

Sex sells. Or so they say. But what about selling the responsibility of having sex? This is a Trojan condom ad. As you can see, it features singles (presumably) in a bar in various dynamics. The most obvious technique used is to represent the “all men are pigs” trope by depicting the men as you guessed it, pigs. The tagline reads “Evolve. Choose the one who wears a condom every time”. The only non-pig being the man at the bar, because well obviously he has a condom, and will wear it. Or so we’re meant to presume. Gender Theory is a lens that is used to critique texts based on how femaleness and maleness are represented, and that these roles are largely social constructs – meaning that society over time dictates what is feminine and what is masculine, and how our expectations of those roles determine how we behave toward one another.

I found this ad years ago and use it when I do advertising in grade 9. I love it because it is interesting on a lot of levels. That’s why I chose it for this project. In this ad, men as a whole are not depicted too positively, as pigs – one would assume we’re meant to see – here and here – that they’re self-involved, only interested in one thing, and don’t really care about the women with whom they’re interacting. The lone exception being of course the knight in shining armor, not on a white stallion, but in a white shirt, who is depicted as respectful and engaged with his lady. He is the hero – but why? For doing what should be expected, and not just by women, – ie wearing a condom every time? Hmm.

This ad was published in a women’s magazine. But I have yet to find one with a tagline that would be aimed at men – this would of course read “Evolve. Be the man who wears a condom every time” – but once again the gates to sex, who gets in or not, are always left to the woman to decide. According to this ad, we should reject the ‘pigs’ who aren’t evolved enough to be responsible for their own sexual activity, health and reproduction. This is actually a form of age-old sexism, so while the ad purports to be pro-woman, and modern in terms of women evolving and having self-respect, it actually does the opposite and makes some of us FREAKING MAD!

I still LOVE this ad – but because of all the discussion it can spark. Ultimately, the first few times I read it, I was like cool. Interesting to address a female audience this way, and with the old line men are pigs. But the truth is that is an old line. You can’t brush every guy off as the same – a whole gender! Nah. Way old news. So the ad is continuing to spread a false idea, and emasculate men in the eyes of their audience which is women. We don’t need to feel strong or empowered by putting guys down. However, if we each hold up our equal share of the sexual relationship bargain then that would actually be fair. A truly modern idea would be for both genders to accept responsibility, and not let each other get off the hook where sexuality, sexual prowess, or sexual responsibility is concerned. Now that would be evolution.