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Smoking, Diplomacy, and Sociability: Indigenous Tobacco Knowledge in Early Modern European Consumption, c. 1492- 1700

Commodities have the powerful ability to communicate across cultures through their shared social and economic value, methods of consumption, and utility. During the fifteenth and sixteenth centuries, European travellers encountered North and South American Indigenous Peoples as well as new and unfamiliar flora and fauna. Alongside each human encounter was a less intentional encounter with ubiquitous Indigenous tobacco, which frequently greeted Europeans upon arrival to Indigenous homelands. Sacred tobacco held, and continues to hold, significant meanings and uses for the Indigenous Peoples of the Americas. In particular, tobacco was an important medicine, a diplomatic necessity, and a marker of sociability across diverse Indigenous Nations. Through generations of interaction and trade, multiethnic European ships carrying newly initiated tobacco users combined with a vast circulating network of print, transferred Indigenous tobacco knowledge and technologies eastward across oceans and around Europe. As Europeans had no previous experience with tobacco, everything they learned and understood about the plant was gleaned from interactions with Indigenous Peoples and rooted in generations of sophisticated Indigenous knowledge. By observing, conversing with, and listening to Indigenous Peoples, Europeans of diverse backgrounds learned the proper methods of tobacco consumption as well as the appropriate social circumstances and uses for smoking. In this way, Indigenous Peoples taught Europeans not only how to smoke, but when and why. While Indigenous knowledge was crucial to European consumption, Indigenous Peoples and their cultures were actively denigrated by Europeans. Therefore, tobacco's Indigenous associations led to anxiety both in the colonies and in the imperial metropoles of Britain, France, and Spain as the

commodity was dismissed as an evil, ungodly, and savage good— mirroring popular ideas surrounding the Indigenous Peoples of the Americas. Despite moral debates, tobacco's uses as articulated by Indigenous Peoples prevailed. By the end of the seventeenth century, tobacco was so entrenched in European society that approximately 38 million pounds of tobacco were imported to England alone, its use predicated on Indigenous methods of consumption and cultural values.[1] Overall, Indigenous methods of tobacco's consumption as well as its uses for healing, diplomacy, and sociability were reflected in European usage both in the imperial colonies of the Americas and on the European continent.

Historical analyses of tobacco have only recently started to acknowledge the ability of Indigenous knowledge and technology to inform and transform European society. Earlier histories focused heavily on European economic gain which enriched imperial metropoles through the development of trade and plantation agriculture by relying on the exploitation of African and Indigenous labour. In these works, little attention is given to Indigenous Peoples and their interconnected knowledge systems which circulated in the Americas and stretched across the Atlantic.[2] For instance, in historian Jacob Price's 1973 work on French tobacco monopolies, the opening sentences credit two Frenchmen, Andre Thevet and Jean Nicot, with bringing tobacco to France. There is no mention of the Indigenous Peoples or cultures from which it was acquired.[3] Eventually, scholars in history, archaeology, and anthropology recognized tobacco's religious and cultural significance to Indigenous Peoples and began to question how tobacco

[1] Peter C. Mancall, "Tales Tobacco Told in Sixteenth-Century Europe," *Environmental History* 9 (2004): 670.
[2] Jacob M. Price, *France and the Chesapeake: A History of the French Tobacco Monopoly, 1674-1791, and of Its Relationship to the British and American Tobacco Trades* (Ann Arbor: University of Michigan Press, 1973); Paul G.E. Clemens, *The Atlantic Economy and Colonial Maryland's Eastern Shore: From Tobacco to Grain* (Ithaca: Cornell University Press, 1980).
[3] Price, *France and the Chesapeake*, 3.

spread across cultures, countries, and continents.[4] In addition to examining sanctioned trade and travel, other informal distribution networks such as extralegal intercolonial trade, smuggling, and privateering were recognized as a major source of tobacco's movement throughout the colonies.[5] Along with demonstrating tobacco's ability to subvert royal authority, tobacco smoking and the Indigenous technologies associated with it, including cigars, pipes, and pharmacological uses, were recognized as learned and adapted from Indigenous Peoples.[6] Historian of tobacco and chocolate Marcy Norton elaborates, "histories that consider all manner of technologies (not only those associated with European innovations) reveal an entangled early modern world in which Europeans and settler-colonists were dependent on subaltern actors…as knowledge producers." [7] While it is true that Europeans attempted to remove and cleanse the presence of Indigenous Peoples from lands, memory, and many material objects, European tobacco use provides one example of how Indigenous knowledge and technologies were essential to European cultures and methods of consumption. Indigenous knowledge provided Europeans the requisite knowledge and with the technology to consume the plant, which was categorized as medical, social, and diplomatic by Indigenous Peoples. By the end of the seventeenth century, these functions were common features of European tobacco use which relied on Indigenous knowledge and technology. Recognizing these influences moves beyond "biological determinism and cultural constructivism" which indicated that the plant's addictiveness and its psychoactive and medical

[4] V.G. Kiernan, *Tobacco: A History* (London: Hutchinson Radius, 1991), 6-26.; Jordan Paper, *Offering Smoke: The Sacred Pipe and Native American Religion* (Moscow: University of Idaho Press, 1988).
[5] Joyce Lorimer, "The English Contraband Tobacco Trade in Trinidad and Guiana," in *The Westward Enterprise: English Activities in Ireland, The Atlantic, and America, 1480-1650,* eds. K.R. Andrews, N.P. Canny, and P.E.H. Hair (Liverpool: Liverpool University Press, 1978), 124-150.
[6] Marcy Norton, "Subaltern Technologies and Early Modernity in the Atlantic World," *Colonial Latin American Review* 26, no. 1 (2017): 27.
[7] Norton, "Subaltern Technologies," 20.

properties, which are devoid of Indigenous influence, allowed it to take hold in Europe.[8] In reality, the Indigenous articulations of tobacco's properties were crucial to how future Europeans consumed and understood the plant. Although there was much anxiety regarding tobacco's possible degenerative abilities which could corrupt European bodies and souls, Indigenous knowledge was depended upon for understanding and utilizing the unfamiliar herb. In this way, Indigenous knowledge consciously and unconsciously crossed oceans through the continued medical, social, and diplomatic use of tobacco by European peoples.

