 124-25. Rabbi is translated as a scholar, mentor, and a teacher.

another Bielarusian genius artist, Barys Zaborau (Russified: Boris Zaborov; 1935, Minsk—2021, Paris). Chagall helped Zaborau get a private studio and presented the artist to Parisian and other major European art gallery owners.

Until his last days, Chagall dreamt of visiting his motherland. When by a Soviet invitation to the art festival in 1973, the artist came to Moscow, he asked permission to visit Bielarus and "his country," Viciebsk. The Soviet government did not allow his dream to come true. Nevertheless, the artist continually expressed his love for the motherland during his long and productive life. Repeatedly he imprinted this undying feeling in his artworks and confirmed it in his autobiography, *My Life*, and other writings. This attitude is evident from his response to the injustice of the Soviets: "My Fatherland (Motherland) is in my soul. Do you understand?! I am coming there without an entrance visa. When lonely, it sees it, puts me to bed, and wraps me up like mother did."<sup>7</sup>

*My Life* starts with a self-explanatory dedication to Chagall's dearest subjects and topics: "To my parents, wife, and native city."<sup>8</sup> The artist's mother tongues were Yiddish (Litvak's variant)<sup>9</sup> and Hebrew. His oral Bielarusian and Russian were fluent but accentuated.

Overall, whatever translation of *My Life* one reads, the person is captured by the bright and sharp witticism of the author. No matter whether

<sup>7</sup> *My Life*, p.179.

<sup>8</sup> *My Life*, p. 1.

<sup>9</sup> Litvak, Litvaki (plural form) have been a common name for Bielarusian Jews. It originated from the Bielarusian names: Litva (historic Bielarus) and Liéviny (Christian Bielarusians). Litvaki (Bielarusian Jews) spoke a special dialect of Yiddish. The place, where ancient Bielarusians lived from early ages formed the Grand Duchy of Litva (GDL) in the thirteenth century. In the 15<sup>th</sup> century GDL became one of the most powerful states in Europe. It included parts of Kyivan Rus where old Bielarusian was a common language. Migration of Jews to Bielarus began by the end of the twelve century and picked by the 16<sup>th</sup> century. The Bielarusian princes and governors invited Jews for their knowledge of the Bible, commerce, banking system, mastery in jewerly, stonework, knowledge of textile, dressmaking and other practical professions. In fact, historic Bielarus (GDL) was the only country in the world that invited Jews with open arms during the Middle Ages.

the artist witnessed an event or re-narrated his family's story, the chronicle of his life transforms even tragic circumstances into a humorous, light weighted phrase or tale. Thus, an autobiography starts with his exclamation: "I was stillborn!"

The entire narrative describes well the diversity of Chagall's character. Indeed, from early childhood, he followed his instincts and demonstrated stubborn resistance to anybody who tried to submit his will. His mother, who loved him most of her children, called her Mojše "a contrarian boy." Her son did not take this as an offence. Rather often in his autobiography, the author agreed with his mother's opinion. Indeed, Chagall's originality and insistence on personal self-efficiency and originality transpire in the artist's fine art, which is often contrarian compared to ordinary people's taste and way of life.

### III. MARC CHAGALL BIOGRAPHY

Chagall was the eldest of nine children and, indeed, the favourite child of his mother. From an early age, he demonstrated an incredible imagination, phenomenal memory, strong will, and unusual habits. The youngster's best pastime was sitting alone on the rooftop of the family's poor dwelling and watching fires. Though Viciebsk of his childhood had some beautiful stone churches, synagogues, and gentry houses, the town's dwellings were predominantly wooden. His family home didn't avoid the town's conflagrations. Chagall powerfully describes this phenomenon in his memoir: "I adore fires! The fire is everywhere! Half of the sky is covered by smoke. Its glow is reflected in the river!"<sup>10</sup> A single spark would often transfer to a neighbour's wooden fence or house, affecting the entire neighbourhood. This extraordinary attraction to fire the artist carried for life. He often used the images in his fine art.

While on the roof, the boy felt like a stargazer. The artist describes the morning and evening stars as a living part of Viciebsk: "My dear, native stars of mine; they accompanied me on my way to school and waited for me on my way back home. Forgive

<sup>10</sup> *My Life*, p. 36.

me, my poor stars. I left you alone at such a terrible height! Oh, my sad and joyful town!"<sup>11</sup>

Marc Chagall was born to a traditional Bielarusian Hasidic family with many respectable Rabbies on both sides of his parents.<sup>12</sup> This religious mysticism has roots in the German Jewish community of the 12<sup>th</sup> century but became prominent in Slavic lands only in the middle of the 18<sup>th</sup> century. Hasids' philosophy and teachings were the opposite of the traditional Hebrew attitude of endless woe, based on expulsion from paradise, dispersion, and ageless slavery.

In contrast, Hasidism teachings used preachings, symbolism, and metaphors based on simple stories easily understood by ordinary people. They taught that God is everywhere and has a place in each soul that portrays the joy of this unity with Him. Hasids often used mysticism that came to them from the ancient tradition of interpretation (encoding and decoding) of the Hebrew Bible. This written and oral history of Hebrew culture proceeded for ages. The preachers of this branch of the Hebrew religion were males. Indeed, Jewish girls and women were predominantly illiterate. Only a few (from well-to-do families) knew other languages besides Yiddish and some Hebrew. Professional males, of course, had a better chance of learning foreign languages and cultures.

However, women like Chagall's grandmothers and mother were often excellent storytellers. Some of the stories came from oral interpretations of family lines and tradition. Others re-narrated stories they heard in synagogues while sitting on the balcony, covered by a curtain. Females were not allowed to sit by their male relatives.

Most of Viciebsk's families, of various confessions, were as poor as Chagall's father, a labourer in a small herring shop. He had worked there for thirty-two years, from his teenage years to his deathbed. Chagall describes his father, Khadski (Zachar) Chagall (Segal), in his autobiography: "I see my father as a riddle and incomprehensibly

<sup>11</sup> *My life*, p. 6.

<sup>12</sup> A rabbi was a person who knew Hebrew Bible by heart and could interpret its meaning. Traditionally, a rabbi had a home school, where he taught boys (from the age of five to the thirteen) the basics of the Bible.

sad person. He was constantly tired, anxious, and silent. His greyish-blue eyes, which would rarely be lightened up, had a thoughtful, poetic expression. He was skinny and very tall. My father was moving and lifting heavy barrels at the herring shop, and my heart was broken when I saw him doing it. Seeing when he took a herring out of a barrel with his bare and cold hands was also painful. My father's working day lasted for twelve-thirteen hours. His fat boss often stood behind him, watching his work, and did nothing. Father returned home in dirty working clothing, covered by a juice of pickled herring."<sup>13</sup>

Indeed, the artist's portraits and sketches of his father show us an exhausted person in poor health. Chagall tenderly recalls a memory of dry sugared pears that his father would occasionally bring to his children. This paragraph about his father ended unexpectedly with a phrase contradicting Chagall's earlier statement, where he said that he could not understand his father. "I alone understood him, for he was the flesh and blood of his people."<sup>14</sup>

Like everyone in the family, Zachar Chagall (Sehal) was under the complete spell of his wife, Feige-Ita (Ida). She was a tiny woman with an iron will. Feige-Ita had a green finger and grew seasonal vegetables at her small plot. She added tremendously to the family's income by selling out-of-home seasonable vegetables, berries, apples, and household items: needles, threads, and scissors.

