

# Two Smokers in Search of Identity: Comparing the Representations of Tobacco Use in *Alastalon salissa* and *Der Zauberberg*

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This essay offers a comparative analysis of the representations of tobacco use in two European novels from the first half of the twentieth century: Volter Kilpi's *Alastalon salissa* (*In the Parlour at Alastalo*, 1933) and Thomas Mann's *Der Zauberberg* (*The Magic Mountain*, 1924).<sup>1</sup> It aims to show how the novels depict smoking as an important constituent of male identities. Furthermore, this study points out how the differences between the cultural meanings of pipe smoking and cigar smoking are meaningful in terms of the stability or instability of identities.<sup>2</sup> Hence, the main idea of the comparison is based on the interrelationship between the representations of smoking and the characters' identities in the selected novels.

In addition to the representations of smoking, the relevance of the comparison between these modernist novels results from their

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<sup>1</sup> I am using John E. Woods' English translation of Mann's *Der Zauberberg*. As *Alastalon salissa* has not yet been translated into English, all translations of the quotes from this novel are mine.

<sup>2</sup> The idea for this, maybe an odd-sounding, topic rests on my larger research project on the cultural representations of smoking in Finnish literature. Thus, the comparison between Finnish and German novels made here is particularly meant to support my aim to define the cultural meanings of smoking in Finnish literature.

similarities in terms of themes, and especially in terms of the theme of time. By following the philosophical ideas of modernism, each novel demonstrates a strong interest in time, temporality, and the human experience of time. This is an important aspect as in order to analyze the representations of identities in narrative literature, it is, in general, necessary to take time into account as the primary context of the identity-making process and to pay attention to temporality as the main component in identity narratives. These two novels are no exceptions to this rule, especially as time, tobacco, and problems of identity are interconnected in their narratives.

Time is often considered the main theme of *Der Zauberberg* (see Ricœur 1985). The third-person narrator of the story speaks of time in many places and in various ways; and the main character, Hans Castorp, can be seen as some kind of guinea-pig in the novel's – and the novelist's – research of time and temporality. In turn, *Alastalon salissa* – the work considered as a masterpiece of Finnish prose fiction – is an extremely long novel in which almost nothing happens during those six hours that the narrative lasts. With its modernist strategies, such as the inner monologue, *Alastalon salissa* stretches time as far as can be imagined. In this sense, it is also a novel about time.

As for tobacco, as is well known, cigars have an important role in the narrative of *Der Zauberberg*, and in the context of Finnish literature and Finnish literary history, the same holds true for the pipes in *Alastalon salissa*. It is thus interesting that these modernist novels share similarities in how they present the function and meaning of smoking when representing identities. Smoking coincides with identities in both novels and its representations give meaningful information about the characters, while at the same time giving particular meanings to smoking. Here, smoking functions as a signifier of the characters' identities. Smoking in these novels therefore has a crucial role in relation to both the theme of time and the representations of identities.

Using the concept of identity in a narrow sense—referring to the fictive character's selfhood and the inner and outer processes that define this selfhood –, allows me to highlight the analogy between selfhood and smoking. According to Daphna Oyserman, Kristen Elmore and George

Smith, «identities are the traits and characteristics, social relations, roles, and social group memberships that define who one is». Part of one's identity is the so-called "self-concept" which is «what comes to mind when one thinks of oneself» (Oyserman et al. 2012: 69). The analysis of the fictive characters' identities will show how the inner "self-concepts" of the characters as well as the other defining aspects of identity, such as social relationships, depend on their smoking habits.

In terms of the cultural meanings of both smoking and identity, it is also worth noting what Eric Burns states about (male) smokers and their ways of smoking, in his work *The Smoke of the Gods: A Social History of Tobacco* (1997). According to Burns, the ways of using tobacco are related to the personality of the smoker:

You could tell a lot about a man from the way he took his tobacco. You could tell what he thought about himself, what he wanted others to think about him, and how far he was willing to go to be so identified. You could tell about his personality, his standards, his style (Burns 1997: 103).