Before understanding the ways in which Europeans adopted and utilized Indigenous tobacco knowledge, it is necessary to ground this work in Indigenous perspectives of tobacco. Historical and contemporary Indigenous Peoples from the sub-arctic to the southern tip of South America have been connected by tobacco for thousands of years.[9] A pan-Indigenous belief in the sacredness of tobacco means that the plant was (and is) a necessity for healing, trade, ceremony, diplomacy, and sociability.[10] Tobacco features heavily in Indigenous creation stories and is a central feature of Indigenous identities across continents. To the Oneida living near the Great Lakes, tobacco pre-exists the creation of Turtle Island (North America). It is used to connect the spirit world to the physical to ensure truth and goodwill in diplomatic negotiations, continued success in the hunt, strong harvests, and create medicinal miracles.[11] To the west, the Blackfeet of the Great Plains believe that the Beaver taught the people how to grow and use tobacco,

[8] Marcy Norton, *Sacred Gifts, Profane Pleasures: A History of Tobacco and Chocolate in the Atlantic World* (Ithaca: Cornell University Press, 2008), 7-8.
[9] Jordan Goodman, *Tobacco in History: The Cultures of Dependence* (London: Routledge, 1993), 25-27; Norton, *Sacred Gifts, Profane Pleasures*, 1.; Joseph Winter, "Traditional Uses of Tobacco by Native Americans," in *Tobacco Use by Native North Americans: Sacred Smoke and Silent Killer,* ed. Joseph Winter (Norman: University of Oklahoma Press, 2000), 3.
[10] Norton, *Sacred Gifts, Profane Pleasures,* 42.
[11] Christopher M. Parsons, "Natives, Newcomers, and Nicotiana: Tobacco in the Great Lakes Region," in *French and Indians in the Heart of North America, 1630-181,* eds. Robert Englebert and Guillaume Teasdale (East Lansing: Michigan State University Press, 2013), 32-33.;

transferring supernatural knowledge to humans.[12] Further south, Mesoamerican societies believed tobacco could instigate creation, smoking tobacco through pipes and casting powdered tobacco as offerings to deities.[13] Tobacco and its associated technologies, including pipes, were actively traded amongst Indigenous Nations— mediating diplomatic and relational connections between peoples through gift-giving. By exchanging gifts, including tobacco, bonds between peoples and nations were consecrated. Historian Bruce White observes, "gifts resulted in a closer relationship, just as a close relationship would result in gifts being given."[14] A widespread practice, the tobacco trade united geographically distant nations. For instance, the Innu of Labrador traded for tobacco and pipes from the Wendat and Haudenosaunee residing near the Great Lakes.[15] The Numununu (Comanche) of the southern plains similarly traded for tobacco and pipes with the Pueblo Peoples.[16] While nations traded tobacco and pipes for economic and practical uses, it is important to recognize that the exchange of tobacco held deeply entrenched cultural meanings. Today, the Nehiyawak (Cree) offer tobacco to Elders to ensure truth and establish *miyo-wîcêhtowin* (good relations), the "heartbeat of the Plains culture."[17] In the Caribbean, the Taino require tobacco to be offered and accepted before an alliance and friendship can be officially cemented. Through tobacco, the outsider is symbolically welcomed into the community by establishing goodwill.[18] In international Indigenous diplomacy, tobacco smoking and exchange was a crucial part of welcoming guests and establishing friendly relations

[12] Rosalyn LaPier, *Invisible Reality: Storytellers, Storytakers, and the Supernatural World of the Blackfeet* (Lincoln: University of Nebraska Press, 2017), 69-71.
[13] Norton, *Sacred Gifts, Profane Pleasures,* 37-38.
[14] Bruce White, "'Give Us A Little Milk:' The Social and Cultural Significance of Gift Giving in the Lake Superior Fur Trade" in *Rethinking the Fur Trade: Cultures of Exchange in an Atlantic World,* ed. Susan Sleeper-Smith (Lincoln: University of Nebraska Press, 2009),117.
[15] Winter, "Traditional Uses of Tobacco by Native Americans," 13.
[16] Winter, "Traditional Uses of Tobacco by Native Americans," 20-21.
[17] Margaret Kovach, *Indigenous Methodologies: Characteristics, Conversations, and Contexts* (Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 2009), 63, 103.
[18] Norton, *Sacred Gifts, Profane Pleasures,* 100.

between nations.[19] Although the particular meanings and applications of tobacco differed from nation to nation, tobacco was a mediator between Indigenous Nations - necessary for healing, diplomacy, and sociability.[20] While the Indigenous sacredness of tobacco was recognized but actively denigrated by Europeans, the medical uses, diplomatic and social values, and methods of consumption articulated by Indigenous Peoples informed future European practices throughout the early modern period.