Unlike her husband, Feige-Ita loved conversations; as abovementioned, she was a good storyteller and loved company. Her eldest son was her primary companion and a good listener.

All the Hasids loved stories, music, dancing, and singing. They used carnival elements in their feeling of unification with God. In translation from Hebrew, the word "Hasid" means "compassion" and "love." It is also translated as a phrase: "the one who loves God."

<sup>13</sup> *My Life*, p.7—9.

<sup>14</sup> *My Life*, p. 10.

Marc Chagall's family was typical in Viciebsk, where most Jews practiced Hasiditism. From early childhood, he was immersed in this religious culture that taught him to love and celebrate life and God. Indeed, Chagall's attitude to God was solid, personal, grateful, and truly special. He often used lyrical prose while addressing Him in prayer, calling the Deity "My God," and making himself and God in possession of each other. Thus, in the later years of his life, the artist addresses the Deity as such: "My God, thank You for this clarity that You willed to my soul. Thank You for this peace that You gave to my soul. My dear God, the night is coming; my eyes close till sunrise, and then I will paint new pictures for You of earth and sky."<sup>15</sup> Indeed, the artist's paintings and writings constantly demonstrate the artist's gratitude to life and God.

Chagall's mother hoped her lively "contrary boy" would be learned enough to continue the family tradition and become a rebbe (rabbi) someday. Thus, when he turned five, she brought him to a cheder (a Jewish primary school) to learn the basics of Judaism and the Hebrew language. At this stage of education, the kids had a teacher hired and controlled by a rabbi (a teacher was called "melamed.") The next step was to study with a local rabbi. This move to religious education didn't last for long. Chagall's mother, who, as mentioned, was practically the head of the family, and a down-to-earth person (not a dreamer like her husband), sent her son to a Russian school where kids studied the basics of math, reading, and writing. To enroll him, she bribed the headmaster with fifty rubles. This bribe allowed her son to attend a school that, by Russian tsarists' law, accepted only Christian students. By then, the mother realized that her Mojše would never be a rabbi and hoped her son would become a clerk with a clean job and a good salary. This dream of Feige-Ita never came true. And though her son was naturally and passionately religious, the rabbi (rebbe) career did not attract him. Neither a clerk in the bank nor any other office job suited him. Consequently, he

<sup>15</sup> Zina Gimpelevich. *The Portrayal of Jews in Modern Bielarusian Literature*. (Montreal & Kingston & London & Chicago: McGill-Queens University press) p. 306.

didn't succeed in a Russian school either. The writer insists in his biography that he studied and knew every subject matter in that school, but due to his stuttering and shyness, he could not answer the teachers' questions.

As strange as it sounds, such a phenomenon is not rare for students of different ages whose learning abilities are based on the inspiration and self-understanding of the subject matter. These people cannot reproduce borrowed knowledge even though they understand it. We see this psychological trend of the artist as he tells the story about his art education.

#### IV. MOTHER... I WANT TO BE AN ARTIST! CHAGALL'S ART EDUCATION

Mojshe's first steps to fine art began with copying portraits and figures from *Naša Niva* (*Our Land*), a popular Bielarusian paper.<sup>16</sup> Soon his drawings covered all the walls of the Chagalls' modest home. After he saw a sign on one of the houses, *Pen's School of Paintings and Drawings*, Mojshe declared to his mother that he wanted to become an artist and needed to study at Pen's<sup>17</sup> school. This request stupefied his mother, who was not keen on her son's choice. After a long struggle, she gave up and brought her son to the artist's studio to get his opinion on her son's artistic ability.

Yehuda Pen (1854–1937) was an academically trained easel painter, portraitist, ethnographer,

<sup>16</sup> This paper exists today; it is led by Bielarusian opposition, printed in Vilnius (Vilnia); the paper is available online.

<sup>17</sup> Pen was loved and cherished by his compatriots before and after Chagall settled in France. Tragically, a person of such influence, who lived through injustices of the Russian Pale of Settlement, inflicted by the tsarism (Jews were not allowed to live in Russian large cities), did not survive the Soviet yoke. The NKVD (Soviet secret police) organized the artist's brutal murder in notorious 1937 (that was the year when Soviets destroyed Bielarusian intelligentsia from all the walks of life). Despite a natural fear of the NKVD, the entire population of Viciebsk—people of different generations and walks of life, participated in the funeral procession. Their demonstration of respect and appreciation for the beloved artist was symbolic. The Viciebsk's citizens showed the murderers that the city's soul was alive and that Soviets could not triumph over the citizens' heritage and love for truth. They did so despite the NKVD's warning the population against participation in the funeral. Thus, the NKVD turned out to be impotent in subduing the people individual and collective will.

and educator. The master was a strict adherent to academic Realism. However, most of his students, the School of Paris (1905-1939) members, like Chagall, preferred Modernism. Many of them earned a world name. Nevertheless, Pen's compatriots and his students highly appreciated the artist; in addition to Jewish tradition, he freely and soulfully used spiritual energies offered by all the cultures and traditions of Christians and other ethnicities of Viciebsk. The further important detail of the master's educative program was that he didn't discriminate against girls and accepted the capable ones to his school.

Upon examining Mojše's drawings, Pen, recognizing the family's poverty, admitted him to his school without a fee. Chagall admired Pen and considered him his second father as he warmly described the artist in his autobiography: "Viciebsk's suburbs. Pen. The land where my ancestors rest is the dearest of my possessions today. I love Pen. His flattering small figure always stands in front of my eyes. In my memory, he exists together with my father. I always stumble on him in my thoughts and dreams, where we are walking together empty streets of our town. How many times, staying on his school threshold, I was about to implore him: 'I need no glory; I only want to become like you, a modest artist whose paintings would be hanging in your home besides yours.'<sup>18</sup>

Chagall spent less than a month and a half with the master. Thus, when he saw Pen's realistic pictures, where every figure was "as if a living one," Chagall confessed: "This is not my road. I feel it in my guts; it is not mine. But what is mine? I do not know it yet."<sup>19</sup>

Chagall's subsequent learning happened in Petersburg in 1906, where he attended various art schools for three years with approximately the same "success" he had with Pen. Chagall recognizes in his autobiography that he cannot receive knowledge from mentors but needs to draw and paint using his imagination, soulful emotions, and vision. Nevertheless, he learned enough about the technical operation necessary

<sup>18</sup> *My life*, p. 62.

<sup>19</sup> *My life*, p. 59.

for his profession. The master developed a strong perspective acuity and colour scheme (both qualities are comparable and equal in individual originality only to Matisse and Picasso). In Petersburg, the artist supported himself by painting houses and store signs. During this "study" period, Chagall often visited "his city" and relatives, mainly to see his sweetheart and wife-to-be, Bella Rosenfeld.

In 1911, thanks to a stipend from Maxim Vinover (1863-1926),<sup>20</sup> Chagall moved to Paris, where he changed his first name to Marc. Like his compatriots, that also were part of the *School of Paris* (1905-1939), he lived in La Ruche.<sup>21</sup> This year, Chagall took classes at the Académie La Pallette and the Académie de la Grande Chaumière. However, the artist spent most of his time in the Parisien museums, where he copied works of old masters and, later, interpreted them in his manner and style. His other passion was Parisian streets, which reminded him of his native streets of Viciebsk.

