

MASTER'S RESEARCH PROJECT

SELLING A FANTASY IN 1960S AMERICA:  
ADVERTISING AND CONSUMERISM IN *PLAYBOY*  
MAGAZINE

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## ABSTRACT

When *Playboy* magazine emerged in the 1950s, founder Hugh Hefner vowed to create a lifestyle magazine based around luxurious fantasies. Beyond its monthly nude centerfold, *Playboy* reached widespread success promoting a fantasy lifestyle of fine wine, sexual adventure, automobiles, and cool jazz to white, middle-class, heterosexual males. In reality, the lifestyle the magazine celebrated as the ideal for readers was one that only wealthy American males could attain. Nonetheless, *Playboy's* direct emphasis on consumerism being the means to turn fantasy into reality mirrored the longings of millions of middle-class American males. Moreover, the Advertising Revolution that occurred at the beginning of the 1960s gave Hefner the tools necessary to further emphasize consumption as a means for achieving personal pleasure.

## INTRODUCTION

In the 1960s, middle-class America was shifting to a consumer-based economy. Although apparent in the 1920s, America's consumer culture matured in the 1960s, with middle-class Americans generating more disposable income.<sup>1</sup> Along with greater prosperity came avenues for self-expression that afforded new opportunities for challenging traditional philosophies. Arriving in 1953 and becoming the most successful male magazine in America by the 1970s, *Playboy* addressed concerns of frustrated, white, heterosexual middle-class males, who fantasized about life meaning more than working for the 'organization man', living in suburbia and providing for their family. Even though escaping marriage and family expectations was more of a fantasy than a reality for the majority of middle-class readers, *Playboy* was able to provide an alternate opportunity for males to acquire individual pleasure through consumption. Even if middle-class males could not escape their reality, *Playboy's* direct emphasis on consumerism as a means for achieving greater social meaning mirrored the longings of millions of middle-class American males.

Most of the scholarship to-date explores the cultural significance of *Playboy*, highlighting the pornographic content and discussing how the magazine pushed the boundaries of public discussions about sex. However, one area that is neglected is the

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<sup>1</sup>Jean Baudrillard, *The Consumer Society: Myths and Structures* (London: SAGE Publications, 1998), p. 17.

importance of advertisement in influencing male fantasy of becoming the “*Playboy* male”. Therefore, the focus of this paper is to explore how, in the 1960s, *Playboy* magazine sold American males a fantasy lifestyle that centered on concepts of achieving the ‘good life’ through consumption. *Playboy’s* use of advertisements, as well as editorials, centerfolds and articles to encourage the acquisition of goods, led the magazine to be a lifestyle guidebook for American males post World War II. Hefner’s emphasis on the ‘good life’ revolved around a fantasy of luxury goods and these products told urban middle-class males that they could reinvent themselves through the quality of life that *Playboy* projected as an attainable goal.<sup>2</sup>

This paper is broken down into four chapters. It begins first by laying out the groundwork of the “masculinity crisis” post World War II, while also providing historical overview of gender roles in America and how they were altered in the 1950s. Then, it provides insight into when and why Hefner began *Playboy* magazine, detailing Hefner’s personal life and the frustrations he had with post-war social and political conservatism. It provides further study on how the magazine gained popularity during the 1950s, and the challenges Hefner encountered while trying to gain mainstream acceptance. Next, it leads into a discussion about the difference between advertising in the 1950s and the 1960s, highlighting the revolution in advertising at the turn of the decade. The third chapter provides in depth analysis of specific advertisements selected for the publication, while providing evidence of the fantasy lifestyle Hefner wanted his readers to consume. The final chapter discusses the editor’s attempts to raise the sophistication of *Playboy*,

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<sup>2</sup> Mark Jancovich, *The Politics of Playboy: Lifestyle, Sexuality and Non-Conformity*, “Historicizing Lifestyle: Mediating Taste, Consumption and Identity from the 1900’s to 1970’s,” David Bell and Joanne Hollows, eds. (Burlington: Ashgate Publishing Company, 2006), p. 72.

placing the magazine at the heart of the political and social transitions that were occurring in the 1960s, with specific emphasis on the sexual revolution.

## SCHOLARSHIP REVIEW

For the purposes of this study, literature from the areas of gender studies, media studies, history, economics and psychology were reviewed. This literature review is a critical overview of how scholars have positioned masculinity within a world of cultural artifacts and capitalism. First, literature on masculinity will be discussed, followed by an analysis of the research to-date on consumerism. Next, the challenging nature of *Playboy's* place in American society will be highlighted, using both secondary and primary sources to evaluate the magazine's importance.

Many scholars have attempted to explain the "masculinity crisis" post World War II by emphasizing the contradicting elements of conservatism and change that were evident during the 1950s. For instance, four relatively recent works analyze *Playboy's* impact on mid-century masculinity: Bill Osgerby's *Playboy's in Paradise: Masculinity, Youth, and Leisure Style in Modern America*, Steven Watts *Mr. Playboy: Hugh Hefner and the American Dream* and Elizabeth Fraterrigo's *Playboy and the Making of the Good Life in Modern America*. Each of these texts explores how *Playboy* editors created a specific, new, lasting image of American masculinity.

While each scholar criticizes *Playboy's* empire as being a 'taste dictator' by telling American males how to be the *Playboy* male, each scholar devotes most of their

scholarship discussing the more positive attributes of the magazine. Watts argues that Hefner's influence extends "well beyond the bedroom".<sup>3</sup> He believes that because Hefner framed sex as "all American", a pursuit as normal and worthy as acquiring a new car, he effectively loosened traditional moral structures about sexuality.<sup>4</sup> Watts is intent on exploring the deeper meaning of Hefner's success and popularity in America's cultural history, but doing so masks his scholarship's true academic potential. For example, nearly every chapter ends with a sweeping praise of the magazine. At the end of chapter nine, Watts glorifies Hefner stating: "Hefner and *Playboy's* social and political orientation of the early 1960s reflected a Kennedy-esque sensibility"<sup>5</sup>. Using numerous statements at the end of chapters emphasizing the positive attributes of Hefner and his empire gives Watts research a biased feel. The scholarship does provide useful insight on the image Hefner gave middle-class American males in the 1960s, but unfortunately, Watts spends little analysis on critiquing Hefner and his capitalistic empire.

Similar to Watts, Fratterigo uses Hefner's personal life as a mirror to post-war society, focusing on *Playboy's* influence in changing traditional views about sexuality. Fratterigo believes that *Playboy* succeeded because it pushed the boundaries about public discussions of sex but did not overstep them.<sup>6</sup> Osgerby's research, like Watts and Fratterigo, highlights *Playboy's* success and positive influence on American culture. Osgerby, disagreeing with Fratterigo and Watts, believes it was Hefner's integration of sexuality amidst pages of luxurious items that resulted in his lasting popularity, not his

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<sup>3</sup> Steven Watts, *Mr. Playboy: Hugh Hefner and the American Dream* (New Jersey: John Wiley & Sons, Inc., 2008), p. 197.

<sup>4</sup> Ibid.

<sup>5</sup> Watts, p. 197.

<sup>6</sup> Barbara Ehrenreich, *The Hearts of Men: American Dreams and the Flight from Commitment* (New York, Anchor Press, 1983), p. 44.



rebellion against Victorian moral codes.<sup>7</sup> For Osgerby, the editorial and advertising content led readers to be interested in the magazine for more than just the centerfolds, which eventually opened the door for Hefner to encourage readers to become the mythical *Playboy* male through consumerism.

Osgerby touches on important connections between the mythical lifestyle *Playboy* projected and American consumerism. However, in order to get a fully evolved understanding of how advertisements in *Playboy* influenced American males, it is important to focus most of the research on the magazine itself, using secondary sources as additional material. For the purposes of this thesis, it was necessary to utilize the political views of *Playboy* as expressed directly through the editors of the publication. More notably, primary evidence was derived directly from the advertisements, advice columns, and forums that were present throughout the magazine. With full access to the online *Playboy* archive, connections to events that were occurring in America at the time of publication were made and allowed for a more complete analysis of the magazine's content.

Academic scholarship on *Playboy* focuses on one of two themes: masculinity or pornography. In order to produce something unique, it is important to place the magazine within a context of what was happening in post-war American popular culture, rather than solely on pornography or gender studies. This thesis joins the conversation started by scholars like Carrie Pitzulo, who traces the winding path the magazine forged in its construction of idealized, heterosexual masculinity through male consumer patterns.<sup>8</sup> Pitzulo focuses the majority of her scholarship on contradicting gender politics in a

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<sup>7</sup> Bill Osgerby, "The Bachelor Pad as Cultural Icon: Masculinity, Consumption and Interior Design in Men's Magazines, 1930-65." *Journal of Design History*, vol. 18, No. 1. (Spring 2005): p. 100.

<sup>8</sup> Carrie Pitzulo, *Bachelors and Bunnies: The Sexual Politics of Playboy* (Chicago: The University of Chicago Press, 2011), p. 3.

contradicting age. She considers the ways in which *Playboy* confronted and contributed to changing notions of heterosexuality.<sup>9</sup> Highlighting *Playboy's* treatment of women and monogamy, Pitzulo provides a unique depiction of *Playboy's* role in society that is crucial for understanding the magazine's influence on gender.<sup>10</sup> Even though this project does not formally engage in discussions of pornography studies, or feminism, the objectification of the centerfolds and advertisements cannot be ignored. How Hefner viewed marriage and women are historically relevant to the narrative, therefore, these issues are addressed where appropriate.

*Playboy* promoted a version of masculinity that focused on the “good life” through the acquisition of particular products that celebrated pleasure in all forms. This assemblage of desire, pleasure and escape had been around for decades, but with emerging social and technological advancements in the 1960s, pleasure and individualism through consumption became much more pronounced.<sup>11</sup> Although interpretations that discuss *Playboy's* impact on American masculinity are useful, they cannot fully account for the magazine's impact on popular culture and society. Instead of repeating the traditional narratives of *Playboy* that focus on gender and pornography studies, this research locates the magazine within the evolving meaning of consumerism in the twentieth century. Although it may be obvious that *Playboy* promoted capitalism, its formulation of wealth was a reflection of a new, more youthful individuality. Here, it is important to note that for *Playboy* and advertisers, “youth” did not mean a demographic. Rather, for those focused on capitalistic endeavors, youth was a

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<sup>9</sup> Ibid, p. 7.

<sup>10</sup> Ibid.

<sup>11</sup> Daniel Harowitz, *The Anxieties of Affluence: Critiques of American Consumer Culture, 1939-1979*. (U.S.: The Maple-Vail Book Manufacturing Group, 2004), p. 5.

characteristic used to sell a particular attitude and image. Young or old, this focus on youth spanned generations and was useful to advertisers in selling a fantasy.

In recent years, consumerism has become a popular field for historical discovery, which is hardly surprising given the importance of consumer behaviour in modern life. Up until the 1970s, historical study on consumerism was bound by traditional beliefs that consumerism was an irrelevant topic, unworthy of proper scholarly attention.<sup>12</sup> Before the 1970s, few scholars delved into historical study of consumerism but those who did, such as Vance Packard, John Kenneth Galbraith and William H. Whyte, critiqued the negative attributes of consumption. Wealth divisions, environmental waste and poverty were issues discussed by critics in the 1950s, but their scholarship had little analysis about why Americans were intrigued by consumerism in the first place.<sup>13</sup>

Elements of thinking consumerism is unworthy of study remain, but recently, historians have argued for the importance of consumerism studies because of its unique historical perspective. Joseph Heath's *The Structure of Hip Consumerism*, Thomas Frank's *The Conquest of Cool: Business Culture, Counterculture and the Rise of Hip Consumerism*, and Peter Stearns *Consumerism in World History: The Global Transformation of Desire* have provided this research with numerous avenues to explore. Without their literature, a proper understanding of how, why and when consumerism emerged would not have been attained. Furthermore, these scholars provide crucial insight into how Americans desire to consume transformed from the 1800s to the 1960s.

In his analysis of consumerism, Stearns provides evidence that consumption is a relatively modern phenomenon, emerging during the late eighteenth century.<sup>14</sup> By the

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<sup>12</sup> Ibid.

<sup>13</sup> William H. Whyte, *The Organization Man*. (Pennsylvania: University of Pennsylvania Press, 2002), p. 397.

<sup>14</sup> Peter N. Stearns, *Consumerism in World History: The Global Transformation of Desire* (New York: Routledge, 2001), p. viii.

1770s, advertisements were used in weekly newspapers, put on posters and trade cards and widely distributed in France and England.<sup>15</sup> During this “consumer revolution”, advertisers began to realize that the needs and wants of consumers were constantly evolving.<sup>16</sup> Storeowners began setting up enticing window displays and extending consumer credit to help people buy what they did not need.<sup>17</sup> Stearns focus on the emerging consumer culture in the eighteenth century is important for historical analysis, but his research lacks comparable critique of the 1960s consumer culture.

Heath fills the gap in research by providing numerous critiques of consumerism, spanning the early to mid twentieth century. Two of the main critiques made by Heath, specifically used in this paper, are about the manipulation of advertising and the exploitation of consuming leisure. Heath believes that the development of consumerism is in direct comparison to the advertisers ability to manipulate public desire for luxury goods.<sup>18</sup> According to this view, consumerism produces conformity, as advertisers promote an accepted image to American consumers. Advertisers successfully tell consumers that in order to move up the social ladder, they must conform to the image provided to them in advertisements.<sup>19</sup>

The scholarship presented by Stearns and Heath, focusing on the history and critiques of consumerism are undeniably important to this paper, but in order to connect the meaning of *Playboy* to all of this diverse literature, it is necessary to turn to Thomas Frank’s *The Conquest of Cool*. Frank’s thesis is unique in the discipline of consumerism, as he challenges the view about 1950s style status competition. His ideology of “hip consumerism: is one of the central forces driving consumption, and it has direct influence

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<sup>15</sup> Ibid, p.20.

<sup>16</sup> Ibid.

<sup>17</sup> Ibid, p.19.

<sup>18</sup> Joseph Heath, “The Structure of Hip Consumerism,” *Philosophy & Social Criticism*, vol. 27, no. 6 (2001): 9.

<sup>19</sup> Ibid.

on the way *Playboy* spoke to its readers in the post World War II era.<sup>20</sup> Frank argues that in the 1950s and 1960s, countercultural rebellion provided the primary source of consumerism in American society and that “cool” became the central ideological expression.<sup>21</sup> Applying his theory to how *Playboy* presented its fantasy lifestyle to readers, the similarities are outstanding. Hefner may not have particularly exploited the counterculture in the magazine, but he did manipulate the youthful image and the “cool” advertising techniques that Frank discusses in his research. Hefner wanted the *Playboy* male to be unique and “think for himself”, which according to Frank was the advertising characteristic exploited by agencies in the 1960s.<sup>22</sup>

The countercultural sensibility was not something that Hefner created, nor was he the only one to exploit the “individualistic” attitude, but the way he did present this ideology to his readers was unique. Originally marketing the magazine to a niche of college-educated professionals, the readership quickly expanded to include young men who wanted to achieve the lifestyle displayed on the various pages of *Playboy*.<sup>23</sup> He promoted having the freedom to be who you wanted to be, but he did so through advertising a particular brand of status. By doing so, he was not only using the “individual” ideal created by advertisers to his benefit, but he was also providing a new masculine image for readers to desire.

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<sup>20</sup> “Anti-advertising” and “hip consumerism” emerged at the end of the 1950s and was widely used by advertising agencies in the 1960s. “Hip consumerism” was the advertisers attempt to take what was “cool” and market the attitude to promote consumption. Taking imagery associated with the youth culture and criticism of advertising itself did this. Taking the mistrust Americans had of advertisements as a selling strategy, consumerism made the shift from conformity to individualism without much problem. This was considered “anti-advertising”. Thomas Frank, *The Conquest of Cool: Business Culture, Counterculture and the Rise of Hip Consumerism* (Chicago: University of Chicago press, 1997), p. 55.

<sup>21</sup> Frank, p. 107.

<sup>22</sup> Frank, p. 109.

<sup>23</sup> Susan Gunelius, *Building Brand Value the Playboy Way* (London: Palgrave Macmillan, 2009), p. 19.

## Chapter 1: CRISIS OF INDIVIDUALITY

*Too many people today live out their entire existence in a group, of a group and for a group—never attempting to explore their own individuality, never discovering who they are or what they are, or might be. Searching out one's own true identity and purpose, taking real pleasure in being a person, establishing a basis for true self-respect—these are the essence of living.*

--Hugh Hefner, *Playboy Philosophy*, July 1963

After World War II, America was experiencing many unsettling changes, with the end of war bringing about an era of social, political and cultural transitions that affected every aspect of American life. As Americans adjusted to cultural transitions of the Cold War, it was common for the government to advocate for a strong family unit, with women returning to domestic obligations and men continuing to hold power in the public sphere.<sup>24</sup> With less men working in heavy industry, manufacturing or agriculture and more working in office jobs, a return to traditional gender roles proved difficult.<sup>25</sup> When the Second World War took men out of the workforce on a large scale, the government

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<sup>24</sup> Taylor Joy Mitchell, "Cold War Playboys: Models of Masculinity in the Literature of Playboy" (PhD diss., University of South Florida, 2011): 10.

<sup>25</sup> Ibid.

campaigned heavily to use women to replace the substantial industrial demand.<sup>26</sup> Women used this opportunity to exercise power in the public sphere, joining the military, aiding in the war effort and having a voice in their communities.<sup>27</sup> All of this placed strain on the traditional gender dynamic, which continued well into the 1950s.