Indigenous tobacco, and the knowledge embedded within, travelled across the ocean to Europe through overlapping information networks which transmitted understandings of the plant through word of mouth, print, and the material and physical presence of Indigenous Peoples and goods in Europe. The first exposure to the practice of smoking, tobacco, and Indigenous Peoples was after the first transatlantic voyages to the Caribbean. Rodrigo de Xerez and Luis de Torres, crewmen on Columbus' voyage, are likely the first European tobacco smokers to have smoked on the continent. While on a diplomatic mission to seek out Indigenous Peoples, the pair were introduced to plant and welcomed by participating in smoking ritual by the Indigenous Peoples living on San Salvador.[21] While these men were the first to return to Europe with tobacco and the Indigenous tobacco knowledge they acquired in the Caribbean, it is also necessary to recognize a large Indigenous presence, with knowledge of tobacco and smoking, situated in Europe in the years directly following Columbus' voyages. It is estimated that 1493 and 1501 approximately

[19] Penelope Drooker*, "*Pipes, Leadership, and Interregional Interaction in Protohistoric Midwestern and Northeastern North America" in *Smoking and Culture: The Archaeology of Tobacco Pipes in Eastern North America,* eds. Sean Rafferty and Rob Mann (Knoxville: University of Tennessee Press, 2004), 74-75.
[20] Alexander von Gernet, "Nicotian Dreams: The Prehistory and Early History of Tobacco in Eastern North America," in *Consuming Habits: Global and Historical Perspectives on How Cultures Define Drugs,* eds. Jordan Goodman, Paul F. Lovejoy, and Andrew Sherratt, 2nd ed (New York: Routledge, 2007), 66-68.
[21] Wayne Arthurson, *In the Shadow of Our Ancestors: The Inventions and Genius of the First Peoples* (Eschia Books, 2010), 144-145.

3,000 to 6,000 Indigenous Peoples were sold into slavery in Europe.[22] Although it is only speculative, first-hand knowledge of tobacco could have been acquired from Indigenous slaves. Unfortunately, these strands of influence are difficult to trace through written sources.

Encountering the tobacco plant did not necessarily require a voyage to the Americas. According to historian Peter Mancall, "because the arrival of tobacco…in Europe coincided with the vast expansion of print, newly arriving flora were able to enter into European cultures through the circulation of printed books."[23] Reports from transatlantic travellers were translated and printed in multiple languages and informed a breadth of interested readers. In 1507, early accounts of tobacco in the Americas were articulated in print by the German cartographer, Martin Waldseemuller, in his account of Amerigo Vespucci's travels. Significantly, this early work suggests a sufficient vocabulary had not been developed for tobacco— it was referred to as a "certain green herb."[24] As Europeans gradually learned about the substance through processes of encounter, Indigenous Peoples and languages provided a name for the plant and the first information about its functions. In France, the herb was labelled 'petun,' informed by the Brazilian Tupi word for tobacco.[25] The more common name for the plant— 'tobacco'— came from a Spanish misunderstanding of an Arawak word for a Y-shaped inhaling instrument, rather than the plant itself.[26] Nevertheless, by 1535 the Spanish adopted and circulated the Indigenous Arawak word *tabaco* as it appeared in Gonzalo Fernandez de Oviedo y Valdes' Spanish print in *La historia general de las Indias*.[27] Oviedo's initial impressions of tobacco condemned its use as

[22] Jack D. Forbes, *Africans and Native Americans: Colour, Race and Caste in the Evolution of Red-Black Peoples* (Oxford: Basil Blackwell, 1988), 23-25.
[23] Mancall, "Tales Tobacco Told in Sixteenth-Century Europe," 649.
[24] Mancall, "Tales Tobacco Told in Sixteenth-Century Europe," 651.
[25] Paper, *Offering Smoke,* 3.
[26] Paper, *Offering Smoke,* 3.
[27] Norton, *Sacred Gifts, Profane Pleasure,* 55-56.

diabolical. However, Oviedo commended its healing properties stating, "now some Christians use it: particularly those who suffer from [syphilis]…they do not feel the pains of their sickness."[28] Importantly, information networks crossed imperial boundaries as writers often familiarized themselves with previous accounts of the Americas. In England in 1590, Thomas Harriot's *A Briefe and True Report of the New Found Land of Virginia,* recounts his 1585 voyage to the Americas with Walter Raleigh. Within the work, Harriot demonstrates the spread of tobacco knowledge to England from Spain. He states, "There is an herbe which is sowed a part by it selfe and is called by the inhabitants Uppówoc: In the West Indies it hath divers names, according to the severall places & countries where it groweth and is used: The Spaniardes generally call it Tobacco."[29] These early writings on the Americas not only demonstrate knowledge transmission between Indigenous and non-Indigenous peoples, but knowledge circulation among European imperial competitors.

Alongside written works, Europeans spread their knowledge of tobacco through vast networks of multiethnic trade and travel. Sailors moved frequently between the colonies and metropole carrying tobacco and the Indigenous knowledge embedded within. Historian Beverly Lemire observes that in the Caribbean alone, "An estimated 300 voyages… were made by English ships alone between 1550 and 1624, involving an approximate 25,000 sailors and 900 ships."[30] In 1578, naval records estimate between 350 to 380 ships from France, Spain, Portugal, England, and the Basque Country operating in the North Atlantic. These ships carried around 8,000 to 10,000 men between the St. Lawrence, the Eastern Seaboard, and Europe.[31] Many of

[28] Quoted in Norton, *Sacred Gifts, Profane Pleasures,* 58.
[29] Thomas Harriot, *A Briefe and True Report of the New Found Land of Virginia* (London: 1590), 16.
[30] Beverly Lemire, *Global Trade and the Transformation of Consumer Cultures: The Material World Remade, C.1500-1820* (Cambridge University Press, 2018), 198.
[31] Laurier Turgeon, "French Fishers, Fur Traders, and Amerindians during the Sixteenth Century," *The William and Mary Quarterly* 55, no. 4 (1998): 592.

these plebeian seafarers did not leave written records behind but frequently interacted with Indigenous Peoples onshore while restocking, trading, and resupplying their ships. As a result, direct interaction between European mariners and Indigenous Peoples spread Indigenous tobacco knowledge from port to port.[32] As mentioned, Indigenous Peoples also travelled across the Atlantic aboard European ships. In his *Counterblaste to Tobacco*, written in 1604, King James I mentions that Indigenous travellers to England, perhaps two Inuit abducted by Sebastian Cabot at the end of the fifteenth century, first introduced the practice of smoking to the British Isles: "so that as from them was first brought into Christendome, that most detestable disease, so from them likewise was brought this use of Tobacco, as a stinking and unsavoury antidote."[33] Many historians have shown that spread of tobacco knowledge was not restricted to Europe as tobacco's reach and its Indigenous origins extended across a linked global world to influence places such as West Africa, Japan, and the Middle East by the beginning of the seventeenth century.[34] No matter where Europeans learned of tobacco, the roots of understanding always originated with interactions and encounters with Indigenous Peoples. Overall, accounts of material encounters with tobacco were disseminated through word of mouth from European travellers to the Americas, written works, or physical encounters with the plant or Indigenous Peoples.

