

THE CACÁHUATL EATER

*Ruminations of an Unabashed
Chocolate-⟨Addict⟩*

JONATHAN OTT



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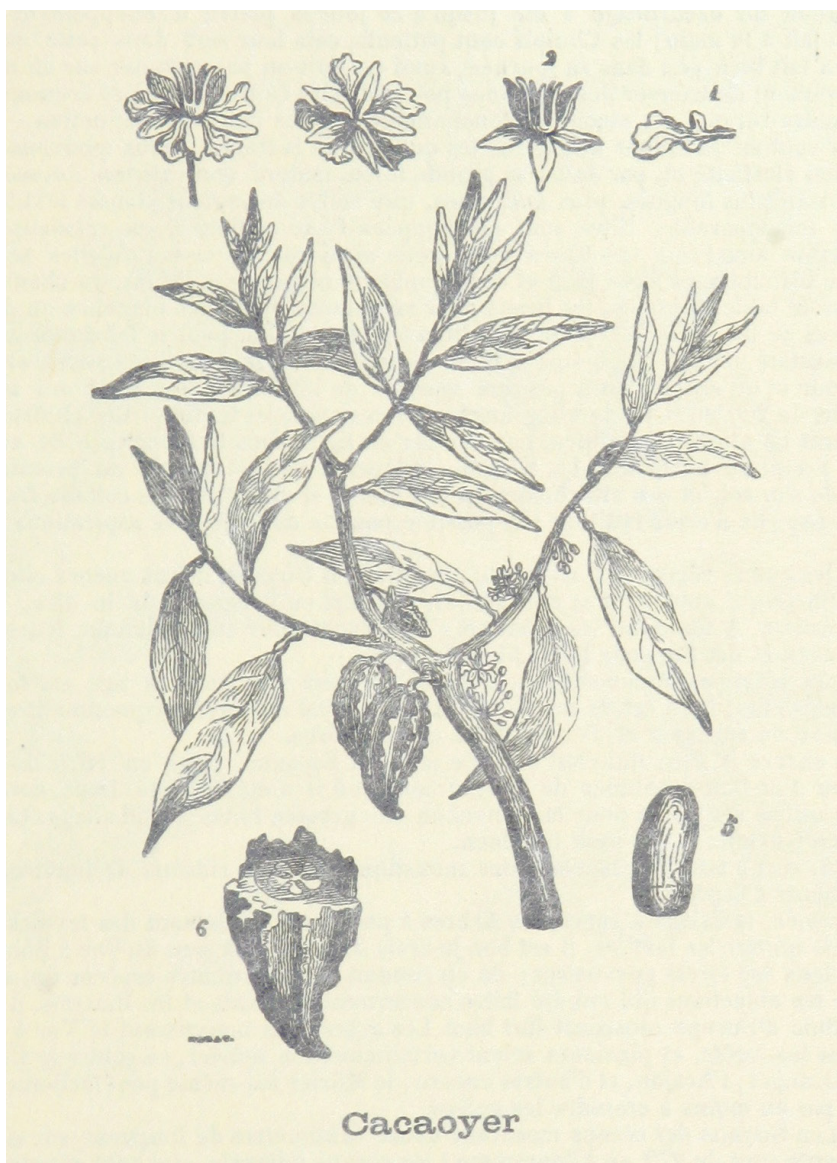
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Theobroma cacao LINNÆUS [Sterculiaceæ], A. Cook: *CACAU*, *CACÁHUATL*. Mesoamerican PSYCHOPTIC POTION-base (*XOCHICACÁHUATL*); in South América, ASHES are used in various SHAMANIC SNUFFS.

FIRST BAR
The Cacáhuatl-Eater

Here was a panacæa, a *θαρμακον νεπενθες* [*pharmakon nepenthes*] for all human woes; here was the secret of happiness, about which philosophers had disputed for so many ages, at once discovered; happiness might now be bought for a penny, and carried in the waistcoat pocket; portable ecstasies might be had corked up in a pint bottle, and peace of mind could be sent down in gallons by the mail-coach.