Burn's claim, even if he is speaking of the (f)actual world and real history instead of fiction, is quite valid and applicable to fictitious characters regarding their smoking habits since in fictive narratives, the depiction of how a character takes his/her tobacco is usually meant to tell a lot about this character and his/her identity.

After the synopses of the novels and a short presentation of the theoretical framework, the analysis will focus on the representations of pipe smoking and cigar smoking and determine how different smoking habits define the identities of the characters in *Alastalon salissa* and *Der Zauberberg*.

## **Alastalon salissa meets Der Zauberberg**

Volter Kilpi's *Alastalon salissa* is a modernist novel, famous in Finland and highly valued for its skillful use of narrative strategies, such as the inner monologue and the stream of consciousness. Kilpi's

narrative, which is told in nine hundred pages, covers a period of only about six hours. Nothing much happens in the narrative: a group of people has gathered together at the house of a character named Alastalo. Most of them are men and all are either ship-owners or sea captains belonging to a small community on the West Coast of Finland. They are having a meeting in Alastalo's parlour to decide whether they will sign a contract meant to finance the building of a very big and expensive ship, a bark ship. All of those who will sign have to make an investment in this project, and the rule is that the more one pays, the more one will own of the bark. The situation emphasizes the social hierarchy between the men. This leads each of them to consider their own position within the community and to evaluate their own social value as a member of the group.

Most of the story happens in these men's minds, as they are positioning themselves within their group. The inner monologues of the men form the multi-narrational structure of the novel. As the chapters of the novel switch from one member's perspective to another, the point of view and focalization change accordingly. In 1930s Finland, Kilpi's innovative style seemed quite peculiar as it was exceptionally experimental. Nevertheless, even more peculiar is the novel's original use of language. The language of the novel is indeed unique in Finnish literature when compared to both older and more recent fiction (see e.g. Lyytikäinen 1992; Rojola 1995). In the Finnish literary canon, Kilpi's novel is considered as one of the best literary works ever and, in 1992, Finnish literary critics and scholars elected it the best Finnish novel of all time. However, *Alastalon salissa* has so far never been translated in any other languages than Swedish and, thus, it is unknown outside Finland and some parts of Scandinavia—although it might well fit in with many well-known modernist novels in Europe. From a Finnish point of view, it is still a great European modernist novel—even if only appreciated in its own culture.

Instead, Thomas Mann's *Der Zauberberg* is known across the globe as one of the greatest novels of European literature, and many even consider it one of the most fascinating novels ever written. Mann's famous work from the beginning of 20<sup>th</sup> century has benefitted from a

long and important research tradition which has emphasized the novel's theme of time and temporality. *Der Zauberberg* represents the modernist thought regarding the subjective nature of time, albeit through the poetics of realism (see e.g. Lukács 1979; Ricoeur 1985). *Der Zauberberg* tells a story of a young German man named Hans Castorp who travels to a sanatorium situated high up in the Swiss Alps, in the city of Davos. Castorp's intention is to stay there three weeks as a guest of his tubercular cousin who is being treated there. The narrative tells how and why Castorp finally stays at the sanatorium over three years and what happens there during those years.

In both novels, smoking has a great importance, and it is most often interrelated with the theme of time—and with problems of identity. There are two significant similarities between the novels when considering how they represent smoking: firstly, they both use tobacco and the representations of smoking as the thematic device through which it is possible to indicate what kind of a person the smoker is. Secondly, in both novels, the representations of tobacco use reflect temporal aspects of the character's stable, or instable, identity.

## **Tobacco is a sign**

Tobacco is a very addictive substance with a very long history. In human culture over time, tobacco has acquired various contradictory meanings due to its ability to signify different things and aspects of life within diverse socio-cultural contexts.<sup>3</sup> Consequently, it can be argued that it is reasonable to research tobacco as a sign in cultural sign-systems, i.e. tobacco as a signifier. This "tobacco-sign" can indeed be interpreted semiotically, as David Grylls shows in his article "Smoke Signals: The

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<sup>3</sup> Recently, it has been established as a medical fact that tobacco, as a substance, is very poisonous and dangerous for health. Nevertheless, this was not self-evident during the hundreds of years of tobacco's global history. For instance, tobacco was considered both poison and medicine at the same time, like some kind of a modern *pharmakon*. This contradictive nature explains also why its meanings have been both rich and ambiguous.

