

The Sweet Smell of Consumerism

☒ Marcel Proust wrote in *The Remembrance of Things Past*, “when nothing else subsists from the past, after the people are dead, after the things are broken and scattered, the smell and taste of things remain poised a long time, like souls bearing resiliently, on tiny and almost impalpable drops of their essence, the immense edifice of memory.”

I agree. When I smell a certain type of grass, I’m transported back in time to my aunt’s home in Connecticut – a place where I associate my fondest childhood memories. Florist shops always remind me of the many funerals I attended as a child. What most people consider an unwanted musty smell, also reminds me of my aunt’s basement and good feelings.

I can’t see a thing without my glasses and my husband claims I have selective hearing, but I have an acute sense of smell. Because I have this gift, I always have a wide selection of body washes, perfumes, potpourri and candles on hand.

But what I think of as normal personal hygiene and good housekeeping has been taken to a whole ‘nother level.

As much as I love the scent of vanilla in just about anything, I really think Glad Products has gone a bit too far. Glad, along with other companies such as Hefty have, in my opinion, created a “problem” which really wasn’t a problem in the first place and have now convinced the consumer that they have a solution for this non-existent dilemma.

They’ve created odor-blocking garbage bags and Glad has gone so far as to make them in vanilla, fresh lemon and fresh clean scents because consumers need an “olfactory cue” in order to trust that the odor-fighting bag is actually working.

If you're thinking, "doesn't Leona have anything else to write about?" think again. The WSJ devoted over a half a page to smelly garbage.

After I read the article, I had to say to myself, "is this really a problem?" Apparently it is. According to Glad's 2008 survey, 60% of people believe if they can smell the trash, the house is not clean. Well then, why wait until the trash starts to smell? Why not just throw it out? Where's the problem?

On the same page, the WSJ reported on garbage cans, the size of furniture, which open and close using infrared sensors costing upwards of \$250! If you're going to use such a huge can and not fill it up for 2-3 days, of course your garbage is going to stink. Easy solution. Use a smaller trash can. I use biodegradable 3 gallon trash bags in our trash can and our garbage never smells.

People mentioned in the article say they freeze their garbage before throwing it away. One such person said, "it's better than putting smelly things like fish or meat in the trash to sit for days." Well, why is it sitting for days? I don't get it. How difficult is it to walk to wherever the garbage bins are and throw out the garbage?

I'm all for innovation, research and development. If someone comes up with a product that can make my life easier, I'm all for it. But is smelly garbage really a problem that needs solving? Take the damn trash out! What's the big deal?

The "odor-cutting technology" is designed in part to persuade consumers to keep spending and pay more for the bags. I guess that's also the American way. Convince people there's a problem and offer them a solution which costs far more than common sense.

I don't get it, but if you do, God bless you.

Fathers – Then and Now

✘ My parents had me and my brother late in life (but not by today's standards). When I was born in 1951, my father was 46, my mother 38. By 1960, my father was a widower raising an 8-year girl and a 10-year old boy on his own.

As a child, I adored my father and wanted to marry my "Prince Rochus" and often regally extended my arm instructing him to kiss my hand just as any Princess would request of her subject. Of course, he indulged my childhood fantasy.

I've no doubt that my strong work ethic comes from him. I remember him leaving every evening around 6 p.m. to go to his baking job at Ebinger's Bakery in Flatbush. I don't remember him ever taking a day off. On Saturday nights, he worked a second job in the bakery below our 4-room railroad flat. After my mother died, he needed to be home at night so he changed his shift and I vividly remember him getting up at 4 in the morning to leave for work so he could be back home when we returned from school. I remember waking up and feeling sad and wondering why he had to leave in the middle of the night. He died too soon in 1972, just eleven months after he retired.

He was a simple, decent man with a gentle soul and good heart who was ill-prepared for the task of raising two children. But my father had something that made him rise to the challenge – dignity and love for his children. We grew up and, through education and hard work, have become successful professionals.

I can't say that our lives were reflected in the television shows that were so prominent in the 50s. We didn't live in the suburbs and we weren't middle class, but, I miss those

shows that depicted fathers as strong, loving, figures who worked to support their families. Fathers were the head of households while the women welcomed the role of being the heart of the family.

I grew up with Donna and Alex Stone watching the "Donna Reed Show" and with Jim and Margaret Anderson on "Father Knows Best." Of course, there was Ozzie & Harriet, Leave it to Beaver, and Margie Albright who was raised by her widower father in "My Little Margie." All the fathers in these shows were honorable, decent men whose worst flaw was forgetting a birthday or arriving late for dinner after working overtime and forgetting to call home. These were men who took their responsibility seriously as fathers and they were seen as caring and loving and respected by their tv wives and children.

As the decades went by, there continued to be respectable portraits of fathers in other television sitcoms such as The Patty Duke Show, The Brady Bunch, The Courtship of Eddie's Father, Happy Days, Family Affair and, of course, I Love Lucy. Even Jed Clampett of the Beverly Hillbillies, who was not an educated man, always doled out common sense to guide his family through life's trials and tribulations. Again, the men occupied an esteemed place within the family unit.

But as the years passed, something happened that caused fathers to be unnecessary fixtures around the house, superfluous to the family, and the butt of far too many jokes. Fathers depicted in the "slobcom" Married with Children and in King of Queens, According to Jim, Everybody Loves Raymond, and Malcolm in the Middle are described as "deadbeat," "immature mentally," "lovable but lazy," "childish," and "someone who avoids any responsibility."

If sitcoms are a reflection of society, we're in a very sad state of decline because fathers are routinely depicted as buffoons and wimps who are just taking up space in the home.

Rather than representing fathers as sniveling spineless creatures, they should be portrayed as strong, responsible men who take their jobs as fathers and husbands seriously even in comical situations.

Perhaps this evolution of men's decline in stature on television resulted from the decline of viewing men as integral, necessary components of the family. Despite the fact that men are essential to the creation of a child, more and more women are choosing to eliminate men as quickly as possible after his initial participation in the process. When a man, for instance, has no say over whether a woman has an abortion, his position in the family is rendered moot.

You might say I'm stuck in 50s TV Land where a mother and father were the accepted ideal family, and, you'd be right. But, if it could be done in the 50s, why can't today's sitcoms show strong, noble fathers instead of immature little boys dressed in men's clothing who are incapable of tying their own shoelaces.

I'll admit I'm also stuck with the obviously out-dated notion that not all men are buffoons, as reflected in today's sitcoms, but are responsible, hard-working fathers who contribute to the family and should be admired. Bottom line: I'd choose Ward Cleaver over Al Bundy any day.

To all the men out there who are wonderfully mature, loving, responsible, providers for your families, Happy Father's Day!

Goldberg Undercover- Segment

2: 48 Hours On Crack Street- “The Streets”

This is the second segment in a special three part series of a groundbreaking documentary that aired in 1986.

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Surprise Special: Classic Goldberg- 48 Hours On Crack Street Part 1

This was groundbreaking TV Journalism that first aired in 1986 by CBS News

And it was my first major reporting assignment on prime time television ...

None of us who reported this story – the introduction of crack cocaine into our culture – wrote a script. There were no voice overs, also known as narration. Just real life action unfolding before our eyes, and the viewers’ eyes – in some scary places around New York City.

Hope you enjoy.

Bernie

Note: We will be releasing this in a 3 part series. Please check back often. Remember you can subscribe to BernardGoldberg.com updates by clicking this link.

48 Hours On Crack Street- The Dealers

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What are your thoughts? How has media and culture changed in the last 20 years? Comment below!