Thomas De Quincey
Confessions of an English Opium-Eater [1821]

When I wrote the following pages, or rather the bulk of them, I lived but a few paces from my **CHOCOLATE-POT**. . . ever constantly savoring its rich, dark effluent: piping-hot and aromatic. When I have strayed from its side, during my frequent travels, I have found a constant surcease from care, in **«LINES»** of **CHOCOLATE-BARS**—the vending-machines and the grocers of the World, ever friends, in my need. For I am **THE CACÁHUATL-EATER**, an **UNABASHED CHOCOLATE-«ADDICT»** (more precisely: a **CHOCOLATE-HABITUÉ**)—from earliest childhood **«ADDICTED»** to this most subtle **DRUG**, which many have mistaken for mere comfit or confection, a palliative for childish natures. But it is not so, as this little *Book of Ruminations* will demonstrate.

De Quincey, for all his eloquence, was mistaken—**CHOCOLATE**, and not **OPIÛM**, is the **SECRET DRUG OF HAPPINESS**. For my entire Life, I've had daily recourse to this **ELIXIR OF HAPPINESS**, although, in 1985 A PENNY would not buy much of it: thirty pennies rather being necessary to acquire that basic DOSE (defined as 1 **H.U.** [**HERSHEY'S UNIT**], now 1.45 OZ., or ~41.1 G); and mine never finds its way into my waistcoat-pocket—owing not so much to the fact that I never wear a waistcoat, as to the fact that my wont it to devour it, at once I seize it. Often, 'tis only a hastily-torn, and empty wrapper, that reaches the check-out-stand of the supermarket. . . such is the ardor of **THE CACÁHUATL-EATER** for his favorite **DRUG**. [I make haste to add that—like De Quincey—I also am an ardent; aye, a Life-long **OPIÛM-EATER**.]

From those of my readers, who, by this time, vociferously may be protesting—**CHOCOLATE**. . . mere candy, **«KIDS' STUFF»**. . . A **DRUG?**—I beg forbearance. My **CHOCOLATE-HABITUATION**, in that same spirit, as Thoreau's **ECONOMICS** [1854]:

is a subject which admits of being treated with levity, but it cannot be so disposed of.

I assure any skeptics in my Audience, that I am quite serious: a fact I shall endeavor

(for reasons which should become evident to the attentive reader) to belie, indeed obfuscate, with a plethora of quaint and curious facts, whimsically presented; all the while drawing allusion, allegory, animadversion, implication, innuendo, litotes, meiosis, and such other shafts from the writer's quiver, as might serve my purpose. For **THE CACÁHUATL-EATER**'s desire is to entertain, as well as to inform... his purpose is as subtle as the effects of his drug; and, like Laurence Sterne [1759–1767], he is:

firmly persuaded that every time a Man smiles, but much more so,
when he laughs, that it adds something to this Fragment of Life.

