

## On pipe tobacco (and smoking)

19/05/2021 (transcribed 25/06/21)

As introduction, the asked necessity of a disclaimer is to be included.

However I will not bore my fellows with the usual propaganda – as true as it might be – and go on after a bunch of lines while having some fun:

*Don't smoke unless there's a part of you that wants to die. Unless there's a part of you that wants some kind of ritual. Unless the rebellion against adults hasn't ended yet. It's no excuse to start smoking. Where is the rebellion in acting like a fuck-up? Why not embrace simple health? It is obvious there is work to do, strong and deliberately. We are the ones, we have to do it: No more parents, no more gods. Take responsibility. Living in the world on our own, there's no punishment. Only knowing what to do, no excuses. Do no wait and go: improve yourself right now.*

More or less typed back the lyrics of a song by Mount Eerie, “don't smoke”. Would recommend listening to the “Song Islands” version of this title. Anyway you know how things are, you know what you want, also this song was specifically about cigarettes. Still is to be applied to smoking altogether. Whatever the case for you, I know I stand more on the “deathwish” type of deal.

Introduction over, now onto the actual subject:

Pipe tobacco and its consumption, as a whole, could be argued to be akin, if not it being, an art form. Where the production of tobacco is its own world that has most likely one of the largest amount of roots in History (*compared to modern agricultural practices*), it also retains an element of the past just as well when it comes to the pipe itself. Technologically speaking, tools still are used as such, and bear no shame in their use as human necessity; to this day, still required. Until it is not anymore, which started to loom on the horizon, here specifically that is neither here nor there. If anything, it would add to my thoughts on the matter.

We all have our stories that lead us to a habit, or an occasional activity. Pipe tobacco is no exception, and can decline itself under different uses and frequencies of use: from a daily relaxing moment to a sunday afternoon at the end of every month with friends. And for some a need, almost, to smoke something throughout the day. But in essence there is something that is similar in all these cases, and everything in-between: Appreciation.

Where tobacco starts as a leaf, its journey to become a variety of tobacco to be smoked is as exhaustive as the craftsmanship of an artisan-made pipe. In both cases, the starting product is a living organism (*sticking with wood-based pipes*), or an inert material (*like meerschaum*). In any case, they come from the Earth, as its creations or its children. Very little is done to alter their state besides natural processes such as drying, which can of course be artificially accelerated, although the process still is, in essence, natural, due to the tools used to do so (*especially true for tobacco leaves*), and the know-how being based in technique and technicity leached from nature as it presents itself, rather than technology.

Once in the hands of producers or artisans, tobacco / materials go through a phase of transmutation to become unrecognizable, yet all the while maintaining their natural origins. Perhaps it is because of the respect given to what makes them by those who manipulate these materials, or perhaps it is because Nature has a way to make itself known when the aim of those, as much as it pains me to say it, **products**, to show a real and unhindered natural side. Also why aromatics tend to be enjoyed as much, if not more by some, than purely tobacco with no added “perfume” (*to keep it short even*

*though that's not what it is*). A point on it being a product, is that this might be one of the very rare ones that are, still to this day, a relation and respect bound between two marginally different abstract concepts and entities, mainly being the relationship between, again, the human and nature. Through Nature, as a primordial here, then it becomes merely a kindness between both, to be with one another and to exist in *loving* terms (for the lack of a better word): Acceptance, and appreciation of what is. Where nature likely is fine with itself being transformed with no ill will towards it, simply to be celebrated through the... intimate destruction of itself, and the human stands at the end of the line, all throughout the process of this destructive manipulation. However one could note that the cinders that emerge, are merely there to represent both the death and future growth of unearthed grounds.

The cycle of transformation repeats itself, in a different yet very similar, abstract manner, when it comes to the consumption of pipe tobacco. While it certainly can be done much like a cigarette smoker, pipe smoking cannot help but push towards contemplation: and obviously, the contemplation of what it brings.

Part of the art form is a proper breathing technique, so that enjoyment can be maximized, in turns showing whole the contemplative aspect and appreciative side of pipe smoking. If patience and time is given to smoking, the reward is as clear as a sun in a cloudless sky. Experimentation is key as well, and mimics much of a side of the human; experience renders onto itself, joys that were unheard of but fell on deaf ears of the comfortable being. Pipe smoking is akin to a cycle, a repeated one we all are familiar with: Birth, life, and death. As it starts with producers and artisans, it ends with the consumers, all the while repeating itself during production and consumption (*as pointed out earlier*).

This contemplative nature of Nature, and all that follows it until it is smoked, allows for the mind of the individual to relax, to meditate, to appreciate, to think. A form of thankfulness from and to nature and Nature, through a long time that could be wished that it would last longer. But if all things must come to end, then this trapping of a cycle is no exception; for even the cycle must end.

Pipe tobacco, when done properly, which by that I mean simply enjoyed however the smoker desires, leads to states of mind that would otherwise be difficult to achieve, albeit of course far from impossible. See in this, a reprieve for the soul. To exist within Time without the forceful integration of modern life – of modern woes.