Sexual Semiotics of Smoking in Victorian Fiction” (2006). Here, Grylls compares the cultural meanings of pipes and cigars and underlines the fact that, in Victorian fiction, the meaning of cigar is more masculine than the meaning of pipe and that it is connected to men’s sexual activity (2006: 19). Furthermore, in the Victorian era pipe was a much more down-to-earth activity than “modern”, high-class, and exclusive cigar:

Cigar smoking in the nineteenth century, then, stood in contrast with the commoner activity of pipe smoking; it was exclusively (or almost exclusively) a male activity; and it was catered for in such a way as to suggest hedonistic transgression.

[...]

Since pipe smoking was so common an activity, it could have numerous meanings in various contexts, but in general it had more stolid and traditional associations than the smoking of cigars. (Grylls 2006: 18)

Grylls’ findings are interesting especially as his approach is historical. Other disciplines are showing interest in the topic and «the semiotics of tobacco» (a concept I have developed elsewhere, see Hallila 2016) is also receiving attention from scholars in cultural and social science studies. Even if they do not state explicitly that tobacco is a sign (see e.g. Gilman & Xun 2004; Hakkarainen 2000; Schivelbusch 1992), they nonetheless consider tobacco as a substance that people use in their life to signify and give meaning to, in various cultural and social aspects of human life; they consider tobacco as a sign and as a symbol.

Tobacco’s European and global history started in the 16<sup>th</sup> century. Until today, both the ways of using the substance and the significance of smoking have continuously evolved. Tobacco is an extraordinary substance amongst substances: it has both an ambivalent essence and contradictory meanings. This is what Claude Lévi-Strauss argues in his *From Honey to Ashes* (1973: 29) when considering tobacco: «Only tobacco worthy of the name unites attributes that are generally incompatible». According to Lévi-Strauss, tobacco has an important role in the structure of myths since being neither food nor beverage but being only analogous

to them, tobacco is a substance which stays in-between the necessary and the unnecessary, in-between culture and nature. Lévi-Strauss even states that tobacco is the first cultural step toward semiotics since its place is on the border between nature and culture. Like him, Jacques Derrida emphasizes the extraordinary role of tobacco in sign-systems: «tobacco symbolizes the symbolic» (Derrida 1992: 112).

The very ambivalence of tobacco may well be the core of its cultural meanings. This argument can be found in contemporary cultural and literary studies concerning themselves with tobacco. For instance, Linda and Michael Hutcheon emphasize tobacco's great cultural ambivalence in their article "Smoking in Opera" (2004) as follows:

The act of smoking has always been given contradictory meanings in Western culture. As both a relaxant and a stimulant, tobacco has been associated with both the medicinal and the deadly with both sensual pleasure and sexual danger; with both the companionship of society and the alienation of the rebel. (Hutcheon & Hutcheon 2004: 230)

As Linda and Michael Hutcheon claim, the elements that form the basic view of tobacco are opposed yet complementary. But there is also another side to the issue: although tobacco is an extremely complex and ambivalent sign, it is at the same time a very conventionalized sign. On the one hand, there is a network of ambiguous and contradictory cultural meanings of smoking; on the other, people have learned to interpret these meanings, and thus they easily recognize the tobacco signs. This observation is found in Richard Klein's influential study, *Cigarettes Are Sublime* (1993):

Smoking cigarettes is not only a physical act but a discursive one – a wordless but eloquent form of expression. It is a fully coded, rhetorically complex, narratively articulated discourse with a vast repertoire of well understood conventions that are implicated, intertextually, in the whole literary, philosophical, cultural history of smoking. (Klein 1993: 182)