The first European opinions of tobacco were mixed. As Europeans had no previous experience with the practice of smoking, the smell, look, and taste of tobacco was unfamiliar and possibly frightful. In turn, Europeans attempted to conceptualize tobacco through their already

[32] Beverly Lemire, "Men of the World: British Mariners, Consumer Practice, and Material Culture in an Era of Global Trade, c. 1660-1800," *Journal of British Studies* 54, no. 2 (April 2015): 294.
[33] James I, *A Counter-Blaste to Tobacco* (London: R.G., 1604), sig. B1.; Mancall, "Tales Tobacco Told in Sixteenth-Century Europe," 676n65.
[34] Georgia L. Fox, *The Archaeology of Smoking and Tobacco* (Gainesville: University Press of Florida, 2015), 80; Lemire, *Global Trade and the Transformation of Consumer Cultures*, 205-206.

developed assumptions of medicine, Indigenous Peoples, and the so-called New World. The European dissemination of books and images representing the Americas and its material goods were commonly associated with barbarism, paganism, hedonism, and diabolism.[35] These anxieties concerning the peoples and goods of the Americas manifested themselves in the practice of tobacco smoking in Europe. As mentioned above, Rodrigo de Xerez, who returned from Columbus' voyage with tobacco, was the first to smoke in Spain in 1493. Unfortunately for him, his smoking scared Spanish onlookers, he was denounced as possessed by the devil, and jailed for seven years.[36] In England, this xenophobia extended to a fear that Indigenous tobacco could physically alter and corrupt English bodies. These assumptions rested on Hippocratic theory which articulated that regional products could impart region-specific characteristics to its users. This meant that Indigenous products had the potential to transform the physical and spiritual qualities of the consumer— turning them into barbaric, uncivilized, and idolatrous 'Indians.'[37] These ideas were reiterated by King James I who decried English smokers that imitated "beastly *Indians*" to become "like Apes, counterfeiting the manners of others."[38]

In Spain and the Spanish colonies in the Caribbean, similar fears existed. Dominican clerics denounced tobacco smoking as an idolatrous practice which subverted colonial authority and memorialized paganism. Ironically, clergymen across the Spanish colonies smoked, snuffed, and chewed tobacco regularly.[39] Despite the opponents to tobacco, there is much evidence to suggest that many Europeans using tobacco did not hold, or chose to ignore, these fears, instead

[35] Mancall, "Tales Tobacco Told in Sixteenth-Century Europe," 655.
[36] Eric Burns, *The Smoke of the Gods: A Social History of Tobacco* (Philadelphia: Temple University Press, 2007), 19.
[37] Joyce E. Chaplin, *Subject Matter: Technology, the Body, and Science on the Anglo-American Frontier, 1500-1676* (Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 2001), 138-139.
[38] Chaplin, *Subject Matte*r, 91.
[39] Norton, *Sacred Gifts, Profane Pleasures,* 129-131.

adopting and emulating tobacco's uses and benefits directly from Indigenous Peoples. In particular, Europeans were informed of the Indigenous use of tobacco as a medical cure-all and as both a social and diplomatic necessity.

Indigenous Medicines and European Panacea

The common use of tobacco in Indigenous medicines and healing practices meant that Europeans crossing the Atlantic encountered tobacco in a variety of contexts and used to treat a variety of ailments. According to anthropologist Joseph Winter, "almost every [Indigenous Nation] in North America…uses or used tobacco as a tool to divine and treat illness."[40] Indigenous Central and South Americas also employed tobacco as a medicine.[41] The Mexica (Aztec) used tobacco to treat wounds, headaches, and insect bites.[42] Across the Americas, Indigenous Peoples held tobacco as a sacred object which had the powerful ability to heal the ill. Tobacco occupied a position between the spiritual realm and the physical world as it could ward off both evil and infection.[43] Importantly, the sacred nature of tobacco gave the plant its multiple medicinal properties.[44] Across the hemisphere, Indigenous healing techniques could be common between Indigenous Peoples or completely divergent. Although the medical uses of tobacco had the potential to be different, tobacco always remained a central ingredient. Among the diverse Indigenous Peoples of the Americas, tobacco was used for relieving fatigue, alleviating cramps, fevers, muscle soreness, remedying snakebites and wounds, and as a cure for more severe disabilities such as blindness and epilepsy.[45] In practice, these ailments were treated by utilizing

[40] Joseph Winter, "From Earth Mother to Snake Woman: The Role of Tobacco in the Evolution of Native American Religious Organization," in *Tobacco Use by Native North Americans: Sacred Smoke and Silent Killer,* ed. Joseph Winter (Norman: University of Oklahoma Press, 2000), 266.
[41] Goodman, *Tobacco in History,* 35.
[42] Norton, *Sacred Gifts, Profane Pleasures,* 20.
[43] Burns, *Smoke of the Gods,* 8-9.
[44] Norton, *Sacred Gifts, Profane Pleasures,* 42.
[45] Burns, *Smoke of the Gods,* 7-8.

tobacco in multiform ways. When tobacco was fired and smoked through a pipe or cigar, the smoke could be blown onto the face or body of the infected. Tobacco could also be snuffed, chewed, juiced and drunk, licked, absorbed through directly applying leaves to wounds and ailments, absorbed through the eye, and used as an enema.[46] Alongside its curative power, tobacco also held a supernatural ability to ward off hunger and thirst. Many Indigenous Peoples believed that by feeding the spirits within with tobacco, one could produce life-giving energy.[47]