Chagall began regularly exhibiting his works in Paris in 1912 at the *Salon des Indépendants*. Consequently, salons in Berlin, London, and other major European cities opened their doors to his shows. This success continued until he returned to Viciebsk in 1914. He planned a short visit during which he hoped to marry Bella Rosenfeld and visit his family. Events of WWI and the Russian Revolution made him stay in Soviet Russia longer. For a brief period, Chagall believed in Soviet propaganda and played a significant role in developing artistic life in Viciebsk. Thus, he served as Fine Art and Cultural Commissar in his beloved city and established Viciebsk's Art College. In 1920, due to the impossibility of continuing his work in Viciebsk, he had to move

<sup>20</sup> M. Vinover (1863-1926) was a famous lawyer, an activist for human rights, a patron of the arts, and the leader of the Jewish community in Russian Empire.

<sup>21</sup> La Ruche (The Behive) is a three-storey building designed in 1900 by Alexander Gustave Eiffel. It was reconstructed and owned by the French sculptor and patron of impoverished artists, Alfred Boucher, who hosted hungry artists from around the world in his huge home with minuscule rooms. We remind the reader that over forty of those artists from the *School of Paris* came from the historic Bielaruš.

to Moscow with his wife and daughter Ida (born in 1916). In Moscow, the family, despite his work for the *Habima theatre*, hardly survived hunger and cold. In 1922, the Soviet Government allowed the family to emigrate to France.

Chagall did not like the Tsarist and Soviet Russian empires. He viewed Russia as an antisemitic backward country that exploited the peasantry and working classes, turning the people into slaves of the system.<sup>22</sup> He also did not recognize Russian fine art that, according to the artist, was not original but a lousy copy of great European fine art.<sup>23</sup>

Unlike in Moscow, his life in France was happy regarding family life, work, and respect for French and world original art and its representatives. He also enjoyed admiration from his friends and associates. Indeed, no one dictated to him how to do his work; he was free, successful, and, later on, prosperous.

There are many manuscripts, articles, and web writings dedicated to Chagall. They continually appear to this day.<sup>24</sup> This statement is proven in every biography and critical study devoted to him and his works. The most detailed literature emerged in the twentieth and the beginning of the twenty-first century. Among them stands out: A book (album) by German art historians Ingo F. Walter and R. Metcher entitled: *Chagall*.<sup>25</sup> The volume is well-translated from English into Russian. Metcher's study is followed by Aleksandra Shatskikh's: *Vitebsk. The Life of Art*.<sup>26</sup> The latter work is among the soundest sources for understanding Chagall's roots and background. Prof. Suzan Tumarkin-Goodman compiled an excellent study (consisting of essays by professors Zvi Gitelman, Benjamin Harshav, Vladislav Ivanov, Jeffrey Veidlinger, and herself) in a volume (album), *Chagall And the Artists of the*

<sup>22</sup> *My Life*, p. 99.

<sup>23</sup> *Ibid*, p. 98.

<sup>24</sup> Zina Gimpelevich. *The Portrayal of Jews in Modern Bielarusian Literature*. (Montreal & Kingston & London & Chicago: McGill-Queens University press, 2023) pp. 52-3.

<sup>25</sup> F. Walter & R. Metcher. *Chagall*. (Cologne: Tachen, 2000) 95 pp.

<sup>26</sup> Alexandra Shatskikh, *Vitebsk* (Russified). *The Life of Art*. (New Haven & London: Yale University Press, 2007) 391 pp.

*Russian Jewish Theater*.<sup>27</sup> The only drawback of these and other publications is their stubborn repetition of a mistake in pronouncing Chagall's identity as Russian or Russian-French." However, his memoir is an antidote that repeatedly shows his contrarian idea of belonging primarily to his home country, the core of which is his native Vitebsk.

## V. CHAGALL'S MEMOIR

There are many controversial data about the time of writing of the memoir. Thus, one of the earlier suggestions was written by Chagall's first scholar, Prof. Franz Meyer (Kunsthistoriker).<sup>28</sup> According to Prof. Meyer, Chagall wrote his memoirs in 1915-16 during his service at Petersburg's military bureau. Other scholars, like Shatskikh and Tumarkin, state that the autobiography was first written during the most difficult (due to the consequences of the Russian Empire's Revolutions and Civil War) of 1918-1922. However, the most critical fact is that this exquisite literary work was written and indicates clearly that the author spent more time in Vitebsk, Berlin, and Paris than in Moscow/Petersburg in the 1910s and 1920s and 1930s. Thus, his twenty illustrations to *My Life* were published in 1923 separately as an album in Berlin, while his poetic autobiography was finished in Paris.

We understand that every scholar of Chagall's heritage meticulously researched the subject matter and saw his creative work according to their personal understanding of fine art. Indeed, each of us has "My Chagall." Yet, the autobiography remains the most precious to understanding the writer's poetic character, origin, and road to fame. The memoir presents unique facts about Chagall's tender and nostalgic

<sup>27</sup> Susan Tumarkin—Goodman. *Chagall and the Artists of the Russian Jewish Theater*. (New Haven & London: Yale University Press, 2007) 228 pp.

<sup>28</sup> Meyer Franz. *The Artist and His Art and His Private Myths; MARC CHAGALL*. (New York: Harry N. Abrams, 1964). 774 pp. The edition has Chagall's illustrations in black and white and 53 color plates. Prof. Meyer was the director of art museum Kunstmuseum in Basel. He was married to the Chagall's only daughter, Ida Chagall. They had three children together.

attitude toward his birthplace, historic Bielaruś, which, once again, for him meant the city of Viciebsk. Chagall never identified this city with Russia: "But Viciebsk is a special place... There are tenths, hundreds of synagogues, churches, meat shops, and passersbys. Is it Russia? No, this is my city, where I always return to. And with what a deeply warm feeling! There I painted Viciebsk's series in 1914. I painted everything I saw. But only from home; I didn't want to go out; I looked through the windows. It was enough for me to paint fences, trees, floors, and chairs. A very ancient man is sitting in front of me on the chair.— 'Who are you? I ask him with my eyes.' — 'What? Don't you know me? You never heard of a preacher from Slucak?!'." "How do I tell him what I want from him? What if he leaves immediately? But no, he agreed to be my model! He made himself comfortable on the chair and immediately fell asleep. Did you see a portrait of an elder in the green? This is he!"<sup>29</sup>

We interpret this example as one of many deep emotional feelings towards the Fatherland that continued throughout Chagall's long and productive life. Indeed, his life, work, and inspiration never abandoned his birthplace. And the artist's memoir, *My Life*, in which he confirms his Bielarusianess and approach to art, ensures this statement.

## VI. VICIEBSK AGAIN: THE TOWN OF MARK CHAGALL

In front of an entrance to Viciebsk, the traveller is met with the colossal sign: VICIEBSK, THE TOWN OF MARK CHAGALL."

However, the sign appeared only in the late 1990s. It was not welcomed during the Soviet times. Currently, Chagall has two museums in Viciebsk, which were difficult to establish because of the communist government's restrictions. However, Bielarusians managed to establish memorials in honour of their compatriot.

