

Playing Bachelor: *Playboy*'s 1950s and 1960s Remasculinization Campaign

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Robert L. Green's 1960 article "The Contemporary Look in Campus Classics", adheres to manifestation of the 'swinging bachelor' and his movement into professionalism. A college student's passage from a fraternal environment of higher education to the business world demands an attitude and clothing makeover. Playboy presents the ideal man employers plan to hire. However, a prideful yet optimistic bravado exemplifies these applicants otherwise unattainable without the magazine's supervision. Presented with a new manliness, American males exhibited a wider range of talents and sensitivity towards previously feminine topics. In accordance with a stylistic, post-schoolboy decadence, the fifties and sixties questioned gender appropriation, especially the hostile restrictions of the average man.<sup>1</sup>

Masculinity shapes one's interactions, responding to global events as an agency of social relationships. Answering the call of World War II, men rushed to the service of nationalism. The homecoming from Europe forced the transition from aggressiveness to domestic tranquility, contradicting the macho training American soldiers endured. James Gilbert explores the stereotypes imposed upon middle-class men as they evolved alongside urbanity and the alterations of manliness apparent in the public sector. However, the Cold War threatened the livelihoods of men and their patriarchal hierarchy as the exploration of gender just emerged. In *Homeward Bound: American Families in the Cold War Era*, Elaine Tyler May notes the emphasis on family security amidst heightened criticism and modification, clearly noting masculinity's struggle with the intervention of femininity and socio-economic restructuring. Erecting a theory of manhood agitated the social imbalance spawned by the battle in Europe and the rise of Communism's ideological peril.<sup>2</sup>

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<sup>1</sup> *Playboy*, August 1960: 63-65, <https://www.igplayboy.com/issues>.

<sup>2</sup> James Gilbert, *Men in the Middle: Searching for Masculinity in the 1950s* (Chicago: The University of Chicago Press, 2005); Elaine Tyler May, *Homeward Bound: American Families in the Cold War Era* (New York: Basic Books, 1999).

Western culture labels contemporary manliness as the ability to exert or resist influence over a subject; in comparison, according to wartime media, motherhood signified the fulfillment of females' obligations to society. With both genders isolated by cultural expectations, the major labor shift initiated by the United States entry into war destabilized gender assignments for the second time in under two decades. Upon arrival home, soldiers entered an immensely revolutionized U.S. during the 1940s and 1950s, where lines of masculinity scrambled due to an imminent threat proliferated by the Doom's Day clock and domestication imposed by modernity. To lose a sense of identity causes the brink of a collapse. This gender anxiety turned the mass's attention towards the opinion proclaimed within the eccentric folds of Hugh Hefner's *Playboy*. The famous "bachelor pad" offered a safe haven for private examination of interests, disregarding the confines of military, political, and suburban intercessions.<sup>3</sup>

By providing a background on the creator of *Playboy*, readers may notice Hefner's personal story also combatting the fears of foreign, ideological subjugation. Studying the magazine's original framework clarifies the motives and structure necessary to reach the aims of renewed masculinity. In addition, primary examples explicitly portray "Playboys" physical design fashioned by attire, behavior, and hobbies. Finally, the response to public criticism concerning the degradation of women mandates a discussion of the magazine's endless self-evaluation. Thus, returning troops and rising entrepreneurs engaged in the manifestation of an unknown spectrum of masculine curiosity demolishing predicated gender biases.

High culture carried the most esteem, status, and money, but popular culture appealed to urbanity and the masses. Unlike elevated culture, experiments within the trendy culture either succeed within a short period or failed for eternity. Classicism airs to the rich; whereas, nostalgia promotes popular culture's losses for brief comebacks. However, this does not promise

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<sup>3</sup> Ibid., 124.

remembrance over consecutive decades. Longevity requires consideration prior to social introduction. With so many factors to weigh out, the creator of *Playboy* strategized to avoid social rejection and annihilation.<sup>4</sup>