The curative potential of tobacco was observed by European travellers crossing the Atlantic. In these early encounters, Indigenous Peoples informed Europeans of the medical properties of tobacco. In general, direct observation, coaching, and conversation with Indigenous Peoples informed Europeans of tobacco's medicinal properties. Early observations of tobacco use among Indigenous Peoples categorized the plant as a cure-all medicine. In 1590, Thomas Harriot noticed that tobacco kept Indigenous Peoples of the Eastern Seaboard generally healthier: "in short, time breaketh them: wherby their bodies are notably preserved in health, and know not many grievous diseases wherewithall wee in England are oftentimes afflicted."[48] The Spanish in Mesoamerica observed similar properties. Jesuit Juan de Tovar explained how tobacco healed the sick and was known among the Nahuas as "divine medicine."[49] In 1590, Spanish naturalist José de Acosta similarly called Indigenous tobacco medicines "Divine Physicke" acknowledging its curative and mystical properties.[50] In his voyage to the St. Lawrence, French author Marc Lescarbot was informed that tobacco cured many ailments including, "maketh the belly soluble, mitigateeth the passions of Venus, bringeth to sleepe, and the leafe of Tabacco, or the ashes that

[46] Hughes, *Leaning to Smoke: Tobacco Use in the West* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 2003), 21.
[47] Goodman, *Tobacco in History*, 25-27.
[48] Thomas Harriot, *A Briefe and True Report of the New Found Land of Virginia,* 16.
[49] Norton, *Sacred Gifts, Profane Pleasures,* 41. (Consistent with previous shortening of this title)
[50] Quoted in Edward McLean Test, *Sacred Seeds: New World Plants in Early Modern English Literature* (Lincoln: University of Nebraska Press, 2019), 77.

remaine in the pan health wounds."[51] Using observation, Europeans became initially familiar with the plant and its place in the healing practices of Indigenous Peoples. In consequence, tobacco was quickly categorized as a divine plant with multiple healing properties. The divine nature of the plant was articulated by Indigenous Peoples but understood through a Christian lens. Dutch Physician Giles Everard describes tobacco as "the universall medicine…a plant of Gods making" though he admits that the "cunning of the Devil…imployed in the large propogation of it."[52]

Tobacco also fit into European medical thought, which believed in the existence of a divine panacea—or cure-all plant.[53] Once Indigenous Peoples categorized the plant for Europeans, treatments methods were directly passed on to European physicians. In treatment, Indigenous Peoples passed on specific techniques and expertise to Europeans through direct instruction and coaching. These intimate physical interactions directly transferred Indigenous healing techniques to Europeans. Giles Everard, citing the work of the Spanish Physician Nicolas Monardes, writes that the Spanish "were taught by an Indian to annoynt their Wounds with the juyce of Tobacco pressed forth, and to lay a bruised leafe upon them: the pains presently ceased an all those symptoms… were cured."[54] Along with physical imitation and teaching, there would have been considerable verbal communication between Indigenous Peoples and Europeans. In the 1570s André Thevet noted that Indigenous Peoples told him that tobacco was "very holesome to clense and consume the superfluous humors of the brain."[55] Although it is next to impossible

[51] Marc Lescarbot, *Nova Francia, or the Description of that Part of New France Which is on the Continent of Virginia,* (London, 1609), 278.
[52] Giles Everard, *Panacea, or, The Universal Medicine being a Discovery of the Wonderfull Vertues of Tobacco Taken in a Pipe, with Its Operation both in Physick and Chyurgery.* (London, 1659), 5.
[53] Goodman, *Tobacco in History,* 43.
[54] Everard, *Panacea*, 27.; Nicolas Monardes, *Joyfull Newes out of the Newe Founde Worlde* (London, 1577), f. 36-37.
[55] Mancall, "Tales Tobacco Told in Sixteenth-Century Europe," 654.

that the Indigenous Nation that Thevet interacted with had an understanding of European humoral medicine, these episodes can speak a wider phenomenon in which Indigenous Americans were able to articulate their understandings of tobacco to Europeans in their homelands. It is possible that these conversations between Indigenous and non-Indigenous Peoples were based on a compatible understanding of illness. According to tobacco sociologist Jason Hughes, "the European understanding of illness…as related to evil was not all that different from the common Native American view of illness…as caused by malevolent spirits."[56] As a result, Europeans and Indigenous Peoples forged cross-cultural encounters built on a shared goal to remedy harm, illness, and disease through the application of tobacco. Europeans observed, conversed, and were coached by Indigenous Peoples to use tobacco medically, transferring and cementing Indigenous knowledge in European medicine.

The medical properties of tobacco, as articulated by Indigenous Peoples, appeared in English, and wider European literature and medical treatises, thereby communicating tobacco's multivalent curative properties to the wider European public. In 1599, English poet and lawyer Sir John Davies illustrates the curative power of tobacco in his book of poetry titled *Epigrammes and Elegies.* The publication contains both humourous stories and practical advice for its readers. Of tobacco, Davies mentions that it could cure fever, toothaches, cough, pox, deafness, headaches, alleviate the pain of childbirth, and help digestion.[57] Davies articulates tobacco's sacred origins, calling it "Gods most soveraigne hearbe divine." Although these understandings fit into the Christian belief of the divine creation of the universe and the "discovery" of a pancaea, it is nonetheless significant that the articulated Indigenous sacredness of tobacco was retained in Christian cosmological understandings. Notably, English literary scholar Edward

[56] Jason Hughes, *Leaning to Smoke,* 45.
[57] John Davies, *Epigrammes and Elegies* (Middleborough, 1599), 36.