Even though men continued to hold power both at home and in the public sphere, political tensions internationally pressured America to continue depicting the ‘Marlboro man’, who was to show no emotion or weakness.<sup>28</sup> Competing pressures for males to depict a ‘cowboy image’, with women gaining public influence, led to what many historians and gender theorists consider the “masculinity crisis”,<sup>29</sup> a definition that explains male frustrations in the post-war era.

Shawn Meghan Burn and Zachary Ward, co-authors of the PhD dissertation “Men’s Conformity to Traditional Masculinity and Relationship Satisfaction”, rely on the “gender role strain paradigm” theory to discuss why this “masculinity crisis” occurred. According to the authors, “discrepancy in constructed masculinity occurs when men have difficulty living up to the masculine standards they have internalized”.<sup>30</sup> This incongruity produces confused gender roles, which consequently affects masculine image perception. Even though men continued to hold the upper hand when it came to accessing credit, education, jobs, political power and public space after the war<sup>31</sup>, the new female public role, which had always been solely a male realm, made it difficult for men to know how

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<sup>26</sup>Michael S. Kimmel, *Manhood in America: a Cultural History* (New York: Oxford University Press, 2000), p. 182.

<sup>27</sup> Shawn Meghan Burn and A. Zachary Ward, “Men’s Conformity to Traditional Masculinity and Relationship Satisfaction” (PhD diss., California Polytechnic State University): 2.

<sup>28</sup> Burn and Ward, “Men’s Conformity,” p. 2.

<sup>29</sup> The “masculinity crisis” is used to describe the nervous concerns that middle-class men had regarding masculinity during the twentieth century. This idea not only brought scholarly attention to important changes in constructions of manhood but also raised questions about the timing of changes in definitions of masculinity, the extent of uniformity and variation in men's experiences of social change and about men's attitudes toward feminism. Kimmel, p. 182.

<sup>30</sup> Burn and Ward, “Men’s Conformity,” p. 2.

<sup>31</sup> Elizabeth Fraterrigo, “The Answer to Suburbia: Playboys Urban Lifestyle,” *Journal of Urban History*, vol. 34, No. 747 (24 April 2008): 748-751.

to behave as “men”. These emotions resonated through all levels of American society, as businessmen, students, managers and blue collar workers started to feel increasingly alienated, stuck in a rut and unable to escape the dull expectations of their gender identity.<sup>32</sup>

Post-war, American men complained that the consumer market was too stereotyped, with visions of masculinity continuing to be tied up with rugged cowboys and adventure. Most middle-class men were working in white-collar jobs that were not labor intensive, therefore the nineteenth century cowboy image was no longer relevant.<sup>33</sup> Others had an issue with the “organization man” who stifled individualism in daily careers.<sup>34</sup> Anxieties over confused gender identities in the public sphere, isolation, and failed expectations, led men to search for an alternate identity beyond the public sphere. If urban life offered middle-class males few opportunities to distinguish themselves, consumption was one way that they could reject conformity and assert their individuality.

At the beginning of the 1950s, for the first time since the 1920s, middle-class men refused to be defined by traditional concepts of masculinity. Instead of escaping to the West, gun in hand to reclaim their manhood, white, middle-class affluent men escaped to the marketplace in order to assert their position in society with possessions.<sup>35</sup> This is another way of saying that consumerism can be depicted as a type of ideology, in a narrow sense of the term. According to Stearns, “ideology is a system of beliefs that prevents agents from acting in a way that is most conducive to the attainment of their

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<sup>32</sup>Kimmel, p. 175.

<sup>33</sup> Kimmel, p. 175.

<sup>34</sup> “Organization Man” is a term taken by William H. Whyte, used to describe how the majority of American men thought organizations and establishments could make better decisions for them than they could make for themselves as individuals. Critics of consumerism such as Whyte, Packard and Galbraith considered this idea detrimental to the growth of the individual and advocated for more individuality in the workforce. Whyte, p. 390.

<sup>35</sup> Kimmel, p. 186.



goals”.<sup>36</sup> In this conception, consumerism can describe a society in which many people can formulate their goals in life through the acquisition of goods that they do not need for subsistence.<sup>37</sup> For middle-class men, prosperity after the war introduced them to the consumer culture that became the solution to their identity crisis. Conrad Lodziak, author of *Myth of Consumerism* asserts that consumerism enabled males to decide “who to be”, and this ideal won steady appeal as more men became aware of the liberation consumption provided for their individuality.<sup>38</sup>

The 1950s marked a period of American capitalism, where economic growth reached stagnation after the Great Depression. This era of prosperity began with military production for World War II and lasted up until the 1970s, when economic growth would enter a period of decline.<sup>39</sup> The 1950s was an era defined by consumption, with the economy booming like never before after the war. The early years of the Cold War fueled massive military production and government spending, creating jobs and financial growth.<sup>40</sup> The 1950s was the “golden age of economic growth”<sup>41</sup> that enabled the middle-class to swell to an unprecedented spending force.

With the help of the G.I. Bill that financed the well-educated workforce, as well as two hundred billion war bonds maturing, millions of white families rose into the “middle-class, got an education and bought homes in the newly thriving suburbs”.<sup>42</sup> Openings in trade and specialization created individual prosperity for the middle-class and provided viable opportunity for males to advance in society. Post-war prosperity gave middle-class Americans the tools to divulge in consumer fantasies and purchase

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<sup>36</sup> Stearns, p. vii.

<sup>37</sup> Ibid.

<sup>38</sup> Conrad Lodziak, *The Myth of Consumerism* (London: Pluto Press, 2002), p. 51.

<sup>39</sup> Pitzulo, p. 74.

<sup>40</sup> Nigel Whiteley, “Toward a Throw-Away Culture. Consumerism, ‘Style Obsolescence’ and Cultural Theory in the 1950s and 1960s,” *Oxford Art Journal*, Vol. 10, No. 2 (1987), p. 3.

<sup>41</sup> Ibid.

<sup>42</sup> Pitzulo, p. 74.

more luxury products, giving individuals a way to reject traditional standards of living and assert their individuality.<sup>43</sup>

Even though historians and economists consider the 1950s the “golden age of prosperity”, wealth was not universal to all Americans. Stearns notes that there was a growing demographic that were dependent on wage labor; people who often suffered because of the service sector inflation.<sup>44</sup> During the 1950s, consumer prices increased because of slow productivity growth in the American economy and due to large increases in consumer demand and credit.<sup>45</sup> Due to economic inflations, people in the working class had infrequent engagement with consumerism and instead concentrated on saving money in case they found themselves unemployed.<sup>46</sup> Pitzulo disagrees, arguing that despite consumer inflation and a slow growth of productivity, there was general prosperity for Americans in the 1950s. There may have been wealth divisions between Americans who could afford to or were able to access credit, but generally, opportunity for social advancement was evenly distributed across classes.<sup>47</sup> Thanks to the strength of labour unions, whose membership reached an all time high in the 1950s, avenues for advancement and spending were available to the majority of Americans.<sup>48</sup>

As consumerism flourished in the 1950s, emerging outlets of media such as television and magazine’s created fantasy images that many Americans sought to emulate. The expansion that the magazine industry experienced in the post war years<sup>49</sup> allowed the American public easier access to ideologies that were being presented in advertisements on television and in magazine’s by retailers. Post-war economic and

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<sup>43</sup> Jancovich, *The Politics of Playboy*, “Historicizing Lifestyle”, p. 74.

<sup>44</sup> Stearns, p. 10.

<sup>45</sup> Ibid.

<sup>46</sup> Lodziak, p. 52.

<sup>47</sup> Pitzulo, p. 76.

<sup>48</sup> Ibid.

<sup>49</sup> Mehita Iqani, *Consumer Culture and the Media: Magazines in the Public Eye* (New York: Palgrave Macmillan, 2012), p. 3.

social changes made the cultural landscape increasingly accessible to special interest magazines, and particularly to *Playboy*.<sup>50</sup> The traditional middle-class world that originally emerged during the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries, with its emphasis on tradition and family life had lost some of its authority to capitalism in the 1920s.<sup>51</sup> In the period after World War II, cultural shifts magnified longings for immediate gratification, with the middle-class becoming more permeated by a leisure-oriented consumer ethos.<sup>52</sup> Pitzulo concludes “with more disposable income and a diminishing sense of identity, growing numbers of men looked to magazine’s to confer an identity to guide them through the expansive consumer market”.<sup>53</sup> These “special interest” male publications presented an image that encouraged men to reinvent themselves.

Hugh Marston Hefner was born in Chicago on April 9, 1926 to a conservative Methodist family. The eldest son of Glenn and Grace Hefner, Hugh grew up in a relatively well-to-do family and enjoyed the social atmosphere extracurricular activities provided him throughout his teenage years.<sup>54</sup> Though he grew up popular and social, Hefner was raised with very strict moral codes. Hefner and his brother were forbidden to drink, smoke, swear and partake in social activities, such as the movies, on Sundays<sup>55</sup>. Growing up in such a morally strict family, young Hefner developed into an introverted young man, escaping into a fantasy world of writing, drawing cartoons and daydreaming.<sup>56</sup>

Hefner’s mother, Grace, was a product of the Victorian 1900s. Even though she placed strict moral codes on her boys, she had certain liberal views about the world that

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<sup>50</sup> Ibid.

<sup>51</sup> Bill Osgerby, *Playboys in Paradise: Masculinity, Youth and Leisure—Style in Modern America* (New York: Bloomsbury Press, 2001), p. 3.

<sup>52</sup> Ibid.

<sup>53</sup> Pitzulo, p. 77.

<sup>54</sup> Watts, p. 21.

<sup>55</sup> Ibid.

<sup>56</sup> Jancovich, *The Politics of Playboy*, “Historicizing Lifestyle”, p. 73.

later influenced Hefner in *Playboy* magazine. Opposed to racial prejudice, influenced by popular psychology, and encouraging her sons to be their own person, were characteristics of her parenting that later swayed Hefner to challenge the traditional male image in the 1950s.<sup>57</sup> Grace's open attitude about certain liberal matters later challenged her Victorian outlook toward sexuality. Even though Grace felt uncomfortable discussing sex openly with her family and friends, like most in the era, she was routinely impacted by magazine articles, like those from *Parenting* magazine that advised parents to talk to their children about sexual matters.<sup>58</sup> Grace's interest in modern sexual principles, and advocating for individuality, allowed Hefner to be exposed to concepts that helped shape his own views about the world that were later incorporated into his own magazine.

Bored of existing male magazine's, which one historian describes as "swaggering machismo and sexual violence,"<sup>59</sup> Hefner decided to create a publication that was for the 'new' man. Hefner was not interested in just any man but specifically affluent, upwardly mobile bachelors, whose disposable income would attract high paying advertisers.<sup>60</sup> Hefner wanted to make the magazine accessible to people of all ethnicities, backgrounds, and religions.<sup>61</sup> Although he was against prejudice and inequality, wanting to create a magazine that all men could aspire towards, realistically, the *Playboy* lifestyle was more in tune with middle-class, white, heterosexual males.<sup>62</sup> When the magazine began, American culture was still segregated and ignorant about alternate forms of sexuality like homosexuality. Therefore, even though Hefner wanted all American males to enjoy the publication, it was not realistic during the magazine's infancy.

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<sup>57</sup> Jancovich, *The Politics of Playboy*, "Historicizing Lifestyle", p. 73.

<sup>58</sup> Watts, p. 24.

<sup>59</sup> Osgerby, "The Bachelor Pad as Cultural Icon," p. 101.

<sup>60</sup> Gail Dines, "I Buy It For the Articles': *Playboy* Magazine and the Sexualization of Consumerism," edited by Gail Dines and Jean M. Humez, *Gender, Race and Class in Media* (London: SAGE Publications, 1995), p. 256.

<sup>61</sup> Gunelius, p. 51.

<sup>62</sup> Ibid.

With help from family and friends, Hefner was able to raise eight thousand dollars to subsidize his vision.<sup>63</sup> *Playboy*, which would have been called *Stag Party* if not for threats of copyright infringement, was released on December 1953, introducing its now famous centerfold that opened up to reveal Marilyn Monroe just as she was becoming the decade's "definitive sex symbol".<sup>64</sup> The first issue carried no date, since Hefner did not know when he would have the money to publish a second issue, or even if there would be another issue to publish.<sup>65</sup> The magazine became a fast success and exceeded Hefner's expectations by selling over fifty thousand copies. The success of the first issue gave Hefner the means to further advance his magazine into a sophisticated publication that males could fantasize about.

Prior to the 1960s, most American consumers had been female.<sup>66</sup> Therefore, when men started to consume in the post-war period, many were unfamiliar with the abundance of goods available to them. *Playboy* became a guidebook for middle-class males, promising to instruct readers in the "fine art of consumption, cultivating taste and imparting expertise".<sup>67</sup> Reading advice columns, following "The Playboy Philosophy", picking up the right literature and going to the right events were all necessary activities for the *Playboy* male. From the magazine's first publication deeming *Playboy* quality entertainment "served up with humor, sophistication and spice",<sup>68</sup> to its entertainment reviews, editors stressed a certain lifestyle based on sophistication by consumption.

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<sup>63</sup> Beatriz Preciado, "Pornotopia", Beatriz Colomina, AnnMarie Brennan and Jeannie Kim, eds., *Cold War Hothouses: Inventing Postwar Culture From Cockpit to Playboy* (New York: Princeton Architectural Press, 2004), p. 217

<sup>64</sup> Richard Corliss, "A Hugh Hefner Documentary: Airbrushed," *TIME* Magazine (July 31, 2010), n/p.

<sup>65</sup> Josh Sanburn, "Brief History: Playboy." *TIME* Magazine (January 24, 2011), n/p.

<sup>66</sup> Alex Altman, "Mr. Playboy". *TIME* Magazine (October 9, 2008), n/p.

<sup>67</sup> Elizabeth Fraterrigo, *Playboy and the Making of the Good Life in Modern America* (New York: Oxford University Press, 2009), p. 49.

<sup>68</sup> "The Playboy Advisor," *Playboy* (December 1953), p. 3.

*Playboy* was not the first American magazine to address a consuming male as its subject. Rather, Hefner came up with the magazine's platform while working at *Esquire*. Launched in 1933, *Esquire* made stylish consumption its forte. Osgerby explains "color illustrations of the latest men's fashions rubbed shoulders with regular features on foreign travel, cuisine and interior décor".<sup>69</sup> *Esquire* encouraged readers to think for themselves as "autonomous men of taste who expressed their identities and status through distinctive consumer practice".<sup>70</sup> Hefner's association with *Esquire* was with his brief employment in the subscription department in 1951. Hefner admired *Esquire* with its pursuit of individual pleasure, but was disappointed that the magazine avoided conflict by not discussing important issues of the 1930s and 1940s.<sup>71</sup> Instead of going against the status quo, *Esquire* decided to place the magazine's feminine pursuits amongst masculine activities like bull fighting and boxing.<sup>72</sup> *Esquire's* success in doing so proved that as long as a masculine identity was identified and maintained, a publication was free to steer its readers through more feminine pursuits of consumerism. Hefner well understood that leisurely consumption and individuality was well established in American culture at the end of the 1930s. He also knew that he wanted more than just consumerism from his magazine. Using the consumer explosion of the 1950s and 1960s, Hefner challenged sexual taboos by including nude photographs of women in a centerfold. Doing so gave reader's a place indulge in both their material and sexual fantasies all in one place.

Following the inaugural issue of *Playboy*, with Marilyn Monroe gracing the cover, *Playboy* intended on commissioning its own pin-ups with local females.<sup>73</sup> This grand fantasy of Hefner's resulted in challenges, as he had problems convincing women

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<sup>69</sup> Osgerby, "The Bachelor Pad as Cultural Icon," p. 101.

<sup>70</sup> Ibid.

<sup>71</sup> Pitzulo, p. 43.

<sup>72</sup> Osgerby, "The Bachelor Pad as Cultural Icon," p. 101.

<sup>73</sup> Gunelius, p.16.

to gamble with their reputations and strip for the magazine's cameras.<sup>74</sup> Given the difficulty *Playboy* faced rebelling against 1950s sexual standards, the first year of the magazine only included pin-ups that were bought along with the images of Marilyn Monroe.<sup>75</sup> They were all standard "cheesecake photos" with no props or settings.<sup>76</sup> At one point, when Hefner desperately needed an image for his centerfold, he ended up bargaining with a female subscription manager at the magazine who wanted an addressograph machine. Hefner told the female that she could have her machine if she would pose as the "Playmate of the Month" and she agreed.<sup>77</sup> Eventually, word got around that the photo sessions were conducted with respect, good humour, and professionalism and from then onward, Hefner had no problems finding women willing to pose as his "Playmate of the Month".<sup>78</sup>

When *Playboy* emerged in the 1950s, it was not the only magazine to include photos of naked women in its pages. Pitzulo asserts that such publications had been available for decades, but they were considered "sleazy" by mainstream media.<sup>79</sup> What made *Playboy's* use of pornography unique was the context of its time. By 1953, American psychologist Alfred Kinsey had released two studies on human sexuality, which influenced Hefner extensively.

Kinsey began discussions on human sexuality by publishing *Sexual Behavior in the Human Male* that brought to light many startling facts about male sexuality. The findings showed that men heavily participated in premarital sexual activity and

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<sup>74</sup> Gunelius, p.16.

<sup>75</sup> Corliss, "A Hugh Hefner Documentary".

<sup>76</sup> Ibid.

