

Gillette and the Rise of Political Sycophancy

What is the deal with razor companies? First they put their products under lock and key, making it practically impossible to actually buy a razor, then they insult their customers.

No wonder beards are making comeback.

Gillette's new commercial warning against toxic masculinity has attracted ridicule for alienating the very men who buy its products. Next thing you know, ketchup advertisements will be running down tomatoes, hamburger advertisements will be touting vegetarianism, and mouse trap makers will be exalting the virtues of mice.

What's next? Dos Equis commercial that feature the "Most Boring Man in the World"?

And is there something about using a Gillette razor that will reduce male aggressiveness? Does it contain some kind of pheromone that makes you more feminine?

That'll excite their customer base.

What happened to the company whose past commercials featured slogans such as "The only way to get a real man shave is with Gillette"?

The commercial features a pack of bullying adolescents and lines of men over outdoor grills saying, "Boys will be boys." It is one more example of the propagation of gender stereotypes by the very people who are constantly warning us against propagating gender stereotypes.

And did anyone notice that a number of examples used in the commercial of “toxic masculinity” were products of Hollywood itself? A sit-com showing a man groping the maid. TV commercials showing sexually aggressive men. Cartoons showing male animals (representing people) hooting and cat-calling.

Nothing embodied male sexual aggressiveness better than the TV show Madmen, about an advertising agency.

Why is Hollywood and the commercial culture of which it is a part now lecturing everybody else about the very behavior they spent decades glorifying?

Corporate America has always kowtowed to the prevailing zeitgeist. If patriarchal dominance were in fashion instead of #MeToo, they’d be promoting bare feet and pregnancy. If slavery became popular again, they’d be advertising rock bottom prices on balls and chains.

Hollywood and the corporate world of which it is a part has long practice in the art of cultural sycophancy. The same companies that now portray themselves as pushing the boundaries of social consciousness were the very ones who promoted those things they now condemn.

Stay unshaven, my friends.

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[Image Credit: U.S. Marine Corps photo by Lance Cpl. Anna Albrecht/Released]