These pages most particularly are addressed to CHOCOLATE-⟨ADDICTS⟩ everywhere, but in a broader sense, are directed to HABITUÉS of other drugs—including (but hardly restricted to): diverse ALCOHOLIC BEVERAGES, MARIJUANA, COFFEES, TEAS, TOBACCO, OPIÜM and its derivatives, *BETEL*, *QAT*, *COCA* and COCAINE, and the like [Ott 2026; Rättsch 1998]. In most *Books* treating-of this phenomenon of DRUG-HABITUATION, the concept of ⟨DRUG-ABUSE⟩ [*sic*] (or, worse still, ⟨SUBSTANCE-ABUSE⟩) constantly is bandied-about: writers on this subject, indeed, appearing well-nigh ⟨ADDICTED⟩ to its use—in this *Book*, it will not appear (that is... just this once!). **DRUG-ABUSE** is a term having exclusively a political and juridical, rather than a scientific or medical meaning. It connotes **ANY USE** (whether moderate and controlled, or immoderate and excessive) **OF CERTAIN DRUGS PROSCRIBED BY LAW OR CUSTOM** [Szasz 1974]; whereas excessive, (so-called) ⟨abuse⟩, of other LEGALLY-SANCTIONED-DRUGS—such as TOBACCO, COFFEE and (in the *non*-Muslim World) ALCOHOLIC BEVERAGES—blandly is censured, as mere bad habit or dietary indiscretion: some nondescript -ING or -ISM (DRINKING, SMOKING, ALCOHOLISM)... just like Communism, **A VICE**, to be sure... but subject to a *Constitutional* protection, nonetheless. Your CACÁHUATL-EATER is pleased to inform you, that he is a scientist and a writer, anything but a politician or a lawyer, and he will endeavor to adhere to perspicuity in expression, avoiding the pitfalls of the PHARMACOPOLITICAL NEWSPEAK (to appropriate George Orwell's [1949] auspicious term—also known as ⟨DRUGSPEAK⟩), which everywhere abounds.

Before forsaking the subject of this **DRUGSPEAK**, **THE CACÁHUATL-EATER**'s mind turns inexorably, to this matter, of that devious, duplicitous, STIGMATIZING word, ⟨**ADDICTION**⟩. Etymologically, this term labors-under no pejorative connotation, being defined, precisely, by the *Oxford English Dictionary* [Anon. 1884–1928], as:

The state of being (self-) addicted or given to a habit or pursuit; devotion.

That's right... **DEVOTION**! One early citation, in support of their definition, being:

«His own proper Industry and Addiction to Books». Indeed, the first application of this word, to any DRUG-HABITUATION, was in 1779, in reference to TOBACCO-USE. The *noun* **ADDICT**, a pejorative epithet describing A LOATHSOME PERSON, is purely and simply **DRUGSPEAK**—merely a political recension of recent coinage, having no basis in etymology nor pharmacology. Literally, an «**ADDICT**»... is a **DEVOTEE**! Your **CACÁHUATL-EATER**, literally a self-described **CHOCOLATE-ADDICT**, uses the word in its veridical sense—to denote a person given or devoted to a habit or pursuit—be that READING BOOKS, SMOKING TOBACCO, INJECTING *Heroin*TM or (as in the present case), **TAKING CHOCOLATE**. We all are **ADDICT** to one or another **PURSUIT**... the vast majority of us... **TO USING** one or another **DRUG**. Some «**DRUG-ADDICTS**» do **SMOKE**, **SHOOT**, **DRINK** or **SNIFF**... greatly do I prefer... **TO CHOCOLATE**. Your **CACÁHUATL-EATER** is no more abashed, by this, his **ARDENT ADDICTION TO CHOCOLATE**, than he is by his equally ardent **ADDICTIONS**—to **READING**, **WRITING** and **CONDUCTING SCIENTIFIC RESEARCH**. [A small aside, on the terminology utilized—**CHOCOLATE** is a product of **CACAO-BEANS** (seeds of *Theobroma cacao* L., Sterculiaceæ [Hoffman 1765]), and the verb **TO CHOCOLATE** means to imbibe a potation compounded of said **BEANS**. In processing, **CACAO-BEANS** are fractionated, into a lipid-moiety, known as **COCOA-BUTTER**, and a mineral-rich, proteinaceous fraction, called **COCOA**: the familiar powders of commerce. **CHOCOLATE-BARS** are confected of **CACAO**, sugars and **COCOA-BUTTER**. **CHOCOLATE**, **CACAO** and **COCOA**—the subjects of this *Book*—are not to be confounded, with *Coca* [Ott 2025] (dried leaf of *Erythroxylum coca* LAM. or *E. novogranatense* [MORRIS] HIERON., Erythroxylaceæ), the sources of **COCAINE**; nor with **COCONUTS** (often misspelled **COCOANUTS**—the fruits of *Cocos nucifera* L., Arecaceæ)—a delicate food of the tropics, which is known as *coco*, in Castilian.]