McLean Test has shown that the associations between tobacco and the divine extended to early modern ballads, plays, and literature, which extolled tobacco's "holy aura" throughout seventeenth-century Europe.[58] The curative powers of the plant were also preserved and circulated in text. Davies notes the range of ailments which tobacco could cure. As mentioned, Indigenous Nations used tobacco to cure a range of illnesses, diseases, and dysfunctions and Europeans continued to use Indigenous prescriptive methods of consumption. In 1600, Physician William Vaughan wrote *Naturall and Artificial Directions for Health.* In this work, tobacco is also described as a cure-all for various ailments prescribed by smoking through a pipe and chewing. He states, "tobacco well dryed, and taken in a silver pipe, fasting in the morning, cureth the megrim, the tooth ache, obstructions proceeding of cold, and helpth the fits of the mother." Also, Vaughan notes an adoption of the Indigenous use for tobacco as a means to curb hunger and thirst stating, "tobacco now and then, chew it, and you shall satisfie both thirst and hunger… by this meanes you may live a holw fortnight without sustenance."[59] Significantly, some English physicians took medical advice on tobacco directly from Indigenous Peoples. For example, widely consulted English physician John Gerard referred to the need to attain expert knowledge directly from Indigenous sources in his medical publication *Herball*. Historian Joyce Chaplin describes this transfer of knowledge from Indigenous healers to the European medical elite: "the Society of Apothecaries in London… received a copy of his *Herball* in February 1652/53, which they placed in the 'upper window of the East side of the hall,' so that all members could consult the opinions of the 'Indian Physitians' in America."[60] In 1595, a pamphlet printed in London described how to prepare and apply tobacco to wounds. Importantly, the author validates the

[58] Test, *Sacred Seeds,* 55- 57.
[59] William Vaughan, *Naturall and Artificial Directions for Health Derived from the Best Philosophers, as well Modern, as Ancient* (London, 1600), 27, 47.
[60] Chaplin, *Subject Matter,* 196.

prescription by stating that the knowledge was procured by a Spaniard of Seville who was "conversant with the Indians" and "had been an eye witnesse" to Indigenous treatments.[61] Sources like this illustrate that although there was anxiety surrounding tobacco, it was heavily outweighed by the fact that Indigenous tobacco knowledge was a crucial and consulted source used to understand the possible curative powers of tobacco. In this way, Indigenous medical knowledge carried on in European tobacco treatments.

Learning of Social and the Diplomatic Tobacco

Almost as significant as the need for Indigenous knowledge in the medical field was the ongoing presence of tobacco's social values imparted to Europeans by Indigenous consumers. As instructed by Indigenous Peoples, Europeans learned that tobacco was particularly important to fostering favourable social and diplomatic conditions. At its core, tobacco is relational and brings people together through the creation of an environment of goodwill. To several Indigenous Nations, tobacco connected peoples through shared consumption and experience. These shared moments of consumption had many different purposes including, but not limited to, demonstrating power or prestige, pledging loyalty, highlighting equality, forming respect, fostering goodwill, and creating sociability. For the Mesoamericans, the smoking and drinking of tobacco united the merchants, warriors, and nobility through shared consumption.[62] In North America, some Nations of the Eastern Woodlands restricted tobacco smoking to men while Onondaga and Blackfoot women frequently participated in the activity.[63] Among many Indigenous Nations living along the Eastern Seaboard, tobacco was ubiquitous and unconfined to sacred and ritual moments of consumption.[64] Despite these regional differences, tobacco

[61] Anthony Chute, *Tabacco* (London, 1595), 21-22.
[62] Norton, *Sacred Gifts, Profane Pleasures,* 20-28.
[63] Chaplin, *Subject Matter*, 148; Paper, *Offering Smoke,* 37-38.
[64] Von Gernet, "Nicotian Dreams," 71.

consumption commonly consecrated relationships and bonded Indigenous Peoples together. In this way, Indigenous men, women, elites, or non-elites could create specific social scenarios which were based on the shared consumption of tobacco. These social aspects extended to the sacred world as tobacco linked both the physical and spiritual worlds. Historian Christopher Parsons shows that among nations of the Great Lakes, "peoples smoked tobacco to try to bring Europeans into relations with other-than-human beings and powers unknown to newcomers."[65] Apart from consumption, tobacco was regularly exchanged as gifts between living peoples and as offerings to the spirits of cliffs, rivers, waterfalls, and the dead as a mark of reciprocity and respect.[66] In Indigenous diplomatic meetings and negotiations across the Americas, tobacco was crucial and represented loyalty, reciprocity, and respect. Tobacco was among the items given to the Mexica (Aztec) rulers in tribute by Indigenous Nations hoping to continue their alliance with the powerful emperors.[67] In North America, the ritualized use of tobacco preceded major alliances or diplomatic meetings for trade, marriage, friendship, or war. In all, tobacco was a crucial part of Indigenous social and diplomatic traditions in its powerful ability to bring people together.

Understanding these articulated social values within tobacco provided Europeans with the ability to participate in Indigenous diplomatic protocols. As merchants, mariners, missionaries, fishers, and traders increased their visitations and colonization efforts in the Americas, tobacco was regularly exchanged and smoked in meetings with Indigenous Peoples— incorporating Europeans into an already well-established pan-Indigenous diplomatic code and forging new nation to nation relationships. The first diplomatic use between Europeans and Indigenous

[65] Parsons, "Natives, Newcomes, and Nicotiana," 21.
[66] Kovach, *Indigenous Methodologies*, 127; Kiernan, *Tobacco: A History*, 9.
[67] Norton, *Sacred Gifts, Profane Pleasures,* 20.

