



Written by [Selwyn Duke](#) on January 16, 2014

## Thus Spake the Potheads

It's starting to appear as if marijuana users have become the "homosexual lobby" of the chemically dependent. What do I mean? *Duck Dynasty's* Phil Robertson could mention one sexual behavior (adultery) as disqualifying someone from the "kingdom of God," but mentioning that "other" sexual behavior? That's a boycottin', pardner! Likewise, there's no shortage of articles about the perils of smoking tobacco — about how it causes lung cancer, emphysema, and premature aging; about how it's a dirty, nasty habit — all without indignant smokers crawling out of the woodwork to protest, between hacking coughs, that their passion is being unfairly demonized. But dare imply that inhaling copious amounts of marijuana smoke may not be one of Dr. Oz's top 10 health recommendations, and, well, the potheads cometh.



Let's begin here with a simple but apparently radical premise: Habitually sucking into your lungs hot gases containing carbon particles probably isn't the most healthful practice. This is true whether the source is a Marlboro, a truck's tailpipe, or a bong loaded with cannabis. Agreed?

Apparently not. As with [this](#) article about pot use's correlation with psychotic behavior, such assertions not only bring out the potheads — who do seem to have the ambition to defend their vice — but also some apologists who claim that marijuana smoking is actually a good thing. It's for medicinal purposes, you see.

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So we hear about how negative reporting on pot is all Puritan propaganda, about how tobacco is far worse, about how *I'm 49 and toked since I were a teen and I funkshun fein*, about how if you purge the THC, it's a perfect drug (somehow every pothead is Linus Pauling). And then there's the old standby: Alcohol is legal and is worse. Alcohol is more addictive. Alcohol this and alcohol that. Potheads love the alcohol comparison. Okay, then, let's compare the two.

While most agree that casual drinking — one or two drinks — is fine and may even offer health benefits, it's universally acknowledged that drunkenness is destructive, ugly, and reckless. In accordance with the old PSA, "If you have to drink to be social, it's not social drinking"; it's accepted that if you have to get inebriated to deal with life, you have a problem. Even drunkards tend to acknowledge this (they just usually deny that they have a problem). And we certainly shouldn't exercise double standards.

So I'll say that if you want to have one or two small puffs of a marijuana cigarette, fine.

But you've crossed the line if you get high.



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Deal?

This puts the lie to the alcohol/pot comparison. There are millions of casual drinkers who may have a beer or glass of wine with dinner but have no intention of getting tipsy. Except, however, for the few who use pot for legitimate medical purposes (and I'm dubious about the necessity of this, mind you), the goal of a marijuana smoker is *ever and always* to get high (drunk). The intention is always to alter his mental state.

Always.

This is why the proper comparison is not pot smoking and "drinking," but pot smoking and drunkenness. It is why legal marijuana doesn't correspond to legal alcohol as much as it does to legal cocaine, another drug that takes you from sober to stewed with one dose.

And it's why there's no such thing in the real world as "casual" marijuana use. Millions of "drinkers" can honestly say that they have no chemical dependency issue, but not one regular pot user can. By definition, pot smokers' goal is to get "drunk."

So one drink doesn't equal one joint — one bottle does. But to further cement the point, imagine alcohol really was pot's equivalent, that even just one six-ounce drink got you plastered. Would we find any degree of alcohol consumption tolerable? Would Prohibition ever have ended?

Note here what I am not doing. I'm not making any claims about whether pot is more unhealthful than tobacco; I'm not denying that a pothead is a safer driver than a drunkard, or opining on whether or not marijuana use increases the incidence of psychosis or lowers I.Q. when used by the young (as another study indicated). I'm not weighing in right now on whether or not the drug should be legal. I'm simply pointing out that the main arguments used to legitimize pot are pap.

And "legitimize" is the operative word. When people editorialized against Prohibition, their argument perhaps was of the nature G.K. Chesterton presented in a 1935 radio talk when he opined, "The free man owns himself. He can damage himself with either eating or drinking; he can ruin himself with gambling. If he does he is certainly a damn fool, and he might possibly be a damned soul; but if he may not, he is not a free man any more than a dog." But I don't know of anyone who claimed that drunkenness should be considered a desired state or even acceptable. Yet this notion runs through pro-pot commentary: the idea that potheads' form of drunkenness is okay. And it has to run through it — because, again, to advocate pot use is to advocate "drunkenness."

So while we may argue about whether pot is a gateway drug, advocacy of it is certainly a gateway idea. Inherent in it is the notion that altering your mind is okay, getting high is fine. Of course, some potheads might tell us that their form of drunkenness is different, that the acceptance of it won't lead to the acceptance of getting high via other means. Hey, all these things occur in a bubble, there is no slippery slope, and precedents don't precede. (And where have we heard that before?)

Wherever you stand on pot legalization, about legitimization there should be no debate. A nation that does not maintain stringent social prohibitions (in the least) against chemical dependency will not likely remain strong and vibrant. Thus, we always must be able to unabashedly say: If you're using marijuana habitually, face it, you're a pothead. You're self-medicating. You're chemically dependent. You have a problem. And drunk and stupid is no way to go through life, son.

This is true whether it's by bottle or bong.



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