<sup>77</sup> James R. Peterson, *The Century of Sex: Playboy's History of the Sexual Revolution, 1900-1999* (Grove Press, 1999), p. 6.

<sup>78</sup> Ibid.

<sup>79</sup> Pitzulo, 21.

experimented with same sex encounters.<sup>80</sup> Kinsey's next bestseller came out in 1953 and was titled *Sexual Behavior in the Human Female*. One of the most important findings was the fact that the report concluded that women liked sex beyond procreation purposes and that they longed for healthy sexual experiences.<sup>81</sup> The reports provided Americans with evidence that both genders were engaging in healthy sexual behaviour and that public notions of sexuality were outdated. Hefner mirrored this mentality in December 1965:

The sexual activity that we pompously preach about and protest against in public, we enthusiastically practice in private. We lie to one another about sex; and many of us undoubtedly lie to ourselves about sex. But we cannot forever escape the reality that a sexually hypocritical society in an unhealthy society that produces more than its share of perversion, neurosis, psychosis, unsuccessful marriage, divorce and suicide.<sup>82</sup>

For Hefner, America's sexual hypocrisy was out in the open, that "we had been preaching one thing and practicing another."<sup>83</sup> Looking at the sexual activities of American's it is evident that this post-war economy, as well as the war itself, created new opportunities for previously taboo sexual behaviours to go. Many Americans discovered sexual promiscuity amid the upheaval of wartime, and they never completely faded post-war.<sup>84</sup> Historian Edward Rielly admits that sexual freedom, including premarital sex, multiple relationships and unmarried couples living together were well and alive during and after World War II, the difference being that Americans kept their sexual adventures quiet prior to the 1960s.<sup>85</sup> Thanks to Kinsey, sexual practices of males and females came to public light, showing Americans that sex was not abnormal or a sin.

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<sup>80</sup> Osgerby, "The Bachelor Pad as Cultural Icon," p. 103.

<sup>81</sup> Peterson, p. 6.

<sup>82</sup> Hugh M. Hefner, "The Playboy Philosophy," *Playboy* (December 1965), p. 48

<sup>83</sup> Hugh M. Hefner, "The Playboy Philosophy," *Playboy* (May 1965), p. 63.

<sup>84</sup> Elaine Tyler May, *America and the Pill: A History of Promise, Peril and Liberation* (New York: Basic Books, 2010), p. 76.

<sup>85</sup> Edward J. Rielly, *The 1960's* (Connecticut: Greenwood Press, 2003), p. 20.



Influenced heavily by the findings of Kinsey, Hefner wanted *Playboy* to break away from strict and narrow representations of sexuality, while also opening up avenues for sex to be discussed in the public realm.<sup>86</sup> Unfortunately, where the Kinsey Reports opened the doors for sex to be discussed publically, the reports, despite their bestseller status, received both admiration and backlash from society. Critical letters to Kinsey denounced the book, while some critics went as far as threatening to withdraw all support for the university as long as Kinsey remained on the faculty.<sup>87</sup> Clergy members critiqued the book as “ungodly”, and Conservatives such as Dorothy Thompson wrote in 1948 that the report “is in danger of being used to justify unbridled license”.<sup>88</sup> Evidently, Hefner’s dream of changing sexual views in the 1950s was more of a fantasy than a reality. It would not be until the 1960s, during the sexual revolution that mainstream America would catch up to the magazine’s liberal views on sexuality.

Even as *Playboy* gained popularity throughout the 1950s, some Americans did not see merit in Hefner’s emphasis on personal self-interest. Critics attacked the consumer ethos and pornographic content of the magazine, which hindered Hefner’s ability to attract advertisers in the 1950s. Throughout the decade, American society was more family oriented and popular culture kept pace by emphasizing advertisements that presented white, middle-class, nuclear families.<sup>89</sup> Mindful of the lifestyle *Playboy* was presenting to readers, instead of admitting conflict in interest between the magazine and advertisers, Hefner insisted he was the one who rejected advertisements. Hefner claimed

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<sup>86</sup> Watts, p. 329.

<sup>87</sup> “How to Stop Gin Rummy”, *Time Magazine* (March 1, 1948).

<sup>88</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>89</sup> Tom W. Smith, “A Report: The Sexual Revolution?” *The Public Opinion Quarterly*, Vol. 54, No. 3 (Autumn, 1990): 419.

he wanted the magazine to mature in editorial content before he bombarded readers with materialistic images.<sup>90</sup>

More importantly, Hefner publically said that the advertisements available did not match the standards of the *Playboy* brand. They were generic, bland advertisements for products meant to solve male issues or promote family matters and that was an area of consumerism that Hefner had no interest in promoting.<sup>91</sup> He wanted to present readers with a fantasy of luxurious goods, not solve male issues by advertising toilet paper and hemorrhoid cream. Nor did Hefner want to encourage domestic life by presenting family oriented goods.<sup>92</sup> He knew from the magazine's birth that he wanted to present males with an image of fantasy, with pages full of luxurious goods that would ultimately sell the magazine.

In the February 1955 issue of *Playboy*, in response to a reader thanking the magazine for being different than other magazines who had twenty-five percent entertainment and seventy-five percent advertisements, Hefner declared:

Here at Playboy we purposely refrained from accepting any ad during its first year of publication with a class male audience first. But we do believe the right kind of ad belongs in Playboy. The man-about-town is concerned with clothes, cars, food, drink, and the rest of the good things in life, and such things belong in the magazine. We'll make two promises, however: (1) advertisers will be selected with the same care that is given to the preparation of editorial material and (2) we'll always edit Playboy for our readers first, not the advertisers.<sup>93</sup>

Despite Hefner's public assertion that it would be he who would soon incorporate advertisements into *Playboy*, scholars like Pitzulo are quick to admit it was the other way around. Pitzulo notes that advertisers were initially cautious of appearing in *Playboy*. They were not sure if the magazine would be accepted publically, let alone if the U.S.

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<sup>90</sup> "Forum News front," *Playboy* (February 1955), p. 5.

<sup>91</sup> Ibid.

<sup>92</sup> Ibid.

<sup>93</sup> Ibid.

Postal Service would even allow the magazine to be delivered.<sup>94</sup> Realistically, Hefner knew that the Comstock Laws, which restricted the transport of obscene literature through the mail, had the authority to refuse to handle the magazine.<sup>95</sup> Therefore, Hefner was most likely desperate for any advertiser to include material in the magazine, regardless of the products caliber.

By the end of the 1950s, *Playboy* had grown in popularity and reputation and the magazine began landing major advertisers. In August 1958, Hefner announced that *Playboy* would soon be “opening its pages” to advertisers.<sup>96</sup> Despite this opportunity to enter the realm of major advertisement, there was modest and unattractive advertisement throughout the 1950s. It was black and white, with numerous advertisements placed on one page.<sup>97</sup> For consumers, it would have been very unflattering, not to mention hard for one specific product to catch a reader’s eye. Looking at the advertisements available in the 1950s, it is obvious that the material available was not suited for the *Playboy* fantasy. Most frequent were advertisements for mail order “show off” record racks, coin collections, drink ware, and ashtrays shaped like a golf club “ready to whack one down the fairway”.<sup>98</sup> Despite the advertising content portraying a generic lifestyle, middle-class readers continued fantasizing about becoming the Hefner male: “the man who wanted fine wine, chic cars and smart clothes to go along with the beautiful women.”<sup>99</sup> All of these consumer items were accessories to the good life that *Playboy* promoted as

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<sup>94</sup> Peterson, p. 6.

<sup>95</sup> Anthony Comstock was the head of New York Society for the Suppression of Vice. The Comstock Laws were a federal act passed by the U.S. Congress on March 3, 1873 for the “suppression of trade in and circulation of obscene literature and articles of immoral use”. The act enabled the U.S. Postal Service to refuse the delivering or handling of erotica goods and the Postal Service deemed *Playboy* exactly that. The Post Office denied a request for the magazine to be granted a second-class mail permit and Hefner took them to court. HMH Publishing Company sued the Postal Service and won the right to use second-class mail privileges. Gunelius, p. 23.

<sup>96</sup> Advertisement. *Playboy* (August 1958): 18.

<sup>97</sup> Ibid.

<sup>98</sup> “*Summa Cum Style*”, *Playboy* (October 1955): 18-19, 52.

<sup>99</sup> Richard Corliss, “That Old Feeling: Your Grandfather’s *Playboy*,” *TIME* Magazine (January 3, 2004).

necessities and it was just a matter of time before Madison Avenue realized that *Playboy* was the ultimate consumer magazine.

## Chapter 2: THE ADVERTISING REVOLUTION

*...And while nearly every account of the decade's youth culture describes it as a reaction to the stultifying economic and cultural environment of the postwar years, almost none have noted how that context—the world of business and of middle-class mores—was itself changing during the 1960s. The 1960s was the era of Vietnam, but it was also the high watermark of American prosperity and a time of fantastic ferment in managerial thought and corporate practice. Postwar American capitalism was hardly the unchanging and soulless machine imagined by countercultural leaders; it was as dynamic a force in its own way as the revolutionary youth movements of the period, undertaking dramatic transformations of both the way it operated and the way it imagined itself.*

--Thomas Frank, *Conquest of Cool*, p. 3

During the 1950s, advertising agencies were much different than they were at the beginning of the 1960s. In his influential work on advertising in the post-war years, Frank describes Madison Avenue as the “archetypal destination for look-alike commuters”.<sup>100</sup> According to Frank’s extensive research on the community of admen, he concludes that in the 1950s they were a demographic that could be “stereotyped to precision.”<sup>101</sup> They were men who wore gray flannel suits, WASPy, directed by “organization men” and living in the suburbs.<sup>102</sup> Madison Avenue in this era was the traditional Cold War model, where conformity, working hard and stability were the norm.

In his literature about the detrimental effects of the “organization man” in the 1950s, Whyte strongly feels that men were losing their souls to the ‘organization’, doing whatever they were told because they believed that there was no other way for things to be done.<sup>103</sup> For the majority of men working on Madison Avenue, they understood that

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<sup>100</sup> Frank, p. 35.

<sup>101</sup> Ibid, p. 42.

<sup>102</sup> Ibid.

<sup>103</sup> Whyte, p. 397.

conforming to standard expectations was for their survival.<sup>104</sup> To Whyte, this professional model was detrimental to living a life of fulfillment.<sup>105</sup> Of course, there were those men who rebelled against the establishment and who, in the advertising world, tried to evoke some creativity in their work, but according to Frank's analysis of advertising in the 1950s, these men did not last long in the profession.<sup>106</sup> Admen were stuck in the boundaries of normality and this conformity set the tone for advertisements in the 1950s.

After World War II, Madison Avenue generally overlooked creativity for more established and normalized characteristics in advertisements. In the 1950s, the central principle of the advertising industry was "science," meaning that advertisements were to be created according to established and proven principles. Frank believes that because scientific advertising based its model on research about public attitudes, advertisers thought they would have a better idea about what American consumers wanted.<sup>107</sup> Unfortunately, this idea that advertising and consumerism is unchanging and scientifically verifiable ended up working against the "organization man".<sup>108</sup> Admen attempted to solve the problems of humanity with this scientific approach, however advertising is not about solving problems but more about creating a fantasy of attainment and perfection.<sup>109</sup> Even so, advertising agencies continued with its scientific infatuation. For admen, creativity was not the way to get America spending, but rather a "non-rational characteristic of human imagination that had absolutely no place in post-war advertising".<sup>110</sup> Instead of utilizing creativity, agencies developed a platform for creating advertisements based around the execution of an idea, media placement and

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<sup>104</sup>Whyte, p. 397.

<sup>105</sup> Ibid.

<sup>106</sup> Frank, p. 40.

<sup>107</sup> Ibid.

<sup>108</sup> Whiteley, "Toward a Throwaway Culture," p. 8.

<sup>109</sup> Ibid.

<sup>110</sup> Lodziak, p. 52.

research.<sup>111</sup> Rules guided every step of the creation process, and departing from this model was not accepted on Madison Avenue in the 1950s.

With advertising agencies publically claiming that there was no place for “rebellion, creativity and difference” in 1950s advertisements, the culture of products that were marketed were “monotonous, repetitive and dull”.<sup>112</sup> Bearing in mind that conformity reigned triumphant in the 1950s advertising world, it is obvious why *Playboy*, whether true or not, wanted nothing to do with advertisements in its infant years. To look at the advertisements from the 1950s is to understand that they were, according to Frank, “some of the worst, given their social and cultural context, that Madison Avenue has ever created”.<sup>113</sup>

Considering the array of drab advertisements available to magazines in the 1950s, instead of promoting the *Playboy* fantasy through advertisements, Hefner chose to promote his fantasy male primarily through various editorials and columns. Instead of being normal, *Playboy* wanted its middle-class readers to distinguish themselves. The magazine was concerned with the stagnant image of males and Hefner wanted to change the perception that “male image is non-altering”.<sup>114</sup> Therefore, clothing and domestic purchases became an important avenue for a man to distinguish himself from others. For this reason, *Playboy* hired Jack J. Kessie as the magazine’s first fashion editor. For Hefner, clothes were a way for readers to express their sophistication and status and Hefner made it Kessie’s job to explain to readers what the “ideal” *Playboy* should look like.<sup>115</sup>

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<sup>111</sup> Frank, p. 42.

<sup>112</sup> Ibid, p. 37.

<sup>113</sup> Frank, p. 48.

<sup>114</sup> Jancovich, p. 74.

<sup>115</sup> Ibid, p. 76.

Kessie's first editorial "The Well Dressed Playboy: *Playboy's* Position on the Proper Male Attire", described that even though male attire was not as dramatic as females, proper masculine dress should not be a confusing matter: "If a man is concerned with how he looks, and he should be, he may find himself caught up in a perplexing, phantasmagoria of color combination, patters, styles, designs, fabrics and cuts".<sup>116</sup> Readers took Kessie's advice very seriously, as seen through a letter to the *Playboy Advisor* in January 1955, by a Houstonite worried that "preppy clothes might go in the East, but down here anyone dressed that way would be called an Ivy League Fruit."<sup>117</sup> A letter such as this suggests the seriousness with which many readers respected the opinion of *Playboy* and by implication, the rapidly expanding consumer culture that the magazine endorsed through its advertisements and editorials.

By 1954, Hefner had a clear idea about what his readers should look like, --"the sophisticated, Ivy League graduate"—but the conflicting fantasy of this ideal man and the actual *Playboy* reader came to light in a survey about the magazine's readership. Conducted by an independent market research organization—Gould, Gleiss and Benn Inc.—and published in *Playboy's* 1955 issue, the survey armed Hefner with statistical proof that "over seventy percent of *Playboy's* readers have attended college" and the "great majority of *Playboy's* readers are business or professional men and young men in college who will be in business and professions in two and a half years".<sup>118</sup> Looking closer at the survey, it reveals that Hefner over exaggerated his readerships class status and success. At the time the survey was conducted, only thirty percent of readers had a college degree, while forty-two percent had attended college for "less than four

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<sup>116</sup> Jack J. Kessie, "The Well-Dressed Playboy: *Playboy's* Position on Proper Male Attire," *Playboy* (January 1955): p. 38-9.

<sup>117</sup> Kessie, "The Well-Dressed Playboy," p.38-39.

<sup>118</sup> "Forum Newsfront," *Playboy* (September 1955): 36-37.



years”.<sup>119</sup> Hefner clearly desired his readers to be educated so they would make enough money to enjoy the material and physical rewards featured in *Playboy*.

Editorials captured the fantasy of “the college man” or “the professional” as particular models of the white, heterosexual, middle-class American man who was actively moving up the social ladder. According to Pitzulo, much of this fantasy was just that, “an unattainable vision of luxury that many American men were not and probably would never be”.<sup>120</sup> Nonetheless, “chasing the American dream through rampant spending was a priority in *Playboy*” and this only intensified after the advertising revolution at the turn of the decade.

By the end of the 1950s, the advertising gloom was apparent to numerous Americans. Admen continued to focus on Cold War orthodoxy of prosperity, progress and consumer satisfaction, but this idealized vision of consuming life had little to do with what Americans actually wanted.<sup>121</sup> Beginning in 1955, the Beats began to criticize the material waste that resulted from an economic system that encouraged obsolescence. Whiteley, a visual arts scholar, asserts that America might have enjoyed abundance after World War II, but “shortages and poverty became more noticeable than surpluses in the world economy”.<sup>122</sup> Beat writers, although not the first to critique the negative effects of consumerism, wanted more from their nation. They wanted to be reached by personal experience rather than by rules.<sup>123</sup> Thus, the American system was attacked politically, morally and ecologically.

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<sup>119</sup> “Forum Newsfront,” *Playboy* (September 1955): 36-37.

<sup>120</sup> Ehrenreich, p. 114.

<sup>121</sup> Lodziak, p. 52.

<sup>122</sup> Whiteley, “Toward a Throw Away Culture”, p. 9.

<sup>123</sup> The “Beat Generation” had attracted much attention by the late 1950s for its characteristics of cool, hipster rebellion. Led by writers and poets such as Jack Kerouac and Allen Ginsberg, the movement disdained bland conformity of middle-class life and celebrated individual pleasure and freedom. Howard Brick, *Age of Contradiction: American Thought and Culture in the 1960s* (Ithaca: Cornell University Press, 1998), p. 114.