Hugh Hefner, born April 9, 1926, defied his strictly Puritan upbringing. Despite serving in the army for two years, he pursued a more liberal pathway. Hefner studied psychology and sociology in college, which equipped him in the dissection of the American mindset. Working for the famous magazine *Esquire* directed him to his niche: advertising. Trial and error led Hefner to a career in exploitation. His former employer instructed him to rely on subtle manipulation, rather than excluding its influence. This inspired him to add unique elements to assert dominance in the industry. Repetitive styles tend to destroy popularity. Since *Esquire* dictated high culture, Hefner targeted the opposite side of the spectrum. His diverse background aided him on his conquest of popular culture. In December 1953, Hefner published the first issue of *Playboy*, and from its air, the company soared for over three decades.<sup>5</sup>

For *Playboy* to spark public interest, it implored the seductive physique of supermodel Marilyn Monroe for its debut. Unlike other publishers at the time, Hefner employed celebrities for naked photographs to showcase their vulnerability. Suddenly, Monroe became attached to the bachelor lifestyle. She exemplified the ideal spouse, achievable via the *Playboy* procedure. By exploiting popularity in a new manner, the magazine collected second-hand marketability. Nevertheless, *Playboy* clearly rejected women from its original audience with the following statement: “If you’re somebody’s sister, wife or mother-in-law and picked us up by mistake, please

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<sup>4</sup> Thomas Weyer, *Reaching for Paradise: The Playboy Vision of America* (New York: Times Books, 1978), 195; Bill Osgerby, *Playboys in Paradise: Masculinity, Youth and Leisure-Style in Modern America* (New York: Berg, 2001), 149; Herbert J. Gans, *Popular Culture and High Culture: An Analysis and Evaluation of Taste* (New York: Basic Books, Inc., 1974), 22-23.

<sup>5</sup> Weyer, *Reaching for Paradise*, 15-21; Carrie Pitzulo, *Bachelors and Bunnies* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 2011), 80-81.

pass us along to the man in your life and get back to you *Ladies Home Companion*.”<sup>6</sup> Revitalizing masculinity repudiated gender neutrality. The first issue proposed sophistication and spice linked to pure masculine taste. While upholding a perfectionist ideology, *Playboy* commissioned admirable women for enticement. As a result, sexuality aroused the modern man, and the restoration of his culture ensued.<sup>7</sup>

In an interview with NPR, Hefner states his muse. “I had a romantic notion of a time that I had missed in the Roaring 20s because I grew up during the Depression in the 1930s.”<sup>8</sup> *Playboy* symbolized his chase for a past era. Drastic fluctuations occurred in demographics and statistics, and society reminisced the high life. The war jaded the American dream and reinstated the call to duty. For example, marriages increased, but the age of marriage dropped considerably. Men concerned themselves with preservation rather than pleasure. Lost in transition, men struggled to restore their acquired statuses from the Age of Intolerance.<sup>9</sup>

Starting in the mid-1940s, women reached the opulence men achieved momentarily. Meanwhile, masculinity and male connoisseurship followed a predictable pattern. The American male fashioned himself according to the women who infiltrated the system. According to Syd Mead, *Playboy*’s pioneer designer, males appeared as the weaker of the two sexes, prone to manipulative complications. Comics in *Playboy*’s February 1954 edition allude to males succumbing to the rise of feminism.<sup>10</sup>

Some individuals despised females’ rise to control. Norman Mailer, a renowned American journalist, called for remasculinization as women became more self-absorbed and attempted to

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<sup>6</sup> *Playboy*, December 1953: 3.

<sup>7</sup> *Ibid.*, 17-18.

<sup>8</sup> Hugh Hefner, interview by Terry Gross, National Public Radio, 1999, audio transcript, <https://www.npr.org/2017/09/28/554194378/hugh-hefner-on-early-playboy-feminism-and-changing-americas-values>.

<sup>9</sup> Elizabeth Fraterrigo, “The Answer to Suburbia: *Playboy*’s Urban Lifestyle,” *Journal of Urban History* 34, no. 5 (July 2008): 749-750, doi:10.1177/0096144208316712.