The first museum is located in a small, old dwelling where the artist grew up. The place displays a character of that time: it exhibits more

than modest hand-made furniture, kitchen necessities, and skimpy clothing of the former inhabitants. The other one is the Chagall's Museum in Viciebsk's Art Center. This place has over 300 originals of Chagall's graphics [donated by his daughter Ida (1916–1994) and granddaughter Bella] in 1992.<sup>30</sup>

Due to Soviet antisemitism and its anti-religious position, the establishment of the museums was close to impossible until three leading Bielarusian members of the intelligentsia [the masterful Bielarusian prose writer Vasil Bykaŭ (1922–2003), the prominent poet Ryhor Baradulin (1935–2014), and an excellent Bielarusian poet and translator from Viciebsk David Šymanovič (1932–2014)] made it happen. The latter two poets translated Chagall's poetry into Bielarusian and Russian from his native Yiddish. Thousands of like-minded Bielarusians supported Bykaŭ, Baradulin, and Šymanovič. Together they fought with the government and won permission to establish a monument and two museums in Chagall's native Bielarusian town, Viciebsk.

The following excerpts from Bykaŭ keynote speeches of 1991–95, delivered at festivities in Viciebsk, illuminate the Bielarusian adherence to Chagall. The writer powerfully described the stupidity and obscurantism of Soviet officialdom that attempted to bury the artist's significance for his birth country and his compatriots' memory of him. Bykaŭ also spoke passionately about Chagall's sense of national belonging. The writer vividly depicted the artist's birthplace, pointed out the importance of Chagall's art of Jewish and Christian Bielarusian cultures, and described how the two, combined with Chagall's talent, transformed his work into a store of universal culture: "With his roots in the Bielarusian milieu, he is a leading artist of Jewish and Bielarusian culture, and both phenomena are natural and lawful. Every artist comes into the world from their national background, whereas a child absorbs its forms, outlooks, smell, and colours. At last, Chagall established himself within a tremendous and eternal culture where he

<sup>29</sup> Ibid.

<sup>30</sup> Ida was named after her grandmother, Feige-Ita (Ida), while Bella was named after her grandmother, Bella Rosenfeld, Chagall's first wife.

belonged to the whole world. Mankind is thankful to him and acknowledges with gratitude that little corner of the earth, unknown before, that gave birth to him."<sup>31</sup>

Chagall is as well-known to the world culture as Pablo Picasso (Málaga, October 25., 1881—Mougins, France, April 8., 1973). Both artists were central figures of the *School of Paris* (1905-1939) and founders and developers of new forms and styles in Modernism. Thus, Chagall fathered surrealism, and Picasso created cubism. The originality of each of them is not disputable, as well as a thorny individual road to personal success.<sup>32</sup> Were they close friends? Not at all: they had very atypical temperaments and characters. As we established, Chagall was the dreamer, the poet, the author, and the family man. He loved and cherished his parentage, wife, and their daughter. The artist was in perpetual love for life. Picasso was not a family man. He was a fighter who endlessly fought for personal changes in his life. Neither were they competitors: Chagall and Picasso respected each other and their differences. Indeed, the artists achieved fame and success due to their search for new forms, diverse approaches to life, hard work, and an early call to fine art. Both loved to portray nature and people. Rather often, each of them would use various animals as models. It is symbolic that Chagall depicted mainly cows, while Picasso preferred bulls.

Despite equality in fame and place in fine art, the significant difference between the two masters is still apparent in the question of their motherland. Thus, no one ever doubted Picasso's Spanish origin. At the same time, Chagall, as we continue to state, was constantly identified as a Russian, French, or Russian-French artist in most Western and Russian manuscripts dedicated to his works by various art historians. And though Picasso could travel between Spain and France as soon as the artist came to money and as often as he

<sup>31</sup> Vasil Bykaŭ. "Chagall and Viciebsk are inseparable." (The article is in Bielarusian), published in *Chagall's days in Viciebsk: 1991-95*. The volume of forty-seven scholarly articles and recorded speeches is compiled and edited by David Šymanovič. (Viciebsk: Pańkov, 1996) p.26.

<sup>32</sup> It is interesting to note that both artists received museums in their home countries at the same time.

pleased, Chagall could not. During Stalinism, his road to the motherland was prohibited — those who returned to the USSR were imprisoned, exiled, or murdered.

Many called Chagall "a golden boy" and "the luckiest artist of the modernist era." However, it is essential to state that two poets and writers, Guillaume Apollinaire (1880-1918) and Blaise Cendrars (1887-1961), recognized Chagall's intellectual and artistic genius before his fellow artists did.

We conclude the current study with Chagall's words: "God forgive me if I could not express my deep love for all the people on earth. And my family are sacred people to me. Truly, I think so."<sup>33</sup>

In these terms, dear reader, we invite you to accept the master's love for us all and to return similar feelings to his eternal memory. Indeed, it is lovely to feel gratitude to Him, who left us such a rich inheritance in fine art, literature, and world culture.

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# Metal Age Hoards on the Middle Yenisei

*A.P. Borodovsky*

## INTRODUCTION

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# Metal Age Hoards on the Middle Yenisei

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## I. INTRODUCTION

Informative archaeological and historical sources. It contains the complex of articles intentionally hidden into the ground after the appointed process of its collecting. Investigation of such finds is one of the actual problems in the world and home archaeology.

On the territory of South Siberia, the buried treasures (or the so-called «caches») appeared as long ago as the Mesolithic Epoch. However, they contained complexes of various kinds of articles and were widespread in the Metals Epoch, especially in the period of the Early Iron Age [Tallgren, 1917]. On the vast spaces, from the Middle Yenisey River to the Upper Ob River, quite a number of hidden treasures have been discovered. Among them – the Iyus and Kosogolsk caches, Znamensk, Novoobintsevsk, Burbinsk and a series of the other ones [Naschekin, 1967; Martynov, 1973; Stepnaya polosa..., 1992; Vadetskaya, 1999; Borodovskij, Larichev, 2013; Makarov, 2013 Borodovskij, Oborin, 2018].

## II. RESEARCH RESULTS INTO THE ITEMS AND DISCUSSION

The Iyus buried treasure was found by Semion Alekseevich Fefelov, a worker of the Iyus State agricultural farm («sovkhоз») of Khakassia. It happened when he made machine processing of the field near not great Saratsk Lake in Khakassia in the middle 70-s of the last century. As a rule, discoveries are usually accomplished by those who are able to see something unusual in that which is habitual and daily. When, in a few days after this

peculiar event in his life, they asked S.A. Fefelov about what made him come up to the place, where (as it turned out soon) the buried treasure («cache») was found, the unexpected answer followed without any delay: «the birch bark». However, there was something in it that made us be surprised. The field is situated in 30 kms from the Iyus Settlement. It was ploughed for many years. When the plough-share, drawn by the «Kirovets» of Fefelov's son Vladimir, had turned (inside) out something bulky (the massive plough-share of the tractor had cut through one of the sides of metallic cauldron), Semion Alekseevich Fefelov, whose tractor was going behind, at first, did not pay attention to it. He thought: «Probably, that was a detail left in the field after repair and then ploughed into the earth». Suddenly scraps of dazedly white birch bark struck him. The scraps were scattered in the fan-shaped manner on the turned out strata of black earth. «Where did the birch bark appear here from? Here, in the open steppe?». Fefelov, the elder, stopped his tractor close by the queer find. He came down from the «Kirovets», grasped the massive bow-shaped handles, sticking out from the earth, and pulled out a large cauldron made of red bronze.