Harvard economist John Kenneth Galbraith's 1958 book *The Affluent Society* clearly outlines the economic frustrations of the Beats. Galbraith acknowledges that post-war America was prosperous and growing, however this wealth was unevenly distributed.<sup>124</sup> The private sector was thriving but the public sector was lacking social support, resulting in economic discrepancies.<sup>125</sup> Galbraith's influential literature about the reality of economics in the 1950s, gives a much different reality than *Playboy*. Hefner believes it was his "support of capitalism that shielded him from large critiques in the 1950s" because "consumerism has always been all American".<sup>126</sup> In reality, Hefner's belief that it was his encouragement of consumerism that made him successful in the 1950s was not organic. Rather, Galbraith paints a picture of a false America created by advertisers. He believes that it is not consumers who create market demand but advertisements that create "wants that are increasingly created by the process by which they are satisfied".<sup>127</sup>

Vance Packard's 1957 book *The Hidden Persuaders* highlighted, a year before Galbraith, concerns about advertising agencies use of scientific techniques to manipulate spending choices. Packard's book became a bestseller, as one of the first pieces of literature attempting to understand the manipulative effects of the post-war consumer society. In his work, Packard heavily critiqued the fact that Americans were succumbing to the lure of false advertising, which was convincing them to buy poorly made products that they did not need".<sup>128</sup> He feared that Americans were betraying the nations fundamental principle of individuality by giving themselves over to hedonism.<sup>129</sup> Packard wanted Americans to re-discover their individuality by rising up to collectively fight

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<sup>124</sup> John Kenneth Galbraith, *The Affluent Society* (Boston: Houghton Mifflin Harcourt, 1998), p.158.

<sup>125</sup> Ibid.

<sup>126</sup> Pitzulo, p. 87.

<sup>127</sup> Galbraith, p. 170.

<sup>128</sup> Vance Packard, *The Hidden Persuaders* (New York: Pocket Books, 1957), p. 116.

<sup>129</sup> Ibid.

against agencies in their attempts to halt “man in his long struggle to become a rational and self-guided being”.<sup>130</sup> American consumers were transforming into a nation of conformed beings and this was, according to Packard, detrimental to the American fantasy of individuality and personal freedom.

Similar to Packard, Whyte also analyzed the influence that advertising agencies had on creating national conformity in the 1950s. Whyte’s critique differs from Packard’s as he goes beyond scientific manipulation. Whyte instead blames admen’s “fondness for cliché and its reliance upon formulaic and unpersuasive speech for creating over-organizational malaise afflicting the rest of the business world”.<sup>131</sup> Where Packard relies on life experiences to express concern about the morality of a society built on happiness derived primarily from consumer goods, Whyte focuses on the damaging effects of “group think” utilized by advertising agencies<sup>132</sup>. Although each scholar’s critique focuses on a specific and rather different element of consumerism, they all mirror each other with their concern about the manipulating effects advertisers have on American consumers. For critics of the outdated and concerning principles advertising agencies utilized in the 1950s, there was only one solution in order to create a more dynamic and equal consuming culture: change.

Had it not been for Ned Doyle, Maxwell Dane and Bill Bernbach, the creative revolution in advertising may not have ever occurred. After becoming frustrated with the hard-selling, repetitive advertising in post-war America, the three men left the small advertising firms they were working for and joined together to begin their own agency in

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<sup>130</sup> Packard, *The Hidden Persuaders* p. 117.

<sup>131</sup> Whyte, p. 398.

<sup>132</sup> “Group think” is a term that was first used in 1972 that refers to a psychological phenomenon in which people strive for conformity in a group. Considering that “group think” refers to members of a community who try to minimize conflict, it is no surprise that advertising agencies in the 1950s isolated themselves from creative influences. *Ibid.*

1949 named *Doyle Dane Bernbach*.<sup>133</sup> Preluding critiques from Whyte, Packard and Galbraith in the late 1950s, DDB made it a point to oppose the traditional platform of scientific advertising. They brought in art directors and copywriters to work together which created harmony in visual and text components of advertisements and ultimately revolutionized advertising<sup>134</sup>

DDB's landmark campaign for Volkswagen at the end of the 1950s is one of the most discussed, analyzed and admired campaigns in the advertising industry's history. Before DDB's advertisement for Volkswagen, auto-advertising was popularized with idealized white, nuclear families.<sup>135</sup> This advertising focus was a popular annoyance with consumers and critics alike, leading DDB to experiment with "anti-advertising" at the turn of the decade. In their numerous advertisements for Volkswagen, DDB broke through obvious exaggerations in favour of straight talk, defying auto-advertising conventions.<sup>136</sup> Early advertisements for the company were black and white, minimalist, with cars appearing on featureless backgrounds.<sup>137</sup> DDB openly made fun of the car, embracing "anti-advertising" that sold the car based on its flaws. It was common to see advertisements telling consumers "the sedan is ugly" and it "looks like a beetle".<sup>138</sup> Volkswagen campaigns successfully appealed to American skepticism about car advertisements and made the mass society critique of Packard, Galbraith and Whyte part of their selling strategy. Eventually, other advertising agencies began to realize the success of DDB and understood that elements of rebellion were marketable.

*Playboy's* emphasis on individual freedom of choice translated perfectly into the new advertising mantra of "personal choices based on individual desires" evident at the

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<sup>133</sup> Frank, p. 57.

<sup>134</sup> Ibid.

<sup>135</sup> Frank, p. 61.

<sup>136</sup> Volkswagen. Advertisement. *Life Magazine* (February 1961): 26. Print.

<sup>137</sup> Ibid, p. 61.

<sup>138</sup> Volkswagen. Advertisement. *Life Magazine* (July 1966): 26. Print.

turn of the decade.<sup>139</sup> With advertisers realizing the success of DDB's creative advertisements, agencies began releasing more sexual, colourful, and humorous advertisements for products that were much more in line with Hefner's fantasy lifestyle. Whyte, Packard and Galbraith may have argued for a more equal economic system with changing advertising and social principles, but the reality was that the ethos of individuality through consumerism was more adaptive than oppositional. Cultural artifacts like *Playboy* were seen as "articulating the core values of the new middle-class—all wanted to be an individual".<sup>140</sup> Consumerism was well and alive during the 1960s, with obsolescence not only accepted by the majority Americans, young and old, but also often positively celebrated.<sup>141</sup>

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<sup>139</sup> Heath, p. 2.

<sup>140</sup> Osgerby, "Bachelor Pad as a Cultural Icon," p. 101.

<sup>141</sup> Whiteley, "Toward a Throw Away Culture", p. 3.

## Chapter 3: THE FANTASY COMES ALIVE

*“What is a Playboy? Is he simply a wastrel, a ne’er-do-well, a fashionable bum? Far from it. He can be a sharp-minded young business executive, a worker in the arts, a university professor, an architect or an engineer. He can be many things, provided he possesses a certain kind of view. He must see life not as a vale of tears, but as a happy time. He must take joy in his work, without regarding it as the end of all living. He must be an alert man, a man of taste, a man sensitive to pleasure, and a man who—without acquiring the stigma of voluptuary or dilettante—can live life to the hilt. This is the sort of man we mean when we use the word Playboy”.*

*--Playboy, April 1955, p. 2*

At the end of the 1950s and early 1960s, “youth” became a characteristic of modern advertising. “Think young” quickly became the advertising cliché of the day, but it was not necessarily “to remember the youth market”.<sup>142</sup> It is very easy to overstate the impact the youth and more specifically, the counterculture, had on American society in the 1960s, as well as simplify the youth demographic into shared goals and values. While some youth were experimenting with drugs and dropping out of mainstream society to live in communes, the majority of youth were “living exactly as their parents had—going to school, finding a good job, buying a house, raising a family and supporting the government”.<sup>143</sup> The fact that the “Silent Majority” twice elected Richard Nixon in 1968 and 1972, speaks to the fact that there were still a lot of conservative and traditional youth in the 1960s.<sup>144</sup> Therefore, rather than overstating the impact of youth on advertising, it is crucial to acknowledge that for advertising agencies, “youth” was not a demographic but an advertising platform. It was meant to get all Americans to think creatively, embrace difference and shake conformity.<sup>145</sup> It was, as Frank admits, “a forced

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<sup>142</sup> Frank, p. 101.

<sup>143</sup> Rielly, p. 24.

<sup>144</sup> Ibid.

<sup>145</sup> Gunelius, p. 45.

and exaggerated form of individualism”.<sup>146</sup> “Youth” was simply a metaphor used to define a complex new consumer value system,<sup>147</sup> where ‘hip’ and ‘cool’ became the defining principle throughout the 1960s.

When advertising agencies adopted principles of creativity and change for marketing in the 1960s, admen began to realize that they were inheriting a largely conservative market that they themselves had helped create.<sup>148</sup> Older buyers were especially conservative. Despite prosperity after World War II, their purchases were heavily influenced by their struggles in the Great Depression.<sup>149</sup> They would spend money on goods, but even at the turn of the decade, they needed a little bit more convincing to purchase products not necessarily needed for survival.<sup>150</sup> Rielly acknowledges that this “static approach to buying did not make for a very dynamic world of consumers and it tended toward conformity...then along came the new young generation of the 1960s”.<sup>151</sup>

The new youth market emerged at the same time that the creative revolution was occurring in the advertising world. Not only did the youth count for about half the population at the beginning of the 1960s, but also the youth who were liberal or part of the counterculture had an attitude focused on change that was completely different than their parents.<sup>152</sup> Liberal youth’s new attitude resulted in an urge for different clothing styles, sexual attitudes, politics, moral standards, and entertainment.<sup>153</sup> The counterculture famously prided themselves on being anti-consumer and anti-conformist, but that attitude was short-lived and more of a fantasy than a living reality. Advertisers and manufacturers

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<sup>146</sup> Frank, p. 90.

<sup>147</sup> Heath, p. 2.

<sup>148</sup> Rielly, p. 45.

<sup>149</sup> Whiteley, p. 3.

<sup>150</sup> Ibid.

<sup>151</sup> Rielly, p. 45.

<sup>152</sup> Heath, p. 2.

<sup>153</sup> Ibid.

recognized that the “Now Generation”, which they named the youth of the 1960s, provided a major consumer demographic.<sup>154</sup> The “throw away” attitude that went hand in hand with their focus on “change” provided a perfect opportunity for advertisers to expand their market.

The concepts of “young”, “counterculture” and “creative” became virtually synonymous with advertising agencies in the 1960s. According to Rielly, for advertisers, to be creative was to be young.<sup>155</sup> This did not mean that advertisers directly marketed to only youth; rather their aim was the complete opposite. Their infatuation with the concept of “youth” had more to do with thinking creatively, adapting to change and embracing differences rather than conformity.<sup>156</sup> Advertisers were intelligent and they understood that not everybody could be young, but that everyone was able to adopt a youthful attitude about life.<sup>157</sup>

As the 1960s reached its midpoint, advertisers began to target their youthful advertisements at older Americans. Advertisers well understood the reality of finances in American society and despite the large population of young Americans, most of the money was “still nestled within the pocketbooks of adult America...the key was to get older Americans to loosen up and spend and what could be a greater inducement than to wave the myth of eternal youth at them.”<sup>158</sup> Stearns notes that advertisers were able to expand their audience while also combining common tendencies to particular demographics, age groups and genders.<sup>159</sup> The counterculture’s novelty and focus on pleasure became the advertising symbol of the era and for advertising agencies, “youth”

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<sup>154</sup> Rielly, p. 46.

<sup>155</sup> Ibid.

<sup>156</sup> Frank, p. 110.

<sup>157</sup> Rielly, p. 46.

<sup>158</sup> Ibid.

<sup>159</sup> Stearns, p. 58.



was a characteristic that drew various age groups into consuming more heavily in the 1960s.

In one sense, *Playboy* tried to co-opt both the Beats in the 1950s and the counterculture in the 1960s. Specifically, throughout the 1960s, *Playboy* included advertisements that adopted anti-establishment and freedom vocabulary. In August 1969, H.I.S clothing retailer described the shirts it was selling as “anti-establishment” clothing.<sup>160</sup> The shirt had a “ban the button” logo on the front, stating, “We have a peaceful way to fight conformity because our button-less button-down will set your collar free”.<sup>161</sup> In the same issue, Yamaha promoted its new motorcycle as the “machine that will help you discover the wild life”.<sup>162</sup> Exemplified in both of these advertisements is the advertisers ability to manipulate the counterculture’s emphasis on individuality and personal freedom. In reality, Hefner included these advertisements in the magazine not because his readership was liberal and young, but because he used the Beats and the counterculture as a foil for his efforts to define the *Playboy* audience.<sup>163</sup> Hefner shared their discontent with outdated aspects of American values but found their style appalling.<sup>164</sup> The counterculture and Beats involvement with drugs and communal living had little in common with the *Playboy* ideal of sophisticated style, social achievement and material prosperity. He used them in order to reach a greater demographic of readers, in hopes that mainstream acceptance would open the doors to luxurious and high paying advertisers.<sup>165</sup>

Even after *Playboy* established itself at the turn of the decade, advertisements continued to remain limited in the magazine. *Playboy* had acceptance issues with

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<sup>160</sup> H.I.S. Advertisement. *Playboy* (August 1969): 6. Print.

<sup>161</sup> Ibid.

<sup>162</sup> Yamaha. Advertisement. *Playboy* (August 1969): 11. Print.

<sup>163</sup> Watts, p. 132.

<sup>164</sup> Ibid.

<sup>165</sup> Rielly, p. 46.

publishers, agents, record companies, films and others, especially in New York that only disappeared once *Playboy* could up its rates and status in the advertising world.<sup>166</sup>

Therefore, Hefner's fantasy "*Playboy* male" became the magazine's platform to attract sophistication and acceptance. Hefner was not just interested in just any man, but "the affluent, upwardly male whose disposable income and hard work would attract high paying advertisers".<sup>167</sup> Hefner began featuring the Starch Report, a report that outlined American magazine readership, launching a campaign around the slogan "What Sort of Man Reads *Playboy*?" It was an attempt to show advertisers the reader demographic of the magazine and that *Playboy* was being read for more than just the popular nude centerfold.<sup>168</sup>

According to the campaign, a *Playboy* reader is "an insider. The kind of guy who knows where to find what he wants—from the loveliest playmates to the liveliest parties. And *Playboy* is his guide to the good life".<sup>169</sup> The campaign continually stressed the *Playboy* reader's education, sophistication, high professional and business standing, luxurious tastes, his need for leisure and travel as well as his upward mobility in society. All of the advertisements that were part of the "What Sort of Man Reads *Playboy*" campaign stressed an image that spoke to good taste. In sum, the ideal male reader was surrounded by high status goods, which was a lifestyle that *Playboy* readers could dream about if not actually attain. The fantasy of transformation that Hefner provided middle-class American males was a mythical dream that he exploited to attain high-end

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<sup>166</sup> Thomas Weyr, *Reaching For Paradise: The Playboy Vision of America* (New York: Times Books, 1978.), p. 27.

<sup>167</sup> Dines, "I Buy It For the Articles", *Gender, Race and Class Media*, p. 257.

<sup>168</sup> In 1958, *Playboy* proudly reported the results of a study about American magazine readership. The report, conducted by Daniel Starch & Staff, appeared in *Consumer Magazine Report*. The goal of the study was to assemble economic and social statistics on the readers of all major magazines in the country. The results showed that *Playboy* had a younger, more affluent and a higher educated audience than any other of the fifty magazines surveyed. Watts, p. 132-33.

<sup>169</sup> "What Sort of Man Reads *Playboy*," *Playboy* (October 1968), p. 85.

advertisers.<sup>170</sup> He did so on the false claim of his upscale readership and mainstream status.<sup>171</sup> Through the campaign Hefner was able to prove that the publication “ranked highest of all men’s magazines in consumer statistics for tobacco, beer, whiskey, wine, apparel, technology, automobiles and radios.”<sup>172</sup> Clearly, Hefner was successful in making *Playboy’s* fantasy male synonymous with a mantra of prosperity and status. Despite *Playboy’s* initial difficulty securing major advertisers during its infancy, with help from the “What Sort of Man Reads Playboy” campaign and the Starch Report, suddenly a higher caliber of advertisers were willing to appear in the publications pages.

*Playboy* was not the first magazine to focus its marketing around desires and commodities, but *Playboy* clearly reinforced its ideology through a multitude of advertisements, products and advisor columns. Hefner acknowledges this stating: “We first became aware that *Playboy* was developing into something more than a magazine when readers began purchasing *Playboy* products in considerable quantities: everything from cufflinks, ties, sport shirts, tuxedos and bar accessories to playing cards, personalized matches and stickers for their car windows.”<sup>173</sup> It is obvious while flipping through the pages of *Playboy*, that after the Starch Report, advertisements began to make up the bulk of *Playboy*. These products tended to stay in line with Hefner’s vision of the “good life”, focusing on what to buy for the office, what to wear, where to eat, what gadgets to play with and how to decorate an apartment. These luxury items also represented the image of sophistication that Hefner had been striving for since 1953. Finally, with the acceptance of advertisers in the early 1960s, *Playboy* was able to visually incorporate sleek representations of urban living throughout the magazine.

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<sup>170</sup> Dines, “I Buy It For the Articles”, *Gender, Race and Class Media*, p. 257.

<sup>171</sup> Ibid.

<sup>172</sup> “What Sort of Man Reads Playboy,” *Playboy* (September 1969), p. 117. Print.

<sup>173</sup> Hugh M. Hefner, “The Playboy Philosophy,” *Playboy* (February 1963), p. 37. Print.