<sup>10</sup> Pitzulo, *Bachelors and Bunnies*, 72; *Playboy*, November 1955: 45; *Playboy*, February 1954: 14-15.

outstretch their boundaries. He viewed masculinity as an object to gain. Men's key to power vanished. Researcher Barbara Ehrenreich's 1984 research on gender supremacy concluded that a battle between the sexes ensued as the magazine supported a masculine rebellion into feminine enterprises. Escaping the claustrophobic nature of breadwinning allowed men to be potentially successful. Returning home offered a clean slate and a chance to ascend again.<sup>11</sup>

Since women underwent a sexual revolution in the early twentieth century, *Playboy* targeted a moral crusade, lifestyle transformation, and an entertainment call already underway. With the scene set, Hefner instituted his invention. Hefner reported that "it [was] a revitalization process."<sup>12</sup> Since the military demanded standardization, men concealed their bravado in exchange for solidarity. While soliciting the women's reformation strengthened the abolition of the gender divide, men secured a stepping block to explore their sexuality and hobbies, with women collecting majority of the backlash.<sup>13</sup>

Within a matter of months, the economy shifted from military support to domestic investments. *Playboy* emerged as markets strayed from demand to mass culture. Segmentation increased profits and reduced competition. Stakeholders explored new products and commercial lines with great success. When the Korean and Vietnam wars exploded, the security of these profits discouraged wide-ranging mobilization which the country previously instituted. Money comes with confidence and ambition. Primarily soldiers risked their small salaries endorsing this new movement; therefore, they received the rewards. Major industrialist J. Paul Getty believed a mentality produced by wealth forms a brighter, optimistic man. This inspires a higher level of potential. Hefner advocated for these young bachelors and entrepreneurs. His magazine targeted

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<sup>11</sup> Taylor Joy Mitchell, "Norman Mailer: Playboy Magazine Heavyweight," *The Mailer Review* 5, no. 1 (September 2011): 199+, Gale Academic Onefile; Brigit Sauer and Kathleen Starck, *A Man's World? Political Masculinities in Literature and Culture* (Newcastle upon Tyne, UK: Cambridge Scholars Publisher, 2014): 182, ProQuest Ebook Central.

<sup>12</sup> Interview with Hugh Hefner, NPR, 1999.

<sup>13</sup> Osgerby, *Playboys in Paradise*, 150.

“a particular guy: sophisticated, intelligent, urban—a young man-about-town, who enjoys good, gracious living.”<sup>14</sup>

The ideal *Playboy* bachelor matched a strict criteria. Non-negotiables included gender and race, but status permitted exceptions. The magazine rejected African American consumers by bolstering the ‘swinging bachelor’ as racially unattainable; however, a black vision and guide for style developed named *Ebony*.<sup>15</sup> By authorizing spinoffs, *Playboy* narrowed their readers to a specific breed but controlled the development of sub-cultures. A brand subconsciously initiated. Once advertisers determined interests, men became objects of consumerism. *Playboy* existed as a dream and a sale.<sup>16</sup>

To reach paradise, connoisseurs acquired via quantity and quality. Hefner acknowledged the missing pieces to masculinity and provided solutions to boost bravura. The magazine outlined a plan of action relative to the times and requests of male culture. Monitoring the variables ensured the setting aligned with *Playboy*’s futuristic aim. “I tried to create...a magazine for the indoor guy but would focus specifically on the single life—in other words, the period of bachelorhood before you settle down,” proclaimed Hefner.<sup>17</sup> Conventions equate to the termination of life. By prolonging decadence, *Playboy* forgot tradition.<sup>18</sup>

The folds utilized a variety of tactics to captivate readers. Interview articles created a platform for elites to archive their activities. Political coverage flooded the pages as well. Fields prone to masculinity spurred professionalism and intellectualism. *Playboy* advisors based their columns on the acquisitions of the modern man. Historically, testosterone fueled sports, politics,

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<sup>14</sup> Natalie Coulter, “Selling the Male Consumer the Playboy Way,” *Popular Communication* 12, no. 3 (July 2014): 139+, doi:10.1080/15405702.2014.921920; *Playboy*, January 1963: 109; *Playboy*, September 1955: 35.

<sup>15</sup> For more on black power’s male movement refer to the 1970 publication *The Black Revolution: An Ebony Special Issue*. This addresses myths and objectives regarding black masculinity.

<sup>16</sup> Osgerby, *Playboys in Paradise*, 173-174; Coulter, “Selling the Male,” 139+.