In the cauldron 271 articles of different kinds were placed. Most of them were those of bronze. In this collection articles made of organic materials, such as skin and birch bark, horn, as well as 150 glassware (beads) and 2 whetstones were present too.

The complex of articles of the Iyus buried treasure is of a special interest since it is a rare case when the whole contents of the collection of such type is intelligible for research work practically in its initial acquisition.

The examined hidden cache contains 3 receptacles: (those of birch bark, metal and skin), as well as their contents which include different categories of articles: adornments (beads, pendants, name-plates, ear-rings and the ones with perforated holes); details of waist-belt set (belt-buckles, spoon-shaped hasps, cartridge-clips, open-worked and zoomorphic blades); whetstones; looking-glasses (functional, votive); covers (the upper and lower ones).

A special attention the complete set and safe keeping of articles attract. This collection consists of solitary and serial articles (belt-buckles, blades, hasps); sheaves of things (belt-buckles, beads, rings, name-plates), as well as separate fragments of articles, especially open-worked blades.

The consistency of appearance of components in the examined set of articles and safe keeping of the latter is well traced on the zoomorphic and open-worked bronze name-plates which were fastened by the Huns to waist-belts.

The completeness and safe keeping of the examined articles are represented in the most consecutive order by the zoomorphic ones and the open-worked bronze waist-belt name-plates of the Hun time. Among such articles, the intact, as well as broken half-and-half and fragmental ones were met.

The outer surfaces of many articles of the Iyus cache are greatly smoothed out; and images depicted on the metal goods became in some cases partly wiped off. These peculiarities of the outer surfaces of many things are, probably, connected with their long and intensive utilization. Such wearing out allows to suppose sufficiently long existence of the articles which later on formed the collection of the Iyus hidden treasures.

The birch bark capacity («tooyes» or pail) of rather large dimensions is the first (outer) receptacle into which the bronze cauldron on a tray was put. The birch bark utensils, those stitched by ribbon of birch bark over the upper edge on each side, were preserved fragmentarily. Analogous capacities of birch bark, those of smaller dimensions, are known on the Middle

Yenisey (Barsuchikha-1), in Tuva (Aimyrlyg, Kokel).

The largest specimen of the birch bark pail (26 cm × 23 cm) of the Early Iron Age was discovered in the Bidin Cave (the Cis-Olkhon Area).

One of the most important circumstances for ascertainment of the time of concealment of treasures is dating of their receptacles. A special meaning the material which forms the cover of the hidden treasures has too. Organics, as compared with the other raw materials (metal, clay) of receptacles, has more limited period of utilization which can be, as much as possible, similar to the time of burial of the Iyus treasure. However, taking into consideration the consequence of episodical safe keeping of the birch bark capacities of the Early Iron Age, one may date them from the time period not earlier than the end of the I<sup>st</sup> millennium B.C. – the beginning of the II<sup>nd</sup> millennium A.D.

The bronze cauldron of the Saxon type, on a tray, with smooth horseshoe-shaped handles is the second (middle) receptacle decorated over the upper edge by two lines of relief (tight) plait-shaped rollers closed in arch on one side of the article. One may consider that such cache dates from the second half of the I<sup>st</sup> millennium B.C.. On the territory of West Siberia a bronze cauldron was a part of the Kholmogorsk cache.

One more inner receptacle of the Iyus cache – the leathern ware which was sewn at the bottom by the relief seam over its edge. Comparatively small dimensions (17 cm × 1,5 cm) of the ware are, probably, bound up with the fact that inside of the bronze cauldron a part of things, together with the other ones was put.

For some varieties of serial things of the Iyus cache (mirrors, waist-belt name-plates, belt-buckles, spoon-shaped pendants, rings) rather close similarity with other cult complexes is observed. For example, press-button mirrors were met not only in the Iyus cache but also in the Burbinsk one, as well as in the Aidashinsk Cave. The presence of bronze belt-cartridges with cuts (slits) in the Iyus cache is also typical of the Novoobintsevsk one on the Upper Ob.

Considerable number of bronze rings is typical of both, the Iyus cache and the Aidashinsk Cave. We ought to emphasize especially that the Iyus cache contains the most numerous for South Siberia series of articles found out in one and the same complex – spoon-shaped hasps and belt-plates with images of 2 bulls or 1 dragon.

It must be also noted that in burial places of the Early Iron Age of this region similar articles are found relatively seldom and at best in one or two specimens. Such similarity in complexes of articles of quite a number of caches of South Siberia is stipulated by a number of factors. Among the latter – epoch-making discoveries, social and cultural significance, as well as ritual symbolism of the articles which formed the collection of the examined cache. As a whole dating of articles from the collection of the Iyus cache keeps within the chronological period of time from the VIII<sup>th</sup> – I<sup>st</sup> centuries B.C. to the beginning of the I<sup>st</sup> millennium A.D.

Some varieties of bronze-ware form a part of the Iyus cache. The other part of articles from the same collection (the cauldron, mirrors, upper and lower coverings), as well as from other analogous complexes applies to the so-called «Tagar bronzes». In the first half of the I<sup>st</sup> millennium B.C., in the Middle Yenisey Valley, within the limits of existence of the Tagar Culture, the powerful bronze-casting centre was formed. Of high quality Tagar bronzes (cauldrons, knives, daggers, pendants, mirrors) in the Early Iron Age were widely spread all over the territory of Siberia, including the northern taiga areas. However, in the main, concentration of such bronze articles was the greatest one only in the basin of the Chulym River and that was the consequence of existence here in antiquity of the natural exchange of commodities way which bound different territories from the Middle Yenisey to the Upper Ob River. But considerable number of metallic articles of the Iyus cache is represented by the Hun artistic bronzes. Judging by the results of spectral analysis of the Kosogolsk cache, this ware was made of local raw on the base of copying the original Hun specimens. For this reason carrying out analyses of chemical composition of metal of the Iyus cache is a special

and extremely important theme of the independent researches.

In connection with this one ought to pay attention to the silver article in collection of the Iyus cache. It is a semi-spherical silver plate. Such articles were current till the II<sup>nd</sup> century B.C.–the I<sup>st</sup> century A.D.

In Siberian caches articles of precious metals (gold, silver) represent themselves most frequently as single finds. For example, in the collection of the Kholmogorsk cache (which is rich in finds) there is only 1 silver plaque. The X-ray spectral analysis of the silver belt-plaque from the Iyus cache allowed to determine its chemical composition (Cu-1,993%; Zn-0,004%); Au-0,0015%; Pb-0,003%; Ag-96,683%; Hg-0,013%). The article applies to the group of those which contain Ag-Cu with rather high content of silver. Most probable, this article, as well as all those manufactured before the first half of the I<sup>st</sup> millennium A.D., was made of native silver. Such production was connected with definite historical standard of methods of this metal treatment. The composite study of the Kholmogorsk cache is also indicative of the fact that the formulas of alloys used in the process of casting the articles of this collection reflect the definite stage in the prehistory of methods of colour treatment in non-ferrous metallurgy of the West-Siberian Region from the boundary of the epochs to the middle of the I<sup>st</sup> millennium A.D.. Such peculiarity of chemical composition of metal in articles of the cache has its own rational explanation: it is so because the process itself of purposeful replenishment of the collection of any cache with metal goods in definite chronological period creates by natural way the necessary and sufficient conditions for forming of very authentic and representative exception of articles characterizing the concrete stage of working of metal.