There have been numerous occasions where Hefner has compared *Playboy* to the *Sears Roebuck* catalogue of the early 1900s, stating that similar to *Sears*, *Playboy* is a “wish book” that offers seemingly infinite number of enticing consumer items to Americans.<sup>174</sup> According to Hefner, “*Playboy* has always been a wish book or dream book...a book of aspiration and fantasy”.<sup>175</sup> Much of the lifestyle promoted in *Playboy* was just that, an unattainable desire and fantasy that many American men could never indulge.<sup>176</sup> Only the wealthy were able to turn the fantasy into reality, but for affluent, middle-class American men, flipping the through the pages of *Playboy* was as close as they were going to get to living the *Playboy* lifestyle. Nonetheless, even though the lifestyle was an unattainable American Dream, it was just as important for readers to view themselves as the man who “could” be the man in the pages.<sup>177</sup> *Playboy* offered males a set of ideals that made their relationship to the world of commodities a little bit more intelligible.

In the 1960s, the pages of *Playboy* had become a dream for American men, stocked full with expensive consumer goods designed to appeal to the affluent man of leisure.<sup>178</sup> This consumerist fantasy was reinforced by the extensive advertisements for stereos, high-end appliances and hobbies that were pervasive throughout the magazine. Hefner sold men these “positional goods” as the tools that would help them not only attract women but also attain the “good life” of individualistic freedom.<sup>179</sup> Each of these products was a component of the *Playboy* lifestyle, however, they were equally as important to construct and secure a position of status. According to Heath, sometimes

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<sup>174</sup> Pitzulo, p. 72.

<sup>175</sup> Ibid.

<sup>176</sup> Becky Conekin, “Fashioning the Playboy: Messages of Style and Masculinity in the Pages of Playboy Magazine, 1953-1963,” *Fashion Theory*, Vol. 4, No. 4 (2000), p. 458.

<sup>177</sup> Fraterrigo, “The Answer to Suburbia: Playboys Urban Lifestyle,” p. 758.

<sup>178</sup> Osgerby, *Playboys in Paradise*, p. 128.

<sup>179</sup> Pitzulo, p. 72.

owning a particular good is used to secure a higher position, in this case status.<sup>180</sup> For example, wanting a certain music system because it is better than someone else's is considered positional, as it amounts to desiring a more expensive stereo than the majority of other buyers. *Playboy* reinforced this need for a position of status to its male readers and this desire was not lost on advertisers with retailers exploiting luxury to sell their products.

In September 1969, *Playboy* included numerous advertisements for stereo equipment. Panasonic specifically laid out instructions on "how to buy a complete stereo recording studio",<sup>181</sup> enticing readers to delve deeper into the details of this magnificent technological advancement. In the same issue, RCA advertised stereo equipment as Panasonic did, but promoted the equipment as "music to your eyes".<sup>182</sup> Both of these advertisements are promoting achieving a particular status through their electronic system. A year later, Panasonic came out with another advertisement geared toward wealth and status. In the advertisement, Panasonic bluntly told buyers "you will feel better if it cost a hundred dollars more" and "when you save yourself some money, you lose yourself some radio".<sup>183</sup> *Playboy's* encouragement to buy certain products was based heavily on consumer indulgence even though a "large portion of the magazines readership were college aged men who could not yet live up to such a high standard."<sup>184</sup> Despite the fact that *Playboy's* promise of material and positional awards through consumerism was a fantasy for most middle-class American males, they looked to the magazine as a guide, imagining that somewhere, men were living the *Playboy* lifestyle.

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<sup>180</sup> Heath, p. 9.

<sup>181</sup> Panasonic. Advertisement. *Playboy* (September 1969): 55. Print.

<sup>182</sup> RCA. Advertisement. *Playboy* (September 1969): 55. Print.

<sup>183</sup> Panasonic. Advertisement. *Playboy* (January 1970): 10. Print.

<sup>184</sup> Pitzulo, p. 21.

Many of the articles, advertisements and columns in *Playboy* can be viewed as an avenue for escape for the middle-class American man. The numerous characteristics of the *Playboy* lifestyle include the best that money can buy. For middle-class American males during the Cold War and the turmoil of the 1960s, daily life was hard, boring and confusing. *Playboy's* pages not only offered them a mythical escape from their conformed lifestyle in suburbia but an avenue to acquire more leisure. In an interview with Watts, Hefner claimed "American consumer society, as it evolved to a more advanced stage in the post-war era, involved more than just buying goods. It was intimately connected to a larger ethos of pleasure, leisure and entertainment. Uninhibited consumption depended on the emotional joys of self-fulfillment, not the moral satisfactions of self-denial."<sup>185</sup> As the magazine matured, editors spent more time encouraging readers to participate in luxurious leisure past times such as sailing, attending the theatre, hosting parties and attending sophisticated sporting events like horse racing.

One of the more obvious ways *Playboy* encouraged leisure was through its consistent inclusion of advertisements focusing on expensive automobiles. According to Weyr, "toys are one of the things that *Playboy* is all about. Adult toys. How to acquire them, and how to use them".<sup>186</sup> It is no coincidence that the most consistent "toy" throughout the magazine is the automobile, the 'king of American leisure'. Since the automobiles introduction into American culture with Henry Ford's Model T in 1908, automobiles have been viewed as a source of freedom.<sup>187</sup> For Americans, the car encouraged the rise of new leisure activities such as drive-ins and Sunday drives,

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<sup>185</sup> Watts, p. 129.

<sup>186</sup> Weyr, p. 55.

<sup>187</sup> Ibid.

becoming the center of middle-class American life.<sup>188</sup> Considering the impact of the automobile on the middle class demographic, it is no surprise that *Playboy* incorporated numerous advertisements for vehicles throughout its pages. For Weyr, “if there was ever a single product that captured the spirit of the American male, it’s the automobile...and if there was ever a magazine that did it, it’s *Playboy*.”<sup>189</sup>

Part of the automobiles popularity in the magazine was the fact it was easy to reference sex in the advertisements. In June 1964, Yamaha promoted its motorcycle by telling readers “wherever you go, take along an exciter”, which coincidentally had a women laying in front of the motorcycle.<sup>190</sup> The beautiful women were always dressed provocatively, with the advertisements telling consumers what they would gain if they owned a car. Women were unashamedly presented as accessories to enhance cars for male consumers, rather than consumers who could also buy these vehicles in her own right.

By the middle of the 1960s, advertisers continued using sex to sell automobiles, but the release of the Ford Mustang in 1964 changed how cars were advertised. Mustang was advertised as a youthful car for a fair price of only twenty-three hundred dollars.<sup>191</sup> More revolutionary was the fact that women were presented as more than just accessories in Mustang advertisements. The advertisements included women as active drivers, enjoying the freedom the car provided. Instead of being just another possession for men to consume, women were able to construct personal identity beyond patriarchal ideologies.

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<sup>188</sup> David Halberstam, *The Fifties* (New York: Villard Books, 1993), p.132.

<sup>189</sup> Weyr, p. 55.

<sup>190</sup> Yamaha. Advertisement. *Playboy* (June 1964): 169. Print.

<sup>191</sup> Ford. “The Total Performance 1965 Mustang” (1965): p. 3. Brochure.

When the Mustang was introduced in 1964, Ford Motor Company saw it as the car for American consumers who were looking for something different than what other companies were offering. From its first days on the market, Mustang was advertised as “the car to be designed by you” thanks to its enormous range of available options that allowed the customer to build and personalize the car of their dreams.<sup>192</sup> Over seventy Mustang options and designs allowed consumers to “design their Mustang as a hot-blooded sports car, an all out luxury car, a family car or anything in between”.<sup>193</sup> Four hundred thousand Mustangs were purchased in its first year, spurring Ford to release a range of advertisements to showcase that there was a Mustang to fit and enhance almost any lifestyle.

In Ford’s 1965 Mustang brochure, the car was promoted as the everyman’s car: “you can depend on the versatility...from twice daily trips to school to a gala debut at the country club, Mustangs go everywhere...and anywhere!”<sup>194</sup> Mustang was advertised on television and in magazines as a versatile, budget friendly vehicle with a multitude of advertisements including children and wives. Even though Mustang had an assortment of advertisements available, *Playboy* was selective in which one's made it into the magazine's pages. In June 1964, *Playboy* included a Mustang advertisement with the car on a racetrack with the caption “Free From Command,”<sup>195</sup> showcasing the freedom that the car could bring to the ideal *Playboy* bachelor. In February 1968, the Mustang was advertised as the car “for the man who wants everything in one car.”<sup>196</sup> Hefner’s fantasy male was a bachelor who purchased only products that could enhance their lives.

Therefore, only advertisements that did not include children or referred to domestic

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<sup>192</sup> Ford. “The Total Performance 1965 Mustang” (1965): p. 3. Brochure.

<sup>193</sup> Ibid.

<sup>194</sup> Ibid, p. 9.

<sup>195</sup> Mustang. Advertisement. *Playboy* (June 1964): 17. Print.

<sup>196</sup> Mustang. Advertisement. *Playboy* (February 1968): 19. Print.



responsibility were included in the magazine. According to Pitzulo, *Playboy's* editors understood that they were promoting a lifestyle often unrealistic for the magazine's readers: "we feel that by stimulating our reader's dreams and aspirations, we move him to action in a [higher] status."<sup>197</sup> Realistically, more middle-class readers could relate to the Mustang advertisements focusing on family, but these campaigns did not relate to the fantasy the magazine wanted to encourage its reader to attain.

Mustang was not the only automobile in the magazine's pages advertised to enhance the ideal *Playboy's* life. In June 1964, Jaguar advertised its TR-4 model as something an "individual" would drive. According to the company, "a real sports car is unique from engine to exhaust."<sup>198</sup> Jaguar relied on its name as an upscale car to promote the model as unique and positional for buyers. It is evident that Jaguar was aware that American males were attracted to fantasy lifestyles, and for many middle-class Americans, the Jaguar with its unique design, was a dream. By advertising multiple different brands of automobiles with a specific image in mind, *Playboy* was able to speak to multiple demographics, wealthy and middle-class, while also maintaining the sophistication and status of the *Playboy* image.

Even though *Playboy* included numerous advertisements for automobiles in the 1960s, an interest in vehicles was not a new masculine past time. Rather, it was the magazine's regular features on traditionally feminine pursuits of decorating, entertaining and fashion that provided middle-class readers with a unique vision of American masculinity. The rugged, self sacrificing family man of previous generations had been replaced by a mythical man who lived for the moment and whose domestic responsibility

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<sup>197</sup> Pitzulo, p. 83.

<sup>198</sup> Jaguar. Advertisement. *Playboy* (June 1964): 52. Print.

was “keeping his wet bar stocked.”<sup>199</sup> This was depicted in March 1969, in an advertisement titled “The Gentleman’s Home Bar.” The article described the perfect liquor for the ideal bachelor, stating “brandy is dandy” and that by stocking up on good liquor and having fashionable furnishings throughout the penthouse it will keep guests in good spirits.<sup>200</sup> Not only was the article promoting a certain kind of fine liquor, but because the article emphasized the importance of having a home bar believing “its downright embarrassing, time-wasting and clumsy” to have a guest over and not hand her well made drink, the article was actually promoting much more. Liquor was not the only accessory to impress guests, but rather furnishings were also imperative in order to keep the host and guests happy.<sup>201</sup>

Alcohol and furnishings, although an important aspect of the *Playboy* lifestyle, were not the only domestic goods emphasized. *Playboy* also encouraged males to develop a taste for fine dining. The magazine’s regular food columns, written by chef Thomas Mario, gave males advice on how to cook for guests. The column began small, featuring one simple dish a month but eventually developed into a long column discussing how to feature the food as well as how to prepare the dish.<sup>202</sup> Of course, the magazine promoted masculine dishes like steak, but the editors were careful to avoid connecting the dish with domestic obligations such as a barbequing for the family. *Playboy* preferred “to invite his lady fair out to the terrace to impress her with his own idea of grilled filet mignon”.<sup>203</sup> These columns depict how Hefner’s fantasy male, who lives for the moment, is completely disconnected from the male at the beginning of the twentieth century.

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<sup>199</sup> “The Gentleman’s Home Bar”. *Playboy* (February 1960), p. 64. Print

<sup>200</sup> Ibid.

<sup>201</sup> Ibid, p. 65.

<sup>202</sup> Thomas Mario, “Smoking for Pleasure”, *Playboy* (August 1964), p. 83. Print.

<sup>203</sup> Thomas Mario, “How to Play with Fire”, *Playboy* (July 1954), p. 35. Print.

Similar to *Playboy's* domestic and food columns, fashion features in the magazine also skirted the boundaries of traditional masculinity. Before the 1960s, men's clothing was "traditionally conservative", but was largely transformed by the lifestyle revolution that was occurring in the 1960s.<sup>204</sup> According to Frank, unlike other markets, the changes in the menswear industry were largely unrelated to the youthful demographic.<sup>205</sup> Rather, the garment industry, albeit happening at the same time as the baby boomers were coming of age, happened for reasons of its own, largely circling around a need for a new "male look".<sup>206</sup> This new revolution in men's fashion was aptly named the "Peacock Revolution", which defined the long overdue decline of the dull business suit and the triumph of the colorful and the casual.<sup>207</sup> The key to the revolution was the fact that middle-class American men wanted change. Men were suddenly interested in the way they looked and wanted clothing to represent who they wanted to be. In the early 1960s, *GQ* magazine observed "in a place of standardized codes, men were suddenly favoring rapid and extreme change; diversity instead of uniformity; flux over stasis".<sup>208</sup> Men's fashion went through many changes in the 1960s, and *Playboy* was there throughout the decade to guide men from trend to trend.

At the turn of the decade, Robert Green replaced Kessie as fashion editor and widened *Playboy's* fashion horizons. Where Kessie and Hefner had been conservative and preppy, Green's tastes were much different. He liked bold colours, patterns, funky materials, stripes and different cuts and fit. Even so, Green stayed relatively conservative until the mid-1960s. In his January 1960 article "Fashion Dateline: Rome", Green continued the elegance that Kessie brought to the monthly column, promoting Italian

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<sup>204</sup> Frank, p. 186.

<sup>205</sup> Ibid.

<sup>206</sup> "Look Like New in '65," *GQ* Magazine (February 1965): 84. Print.

<sup>207</sup> Ibid.

<sup>208</sup> "Off the cuff," *GQ* Magazine (September 1966): 13. Print.

clothing as elegant and clone-worthy.<sup>209</sup> Although, what Green did change, even if it was slight, was his promotion of different fabrics such as suede and wool.

Worried about *Playboy's* shifting place in American culture, editors began contemplating change: "I feel that our audience is growing increasingly younger (especially as we age) and the youth are coming up more aware, more hip, more irrelevant and it is essential for us to reflect some of these moods and attitudes."<sup>210</sup>

*Playboy* editors understood that their preoccupation with elegance and status could risk the magazine becoming irrelevant to future generations. Weyr pointed out that by 1968 *Playboy* was forced to update its look for the changing era, as the magazine began to struggle to find its place in an increasingly casual culture of the 1960s.<sup>211</sup> Green became aware of the growing discrepancy between the sophisticated images *Playboy* projected and how elegance became irrelevant to the younger generation.<sup>212</sup> The majority of youth embraced jeans and t-shirts over dresses and suits. This style reality led Green to think of ways to keep the image of *Playboy* relevant while also speaking to the younger generation: "I am requesting that we hew a good deal closer to proper urban-executive garb, while recognizing the fact that the casual look—which our younger readers dig—is making inroads against conservative appearance as never before."<sup>213</sup>

However, even though the magazine mentioned changes in fashion that accompanied the late 1960s, the monthly fashion feature continued to celebrate a more "stylized, refined look".<sup>214</sup> Throughout 1969, Green alluded to "revolutionary trends in men's attire" but did not provide images of this new look.<sup>215</sup> Specifically, in the

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<sup>209</sup> Robert L. Green, "Fashion Dateline: Rome," *Playboy* (January 1960): 30-31. Print.

<sup>210</sup> Pitzulo, p. 99.

<sup>211</sup> Weyr, p. 61.

<sup>212</sup> "Let Yourself Goo," *Playboy* (February 1968.): 110-111. Print.

<sup>213</sup> Pitzulo, p. 101.

<sup>214</sup> Robert L. Green, "The Playboy Forum," *Playboy* (April 1969): 73-74. Print.

<sup>215</sup> Robert L. Green, "The New Edwardian," *Playboy* (March 1967): 88. Print.

September 1969 feature “Back to Campus,” Green discussed the fashions of the counterculture. Although mentioned, Green did not outwardly promote the trends associated with the youth such as love beads, fringe, or tie-dye but he acknowledged that the fashion of the fall would be “flared legs, and multi-colors” like that of the counterculture.<sup>216</sup> Likewise, in August 1969, the monthly fashion feature titled “Avant-Garb” expressed delight for “silk brocade double-breasted evening suits”<sup>217</sup>. This shows that even though the times were changing, *Playboy* still desired to uphold the standards it had set for itself and its readers a generation earlier.

In the pages of *Playboy*, fashion was not the only product advertised for self-improvement. By the beginning of the 1960s, the magazine was not only publishing the popular fashion editorial monthly, but also regularly telling readers which type of grooming accessories they needed. One advertisement for Command grooming products appropriately told readers “when the name of the game is great grooming, the name of the line is Command.”<sup>218</sup> What the advertisement also clearly exemplifies is the sexualization of advertisements at the time, with the woman in the advertisement peering at the man playing chess longingly from the corner of the room.<sup>219</sup> As everything else in the magazine depicts, this advertisement shows men that by taking care of yourself, your desires will be met, more specifically, sexually. Throughout the 1960s, *Playboy* incorporated advertisements that encouraged readers to think of taking care of themselves beyond a simple razor and deodorant. *Playboy* saw itself as a guide in male products, regularly emphasizing that buying certain goods would elevate sex appeal in order to, supposedly, ‘get the girl’.<sup>220</sup>

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<sup>216</sup> Robert L. Green, “Back to Campus,” *Playboy* (September 1969): 165-169. Print.

