

Maybe We Were Wrong

Written by Smoke Signals
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As long-time readers know, we're not hesitant to toot our own horn when one of our observations or predictions proves prescient. The best example of this, of course, is our prediction from a number of years ago that the widespread availability of commercial videos, shared on tubes, hubs and other venues in violation of copyrights and common decency, would eventually lead to a massive decline in new video production and the eventual demise of a number of producers. We were right, and haven't hesitated to trumpet that fact.

However, it seems only fair to also admit when we apparently were wrong.

For many years, we held fast to our belief that smoking fetishes developed, for the most part, because people were exposed to a ubiquitous culture of sexy smoking. When virtually everywhere you looked (in real life and on television) you saw attractive young women enjoying their cigarettes with great enthusiasm and style, it seemed incredibly natural and often glamorous to many of us. That's certainly how our own smoking fetish developed; we can even remember (with great detail) the one seminal moment when a pretty, anonymous teen girl's smoke play in a cafeteria seemed to cement our fetish for good.

That line of thinking led us to a corollary: as smoking bans took hold and the smoking rate declined, fewer and fewer young people would develop a smoking fetish. After all, they wouldn't have the incredibly sexy imagery bombarding them day and night in every conceivable location - and wouldn't grow to appreciate the sexual appeal of smoking the way previous generations had.

That even led us to downplay the theory that one critical factor in the development of a smoking fetish was the element of "risk" being taken by the smoker. Sure, the bad girl image was certainly a factor - but in our view, it just folded into the overall picture of a sexy, glamorous smoking woman. We didn't think a fetish developed, for most people, because a smoker was risking her health by the very act of smoking. After all, it's obvious from literature, movies and photographs of the decades prior to 1964 that the smoking fetish was alive and well long before the Surgeon General's report - so "risk" couldn't have played a role way back then.

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Additionally, we were asked numerous times over the years by journalists doing stories on the fetish, whether we expected a huge increase in the number of people with a smoking fetish, as smoking became more and more taboo. Our answer was always an emphatic "no."

Fast forward to 2013. It's clear from our interactions with smoking fetishists, and from postings on various internet forums and sites, that there's been no decline in our number over the last twenty years - in fact, it continues to grow. Plenty of young people have developed a smoking fetish, even though the youngest among us are certainly much less likely to see sexy smoking on a daily basis than their predecessors.

So, we're led to reconsider our original beliefs. It obviously isn't simple, constant exposure to attractive female smoking which is triggering smoking fetishes among the younger members of our community. There must be something else at work as well. And in searching for an explanation, we're left with the concepts of "taboo" and "risk" as the primary candidates. We don't know what role those concepts may have played in the development of previous generations of smoking fetishists, but they must play a large role today. And, we imagine, they played a much greater role in the past than we had imagined.

Our only real conclusion can be, at least in part, that Vesperae has been right - and we've been wrong.

It doesn't happen often, though!

Enjoy the September-October issue!