For all incredible good luck of finding the Iyus cache the latter was extracted from not an accidental place. In the eastern outskirts of the Saratsk Mountain one of the rocky astrosanctuaries is placed. The latter is known as the Saratsk «Sunduk». All through the

neighborhood of the mountain (which is surrounded by the right bank of a very steep bend of the White Iyus River) is satiated with a number of various relics of the past – burial grounds, rock-drawings, petroglyphs, menhirs, «places of funeral rites», astral observation posts. The Saratsk Mountain itself is a part of the peculiar natural region – «Sunduki» («Chests»). This region is situated at the frontier of the mountain-taiga zone of the Kuznetsk Ala-Tau and steppes, as well as of swampy bogs and lakes of the country between two rivers – the valley of the Iyus and Yenisey Rivers. Judging from the numerous Alpine sanctuaries discovered in the zone of «Sunduki», as well as from the pictorial rocky temples of the valley of the White and Black Iyus Rivers in the region of departure of the both rivers from gorges of mountain ridges of the Kuznetsk Ala-Tau, one, evidently, ought to apprehend this region as the most important cultural and religious centre of the north of Khakassia from the Early Bronze Age to the final stage of the Tagar Epoch (of the second half of the I<sup>st</sup> millennium B.C.).

The correlation of the cache with diverse cult objects may be versatile. The concealment itself of the complex of things into the earth is closely connected with funeral and ritual practice in ancient times. The composition of articles in caches (arms, adornments, waist-belt-set) and the character of their burial ‘allows’ interpreting these complexes as the material of burials. For example, the Kholmogorsk cache seems to us as remains of ritual burial of several posthumous images of the dead ones. Complex of articles of the Burbinsk cache is interpreted by T.N. Troitskaya as inventory of pillaged burial mound. Indeed, the case of location of the cache into the funeral complex of the Early Iron Age was fixed by archaeologists in the Znamensk cache (Khakassia). The collection of the Huno-Sarmatian time consists of gold ware, beads, silver plaques and silver half-finished products (small metal twigs – pivots, pieces of crumpled foil). All this was found near the lower edge of a slab of the Tagar burial mound. The finds were covered with a fragment of a side of ceramic vessel. In respect of the Kholmogorsk and

Burbinsk caches the funeral “interpretation” will be, nevertheless, the hypothetical one, since it is based on reconstruction or relative correlation of composition of articles in the burial place and in the cache. The authenticity of such point of view raises substantial doubts, even if it is because there is a certain extent of redundancy of articles for the one separately taken interment. This peculiarity attracted attention to itself when interpreting of the famous Amu-Daryanian cache was carried out; discussions apropos of this cache do not cease in the scientific environment already more than 150 years.

Nevertheless, any cache, first of all, is not only valuable articles but also their rather considerable number, in one moment concealed and subsequently extracted from earth. The number of metallic articles from a single ten (the Burbinsk cache – 12 things) and to more than one hundred (the Kholmogorsk cache – 193 things) does not correspond to the «standard» set of articles even to that of the richest burials of their time in Siberia. Moreover, a number of «symbolic» things in such caches represents itself a series of articles. In particular, 4 bronze mirrors of the Scythian time, with press-button handles, form a part of the Burvinsk cache, whereas in all burials of the middle of the I<sup>st</sup> millennium B.C., those investigated by archaeologists in South Siberia (Chultykov Ravine-1, burial № 35), such mirrors are represented by 1 specimen in each burial. The plenty and serial production of the complex of articles of the ancient caches of West Siberia do not allow to consider them to be those having a single meaning. It is no mere chance that the Kholmogorsk cache is connected with not the usual but the ritual burial which is more similar (by the chemical composition of articles in its collection) to the cult burial complexes. Just in them deliberately (for the limited or broader time period) the appointed categories of articles were put. In the south of West Siberia, the Aidashinsk Cave and the Sarovsk cult place were such objects.

The Iyus cache, as well as the other ones of the Cis-Chulym Area, was formed to appear as complete set of ritual attributes from the second half of the I<sup>st</sup> millennium B.C. till the period of the active Hun influence on the Yenisey River in the

end of the I<sup>st</sup> millennium B.C. The bronze plates with bulls and dragons, spoon-shaped hasps and the belts-buckles with immovable tongue testify to this time. The artistic bronzes of the Huns represented themselves the all-round social and cultural phenomenon. They could belong to both, the Huns and the people, which circulated the Huns' influence among the local population whose culture was similar to that of the Huns. The nearest territorial analogies of the most part of the Hun artistic bronzes of the Iyus cache are not among the accompanying inventory of the Tesinsk subsoil sepulchres (Chornoye ozero I, Yesino III). This fact might, quite possibly, be connected with cultural affiliation of the cache, so far as for the Tagar funeral rite not full-scale ware, made according to the Hun specimens, but their miniature copies were typical. Obviously, we may consider the boundary of the I<sup>st</sup> millennium B.C. – the beginning of the I<sup>st</sup> millennium A.D. to be the time of burial of the Iyus cache. Three-layered receptacle of the Iyus buried treasure has definite parallels in wrapping of the most significant articles well-known in the folk-lore tradition. Such peculiarity once again emphasizes the inordinateness of the complex of articles of the Iyus cache and its ritual character.

Spatial systematization of location of troves and hiding places containing iron tools in the Middle Yenisei region is possible also within the framework of two contexts – hydrographic and orographic (Fig. 1). The hydrographic context implies characterization of location of any trove (hiding place) next to different water basins (rivers, lakes) of arterial or basinal character (rivers and their tributaries). The orographic context is represented by location of any trove (hiding place) within the boundaries of a certain mountainous landscape (mountain peaks, slopes, mound feet, mountain gorges, and valleys). Based on these criteria, from the territorial point of view, the Middle Yenisei troves and hiding places belonging to the Hun–Sarmatian time can be divided into two groups. Those troves and hiding places related to the hydrographic character of occurrence include the following: Kasangolskii, Sagarkhaiskii, Uibatskii, Ust–Kamyshtinskii, 1<sup>st</sup> and 2<sup>nd</sup> Askizskii and Dzhirimskii. The discovered

sets of iron tools (different axes, ice breaks and iron breakers, stone hammers, adzes) allow not only correlating and synchronizing a whole array of the Middle Yenisei troves but also significantly elaborating interpretation thereof within the framework of their functional purpose, specialization and ritual application. It is also noteworthy that a number of troves containing iron tools were located by adjacent small hiding places with similar sets of iron tools.