<sup>217</sup> Robert L. Green, “Avant-Garb,” *Playboy* (August 1969): 88-89. Print.

<sup>218</sup> Command. Advertisement. *Playboy* (August 1969): 42. Print.

<sup>219</sup> Ibid.

<sup>220</sup> “The Grooming Game,” *Playboy* (March 1967): 104-107.

As with all advertising, retailers provided *Playboy* readers with the mythical idea that a product could bring transformation to their lives. There were few readers where the fantasy of swanky living could actually become a reality, but for the average reader the magazine had a “mythic” quality to its visions of the “good life” that many readers were attracted to. Flipping through the advertisements, it is evident that the magazine made a small attempt to reconcile the contradictions between the fantasy that was presented page after page and the reality of its readership’s ability to attain the fantasy. Hefner believes that the magazine:

Tries to show things that are attainable but special—possible but special. Part of our package is to say there are things that are qualitatively better, that are desirable, that there is a world of objects and toys out there. We don’t tell the guys how to get these things, but say ‘hey, these are things that are nice to have, that are fun to have, or, something that is not nice to have.’<sup>221</sup>

Obviously, *Playboy*’s goal was to provide its middle class male readers with the tools necessary to become the ideal *Playboy* male. Regardless of its unrealistic potential, *Playboy* magazine provided American males with a fantasy to achieve their lifestyle through consumption.

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<sup>221</sup> Weyr, p. 56.

Chapter 4:  
SEX SELLS! THE SEXUALIZATION OF A FANTASY,  
*PLAYBOY* STYLE

“Thanks for helping to put the humor back sex. I was beginning to think sex had become something sacred that couldn’t be kidded. Your magazine renews my hope that we may yet overcome the prudes and pressure groups and get suitable adult entertainment.

–Clarence Moore, New York  
(*Playboy*, January 1954, p. 4)

As *Playboy* matured out of the 1950s, editors approached the 1960s as a chance to realize its dream as a sophisticated publication. The magazine aimed to create a space for readers to discuss the various social and political issues in America throughout the 1960s. Hefner’s first order of business was hiring Auguste Comte Spectorisky in 1957 as the editorial director. He was from the New York literary scene and insisted on raising the level of sophistication in the magazine.<sup>222</sup> Under the guidance of Spectorisky, *Playboy* began to take itself more seriously. As politics and societal critiques became central to many American lives, issues of national importance gained more attention in the magazine.

*Playboy*’s sophistication elevated the magazine from purely a men’s lifestyle magazine to a publication that crossed over into discussions of personal, social and political tensions in 1960s America. Doing so ultimately served to make the magazine more accessible to readers, both male and female. One aspect that appealed to women, as well as men, was the magazine’s *Playboy* interviews and literary works by renowned writers such as Ray Bradbury, Woody Allen, Shel Silverstein, Ian Fleming, Alex Haley and Jack Kerouac. The material gave literary credit to *Playboy*, and women appreciated

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<sup>222</sup> “The Pursuit of Hedonism”. *TIME* Magazine (March 3, 1967): 76-82.

and respected the advice and articles presented in the magazine. In January 1955, a woman from Toronto, Canada wrote into *Playboy* commenting on the “added wit and charm of *Playboy*”.<sup>223</sup> Pitzulo believes that even though *Playboy* was officially a men’s magazine, many women read the publication, finding the magazine humorous and interesting.<sup>224</sup>

At the turn of the decade, discussions about societal issues in the magazine were mainly through “The Playboy Forum”, a monthly installment that allowed readers to comment and critique the material included in the magazine. In most cases, the column dealt with political issues that did not allow free expression of individuality. Readers who responded to columns became an increasingly important component of the magazine, with *Playboy* growing from one to three lengthy columns by the early 1960s.<sup>225</sup>

The famous “The Playboy Philosophy”, written personally every month by Hefner, was an advertising manifesto that combined human rights, political rights and sexual rights, aimed to assist readers in making sense of laws and restrictions that were set in place by the government.<sup>226</sup> The “Philosophy” was presented in the magazine in twenty-five installments from 1962 through 1966, hoping not only to spark discussion about issues in American society, but also provide the magazine with a defense against critics. Noted in the second installment, Hefner talks about frustrations with critics stating:

Recently, and increasingly in the past year, *Playboy*’s aims and outlook have been given considerable comment in the press, particularly in the journals of social, philosophical and religious opinion, and have become a popular topic of conversation at cocktail parties around the country. While we’ve been conscious of the virtues in seeing ourselves as others see us, we’ve also felt the image is occasionally distorted; having listened

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<sup>223</sup> “The Playboy Advisor,” *Playboy* (January 1965): 19. Print.

<sup>224</sup> Pitzulo, p. 27.

<sup>225</sup> *Ibid*, p. 24.

<sup>226</sup> Gunelius, p. 43.



patiently for so long a time to what others have decided Playboy represents and stands for, we've decided — on this ninth anniversary — to state our own editorial credo here, and offer a few personal observations on our present-day society and Playboy's part in it — an effort we hope to make interesting to friends and critics alike.<sup>227</sup>

Even though the magazine became explicitly political and spoke out against many issues of the decade such as environmental issues, Vietnam, Women's Rights and Gay Rights, the magazine was afflicted with contradictions.<sup>228</sup> Hefner may have desired the magazine to become a sophisticated work of journalism, including interviews and work from renowned writers, but the magazine's intense consumer emphasis contradicted his dream. While Hefner sat to the left of center politically, he could not publically embrace radical critiques of capitalism from intellectuals and activists, as it would have challenged *Playboy's* lifestyle and status as a consumer magazine.<sup>229</sup>

Throughout the 1960s, *Playboy* consistently had to defend its lifestyle based on luxurious consumer goods to diverse groups of critics. Many readers wrote into the advisor column and forum stating that the magazine's "encouragement of luxury consumption is its fatal flaw".<sup>230</sup> Beyond monthly readers, Charles Keating, the leader of the organization Citizens for Decent Literature accused the magazine of being a taste dictator, which is dangerous when people are trying to figure out who they are.<sup>231</sup> Spectorisky responded to such criticisms by explaining "our role in demonstrating leadership is to work within the establishment...not to overthrow it".<sup>232</sup> *Playboy* stated that in no way was the publication trying to impose a standard viewpoint on individuals but was only asking for more tolerance:

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<sup>227</sup> "The Playboy Philosophy," *Playboy* (December 1962): 73. Print.

<sup>228</sup> "Sophistication in America," *Playboy* (December 1958): 51-54.

<sup>229</sup> Pitzulo, p. 102.

<sup>230</sup> "The Playboy Forum," *Playboy* (September 1970): 71-73.

<sup>231</sup> *Hugh Hefner: Playboy, Activist and Rebel*, Directed by Brigitte Berman, 124 minutes, Metaphor Films (2009), DVD Documentary.

<sup>232</sup> "The Playboy Forum" (September 1970): 71-73.

No conflict exists between the pleasure a modern American finds in material things and his struggle to discover a new scientific truth, evolve a new philosophy, or create a work of art. The good life, the full life, encompasses all of these – and all of them satisfy and spur a man on to do more, see more, know more, experience more, accomplish more. This is the real meaning, the purpose, and the point of life itself: the continuing, upward striving and searching for the ultimate truth and beauty.<sup>233</sup>

Desiring to uphold the luxurious standards Hefner set for *Playboy* a decade earlier, the magazine continued to encourage its fantasy lifestyle as a worthy goal. Although, realizing that *Playboy* could not focus on every political or social issue afflicting American society and promote capitalism at the same time, Hefner decided to adjust its subject matter in monthly columns to mainly addressing the one issue that had been apparent in the magazine since its infancy: sexuality.

Challenges to traditional views on sexuality came from mainstream publications like *Playboy*, whose ideologies were directed towards a male demographic. Hefner believed that sexual freedom was integral to a healthy expression of individuality, as well as main component of the “good life”. As *Playboy* gained popularity, becoming the largest selling men’s magazine by the end of the 1960s, it became evident that middle-class readers, both male and female by this time, were ready to publically embrace new viewpoints about sexuality that were previously not accepted in mainstream culture.<sup>234</sup>

Prior to the 1960s, people engaged in premarital sex, but they continued to only discuss permanent, long-term, monogamous relationships. Their sexual experiences were kept secret, and sex was rarely talked about in public.<sup>235</sup> Hefner worked diligently to make sex safe for America, by distributing condoms, fighting obscene charges in court

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<sup>233</sup> “The Playboy Forum,” *Playboy* (March 1964): 45

<sup>234</sup> Rodger Streitmatter, *Sex Sells! The Media’s Journey from Repression to Obsession* (Cambridge, MA: Westview Press, 2004), p. 16.

<sup>235</sup> Rielly, p. 28.

and beginning public discussions on sexuality.<sup>236</sup> Hefner admitted “at the heart of most of the criticism of *Playboy’s* content, we find that ol’ devil sex...but we must confess at the onset that we do not consider sex either sacred or profane”.<sup>237</sup> Hefner explained that his critique of American sexuality was not a rejection of monogamy but was instead congruent with the new reality of the 1960s, where liberal demographics, such as the counterculture were experimenting with their sexuality.<sup>238</sup> He wanted to discover what was going on in American society in respect to sex and attempt to alter the laws of sexuality towards a more twentieth century code.<sup>239</sup>

One way that *Playboy* opened up discussions about sexuality was by including advertisements and columns depicting sexuality in its many forms. In August 1969, *Playboy* dedicated its monthly forum responding to and engaging in talks about stiff sex laws, sexual censorship and the sexual practices of American society.<sup>240</sup> Not only did the magazine include forums promoting healthy discussions of sexuality, but the magazine also included sexual advertisements. Retailers began to use utilize sexuality to sell their products in order to draw male consumers to a particular product.<sup>241</sup> According to Hefner, “sex...eventually used in the advertisements that beguile the eye, woo the wallet and influence our way of life”.<sup>242</sup> In the August 1970 issue, Pioneer electronics used the caption “The Pleasure Maker” in order to sell their music player.<sup>243</sup> Common in the advertisements presented in *Playboy*, specifically in this advertisement presented by

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<sup>236</sup> “Forum Newsfront,” *Playboy* (August 1969), p. 44-47.

<sup>237</sup> Hugh M. Hefner. “The Playboy Philosophy,” *Playboy* (December 1962): 47.

<sup>238</sup> Arlene Kaplan, “The Hearts of Men: Review of *The Hearts of Men: American Dreams and the Flight from Commitment*” by Barbara Ehrenreich, *DanielsSigns*, Vol. 11, No. 3 (Spring 1986): 576.

<sup>239</sup> Ric Gentry, “10 Questions for Hugh Hefner,” *TIME Magazine* (January 16, 2009): n/p.

<sup>240</sup> “Forum Newsfront,” *Playboy* (August 1969), p. 44-47.

<sup>241</sup> In 1958, Mary Wells Lawrence (the first female executive of an advertising firm), introduced sex to advertisements. In her revolutionary advertisement for Banff flights, she sold consumers on the “in flight air strip,” complete with a stewardess stripping off a hat, scarf and coat. At the outset of the advertising revolution, Wells introduced an exciting and erotic advertising platform. Frank, p. 101.

<sup>242</sup> Hugh M. Hefner, “The Playboy Philosophy,” *Playboy* (December 1964): 91. Print.

<sup>243</sup> Pioneer. Advertisement. *Playboy* (August 1970): 49. Print.

Pioneer, is the presence of a woman in the background who is looking directly at the man. Whether the advertisement takes place at work, home, socializing or on vacation, the presence of sexually interested women is overwhelming in the advertisements. These retailers were selling pleasure to males as a main accessory to the “good life”, promising the fantasy of ‘the girl next door’ if they purchase the product.

Even with the dramatic emphasis *Playboy* placed on advertisements, the magazine still relied on the popular nude centerfold to sell the products. Hefner notes that the magazine did not objectify women in its pages, but rather the “‘Playmate of the Month’ was a political proclamation” that allowed women to showcase their sexuality.<sup>244</sup> Instead, *Playboy* successfully turned the girl-next-door into a sex symbol. Historian Rodger Streitmatter argues that “most of the stories published in *Playboy* chronicle aspects of the sexual revolution that other publications would not touch,”<sup>245</sup> but regardless of this feat, a good deal of historical debate continues over the meaning of *Playboy*’s sexual representation of the playmates.<sup>246</sup> Pop psychoanalyst Rollo May engages in the popular negative view of *Playboy* and the publications meaning for 1960s American society. He declared *Playboy* among the “new puritans” and stated that in its representation of women, the magazine was not desirable at all, but rather “shifted the fig leaf from the genitals to the face”, making men desire female genitals more than a female herself.<sup>247</sup> Nudity became acceptable in the nation as a legitimate expression of sexual appeal.

By marketing sex as a normal, healthy pursuit, *Playboy* prodded the country to dispense with outdated sexuality. One of the ways that *Playboy* encouraged modern sexuality was by championing “the pill”, which became a symbol of the sexual revolution

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<sup>244</sup> “Photographing Your Own Playmate,” *Playboy* (June 1958): 35, 37.

<sup>245</sup> Streitmatter, p. 22.

<sup>246</sup> Pitzulo, p. 112.

<sup>247</sup> Ibid, p. 105.

in the 1960s. Margaret Sanger, an American sex educator, birth control activist and the founder of *Planned Parenthood*, worked with biologist Dr. Gregory Pincus to develop a contraceptive pill that allowed the female population opportunity to partake in sexual experimentation without fear of an unwanted pregnancy.<sup>248</sup> In 1960, the *Food and Drug Administration* agency approved the birth control pill, by that time named *Envoid*. Within the year, four hundred thousand American women were on the pill and the number of women taking the pill internationally multiplied over the next few years.<sup>249</sup> Heated controversies erupted over the contraceptives impact on the country's sexual behaviour, as many conservative Americans thought that the pill would destroy the nation's sexual mores and the institution of marriage.<sup>250</sup>

In reality, as gender historian Elaine Tyler May claims in her extensive research on the pill, birth control only furthered a sexual trend that had been happening for decades.<sup>251</sup> The rise in sexual activity among single women only looks drastic because of its direct contrast to the conservative 1950s, where couples were rushing to the alter and having babies in record numbers.<sup>252</sup> Even though the pill introduced a radical concept to sexual intercourse, the traditional sexual taboos did not disappear with the arrival of the pill or the sexual revolution. For some Americans, sex was part of the anti-establishment lifestyle, for others sex was a means of pleasure, part of the consumer economy, meant to be enjoyed.<sup>253</sup> Yet, for most Americans, it was a source of pleasure to be enjoyed within the confines of marriage.<sup>254</sup> Also, despite general approval for birth control by 1964, the Catholic Church refused to accept the use of artificial birth control, as well as supporters

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<sup>248</sup> Halberstam, p. 284.

<sup>249</sup> Ibid.

<sup>250</sup> May, *America and the Pill*, p. 72.

<sup>251</sup> Ibid.

<sup>252</sup> Ibid, p. 74.

<sup>253</sup> Rielly, p. 31.

<sup>254</sup> Ibid.

of the Comstock Laws were still lingering.<sup>255</sup> Eight states prohibited the sale of contraceptives in the 1960s and it was not until 1972 with the U.S. Supreme Court ruling *Eisenstadt v. Baird* that it was deemed a state could not stand in the way of birth control distribution<sup>256</sup>.

Various popular culture publications, *Playboy* included, printed articles promoting and justifying the pill as a medical advancement that enhanced the lives of Americans. In the September 1968 issue, *Playboy's* forum dealt with criticisms and praises of the pill. One reader discusses that “the pill does not encourage sexual laxity” while a doctor who refused to give contraceptives to single women believed “the majority of girls who ask for contraceptives are not virgins”.<sup>257</sup> Considering the discussion matter in the magazine at the end of the decade, the reality was that the sexual revolution gradually unraveled throughout the 1960s, with attitudes about sexual activity slowly changing.

Throughout most of American history, marriage has been the social arrangement that, according to editors of the book *Alone Together: How Marriage in America is Changing*, has been socially accepted as providing meaning and structure in people's lives.<sup>258</sup> Matrimony served as the transition to adulthood, where young adults left their parents home, became economically independent, initiated regular sexual activity and raised children.<sup>259</sup> For Hefner, marriage strangled individual identity. He argued that neither men nor women find contentment in life without a clear sense of who they are:<sup>260</sup>

We throw married people into bed together with absolutely no experience whatsoever, if we follow societies rules. If couples had a variety of partners and a frequency of experience with

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<sup>255</sup> Halberstam, p. 284.

<sup>256</sup> May, *America and the Pill*, p. 118.

<sup>257</sup> “The Playboy Forum,” *Playboy* (September 1968): 76-77.

<sup>258</sup> Paul R. Amato, Alan Booth, David R. Johnson and Stacy J. Rogers, *Alone Together: How Marriage in America is Changing* (U.S.: Harvard University Press, 2007): 1.

<sup>259</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>260</sup> Fraterrigo, *Playboy and the Making of the Good Life*, p. 34.

intercourse beforehand, many of the basic problems that afflict most new marriages would be avoided.<sup>261</sup>

Rather than marriage, Hefner glamorized bachelorhood as the ideal for his middle-class male readers.