Klein researches cigarette smoking, not smoking in general. Yet, his idea of smoking as a discursive act is applicable to different contexts since all ways of using tobacco carry multiple and rich connotations that the readers of tobacco-signs are familiar with. These evolve, however, and the different forms of tobacco use can be understood as the continuously changing signs in cultural sign systems. These signs can work two ways: they can produce meaning themselves, and they also can be used to produce meaning. As the following section will show, *Alastalon salissa's* pipe smoker, Härkänieniemi, and *Der Zauberberg's* cigar smoker, Hans Castorp, are the characters whose identity coincides with their ways of smoking. The comparative analysis of the novels will demonstrate that in both *Alastalon salissa* and *Der Zauberberg*, tobacco as a sign works two ways: first, it symbolizes certain ideas and contents of identities, and second, it is a symbol carrying its own meanings, which effects the identities of the smoker characters.

### **The smoker's choice: *Alastalon salissa***

All men in *Alastalon salissa* smoke pipes. There is a big pipe-rack hanging on the wall of Alastalo's parlour, and from that rack each man can choose himself a pipe. At the end of the novel, after the men have signed the bark contract, there is a most important episode in which the householder, Alastalo, lights a new, unused pipe. That gesture is analogous to his first step as new leader of the whole male community. The fact that the pipe-smoking motif has been developed from the beginning allows the reader to understand the significance of that particular moment. The most important episode in this regard is in chapter three of the novel. The title of the chapter is "Härkänieniemi chooses himself a pipe from the pipe-rack of Alastalo and thinks some thoughts to pass the time". This over eighty-page-long chapter is probably the most famous part of Kilpi's novel; it shows that in this narrative, it is possible—in order to "stretch time" to the extreme—to use that many pages for the description of someone's selection of a pipe, which in the real world may not last more than a couple of minutes.



Above all, the analysis of this chapter offers an interesting perspective to tobacco as a sign of identity in *Alastalon salissa*.

The title of the chapter tells exactly what happens in it: Härkäniemi is choosing a pipe in front of the pipe-rack, and his head is full of thoughts. His painstaking decision-making and thinking process show how pipe smoking is linked to the problems of identity. In his inner monologue, while trying to decide which one of the pipes on the rack is the right pipe for him, Härkäniemi compares both the pipes displayed on the pipe-rack and the men who smoke those pipes. Furthermore, he compares the pipes to the men and the men to the pipes. Since he is an old bachelor, he moreover associates the selection of the pipe to the selection of a wife. While thinking of the differences between the pipes and the men, and while associating the pipes with the imagined wife-candidates, Härkäniemi is defining who he is and is not.

As said earlier, Härkäniemi's careful selection of the pipe takes place in a very sensitive context: the male community of the novel is experiencing great changes due to signing a bark-building contract as each member of this quite small patriarchal group, in one way or another, attends the project. This arrangement brings forth the hierarchical relations between the men, since those with the larger estates can have a bigger share of the bark than those with the smaller incomes. And this sensitive situation leads the men to reconsider their own position in the community. This is why Härkäniemi's deliberation over which pipe to choose represents his inner self-evaluation in relation to his community.

In addition to these personal aspects, social aspects of identity are also exposed when Härkäniemi appraises the pipes. This is how Härkäniemi defines his own personality while considering the similarities between the selections of wives and pipes:

Also in a good house and in a proper pipe rack there are many kinds of pipes, good and even better, and a man, who has a high opinion of his own mouth, selects the best one to place between his teeth. One does not marry just anyone, but potentially suitable wives are selected, reviewed, and even worthy ones can be left in

the rack when targeting the best one, and a man does not consider his mouth lesser than his bed! I who have been wise enough to remain a bachelor until this age, how would I be flighty when selecting a pipe? (Kilpi 2013: 40)

On the one hand, the issues raised by Härkäniemi are related to his own personality because the difficulties in selecting the suitable pipe reveal that it would be too difficult for him to get married. On the other hand, Härkäniemi associates pipes and women as if they were both objects that a man has the power to choose. This reveals the patriarchal ideology of the community; there is the male hierarchy which ignores women. For Härkäniemi therefore, a man may select the right woman for him to marry as he would a pipe. Pipes and women thus represent the kind of commitments a man makes in his life. However, in his case it is ironic as he is a bachelor. He compensates the lack of a wife with juxtaposing pipes and women, but in fact the only thing he can really choose from the pipe-rack is a pipe—which still allows him to position himself into the male hierarchy. His social identity is consequently defined by this choice. In order to strengthen his identity, he needs to consider carefully how he chooses as choosing the “wrong pipe” could lead to identity instability.