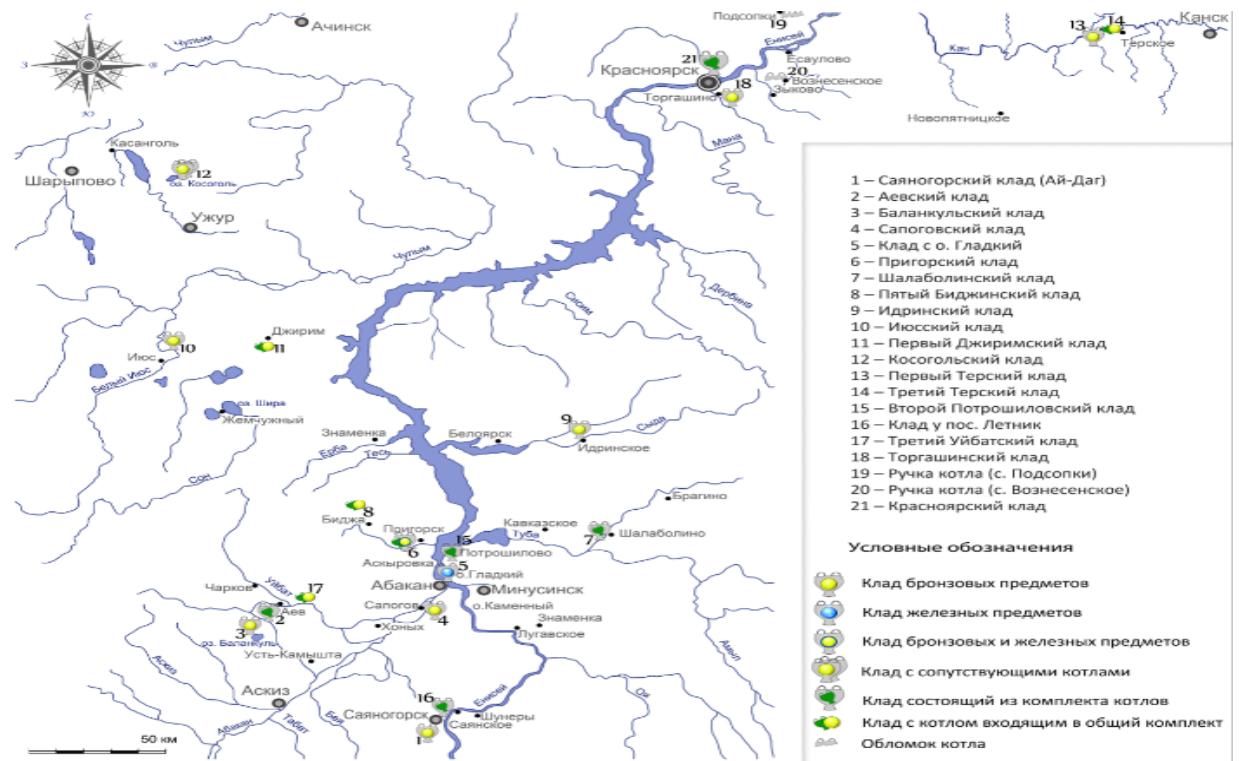
### III. CONCLUSIONS

Summarizing the results of discussion of the Middle Yenisei troves and hiding places containing different sets of iron tools, one should take into account several conclusions on these archeological complexes (Fig. 2). First, based on the combination of several object complexes belonging to different periods of existence, i.e. the Tagar time, the Hun time, and the Bronze Age, and sets of various iron tools, one can reasonably assume that such peculiarities of different object collections can be used to determine a relative chronological distribution of troves. Secondly, it is discovered that a number of the Middle Yenisei troves containing iron tools were located in close vicinity to the similar sets of tools (hiding places). This peculiarity is quite common for the Middle Yenisei troves as it has been consistently registered for an array thereof (the Iyusskii trove, i.e. the trove located next to the town of Krasny Iyuss; the 1<sup>st</sup> and 2<sup>nd</sup> Kosogolskii Troves). Thirdly, the presence of iron tools and sets thereof inside the trove or an associated hiding place can be directly related to a character of its production specialization (a caster's trove or a set of tools meant for mining activities). On the whole, identification and study of troves and hiding places containing sets of various iron tools opens new perspectives for relative dating, interpretation and systematization of such object complexes.

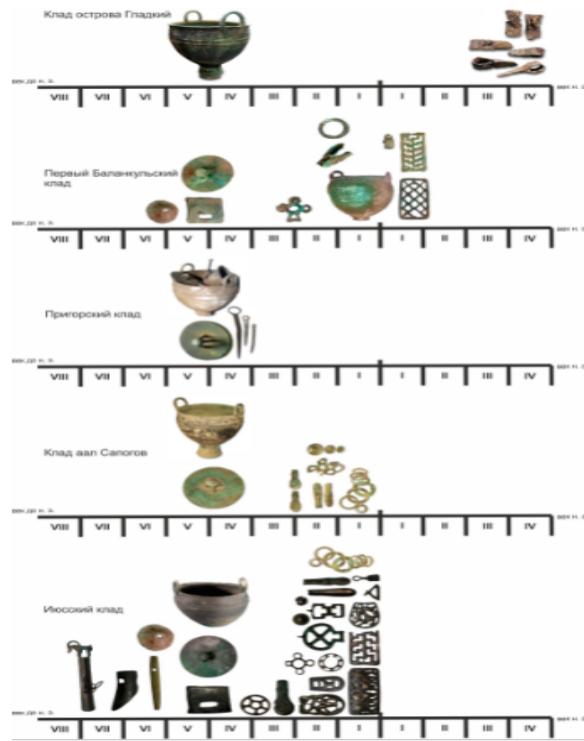
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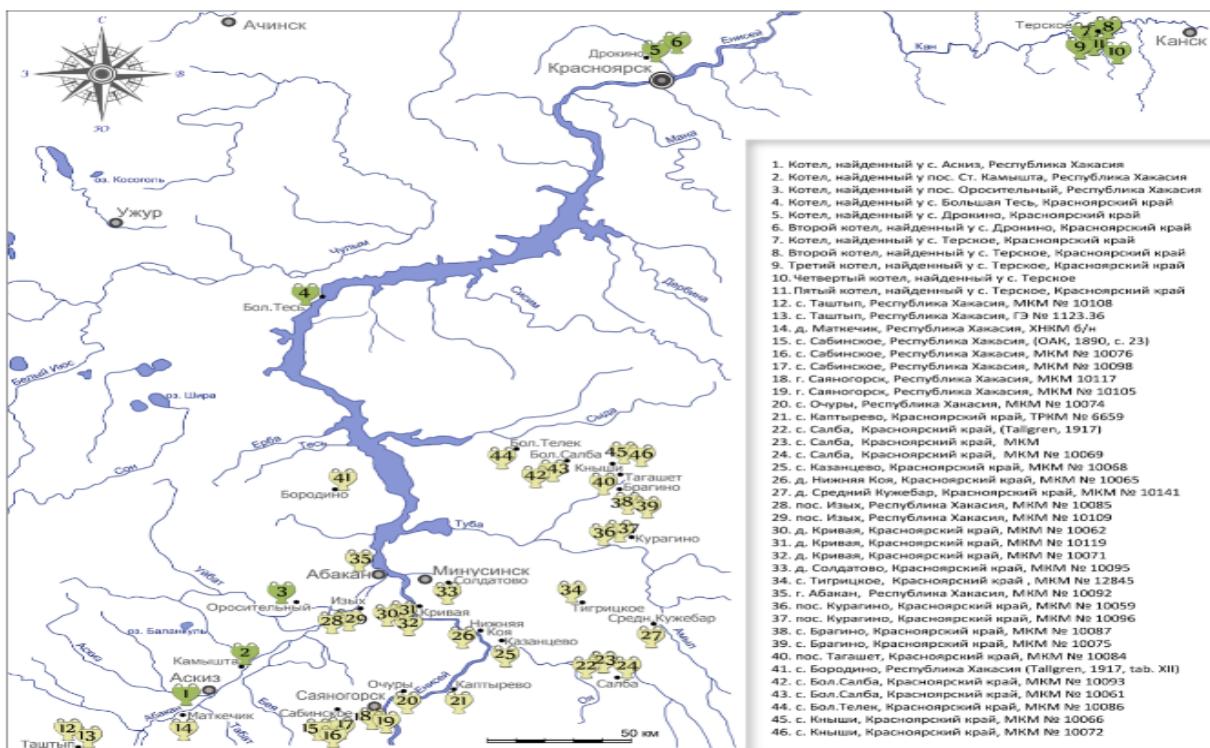
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*Fig. 1:* Cartography of cauldrons and treasures of the Early Iron Age in the Middle Yenisei. 1 – Sayanogorsk treasure (Ay-Dag); 2 – Aevsky treasure; 3 – Balankul treasure; 4 – Sapogovsky treasure; 5 – Treasure from about. Smooth; 6 – Prigorsk treasure; 7 – Shalabolinsky treasure; 8 – Fifth Bidzhinsky treasure; 9 – Idrinsky treasure; 10 – Iyussky treasure; 11 – First Djirim treasure; 12 – Kosogolsky treasure; 13 – First Tersk treasure; 14 – Third Tersk treasure; 15 – Second Gotroshilovsky treasure; 16 – Treasure at the village. Letnik; 17 - Third Uybat treasure; 18 – Torgashinsky treasure; 19 – Boiler handle (p. Podopki); 20 – Boiler handle (Voznesenskoe village); 21 – Krasnoyarsk treasure.