One of the ways that *Playboy* cleverly went against marriage was through its advertisements of the “Playboy Penthouse”. The ultimate penthouse, which was originally introduced in September 1956 and was updated numerous times in the 1960s, was decked out with the most cutting-edge, fashionable furniture and technology.<sup>262</sup> This consumerist way of depicting the *Playboy*’s ideal living situation went directly against marriage because traditionally house decorating was not a masculine concern. It was an activity destined for a wife, but in *Playboy*, decorating a bachelor pad would end in a bedroom equipped with the technology and the convenience ‘he’ desired, making a wife’s role in a man’s life nearly obsolete.<sup>263</sup> The new male centered commodities, like desired furnishings and entertainment, meant that a man could display his status or simply flaunt his earnings without possessing either a house or a wife.<sup>264</sup> Unfortunately, despite *Playboy*’s attempts to promote bachelorhood as the ideal fantasy, many of the magazine’s older reader’s were already married.

May conducted a survey about marriage in the 1960s, asking men questions like “what did you have to give up for marriage?” Typical responses to her question were “nothing but bad habits”, “lonely life of a bachelor” and “nothing besides natural adjustment”.<sup>265</sup> Not all men would have had such high reviews of marriage, but through May’s research, it seems like males who were married were relatively happy with their

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<sup>261</sup> Streitmatter, p. 23

<sup>262</sup> “The Playboy Penthouse,” *Playboy* (March 1960): 41. Print.

<sup>263</sup> Ibid.

<sup>264</sup> Ehrenreich, p. 49.

<sup>265</sup> Elaine Tyler May, *Homeward Bound: American Families in the Cold War Era*. (New York: Basic Books, 1988): 32.

chosen marital status. It became clear that Hefner could not position *Playboy* in complete opposition to marriage, as readers were still getting married. Instead, *Playboy* began advocating for middle-class males to spend more time single, experimenting with alternate forms of relationships that would ultimately strengthen marriage bonds in the future.<sup>266</sup> Hefner's ideas were not radical, as prolonged bachelorhood was already a common lifestyle choice amongst liberal youth. *U.S. Department of Health, Education and Welfare* 1960 explains that the first age of marriage increased in the 1960s. In 1964, the median age of first-time marriage was 22.8 for men and 20.3 for women, whereas prior to the 1960s, forty percent of brides were married by the age of twenty.<sup>267</sup>

In the 1960s, both men and women were questioning traditional assumptions of marriage. Young, liberal couples began experimenting with living together before marriage or decided not to get married at all.<sup>268</sup> According to the *U.S. Department of Health, Education and Welfare* 1960 marriage statistics, the rate of marriage per one thousand population of 8.5 was the lowest annual rate since 1920.<sup>269</sup> In the 1950s, ninety-five percent of adults were husbands and wives, but in the early 1970s, only three-quarters were.<sup>270</sup> Referring to this report, it is evident that liberal youth began viewing marriage as one of societies definitions on how they should live their lives, which they believed inhibited individual choice.<sup>271</sup> Another explanation is that women no longer relied on males for wellbeing, as they were getting their own education to support

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<sup>266</sup> Fratterigo, *Playboy and the Making of the Good Life in Modern America*, p. 111.

<sup>267</sup> U.S. Census Bureau, Household Economic Studies, *Number, Timing and Duration of Marriages and Divorces: 2009*, by Rose M. Krieder and Renee Ellis (U.S. United States Government Printing Office, 2009) 5.

<sup>268</sup> Ibhajaj Arafat and Betty Yorburg, "On Living Together without Marriage," *The Journal of Sex Research*, Vol. 9, No. 2 (May 1973): 101.

<sup>269</sup> U.S. Department of Health, Education and Welfare, *Vital Statistics of the United States 1960: Volume III—Marriage and Divorce*, by Anthony J. Celebrezze and Luther L. Terry (Washington, D.C.: U.S. United States Government Printing Office, 1964): 7

<sup>270</sup> U.S. Census Bureau, *Number, Timing and Duration of Marriages and Divorces: 2009*, p. 5.

<sup>271</sup> Jeffrey P. Moran, "In the Trenches of Sexual Revolution: Review of Sex in the Heartland by Beth Bailey," *Reviews in American History*, Vol. 28, No. 2 (June 2000): 301.



themselves.<sup>272</sup> In the journal article “Living Together Without Marriage,” co-author’s Ibitahj Arafat and Betty Yorburg claim that educated, liberal youth believed that marriage set up fixed roles and expectations that “bear no true relationship to the people involved and are detrimental to individual growth and fulfillment”.<sup>273</sup> Therefore, in order to defy the conformist nature of marriage, some Americans decided to take part in ‘open’ relationships and even ‘swinging’ as an expression of modern love.<sup>274</sup>

Although there are suggestions as to what percentage of the general population engaged in swinging activities in the 1960s, there are no definite statistics. In 1964, William and Jerrye Breedlove published the results of their research about swingers based on a sample of four hundred and seven couples. They concluded that about eight million couples in the United States had exchanged partners for sexual purposes.<sup>275</sup> Other estimates suggest that swinging couples comprised of about four percent of the general population and some estimates going as large as twenty-five percent of couples had engaged in swinging at least once.<sup>276</sup>

In April 1969, an article in *Playboy* titled “The Swingers” exemplified this new relationship construct stating that swingers are “looking for strangers across the flocked wall paper room and openly exchanging phone numbers”.<sup>277</sup> Hefner praised the lifestyle choice of swingers, as they openly defied relationship norms. Swingers did not want to deal with expectations from society to engage in expected marriage patterns, but rather the freedom to define their relationship as they chose. This expression of sexual freedom

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<sup>272</sup> Thomas J. Espenshade, “Marriage Trends in America: Estimates, Implications and Underlying Causes,” *Population and Development Review*, Vol. 11, No. 2 (June 1985): 236.

<sup>273</sup> Arafat and Yorburg, “On Living Together Without Marriage,” p. 102.

<sup>274</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>275</sup> William and Jerrye Breedlove, *Swap clubs* (Los Angeles: Sherbourne Press, 1964): 17.

<sup>276</sup> D. L. Weis and M. Slosnerick, “Attitudes Toward Sexual and Nonsexual Extramarital Involvement Among a Sample of College Students,” *Journal of Marriage and the Family*, 43 (1981): 352.

<sup>277</sup> “The Swingers,” *Playboy* (April 1969): 149-150. Print.

that was previously evidence of defying accepted norms became something that Americans started talking about, if not participating in.

Beginning in the mid-1960s, publishers from competing male magazines tried to emulate *Playboy's* winning editorial formula. *Penthouse* magazine, formed by Bob Guccione in 1965, mirrored *Playboy's* format with its use of interviews, cartoons, narrative pieces, comedy and nude centerfolds. Gail Dines, author of the journal article "I Buy it for the Articles" highlights that *Playboy* began to feel pressure from *Penthouse* at the beginning of the 1970s, and later *Hustler* in 1974, due to their more sexually explicit material.<sup>278</sup> Like all products for consumption, *Playboy* readers had the potential to get bored with the 'same old', resulting in Hefner having to think of ways to both attract advertisers, while keeping subscribers interested in the centerfolds.<sup>279</sup> In order to keep up with sexual demand by readers and the racier content circulating from competing publications, Hefner briefly experimented with pornography that was more obscene. When *Playboy's* circulation peaked and then declined in 1973, advertisers began complaining about the explicit nature of the pictorials.<sup>280</sup> Eventually, due to outside pressures from advertisers, Hefner chose to stick with a more tasteful approach and ceased to cater to a racier demographic.

Regardless of the changes the sexual revolution brought to American culture, *Playboy* was always there, providing its readers with a guidebook to sexuality and an avenue to pursue sexual fantasies. The magazine's pages were not only stocked full of expensive products promising an escape from drab tradition, but also pictorials of the girl-next-door; the dream girl that middle-class American men could attain if they listened to *Playboy* and became the mythical ideal male.

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<sup>278</sup> Dines, "I Buy It For the Articles", *Gender, Race and Class Media*, p. 259.

<sup>279</sup> Ibid.

<sup>280</sup> Ibid, p. 260.

## CONCLUSION

From the start of *Playboy* in 1953, the magazine successfully articulated a mythical male that emerged as an important fantasy for the consuming middle-class American man. *Playboy* aimed to be a magazine for affluent, white, heterosexual, middle-class males who were not just consumers, but consumers who “yearned for distinction”.<sup>281</sup> *Playboy’s* focus on how to achieve the “good life” was the main ideological component of the magazine, with Hefner wanting more out of his readers than the daily grind of everyday life. Hefner wanted his ideal male to make “lifestyle a projection and display their individuality and sense of style through the assemblage of goods, clothes, practices and appearance” that they could mobilize with the help of *Playboy*.<sup>282</sup>

Hefner’s rise to notoriety, with ongoing success of *Playboy*, allowed him to further his concepts of what he considered the “good life” by creating the *Playboy* Empire. Hefner’s empire consisted of hosting two television shows--“*Playboy’s* Penthouse” and “*Playboy* After Dark”-- book publishing, film production, casinos, hotels, and the famous *Playboy* lubs that began in Chicago in 1960 and quickly spread across the country.<sup>283</sup> By the mid-1960s, Hefner’s empire had become an institution. It is obvious through Hefner’s international empire that “the bunny” left a thumbprint, albeit debatable, on American society. Feminist Susan Brownmiller argues that Hefner was the “king of a hedonistic empire, where women were exploited for male endeavors”.<sup>284</sup> Pat Boone, singer and conservative activist agrees, stating that even though Hefner is the creator of an “American phenomenon” with his television shows, merchandise, magazine and *Playboy* Clubs, it was an institution that nonetheless became successful by exploiting and

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<sup>281</sup> Jancovich, *The Politics of Playboy*, “Historicizing Lifestyle”, p. 85.

<sup>282</sup> Ibid.

<sup>283</sup> Pitzulo, p. 11.

<sup>284</sup> *Hugh Hefner: Playboy, Activist and Rebel*, Berman.

objectifying women.<sup>285</sup> However, historians like Osgerby and Watts argue it was Hefner's editorial platform and detailed business model that allowed Hefner to expand beyond just a 'simple' magazine.<sup>286</sup> Hefner had a philosophy that he was able to manipulate to roll with the 'changing times' of the 1950s and 1960s that ensured peak readership for more than two decades.

*Playboy* can be viewed as a cultural artifact that helped middle-class American males make sense of prosperity and expanding male consumerism post-World War II. Hefner embraced the 1950s focus on consumerism as a vehicle for transformation for his male readers. With a lack of acceptance by advertising agencies for the majority of the 1950s, Hefner used his monthly editorials to promote escapism through consumerism. By the 1960s, the magazine was mainstream in American culture, leading editors of *Playboy* to create a more sophisticated publication. According to Pitzulo, the culture of the 1960s allowed the magazine to become much more than just a source for male sexual stimulation.<sup>287</sup> Middle-class attraction to consumerism allowed Hefner to move beyond just editorials and showcase clothing, stereos, high-end appliances, travel, and automobiles with the newly innovated 1960s advertisements. These advertisements, coupled with sophisticated literature and interviews were more pervasive throughout the pages than the nude centerfolds in the 1960s.<sup>288</sup>

The multitude of editorials and advertisements that made up the bulk of *Playboy* in the 1960s may have been an intriguing fantasy for many white, middle-class men who were trying to define their manhood after years of lost identity. However, only wealthy elite was able to turn the fantasy into reality. Even for the relatively affluent, middle-class

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<sup>285</sup> *Hugh Hefner: Playboy, Activist and Rebel*, Berman.

<sup>286</sup> Osgerby, *Playboys in Paradise*, p. 181.

<sup>287</sup> Pitzulo, p. 72.

<sup>288</sup> *Ibid.*

reader, flipping through the pages of *Playboy* was as close as they were probably going to get to becoming Hefner's fantasy male. Nevertheless, even though the publication was more mythical than reality, middle-class men still enjoyed imagining what it would be like to live the *Playboy* lifestyle.

In many ways, Hefner designed *Playboy* as a feminine magazine that middle-class men could indulge in. *Playboy* was a leading men's magazine, marketed as a lifestyle handbook that celebrated luxurious commodities like fine wines, sleek cars, cool jazz and beautiful women. Corliss argues that "conspicuous consumption" was the phrase of the era, and "Hefner merged the magazine's editorial and advertising content to promote his vision of utopian ownership".<sup>289</sup> The magazine spoke to middle-class reader's through a unique vision of identity that promoted individualism through consumption. *Playboy* encouraged readers to "get that summer house, that third car, a fourth woman — products as beautiful as they were interchangeable."<sup>290</sup> Every facet of the magazine, even the empire, promoted the idea that the "good life" was never far from hand and this fantasy was something that the *Playboy* reader could never have enough of.

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<sup>289</sup> Corliss, "That Old Feeling."

<sup>290</sup> Ibid.

# ILLUSTRATIVE APPENDIX

## CHAPTER 1—CRISIS OF INDIVIDUALITY



Marilyn Monroe on the first cover of *Playboy* in December 1953. (Photograph courtesy of *iplayboy* online archive)



This is an example of Hefner's *Playboy Philosophy* from May 1965. (Photograph courtesy of *iplayboy* online archive)



An example of an editorial describing the luxurious products the *Playboy* reader should buy in the October 1955 issue. (Photograph courtesy of *iplayboy* online archive)



An example of the advertising format *Playboy* used throughout the 1950's. This advertisement, from the May 1959 issue, is evidence of the dull advertising available in the decade. (Photograph courtesy of *iplayboy* online archive)

## CHAPTER 2: ADVERTISING REVOLUTION

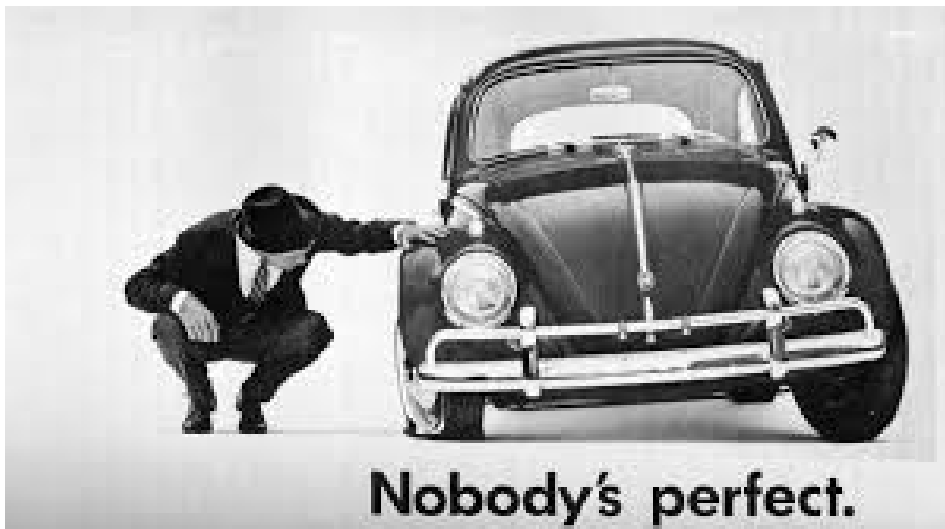


Jack J. Kessie's "The Well-Dressed Playboy" article from *Playboy's* January 1955 issue. (Photograph courtesy of *iplayboy* online archive)



This is the independent market research survey in the September 1955 issue of *Playboy*. Commissioned by *Playboy*, the purpose of the survey was to show advertisers who the average *Playboy* reader was. (Photograph courtesy of *iplayboy* online archive)





An example of a DDB Volkswagen advertisement at the beginning of the 1960s that utilized the “mass society critique” to sell their product. Endearing to consumer was VW’s ability to make fun of the car to make the vehicle more relatable. (Photograph courtesy of *Life Magazine* online archive)



An example of VW’s simple advertising formula with a white background and simple landscape in the June 1964 issue of *Playboy*. DDB and VW went against auto-advertising conventions with campaigns such as this one. (Photograph courtesy of *iplayboy* online archive)

### CHAPTER 3: THE FANTASY COMES ALIVE



An advertisement for H.I.S. clothing retailer in August 1969. This advertisement successfully utilized countercultural language to sell its product. (Photograph courtesy of *ipplayboy* online archive)



Additional examples of countercultural imagery in *Playboy* throughout 1969. Both images taken from the November 1969 issue. (Photograph courtesy of *ipplayboy* online archive)



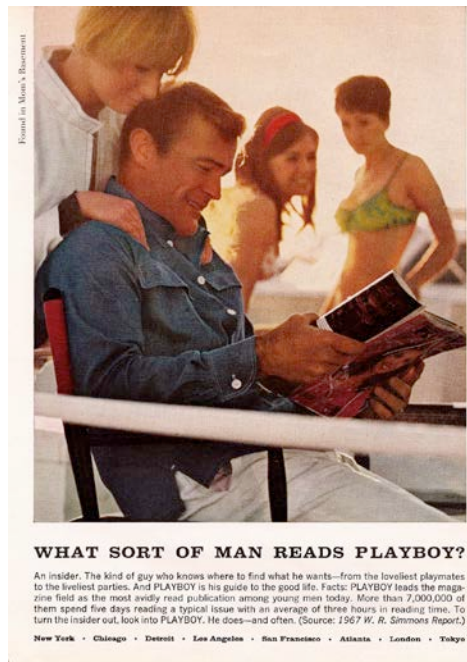
A Yamaha advertisement in August 1969 that used language of “freedom” to relate to the younger, liberal youth. (Photograph courtesy of *iplayboy* online archive)



The February 1963 installment of “The Playboy Philosophy.”(Photograph courtesy of *iplayboy* online archive)



*Playboy's* September 1969 “What Sort of Man Read’s Playboy” campaign. This month was focused on the younger reader. (Photograph courtesy of *iplayboy* online archive)



*Playboy's* October 1968 “What Sort of Man Read’s Playboy” campaign. This month was focused on the older, established male. These campaigns show *Playboy's* effort in displaying a diverse reader demographic to advertisers. (Photograph courtesy of *iplayboy* online archive)



An example of Panasonic's advertisements that promoted status by purchasing its more expensive stereo, as seen in the September 1969 issue of *Playboy*. (Photograph courtesy of *iplayboy* online archive)



In the September 1969 issue of *Playboy*, RCA advertised its stereo to the younger, more musically inclined American demographic. (Photograph courtesy of *iplayboy* online archive)



In the September 1970 issue of *Playboy*, Panasonic continued with its advertising platform of promoting its product as positional. (Photograph courtesy of *iplayboy* online archive)



An example of Yamaha using sex in its advertisements in the June 1964 issue of *Playboy*. (Photograph courtesy of *iplayboy* online archive)



Images from the 1965 Ford Mustang Brochure that show the Mustang as being a diverse vehicle for every need or want. (Images courtesy of media.ford.com)



**Should a man in his 50's be allowed out in a Mustang?**

Let's consider what might happen. To begin with, he'll go around with a mysterious little smile on his face, new spring in his walk. Mustang acts on a man that way, what with standard equipment like bucket seats, husky 233 cubic-inch Six, all-vinyl interior, floor-shift, wall-to-wall carpeting, the works. Driving a Mustang can be like finding the Fountain of Youth! Then there's this: Mustang might give a man an incurable taste for luxury. Options include Stereo Tape System, air-conditioning, front disc brakes, power steering, big smooth 289 cubic-inch V-8. Finally, remember Mustang's low price. It will give a man a sense of spending power he's never had before. Do you know a man in his 50's who'd like all this to happen to him? *You do!* Well, welcome him to 1966—and tell him to get into a Mustang fast!