<sup>17</sup> Interview with Hugh Hefner, NPR, 1999.

<sup>18</sup> Pitzulo, *Bachelors and Bunnies*, 78-79.

war, and the economy. Therefore, the easiest dialogue originated from this range, and a call for knowledgeable, creative writers ensued.<sup>19</sup>

Hefner commissioned renowned, literary authors and editors, such as Auguste Comte Spectorisky, to elevate the taste. In return, new hires brought in colleagues, who spread the brand's name and expand the spectrum. Spectorisky outsourced Norman Mailer, often compared to Ernest Hemingway, to advance the color and publicity. Mailer shaped an iconic section for *Playboy*: stimulating literature. The world remembers Hemingway as a fictional genius, so Mailer incorporated his devices into masculine and sexual prose. Eventually, he embraced non-fiction, which stirred reader scrutiny.<sup>20</sup>

Never losing his masculinity objective, Mailer's installments sponsored contemporary entertainment and current events. His imagination prompted new-fangled outlooks on life. He used male heroes to direct storylines, connecting his persona to Hemingway. Articles transformed into literature. This exclusive value affected the weight of *Playboy*'s influence. Men believed these readings raised their intelligence. Personifying Hemingway's genius, Hefner exploited wisdom in response to social affairs. Sophistication pushed the folds beyond primitive erotica. Sex and brains coincide with comprehensive proof.<sup>21</sup>

Additionally, Hefner selected business researcher Shepherd Mead to fill his blank space. His attitude toward *Playboy* and its impact on masculinity overlapped with Spectorisky and Mailer. "Simply feed the facts to your subconscious and then relax. The more you relax, the better. Forget the problem. The answer will come to you. Sometimes it will come while you are shaving, or while you are sinking a put. But it will come," affirmed the capitalist.<sup>22</sup> A feel good voice rarely causes more harm. With public masculinity on the decline, boosting self-esteem became the only source

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<sup>19</sup> Sauer and Starck, *A Man's World?*, 181; Pitzulo, *Bachelors and Bunnies*, 95.

<sup>20</sup> Mitchell, *Norman Mailer*, 199+.

<sup>21</sup> *Ibid.*, 199+.

<sup>22</sup> *Playboy*, November 1954: 28.



for improvement. To champion narcissism gains the magazine revenue and lifts the spirits of those under duress. Gradually, *Playboy* invaded the minds of men, which proved to be the difficult part of revitalization. Stubbornness aided their resistance. Regardless, only the painless part remained: the physical makeover.<sup>23</sup>

In the May 1954 copy, a map labeled “*Playboy’s* Progress” illustrates the invasion of male culture via a step-to-step process, beginning within the town home. Reluctancy persisted in rural areas, which explains the locational opportunities bachelors pursued. The majority of advertised products and events popped up in urban centers. As the modern man chased his dream, his journey and achievements reestablished his control over the city.<sup>24</sup>

Although masculinity began to flourish in its customary sectors of society, *Playboy* intended to expand manhood into unknown territories. The 1956 Dress Right Campaign marked the first move towards connoisseurship, and the 1959 installment titled “*Playboy* Penthouse” strengthened the move towards new industries. Since fashion and home décor traditionally reside within femininity, Hefner prepared to permeate the gender divide. Rallying against disapproval, he continued on with his goals.<sup>25</sup>

From shoes to belts, a ‘gentleman’s wardrobe’ exhibited fashion in agreement with the trends. The bachelor lifestyle inherited a distinct look. Men radiated a poise not seen since winning the war. This closet equipped them to reenter American society. Employers found these men quite attractive in all categories. “How to Apply for a Job” hit the stands in the May 1954 issue. Shepherd Mead proposed that the labor force disliked specialization, rather personal skills and determination represented a viable candidate. The middle-class honed in on these qualifications. Average jobs paid the bills and allowed for occasional splurges.<sup>26</sup>

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<sup>23</sup> Osgerby, *Playboys in Paradise*, 163.

<sup>24</sup> *Playboy*, May 1954: 22-23; Fraterrigo, “Answer to Suburbia,” 751.

<sup>25</sup> Coulter, “Selling the Male,” 139+.