Here is a quote showing how, for instance, analogies between pipes and men are made inside Härkäniemi’s mind:

I have never believed in those kinds of men who smoke the porcelain pipe. (*ibid.*: 41)

[...]

[The pipe of the judge of Ristimäki is] the pipe of a man such as Langholma, it is a serious pipe, a staid pipe, I would say a strict pipe suits Langholma’s mouth as an ass down the pew or a note in a cantor’s throat. (*ibid.*: 51)

Similarly to these two characters, the judge of Ristimäki and Langholma, other men in the group are identified with the pipes that

Härkäniemi is looking at. The characteristics of the pipes are compared with the characteristics of the men.

Alastalo's pipe-rack is, furthermore, structured hierarchically; every pipe has its own particular place on the rack. In the middle of the rack, as the absolute king of the pipe hierarchy, stands the pipe that Härkäniemi names "the governor's pipe". This pipe has never been in use and Härkäniemi wonders why Alastalo bought it, although this kind of pipe does not seem suitable for anybody in the community. Härkäniemi wonders who the pipe is meant for, and that is the reason why he names it "the governor's pipe":

I believe that I would find it gorgeous to watch as I would see this gadget in the corner of the mouth of the governor; it is imposing when on the lapel of the imposing man lays an imposing pipe and the mouth of the festive man speaks behind the festive pipe, the festive speech or the festive smoke. (*ibid.*: 48)

The governor—or, in fact, *the idea* of the governor—represents a much higher position in the social hierarchies of the society than any of the men swarming around the parlour has. But, as an echo of the transcendent signifier, the very presence of the governor's pipe in the rack gives a structure to the whole pipe-system of male identities. While looking for the right pipe for himself, Härkäniemi cannot choose freely, since he has to take into account the hierarchy of this whole system, which is structured from the ontological superiority of the governor's pipe. When, at the end of the novel, Alastalo lights the governor's pipe, he thus occupies the highest position in the male community. This gesture, therefore, defines the social identities of the whole of the group.

Before this revelatory happening takes place, Härkäniemi selects quite a modest pipe for himself. This is because he believes he has «too respectful a heart for both getting married and for cultivating a luxurious pipe» (*ibid.*: 49). Härkäniemi's pipe selection nevertheless provides a very happy ending since he can now finally have an enjoyable smoke from the pipe that «suits his mouth». Maybe even more

importantly, Härkäniemi, after choosing the pipe deemed right for him, now knows both who he is and where he belongs.

As the analysis has shown, in *Alastalon salissa*, the selection of the pipe is a defining process for personal and social identities. The pipe is a symbol of one's belonging to a patriarchal community: it represents the common values of a community and, at the same time, it offers a way to find a stable position in it. The pipe is the sign of a stable identity.

### **A man of Maria: *Der Zauberberg***

In *Der Zauberberg*, the main character Hans Castorp has a special relationship with the specific cigar brand called Maria Mancini; Castorp has committed himself to smoke only this brand. The cigars are a very important part of his selfhood, and his relationship to them is an important motif in the novel. For instance, at the beginning, when Castorp arrives at the sanatorium, he intends to spend only three weeks up there. Nonetheless, he has with him two hundred Maria Mancini cigars, and this is a strikingly large amount for such a short sojourn.