Peoples likely occurred in 1493 when Columbus' crewmen Rodrigo de Xerez and Luis de Torres, an Arabic scholar, smoked tobacco with the Arawak.[68] The diplomatic and social functions of tobacco were slowly understood by European travellers in Indigenous territory often by direct coaching. This knowledge then found its way overseas via multiethnic ships and written accounts. While searching for trade with local Indigenous Nations, conquistador Juan de Grijalva and a group of Spaniards exchanged goods, dined with, and were taught to smoke tobacco by the Yucatan Mayans. According to Marcy Norton, "the Indian hosts, perhaps seeing the Spaniards as novice smokers, 'made gestures to the Christians to indicate that they were not to let that smoke be lost or escape."[69] These rituals of welcome crossed linguistic barriers with Grijalva's new experience smoking tobacco creating an amicable environment to foster peace and diplomacy between the Spaniards and the Mayans. The next day, word of Grijalva's act reached a neighbouring Indigenous Nation who "embraced captain Grijalva and showed him and the other Christians much love, as if they had known them previously and had a friendship with them."[70] Oviedo circulated de Grijalva's expedition and the diplomatic utility of tobacco to his European readers in *La historia general de las Indias.*

Further north, the English describe a similar experience learning of tobacco diplomacy. During their time among the Roanoke, Walter Raleigh and Thomas Harriot were coached to smoke Indigenous tobacco. Harriot later describes his fondness for the encounter stating, "we our selves during the time we were there used to suck it after their maner, as also since our returne, & have found maine rare and wonderful experiments of the vertues thereof."[71] In French writings, Marc Lescarbot's observed that Indigenous Peoples "can make cheere to them that

[68] Burns, *The Smoke of the Gods,* 16-17.
[69] Norton, *Sacred Gifs, Profane Pleasures*, 49.
[70] Norton, *Sacred Gifts, Profane Pleasures,* 49.
[71] Harriot, *A Briefe and True Report of the New Found Land of Virginia,* 16.

come to visit them with no greater thing, as in these our parts one presents his friends with some excellent wine: In such that if one refuseth to take the Tabacco-pipe, it is a signe that he is not a friend."[72] These examples demonstrate how Indigenous Peoples imparted the knowledge of tobacco sociability and diplomacy to Europeans through an early sharing of tobacco. These moments, which were widely published and circulated, informed Europeans of the diplomatic and social powers of tobacco.

Europeans, both in Europe and in the Americas, were informed of tobacco's social and diplomatic abilities and brought this knowledge with them in future encounters. As a result, European clay pipes, which mimicked Indigenous technologies, were incorporated into Indigenous encounters as a mechanism of social understanding. During tense encounters which could lack a significant linguistic understanding, the material presence of the pipe, whether Indigenous or European, held a remarkable visual cue as a gesture of friendship and peace. By the beginning of the seventeenth century, Indigenous Peoples had already communicated these qualities to Europeans. In this way, the two cultures came together through a shared understanding of the diplomatic qualities of tobacco to facilitate relationships. In 1605 on the northeastern coast of North America, James Rosier and his men shared tobacco with the Eastern Abenaki, smoking Abenaki grown tobacco in English clay pipes.[73] Further south, George Percy, who was among the first colonists at Jamestown, wrote of another example of tobacco's ability to break linguistic barriers through diplomacy. He described an encounter in "Chesupioc Bay" (Chesapeake Bay off the coast of Virginia) where tobacco and pipes eased tensions and gestured for goodwill between the Paspaheghs and Rappahannocks, and the English. He recollects, at their first meeting "they were at first very timersome" but after they were invited into the village "they

[72] Lescarbot, *Nova Francia,* 278.
[73] Chaplin, *Subject Matter,* 208.

gave us of their Tabacco, which they tooke in a pipe made artificially of earth as ours are, but far bigger, with the bowle fashioned together with a piece of fine copper."[74] These gestures eased tension between cultures, which ensured reciprocity, respect, and peace in an encounter. On the other hand, the refusal to smoke was also well understood by Europeans. Three days later, during the same voyage in the Chesapeake, Percy's ship attempted to land at Appomattox and was confronted by an unnamed Indigenous chief holding a pipe of tobacco in one hand and a bow and arrow aimed at them in the other. Luckily for the Europeans, Percy's group understood the more significant material gesture, the weapon, and promptly departed.[75] We see similar examples of European understandings of Indigenous diplomacy from accounts written by French Jesuit missionaries and traders among the Oceti Sakowin (Sioux), Wendat (Huron), and Haudenosaunee (Iroquois) of the Great Lakes region. In 1679 French missionary Louis Hennepin, who by this point was familiar with tobacco and the Haudenosaunee, attempted to smoke with Eastern Dakota who had taken him captive. Upon their refusal to smoke, Hennepin believed that they intended to murder him.[76] South of the Mississippi river, Jesuit missionary Jacques Marquette saw the presence of the pipe and tobacco among the Chickasaw as a sign of relief in what he believed was a hostile reception.[77] In effect, Europeans learned the Indigenous articulated language of tobacco diplomacy in order to understand and define their social and diplomatic relationships among Indigenous Peoples.

Alongside the use of tobacco in the Americas, the social qualities of tobacco to Indigenous Peoples stretched across the Atlantic. By the 1570s tobacco appeared frequently in

[74] George Percy, "A Discourse of the Plantation of the Southern Colonie in Virginia, 1606-1607," in *Envisioning America English Plans for the Colonization of North America, 1580- 1640: A Brief History with Documents*, ed. Peter C. Mancall, (Boston: Bedford/St. Martin's, 2017), 117.
[75] Percy, "A Discourse of the Plantation of the Southern Colonie in Virginia," 119.
[76] Parsons, "Natives, Newcomes, and Nicotiana" 25.
[77] Parsons, "Natives, Newcomers, and Nicotiana," 27.

the ports of Seville, London, and Flanders.[78] Fifty years later in the 1620s, half a million pounds of tobacco entered London annually, with smaller amounts filtering through western ports.[79] Thousands of clay pipes were produced in Europe and the Americas, as evidenced by archaeological sites such as one seventeenth-century shipwreck containing 25,000 Dutch clay pipes.[80] Importantly, the tobacco technology that Europeans employed, either pipes or cigars, was gleaned from Indigenous Peoples that initially taught them how and why to smoke. In the Iberian Peninsula, the Central and South American cigar was as the preferred method of consumption, while the pipe which common among North American Indigenous Peoples was favoured in France, the Netherlands, and England.[81] This not only suggests a large consumer demand but the crucial usage of Indigenous technologies and knowledge through the adoption of Indigenous technologies and the practice of smoking in social scenarios.