<sup>26</sup> Pitzulo, *Bachelors and Bunnies*, 88-89; *Playboy*, May 1954: 11.

With the picture-perfect appearance and job, spending money on leisure and entertainment followed suit. For former servicemen, weapons became their choice of collection. The magazine advised readers on the best antique guns to add to their cabinets. Upon touching the Second Amendment, *Playboy* spoke to hearts of every countryman. The battlefield always served as a man's land. Now, they could admire strategy and weaponry on non-fatal ground.<sup>27</sup>

Another pleasure of men fills them from the inside out. Food pervades culture, gender, race, sexuality, etc. Connoisseurship delights itself with the culinary arts. With the right recipe, men impress women with a delicious palate. Traditionally, women own the kitchen. However, with *Playboy's* assistance, men untapped savory flavors not found in the common cookbook. After the food, talking grew to be the other half of the battle. Relationships never escape the human mind. Naturally, people judge conversation and hospitality comparative to class. "*Playboy* at the Punch Bowl" speaks on the model conditions for dating and parties. A perfect bachelor hosts, serves, entertains, and rushes to fix complications. Women treasure attentive men. One reader attributed his success engaging women to the magazine's differentiation between sex and reality. The recovery of masculinity rippled a change in behavior.<sup>28</sup>

A true connoisseur purchases extravagant items as well. Home décor aligns with classiness, and the *Playboy* impression resonated in a number of household across the nation. Undistinguishable designs and layouts lacked the authenticity and freshness of a personal touch. With limits on prints and the novelty of originals, contemporary art privatizes expressionism. *Playboy* recommends this hobby because of its objective stance. Used as a simple conversation

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<sup>27</sup> *Playboy*, October 1962: 79-81.

<sup>28</sup> Pitzulo, *Bachelors and Bunnies*, 84-85; *Playboy*, January 1955: 16; James K. Beggan and Scott T. Allison, "What Sort of Man Reads Playboy?" The Self Reported Influence of Playboy on the Construction of Masculinity," *The Journal of Men's Studies* 11, no. 2 (January 2003): 189+, Gale Academic Onefile.

starter, admiration for paintings and sculptures implies finer living. Masculinity drifted from bravado to sensitivity.<sup>29</sup>

Nevertheless, athletics held onto the rough nature. Sports offer people an outlet for aggression. Instead of causing chaos, athletes harness anger into energetic passions. In January 1954, *Playboy* published instructions on how to score boxing matches, regardless of the apparent victor. The magazine recognized the social power of sporting events. During prime games, shops close their doors and choose entertainment over money. American nationalism claims sports just as much as the flag. Hefner managed the ways and means by which men subconsciously watched with lists of critiques and products to increase enjoyment. Men deserved a viewing in complete relaxation.<sup>30</sup>

Mobilization carries a country to the forefront of industrialization. Automobiles contribute to this standing. After the war, streets started to line up with traffic. Anyone of a measurable status joined this community. *Playboy* printed a series of drawings in 1969 to commemorate the progression of the bachelor lifestyle relative to decade's cars. Each year showed a man charming a young women with his new ride. Always drawn in the driver's seat, men drove the car, the conversation, and the mood. Finally, manhood retained control.<sup>31</sup>

An all-encompassing segment called "The *Playboy's* Bazaar" recurred in almost every issue. This advertisement sold shoes, grills, coasters, portraits, etc. Essentially, the ad listed any items within reason and social demand. Hefner dedicated articles to a variety of markets but operated the "Bazaar" as all-inclusive. *Playboy* termed itself, "a pleasure-primer for the adult male."<sup>32</sup>

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<sup>29</sup> Pitzulo, *Bachelors and Bunnies*, 86; *Playboy*, April 1955, 48.

<sup>30</sup> *Playboy*, January 1954: 16-17.

<sup>31</sup> *Playboy*, November 1969: 162-167.

<sup>32</sup> *Playboy*, July 1955: 50; *Playboy*, April 1954: 50.

