

That we should censor the depiction of smoking in movies



Upscyfees (PRO)

- Film productions regularly don't mention any negative aspects that smoking causes in real life. That leads to the normalization of smoking, since its harmful effects are not presented, and smoking appears as a not harmful habit. Sometimes the normalization of these habits can occur with drug smoking (like marijuana, cocaine, heroin, opium and more) where the implications on a smoker's organism can be more severe. That normalization could have tremendous negative effects, if someone becomes a user, without clearly knowing the risks of smoking substances (which is what most of the films tend to do).
- Additionally, this normalization could have the potential of accustoming the viewers into such habits, in order to cope with stress or to enter a new social group, which are contexts in which smoking is used in movies.
- Finally, studies have shown that when ex-smokers see other people smoking, they start craving to smoke and that works as a hindrance on their rehabilitation process (especially when they are dealing with drugs).

All of the above can be prevented to an extend by censoring the depiction of smoking in movies.Sources: <http://thechart.blogs.cnn.com/2011/01/19/smokers-beware-of-movies-with-smoke/comment-page-1/>



GreyFox101 (CON)

First, I would like to point out that a huge number of people follow the personal lives of actors and many actors who hold cigarettes in movies do not actually smoke in their personal lives. The general public is most certainly aware of this.

The prominence of antismoking campaigns in all our lives means that we cannot help, but think of the negative side effects of smoking when seeing someone smoke. It is obvious that the characteristic of being a smoker is often used to suggest a weakness or negative side of a

person. In addition to this, there are much higher levels of smoking addiction in poorer neighborhoods and screenwriters use this fact. For example, in the movie 'The Dallas Buyers Club' the producer uses the fact that the main character smokes to associate him with lower sectors of society. This is likely to discourage someone from smoking.

I would also like everyone to note that smoking advertisement through actors is not the main reason as to why people start smoking. There are many causes of smoking addiction:

- 90% of people smoke due to peer pressure.
- According to Faucher's "Factors that influence smoking in adolescent girls: review of the literature", if a parent smokes, the child is twice as likely to smoke.
- Often a smoker has a genetic tendency towards tobacco addiction according to a study by Benowitz called "The Genetics of Drug Dependence: Tobacco Addiction".
- Many studies show that people start to smoke because they think it will alleviate their pressure (see Lillard "Smoking as Self-Medication" and the Cleveland Clinic's study "Stress, Stress Management, and Smoking.")
- According to the website 'Teen Drug Abuse' the act of smoking creates a camaraderie which gives the participants a social reward.
- There are also many other reasons for smoking such as the desire to 'act out'.

I should also say the obvious argument in answer to Upskyfee's point about people in rehabilitation: if you are in rehab and you know that seeing smokers makes you want to smoke, you will not watch a movie which contains scenes of people smoking.

Also, in a film which is not about smoking, you cannot expect the producers to add lines mentioning the negative side of smoking because the interplay will feel fake.



Upskyfees (PRO)

- I am now replying to your argument which stated: "It is obvious that the characteristic of being a smoker is often used to suggest a weakness or negative side of a person. In addition to this, there are much higher levels of smoking addiction in poorer neighborhoods and screenwriters use this fact." Most of the times, films tend to portray a realistic to our world,

and so, smoking does not play a major part in the plot of the film but instead would just (as mentioned in your argument) help portray a realistic to our world. One could argue that this would hurt the film's effort of portraying that realistic world, but I will argue that a great number of films fail to do so with the use of smoking. Why? It is pretty obvious really. They rarely include any other common effects of smoking (which could potentially make the film more realistic) such as unhealthy teeth, coughing, erectile dysfunctions and more.

- Though, the use of smoking in films might not be one of the leading causes of smoking, that definitely doesn't give the chance to addicted smokers of substances getting out of their addiction. Many countries, including the US, have banned the commercial advertising of addictive substances on television and radio, so that less people will become addicted and suffer the negative effects of smoking. That has yet to happen in films. That means that advertisements of tobacco and other substances that can be smoked (if they are legal) could be presented in films appearing in cinemas, where such laws do not apply. That means that :

1. Acts as the Public Health Cigarette Smoking Act (that bans advertising of tobacco and cigarettes in television and radio) become useless. That could potentially have as a harmful effect as banning cigarette warning labels, and both of those scenarios work against anti-smoking campaigns, that try to inform people on the negative effects of substance smoking. That, of course, is unjustifiable.

2. Consumeristic tendencies start to appear more than before in sectors as tobacco and other drugs. Not only do these addicting substances appeal to people, but also people start spending their money carelessly on that. Since it is addictive, they can only with difficulty stop spending money.

In conclusion, smoking in films can enhance the belief that people should smoke to cope with stress. Additionally, if film productions use smoking to achieve realism in films, they certainly fail, since they often do not present the very common negative effects in smoking. That leads us to the conclusion that they might advertise products of these substances and that would not only endanger the health of viewers, but their financial stability as well. Sadly enough, because films are most of the times not based in real events. They can misrepresent how being addicted feels

like. That is especially bad when it comes to drugs other than tobacco, where people who might be easily influenced or looking for comfort could fall in the trap of addiction because films can present it as an innocent, even harmless habit (but as most of us know, it is not like that in real life).



GreyFox101 (CON)

Firstly, I noticed that you conveniently forgot to comment on the fact that the private lives of actors are common knowledge and everyone knows that most of the actors who are filmed holding a cigarette do not smoke. Therefore their fans will not want to copy this behavior. In addition to this most actors smoke herbal cigarettes on screen: they are not even real cigarettes.

Also:

Yellow teeth and smoker's coughs are hard to fake and it is even harder to encourage actors to produce this effects. Many actors have their teeth whitened and would not let anyone stain them for the purposes of television. These performers make their money partly from their looks and do not want their reputation marred by an overzealous producer, who wants to stain their teeth in the name of realism. That type of producer probably would not be able to find anyone who would work for him. Smoker's cough is a very heavy and wet sound, something that is hard to produce/fake if you are not ill. There are substances which could make someone reproduce those effects, but will have a strong impact on the quality of acting (something undesirable to actors). Most movies do not show overt sexual behavior and nudity; therefore, erectile dysfunction would be hard to show.

To further counter your arguments, I would like to say the following:

- Failure to portray a scene is not linked to smoking. Just because one piece of the picture is not there, does not make it okay to remove the rest of the elements which make up the scene.
- I have noticed that you twisted my point about movies often showing smoking in bad neighborhoods into a realism point. I was actually stating that films often link smoking to evil characters and frankly disgusting parts of town

characters and mainly disgusting parts of town.

- Most people have come into contact with antismoking campaigns and therefore are well aware of the negative elements of smoking. Producers know this and are therefore forced to use this knowledge in their movies. Therefore enforcing the negative associations of smoking.

Furthermore, the nature of these substances automatically makes users act irrationally; the consumeristic nature of the cigarette industry will be there whether or not movies use cigarettes.

Finally, it is worth mentioning that cigarettes form a major cog in the world economy. In the US for example the tobacco industry added, according to statista

(<https://www.statista.com/statistics/248964/revenues-from-tobacco-tax-and-forecast-in-the-us/>), \$13800000000 to the US economy. If this industry is taken away it could be crippling,

something that seems ridiculous effect of limiting a recreational habit. Particularly when this habit does not do harm to society, only harm to the user. Trying to limit the use of this substance is the equivalent of telling someone not to run because their joints will wear out in fifty years.