*Fig. 2:* Synchronization of a number of warehouses in boilers.



*Fig. 3:* Random finds of metal cauldrons of the early iron age on the Middle Yenisei. 1 – Boiler found near the village of Askiz, Askizsky district of the Republic of Khakassia; 2 – Boiler found near the village. Kamyshta station, Askizsky district of the Republic of Khakassia; 3 – Boiler found near the

village. Irrigation, Ust-Abakan district of the Republic of Khakassia; 4 – Boiler, found in s Bolshaya TES, novoselovskiy rayon of Krasnoyarsk Krai; 5 – Boiler, was found at C. Trocino, Emelyanovsky district of Krasnoyarsk Krai; 6 – Second boiler, was found at C. Trocino, yemelyanovsky district of the Krasnoyarsk region; 7 – Boiler, was found at p Terek, Kansky district of the Krasnoyarsk region; 8 –the Second boiler was found in C. Terek, Kansky district of the Krasnoyarsk region; 9 – the Third boiler was found in S. Terek, Kansky district of the Krasnoyarsk territory; 10 – Fourth cauldron which was found in S. Terek, Kansky district of the Krasnoyarsk region; 11 – the Fifth pot found in S. Terek, Kansky district of the Krasnoyarsk region; 12 – S. Tashtyp, Tashtypskiy district of the Republic of Khakassia, MCM No. 10108; 13 – S. Tashtyp, Tashtypskiy district of the Republic of Khakassia, GE No. 1123.36; 14 – D. Marketic, Beysky district of the Republic of Khakassia, HNCM n/a; 15 – S. Sabinsky, beysky district of the Republic of Khakassia (KLA, 1890, p. 23); 16 – S. Sabinsky, beysky district of the Republic of Khakassia, MCM No. 10076; 17 – S. Sabinsky, beysky district of the Republic of Khakassia, MCM No. 10098; 18 g. Sayanogorsk, Republic of Khakassia, 10117 MM; 19 – the city of Sayanogorsk, Republic of Khakassia, MCM No. 10105; 20 – C. Ocuri, Altai district of the Republic of Khakassia, MCM No. 10074; 21 – S. Kaptyrevo Shushenskiy district of Krasnoyarsk region, TRKM No. 6659; 22 – S. Salba, ermakovskiy district of the Krasnoyarsk territory (Tallgren, 1917); 23 – S. Salba, ermakovskiy district of Krasnoyarsk Krai, MCM b/n; 24 – S. Salba, ermakovskiy district of Krasnoyarsk Krai, MCM No. 10069; 25 – S. Kazantsevo, Shushensky district of Krasnoyarsk region, MM No. 10068; 26 – D. the lower Koya, Shushenskiy district of Krasnoyarsk region, MM No. 10065; 27 – D. Sredny Kuzhebar, Karatuzsky district of the Krasnoyarsk territory, MKM No. 10141; 28-village. IZH, Altai district of the Republic of Khakassia, MCM No. 10085; 29–POS. Izykh, Altai district of the Republic of Khakassia, MKM No.10109; 30- Krivaya, Minusinsky district of the Krasnoyarsk territory, MKM No.10062; 31 – Krivaya, Minusinsky district of the Krasnoyarsk territory, MKM No.10119; 32 – Curve, Minusinsk district of Krasnoyarsk Krai, MM No. 10071; 33 – D. soldatovo soldatovo district of Krasnoyarsk Krai, MCM No. 10095; 34 – S. Chriscoe, Minusinsk district of Krasnoyarsk Krai , MM No. 12845; 35–the city of Abakan, Republic of Khakassia, MCM No.10092; 36 –POS. Kuragino, Kuraginsky district of the Krasnoyarsk territory, MKM No.10059; 37-village. Kuragino, Kuragino in Krasnoyarsk region, MM No. 10096; 38 – S. Bragino, kuraginskiy district of Krasnoyarsk Krai, MCM No. 10087; 39–S. Bragino, kuraginskiy district of Krasnoyarsk Krai, MCM No. 10075; 40 – POS. Tagset, Kuraginsky district of Krasnoyarsk Krai, MM No. 10084; 41-Borodino village, Bogradsky district of the Republic of Khakassia (Tallgren, 1917, tab. XII); 42 – S. Bol.Salba, Idrinsky district of the Krasnoyarsk territory, MKM No.10093; 43 –bol.Salba, Idrinsky district of the Krasnoyarsk territory, MKM No.10061; 44–bol village.Telek, Idrinsky district of Krasnoyarsk territory, MKM No.10086; 45 –Knyshy village, Idrinsky district of Krasnoyarsk territory, MKM No.10066; 46 – p. Knyshy, Idrinsky district of Krasnoyarsk territory, MKM No.10072

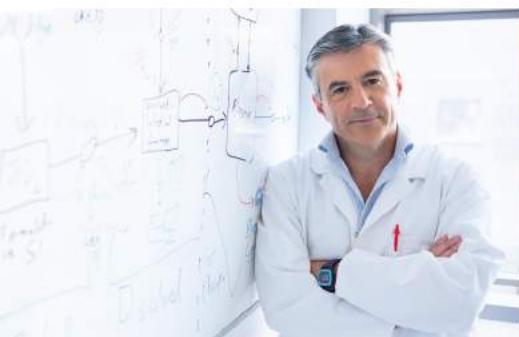
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