With a comprehensive read in hand, men sought no other subscriptions. Reaching total authority allowed Hefner to dictate the imminence of masculinity. Men instated themselves as kings of leisure, governing society and the economy. Not yielding to complacency, Hefner moved deeper into the markets. He stimulated a new presence in Hollywood. From movies to songs, the ‘swinging bachelor’ took a physical form. Masculinity outgrew its original state.<sup>33</sup>

Urbanity normalized *Playboy*. It conceived a conversation starter and a forum for diversity. Additionally, the magazine instituted a rite of passage. During the 1950s and 1960s, it symbolized an aspiration of manhood. Attaining manliness followed one of two tracks: the *Playboy* guide or self-exploration. Thus, paradise implored either anxiety or simplicity, up to a man’s discretion. With a stage to flourish on, men focused on the influential articles not just the eccentric centerfolds.<sup>34</sup>

America could not contain Hefner’s far-reaching ideologies. The folds appeared in international headlines and encouraged revitalization in other postwar nations, especially liberal Finland. Western popular culture outdrove political strife and oppression. Masculinity may have disappeared momentarily, but its death never occurred. The world awaited the resurgence of testosterone.<sup>35</sup>

Studies and comments discovered that the editorials enlightened readers’ views on liberty. Hefner disregarded censorship and relied on freedom of speech to advance his career. The bachelor lifestyle communicated new messages. One, aimed at capitalism, requested wants over necessities. *Playboy* proved the practicable application of masculinity on paper. Heterosexuality boosted capitalism.<sup>36</sup>

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<sup>33</sup> *Playboy*, July 1961: 78-79; Osgerby, *Playboys in Paradise*, 155.

<sup>34</sup> Amber Batura, “How Hugh Hefner Invented the Modern Man,” *Sex and Sexuality*, ed. The New York Times Editorial Staff (New York: Rosen Publishing Group, 2018): 191, ProQuest Ebook Central; Beggan and Allison, “What Sort of Man,” 189+.

<sup>35</sup> Sauer and Starck, *A Man’s World?*, 184.

<sup>36</sup> Beggan and Allison, “What Sort of Man,” 189+; Osgerby, *Playboys in Paradise*, 175-176.

Once men opened the folds, they questioned their appearances and statuses relative to its ideals. The war sensitized men, and *Playboy* capitalized on men's insecurities. Competitors like *Esquire* and *Ebony* chased after the same line of success by revamping their folds to fill the voids Hefner ignored or missed. However, quality destroyed their slim chances. Only *Playboy* understood its self-made industry.<sup>37</sup>

The objectification of men and the exploitation of their wallets resonated fear in traditionalists. Men transformed into pawns of consumerism; however, only discontent suggests a bad motive. Bachelors praised *Playboy* for the recovery of their gender. Also, they realized liberality was impossible without this publication. The 'swinging bachelor' served as a contradiction to conservatism and appealed to the licentious behavior of the single man. Men of modernity surpassed the men of conformity. Men hated the constraints of tradition; therefore, molding to an archetype seemed like a small price to pay for liberation. As more issues hit the stands, women started to conform to 'the girls next door' stereotype as well. This reversed the superiority complex from the wartime period. This reset rebuilt the gender hierarchy, but the divide greyed as masculinity relished in the perks of femininity.<sup>38</sup>

With the hedonistic man in power, he began to question the safety and security of prewar masculinity. Manhood could not restrict the ambition *Playboy* instilled during revitalization. Men strived far beyond the goals Hefner originally set out to accomplish. He continued to uphold this movement, but at a certain point, masculinity embarked on its own route.<sup>39</sup>

"The enemy...was clearly the right wing and...[the] Moral Majority and the Puritan part of society," declared *Playboy's* creator.<sup>40</sup> Hefner lumped feminists into this category as well.

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<sup>37</sup> Ibid., 152.

<sup>38</sup> For more on playmates read the 2015 article in *The Journal of Popular Film and Television* by Sofia Rios. "Joey Potter: A Final Girl Next Door" defines a bunny and her role; Pitzulo, *Bachelors and Bunnies*, 93-94; Osgerby, *Playboys in Paradise*, 151; Coulter, "Selling the Male," 139+.

<sup>39</sup> Osgerby, *Playboys in Paradise*, 161.

<sup>40</sup> Interview with Hugh Hefner, NPR, 1999.