The exaggerated number of cigars refers to two aspects of the story: time and addiction. Smoking Maria Mancini cigars is what Castorp must do as he is addicted to them, but bringing two hundred cigars with him for three weeks implies also that Castorp unconsciously has prepared to stay at the sanatorium longer than planned. He needs to be sure that he will not be out of cigars no matter what happens since he thinks he would not survive without them. He declares this addiction to his non-smoker cousin in a little speech:

“I don't understand how someone cannot be a smoker—why it's like robbing oneself of the best part of life, so to speak, or at least of an absolutely first-rate pleasure. When I wake up I look forward to being able to smoke all day, and when I eat, I look forward to it again, in fact I can honestly say that I actually only eat so that I can smoke, although that's an exaggeration, of course. But a day without tobacco—that would be absolutely insipid, a dull, totally wasted day. [...] what I am saying, is that if a man has a good cigar,

then he's home safe, nothing, literally nothing, can happen to him. [...] Because things can go very badly—let's assume, for instance, that things would go miserably for me—but as long as I had my cigar, I'd carry on, that much I know, it could bring me through anything." (Mann 1995: 46–47)

Castorp equates his relationship to Maria Mancinis with friendship and safety, and clearly confirms two aspects referring to the identity question: his belonging to "the smokers' group" and his intimate relationship to the cigars, thus indicating that he would not feel like himself without them. He uses the cigars to define his personal identity and self-concept—which is somewhat similar to Härkäniemi's approach to pipes. And like Härkäniemi, Castorp associates tobacco with women: in *Der Zauberberg* it is often mentioned that Castorp considers his cigar brand akin to a lover – and indeed, he calls it fondly "my Maria". However, the function of cigars here is not so much to be substitutes for women, but to provide the identity of the smoker with a sense of continuance and stability.

Nonetheless, Castorp fails to ensure such stability for himself, and it turns out that cigars are in fact the signs of the uncertainty surrounding his personal and social identities. Most of the time in the story, Castorp does not feel like himself and he does not belong to the community of the sanatorium or to the people living outside the place either. Soon after his arrival, he no longer knows who he is (or was), and the changes in his cigar smoking coincide with his loss of selfhood. At the beginning of the novel, he seems to have a very balanced relationship with his Maria Mancinis, but soon after that, when he has settled down at the sanatorium, he experiences recurring problems with the taste of his cigars. He had thought himself "a man of Maria" but, in the new situation, this relationship starts to signify the loss of his former identity; his enjoyment of Maria has for some reason turned into its opposite, into disgust:

“I’ve been asking myself the whole time what was the matter, and now I realize that my Maria is the problem. I swear to you, it tastes like papier-mâché, exactly if I had a terribly upset stomach.”

[...] “Every puff is a disappointment; there’s no point in forcing it.” (*ibid.*:50)

[...]

He sat down in Joachim’s large flowered armchair—there was a chair like that in every room—and lit a Maria Mancini. It tasted like paste, like coal, like anything except what it should; nevertheless he continued to smoke it [...] (*ibid.*: 86)

The radical change in the smoker’s satisfaction with his cigars coincides with his identity crisis, and even if Castorp occasionally recovers the capability to enjoy his cigars, these remain signs of his increasingly precarious individuality. Hence, even if Maria “is the problem”, Castorp continues “to smoke it” as he tries to ensure the steadiness of his selfhood. However, in contrast to Alastalo’s pipes, Castorp’s cigars do not offer any possibility to define a stable personal or social identity within the community. On the contrary. Living in the sanatorium, Castorp progressively loses both his identity and his sense of time. The representation of his tobacco use is linked to this loss: he then changes cigar brands. But this change does not improve his growing unstable identity. The new brand does not allow Castorp to reflect the social hierarchies or personal aspects of his self either, and these cigars actually perpetuate the sense of identity instability:

He no longer ordered his Maria Mancinis from there [from outside the sanatorium]. He had found another brand up here, one that suited him and to which he was now as faithful as he had once been to his former girlfriend—a brand that would even have helped polar explorers get over their worst hardships in the ice and that when you smoked it made you feel as if you were lying on the beach and would be able to carry on. It had an especially well cured wrapper and was named Oath of Rütli; somewhat stubbier than Maria, mouse gray in color with a bluish band, it was very tractable and mild by nature; it had a snow-white durable ash that still

showed the veins of the wrapper. It drew so evenly that it could easily have served as an hourglass for the man enjoying it, and, indeed given Hans Castorp's needs, did serve as such, for he no longer carried his pocket watch. (*ibid.*: 698–699)

In this episode, Oath of Rütli's have come to replace Maria Mancinis, and Hans Castorp has lost his interest in time: «he no longer carried his pocket watch». The cigars here represent the loss of both time and identity since, even if the new brand «suited him», its ash still «drew so evenly that it could easily have served as an hourglass». The fact that the ash of his new cigars really serves as the only thing from which he can measure time, means that the measuring of time has lost its meaning in Castorp's life. Time has become meaningless for him, and as Oath of Rütli "suits him", timelessness can be interpreted as analogous to his identity. His identity no longer has stability in time. Crucially, in contrast to Maria Mancinis, Oath of Rütli's are not described as companions or reliable friends. Rather, they represent the solitude to which Castorp has now been driven, which only highlights the cultural meaning of the cigar as a sign of unstable identity.

## Conclusion

As this analysis has shown, Volter Kilpi's *Alastalon salissa* and Thomas Mann's *Der Zauberberg* represent, respectively, pipe smoking and cigar smoking as important parts of their characters' identities. The personal and social individualities of both Härkäniemi and Hans Castorp are here defined in terms of tobacco use. Pursuing other studies of tobacco use representations in literature, this investigation further demonstrates that, as identity signs, pipes and cigars possess distinct cultural meanings. For Härkäniemi, the pipe is an object with which he can define his self-concept and his position in the social hierarchy of the patriarchal community. In *Alastalon salissa*, pipe smoking functions as a sign of acceptance of one's social identity in a male community. The pipe signifies the stability of the identity. While Hans Castorp's cigars also function as signs related to his identity, they do not provide the

character with a chance to define a stable self-concept or social identity. In *Der Zauberberg*, the cigar is a sign of identity instability.

In the context of “the semiotics of tobacco” these results supplement earlier analyses of cultural meanings of pipes and cigars such as David Grylls’ analysis on Victorian fiction. In this essay, the focus was not on historical context but on the problems of fictive characters’ identities. The comparison of these two novels therefore highlights the fact that the idea of tobacco as a sign applies to the analysis of the representations of tobacco use in literature, in terms of identity.



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Mika Hallila has been a visiting professor of Finnish literature and culture at the University of Warsaw since 1<sup>st</sup> of August 2013. Earlier, during the years 1999–2013, Hallila taught and conducted research in two Finnish universities, University of Joensuu and University of Jyväskylä, in different academic positions (three years as a professor of literature). Hallila is the docent in literary theory at the University of Eastern Finland. The main themes of his research are literary theory, especially theory of the novel, and contemporary novel. Most of his publications –including the doctoral dissertation *Metafiktion käsite. Teoreettinen, kontekstuaalinen ja historiallinen tutkimus* (“The Concept of Metafiction. Theoretic, Contextual, and Historical Study”; in Finnish [2006]) –are dealing with these very themes. Professor Hallila has, among other things, co-edited with four other scholars the large two-volume research anthology of contemporary Finnish literature (*Suomen nykykirjallisuus 1–2; “Contemporary Finnish Literature 1–2”* [2013]). Recently, one of his main research interests has been the cultural representations of smoking in Finnish literature.

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## **The paper**

Date sent: 31/01/2017

Date accepted: 15/04/2017

Date published: 31/05/2017

## **How to quote this paper**

Hallila, Mika, "Two Smokers in Search of Identity: Comparing the Representations of Tobacco Use in *Alastalon salissa* and *Der Zauberberg*", *Longing and Belonging/ Désir et Appartenance*, Eds. Massimo Fusillo, Brigitte Le Juez, Beatrice Seligardi, *Between*, VII.13 (2017), <http://www.betweenjournal.it/>