Particularly, tobacco was used to consecrate and affirm relationships— paralleling how Indigenous Peoples utilized tobacco in the Americas. Among the Andalusian elite, tobacco smoking was an important part of welcoming and receiving guests, with cigars being smoked at the commencement of feasts.[82] Similarly, tobacco consecrated and reinforced social relationships in London. Venetian ambassador Horatio Busino observed that pipe smoking created social environments: "passing the pipe from one to the other with much grace, just as they here do with good wine, but more often with beer."[83] Throughout Europe, tobacco was continually consumed in social scenarios which included crowded taverns, alehouses, coffeehouses, and theatres.

[78] Marcy Norton and Daviken Studnicki-Gizbert, "The Multinational Commodification of Tobacco, 1492-1650: An Iberian Perspective" in *The Atlantic World and Virginia, 1550-1624,* ed. Peter C. Mancall (Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina Press, 2007), 258.
[79] Kiernan, *Tobacco: A History,* 19.
[80] Fox, *The Archaeology of Smoking and Tobacco,* 16.
[81] Goodman, *Tobacco in History*, 66-68.
[82] Norton, *Sacred Gifts, Profane Pleasures,* 182-183
[83] Quoted in Goodman, *Tobacco in History,* 66.

Significantly, smoking and pipes were shared among patrons in alehouses as small quantities could be drunk from a communal pipe.[84] Physically sharing a pipe meant that tobacco's social qualities and methods of consumption could be spread among Europeans through emulation in a manner similar to early travellers to the Americas sharing pipes with Indigenous Peoples. Europeans also connected with one another through engaging with tobacco and the purchasing of pipes. In Port Royal, Jamaica, mass-produced pipes were sold in places where tobacco could be smoked such as tobacco shops, taverns, alehouses, coffeehouses, and restaurants.[85] Notably, many of these locations are communal and social, emphasizing the potential for socializing while both consuming and purchasing tobacco. Furthermore, tobacco strengthened social bonds through its shared consumption and purchasing. Londoner Samuel Pepys fondly recalls a friendly afternoon over a common interest in tobacco, noting "[Mr. Creed] and I went to the tobacco shop under Temple Bar gate, and there went up to the top of the house and sat there drinking Lambeth ale a good while."[86]

However, tobacco did not require a physical location to enforce sociability. As Marcy Norton argues, "[tobacco's] suitability to the moveable feast of street life" meant that "any odd corner could become a site of tobacco diffusion… any place there was a gathering of folk desirous of a respite from their labors and enjoying the company of their peers."[87] This feature was especially useful in diplomacy as European plenipotentiaries incorporated tobacco to foster goodwill between nations. In 1616, Portuguese missionary Matteo Ricci presented Ming Emperor Wan Li with tobacco and snuffboxes.[88] William Trumbull, the seventeenth-century

[84] Kiernan, *Tobacco: A History*, 19.
[85] Fox, *The Archaeology of Smoking and Tobacco*, 44.
[86] Samuel Pepys, "June 8, 1661," *The Diary of Samuel Pepys*, https://www.pepysdiary.com/diary/1661/06/08/.
[87] Norton, *Sacred Gifts, Profane Pleasures,* 159.
[88] Carol Benedict, *Golden-Silk Smoke: A History of Tobacco in China, 1550-2010* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 2011), 113.

English diplomat to the Ottomans smoked tobacco to establish friendly relations with Yegen Mehmed Aga.[89] By the late seventeenth and early eighteenth century, carrying tobacco in snuffboxes and sharing it at international negotiations and conferences were an essential part of the European gentleman-diplomat's schooling and dress.[90] Informed of its social and diplomatic utility by Indigenous Peoples, sharing tobacco with others to consecrate relationships, facilitate diplomacy, and create amicable social environments became essential features of European tobacco consumption.

Conclusion

Understanding the cultural values of tobacco to Indigenous Peoples recognizes how Indigenous knowledge, peoples, and goods informed European practices. Although European authorities attempted to limit tobacco use for fear that it would turn its users into 'beastly Indians,' it was impossible to remove the Indigenous knowledge embedded in tobacco as Indigenous Peoples showed Europeans how, why, and when to use tobacco. Overlapping knowledge networks facilitated by the dissemination of print and the movement of plebeian mariners transported Indigenous knowledge to Europe and beyond. The long-standing Indigenous uses of the sacred plant as a medicine, diplomatic necessity, and social commodity continued to manifest itself in European practice for hundreds of years. In particular, the idea that tobacco was a divine cure-all was duplicated in European medical discourse. In taverns, coffeehouses, streets, and on the international stage Europeans learned and adopted Indigenous tobacco diplomacy. This learned understanding gave them the ability to identify friend or foe and participate in Indigenous protocols diplomacy in the Americas, but also to define and create

[89] John-Paul Ghobrial, *The Whispers of Cities: Information Flows in Istanbul, London, and Paris in the Age of William Trumbull* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2014), 80-81.
[90] Tessa Murdoch, "Snuff-taking, Fashion, and Accessories," in *Going for Gold: Craftsmanship and Collecting of Gold Boxes,* eds. Tessa Murdoch and Heike Zech (Brighton: Sussex Academic Press, 2014), 2.

amicable relationships in Europe and beyond. Tobacco's important social functions brought people together in the spirit of friendliness and goodwill which formed the basis of social consumption in Europe. In all, Indigenous knowledge was central to the formation of European tobacco cultures. By centering and understanding Indigenous knowledge embedded in seemingly inanimate commodities such as tobacco, one-way contact narratives of the Atlantic World become more complicated, as knowledge, goods, and people are recognized for their remarkable ability to make their mark on distant peoples, cultures, and society.

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