Unfortunately, this battle lingers to the present day, yet Hefner's responses never vary. "I consider myself...a very moral man...and morality has always been very, very important to me."<sup>41</sup> Women argued recovering masculinity undermined their sexual revolution from decades earlier. However, men employed the rise of feminism as a motivator. Also, *Playboy* advisors encouraged a respectful tone and dissuaded sexism. Misinterpretations led to a preventable argument. The magazine aimed to decrease the polarization between the two genders by loosening standards and broadening the limits of interest. *Playboy* fought for the women's movement just as much as the men's.<sup>42</sup>

Since sex stratifies low culture from high culture, these folds appealed to the upper-middle class. However, promiscuity limited its rise to high culture. Despite *Playboy*'s articles on color pallets and food cravings, it failed to eliminate the sex stigma. Conservatives claim that popular culture emotionally destroys people by inhibiting satisfaction through violence and sex. In another capacity, its alteration and abandonments of reality distort one's mental state. Lastly, popular culture prohibits the development of true high culture. Hefner does not contest the nonsense of such accusations. Instead, he reports that, "the magazine never, ever has been anything even remotely related to pornography."<sup>43</sup> According to him, a violation of culture cannot occur if sex is not portrayed as the primary objective. Hefner constantly reiterated the purpose of his creation: revitalization. Articles rarely focused on eroticism; rather, he incorporated pictures as a lure but not a catch. Men selected the magazine for a masculine gain, and its provocative nature cannot dictate its scheme.<sup>44</sup>

As the magazine established a legitimate agency, the "Dear *Playboy*" column emerged to note positive feedback and respond to negative reviews. From his home in Albuquerque, New

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<sup>41</sup> Hugh Hefner, interview by TIME, 2009, audio transcript, <https://time.com/4960897/hugh-hefner-interview-sex-politics/>.

<sup>42</sup> Beggan and Allison, "What Sort of Man," 189+.

<sup>43</sup> Interview with Hugh Hefner, TIME, 2009.

<sup>44</sup> Gans, *High Culture*, 30, 92-93.

Mexico, Arthur Jeffries wrote, “*Playboy* is a hypocritical magazine...you allow [authors] to satirically slash the phoniness of our society...[yet] you endorse and promote much of that same phoniness.”<sup>45</sup> Some men feared the ‘swinging bachelor’ was unattainable through average measures. The epitome of this lifestyle subverted middle-class contentment. In addition, masculinity acclimated to materialism, ruining the naturalization of gender. *Playboy* rejected the alleged hypocrisy by replying that, “...its opposite when we allow our satirists to deflate areas of life reflected in *Playboy*...true sophistication...recognizes some of the ridiculous aspects of one’s own personality and to good-naturedly poke fun at them.”<sup>46</sup> Although some gentleman deemed the *Playboy* bachelor an imposition upon society, the magazine merely presented the luxurious lifestyle as a viable option.

Over time, Hefner believed people would not spend as much money, but this does not infer the lifestyle was fading. The ‘swinging bachelor’ forms an everlasting persona. A free-spirited man refuses to be tamed by gender or politics. These newly-reformed men sought revolts against conservatism’s errors. For example, *Playboy* proceed to clench onto antiwar sentiment, which became a prominent counterculture amidst the Vietnam outbreak. As previously done, Hefner boosted morale and fired protests against selfish directives. Consequentially, insularity fell to the bachelor attitude underlying men’s activity in the public sector.<sup>47</sup>

The 1950s and 1960s mark the beginning of society’s upheaval. To contend complacency requires a substantial amount of promotion. With everything to lose and a target audience under subjugation, Hefner’s *Playboy* invigorated men to redeem the dignity rewarded at war. Nature requests male domination; therefore, the ‘swinging bachelor’ contained a great deal of potential. The magazine presented masculinity attractively by personifying hedonism. With leisure and

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<sup>45</sup> *Playboy*, June 1960: 5.

<sup>46</sup> Ibid.

<sup>47</sup> Ibid.; Batura, “Invented the Modern Man,” 193.

pleasure as acceptable provisions of living, the male culture broadened its taste and reduced judgment. Men left for Europe with a rigid form of ethics but returned to battle for a new lifestyle, memorializing the freedom for which they defended.



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