The reader might well ask **THE CACÁHUATL-EATER**: «why yet another *Book* on **CHOCOLATE**?»; for, indeed, over the years, there have been dozens of *Books* on this subject. Many of these *Books* have been excellent—yet invariably all have treated this subject, rather from a culinary, than a pharmacognostical perspective. That is: **CHOCOLATE**, first and foremost, has been seen as **A FOOD**; and no *Book* (yet!) had treated it as **A DRUG**, to which one may become **HABITUATED**. But this in fact is the case, and this *Book* will examine this subject, from the standpoint of **CHOCOLATE AS DRUG**, and only secondarily, **AS FOOD**. It will answer that question, which must have crossed the minds of every **CHOCOLATE-HABITUÉ**, to wit: «**WHY** do I crave **CHOCOLATE** some times... and why will nothing else do?». **THE CACÁHUATL-EATER**'s *Book* further will be distinguished by its historical treatment of the subject. Most of the other *Books* on the topic tediously have repeated the same (and hackneyed) old stories—some of which are *apocryphal*—one author clearly copying another.

While there is some historical interest in a few of these stories, your CACÁHUATL-RESEARCHER became so weary of reading them, again... and again... that he cannot bear further repetition of them here. Moreover, some of the important aspects of the HISTORY OF CHOCOLATE—and most germane to the focus of THE CACÁHUATL-EATER's treatise—have been ignored completely by most *Tracts* on CHOCOLATE, just glossed-over by others, while others still have distorted, and sometimes even misrepresented them. Rather than proffer yet another, tiresome regurgitation, of the same old material concerning CHOCOLATE, THE CACÁHUATL-EATER boldly and fearlessly (mayhap betimes, foolishly?) will stride into new territory, and promises that his little *Book* will contain scanty information that previously had been published.

And so, between sips of his *Ott Chocolate*,[™] and periodical forays to the nearest CHOCOLATE-SHOP, your CACÁHUATL-EATER will outline THE CULTURAL HISTORY OF CACAO, in a clear and simple fashion, and trace the course of the PRE-COLUMBIAN CHOCOLATICAL HISTORY. This is a HISTORY, as rich in romance and mystery, as its subject is in flavor, and the story of this SINGULAR DRUG is certain to surprise or amaze the reader: however many *Books* s/he may have read on this subject—for not one yet has covered this jewel-facet accurately; much less so, adequately. THE CACÁHUATL-EATER's examinations of the nutritional and medical aspects of this CHOCOLATE-HABIT might prove heretical to the physicians, dentists, nutritionists, health-faddists and other «specialists», who (O, most unjustly!) have maligned and impugned A HARMLESS DRUG AND NUTRITIOUS FOOD; while his simple explications of the phytochemical and pharmacological bases for the CHOCOLATE-HABIT will prove edifying and illuminating to the TAKERS OF CHOCOLATES, COFFEES and TEAS alike. The subject being near and dear to his heart, on an amorous note, your friend and ardent CACÁHUATL-EATER will penetrate the mysteries of this beloved *PHILTRUM MEXICANORUM*—the greatest LOVE-DRUG OF ALL TIME! Finally, THE CACÁHUATL-EATER will culminate his *Opuscule*, with incisive reflections on THE CHOCOLATE-HABIT.

THE CACÁHUATL-EATER is a freelance-writer and self-employed chemist. He owes no allegiance to any manufacturers, distributors, nor vendors of CHOCOLATE, and has received no funds, supporting the writing or research of this *Book*. All notions and opinions expressed herein, are HIS alone. Although certain trade-names will appear in this *Book*, that does not reflect any sponsorship, but rather a preference by THE CACÁHUATL-EATER, for some particular product, or the fact that said product may be so popular, as to be considered as being representative of an entire *genre*.

THE CACÁHUATL-EATER
CHOCOLATE- HABITUÉ OR «ADDICT»