America's Favorite Fun Car  
**MUSTANG**  
**MUSTANG**  
**MUSTANG**




Sidney spent Sundays seasidling at the seashore. Then Sidney started digging the '66 Mustang—the great original. Dog the models, hardtop, fastback and convertible. Liked the low price, too, which left Sidney lots of clams to design his own Mustang, Sidney style. Now Sidney's making waves all over. Last week he saved 3 bathing beauties. (And they all could swim better than Sidney!)

**Only Mustang makes it happen!**

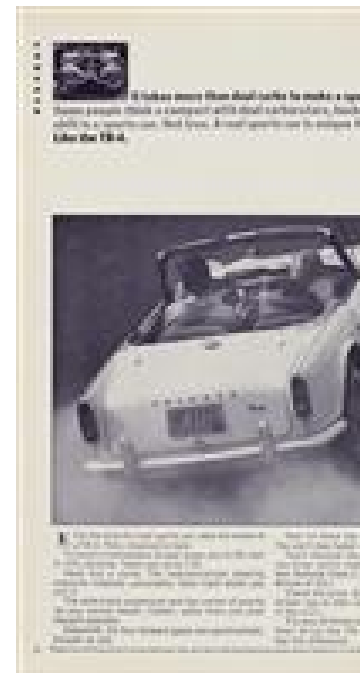


**FORD**

Examples of Ford Mustang advertisements from its extensive campaign throughout the 1960s. Ford wanted to market the Mustang as a diverse, affordable car, which led to numerous advertisements depicting the car in multiple scenerios. (Photograph courtesy of *ipplayboy* online archive)

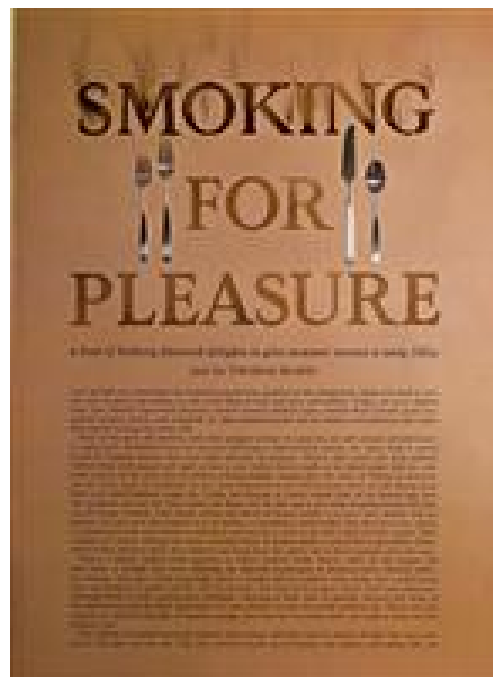


Two examples of Ford Mustang advertisements in the pages of *Playboy*. The left image is from the February 1968 issue and the image on the right was in the June 1964 issue. These advertisements show that despite Mustangs diverse advertising campaign, *Playboy* chose only to include select advertisements that reflected the *Playboy* lifestyle. (Photograph courtesy of *iplayboy* online archive)

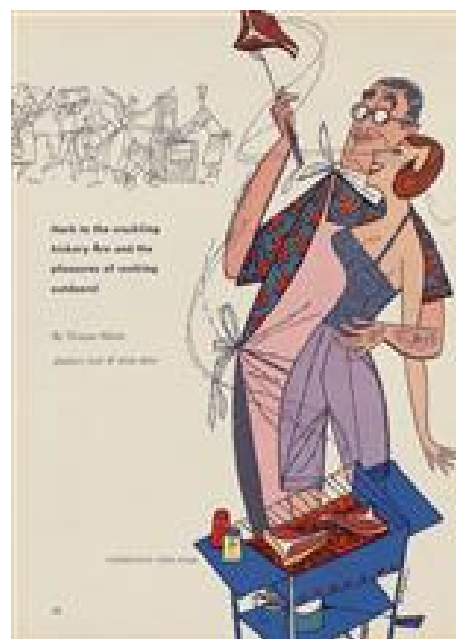


Jaguar advertisement in the June 1964 issue of *Playboy*. *Playboy* successfully spoke to numerous demographics by offering multiple different cars in its pages. (Photograph courtesy of *iplayboy* online archive)





Thomas Mario's extensive monthly food column in the August 1964 issue of *Playboy*. Including a monthly food column was the magazine's way of encouraging males to become interested in sophisticated past times such as fine dining. (Photograph courtesy of *iplayboy* online archive)



Another example of Thomas Mario's food column in the June 1954 issue of *Playboy*. Even though the column was about masculine food such as steak, it is evident that the column focused on barbecuing for a lady friend, not a family. (Photograph courtesy of *iplayboy* online archive)



An example of a column in *Playboy* focusing on a more domestic lifestyle. This column is encouraging readers to purchase a home bar for their penthouse that will make entertaining for guests much easier. (Photograph courtesy of *iplayboy* online archive)

# An *A*nnouncement

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**APPAREL ARTS - GENTLEMEN'S QUARTERLY**  
*A Timely New Industry and Publishing Dimension*

**W**HEN THE PAST DECADE the men's apparel industry has emerged from the dark age of reaction and tradition to a new, bright, creative age of fashion. Fashion is the hallmark of this era—and there is no turning back.

APPAREL ARTS is synonymous with fashion. It is our creed, our reason for existence, our way of life. In combination with the formidable, soundly established national influence of *Esquire* Magazine we modestly believe that we have consistently made major contributions to this industry in hammering home the philosophy of fashion and in both leading and paving "the force of fashion" to its current dominant, eminent and prominent position.

The very nature of fashion produces change and so we, too, are ready to make a rather remarkable and radical change in our own publishing history. Like all change, of course, it is one that is inspired by the needs and the tempo of the times—it is a change that is as natural, plausible and understandable today as it would have been ludicrous and unbelievable yesterday.

Here are the details:

The forthcoming *June* issue of APPAREL ARTS will be a CONSUMER ISSUE. Its entire editorial content will be devoted to fashion and fashion-related features. From its brilliant, masculine full-color cover and through every page it will present a lavish panorama of styles and trends concurrent with the late spring, graduation, Father's Day, summer and vacation selling season as well as advanced fall trends. It will be a men's fashion magazine unprecedented in the history of our industry—a classic showcase of the most distinguished, appealing and elegant creations in all classifications of men's apparel, furnishings and accessories and related products. Art, photography, background interest and layout will be ingeniously used to highlight the merchandise and to stimulate consumer interest and demand.

Advertisers in this issue will be both required and inspired to produce insertions which will be compatible with its flavor and content so as to effectively influence the dual audience of both retailers and consumers it will reach. Advertisements

bearing straight trade copy or wholesale prices will be unacceptable. Advertisements designating retail sources or inviting retail source inquiries will be encouraged. In effect, this *June* issue of APPAREL ARTS, bearing the descriptive sub-title GENTLEMEN'S QUARTERLY, will be the male counterpart of *Vogue* Magazine, possessing both trade and consumer appeal.

Retailers are urged to provide for an additional supply of this showpiece edition to be strategically located in their store or stores where they can be seen and read by their customers. Copies for window display and for individual store personnel should be ordered too. Copies for direct retail to consumers will also be made available to retailers.

But the most significant news related to this issue, however, is our plan for supplementary consumer circulation and readership.

In addition to its exposure at the retail level and individual copy sales by retailers to consumers, we are going to circulate this issue—

To every fraternity house lounge room-reading table in major colleges and universities throughout the nation.

To the reading tables of every major men's club—social, business, country, resort, dining, athletic, etc.—from coast to coast.

To the magazine tables of major barber shop chains and hotel and office building barber shops throughout the country.

To the men's "shops at sea" on leading cruise and steamship lines.

In addition, it will also be allocated for direct sale on select newsstands throughout the country.

Picture if you will the impulsive curiosity and spontaneous interest this handsome men's fashion magazine will stimulate within the establishments mentioned above. Picture, too, the kind of men who frequent them. Picture his interest in good dress and good grooming—and you will just begin to conceive the enormous, concentrated audience of men of means and men of influence this exciting new dimension in publishing annals will reach.

In appraising its consumer appeal, bear in mind that the magazine title "APPAREL ARTS" is unknown outside of trade circles and that its dramatic debut through these distribution methods will certainly provoke untold publicity and interest. A thousand brainstorming sessions could not produce a more apt, more distinctive, more self-evident title for a men's fashion magazine and the sub-title "GENTLEMEN'S QUARTERLY" will lead even further prestige and distinction.

We are confident that the publication of this consumer-trade edition will launch a sustained schedule of similar future issues—that it will fill a waiting void and serve an essential purpose in this bright and promising age of fashion in dynamically projecting the creative and promotional ingenuity of our great industry to a widely expanding, receptive and responsive audience both within and beyond our industry.

We hope you agree.

*Bernard J. Miller*  
BERNARD J. MILLER  
PUBLISHER

*GQ* magazine's article about the "Peacock Revolution" in men's clothing at the end of the 1950s. (Photograph courtesy of *GQ* archives).

*Playboy*, January 1960



*Playboy*, February 1968



Four examples of Robert L. Green's monthly fashion feature in the pages of *Playboy*. Although these examples are from the 1960s, when casual style was becoming more popular, these columns are still depicting a more refined, sophisticated look. (Photograph courtesy of *iplayboy* online archive)



*Playboy*, September 1969



*Playboy*, March 1967



“Avant Garb” fashion column in the August 1969 issue of *Playboy*. This column celebrates the more colourful aspects of the youth culture. (Photograph courtesy of *iplayboy* online archive)



The first two images are from the September 1969 issue of *Playboy* and the image on the right is from the October 1968 issue. Both of these advertisements show that the magazine did not only promote clothing as a way to become an individual. Rather, the accessories were also important purchases to distinguish yourself as an individual. (Photographs courtesy of *iplayboy* online archive)

## CHAPTER 4: SEX SELLS! THE SEXUALIZATION OF ADA FANTASY, PLAYBOY STYLE



“The Playboy Philosophy” installment from the March 1964 issue of *Playboy*. The *Philosophy* discussed the Kinsey Reports and the desire to open up discussions about sexuality. (Photograph courtesy of *iplayboy* online archive)



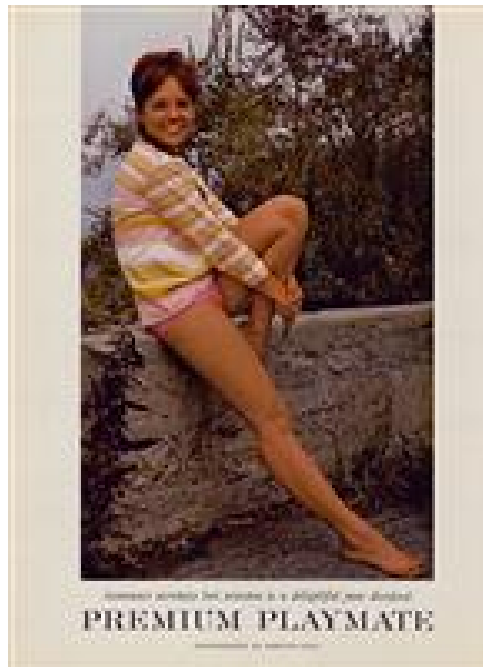
An example of the “Playboy Forum” included in the March 1964 issue of *Playboy*. This specific forum discussed safe sex practices and unjust sex laws. (Photograph courtesy of *iplayboy* online archive)



Pioneers advertisement in the August 1970 issue of *Playboy* that used sexual pleasure to sell its camera. (Photograph courtesy of *ipplayboy* online archive)



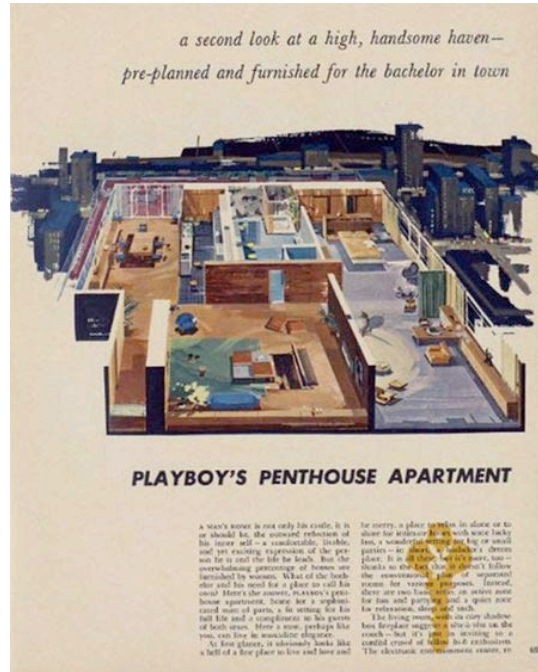
An article in the June 1958 *Playboy* issue that encouraged men to go out and find their own “Playmate of the Month” to photograph. The article gave readers details and instructions on how to do so. (Photograph courtesy of *ipplayboy* online archive)



An example of a less obscene “Playmate of the Month” centerfold in the June 1967 *Playboy* issue. (Photograph courtesy of *iplayboy* online archive)



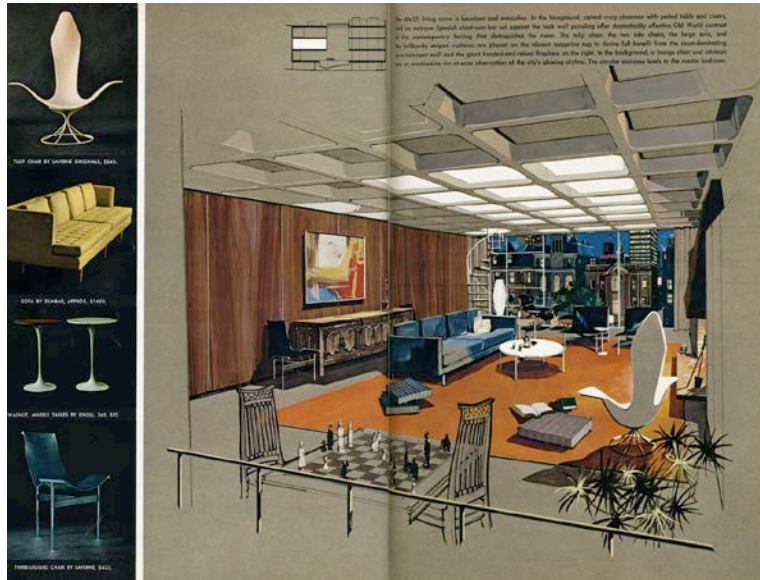
June 1965s “Playmates Revisited” article. The purpose of this article was to rate and review the playmates of the past year. Columns such as this give critics viable proof that *Playboy* objectified women. (Photograph courtesy of *iplayboy* online archive)



Playboy's March 1960 article on the "Playboy's Penthouse Apartment". Revised and updated many times throughout the 1960s, the *Playboy's* apartment celebrated bachelorhood and upscale living. (Photograph courtesy of *iplayboy* online archive)



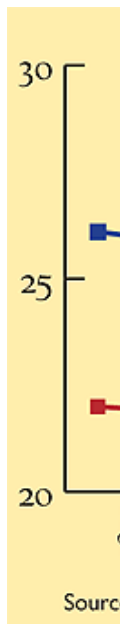




This image is part of the “The Playboy’s Penthouse” articles that were presented throughout the 1960s. This specific article, in the October 1969 issue, encouraged readers to buy upscale items for their apartment. (Photograph courtesy of *iplayboy* online archive)



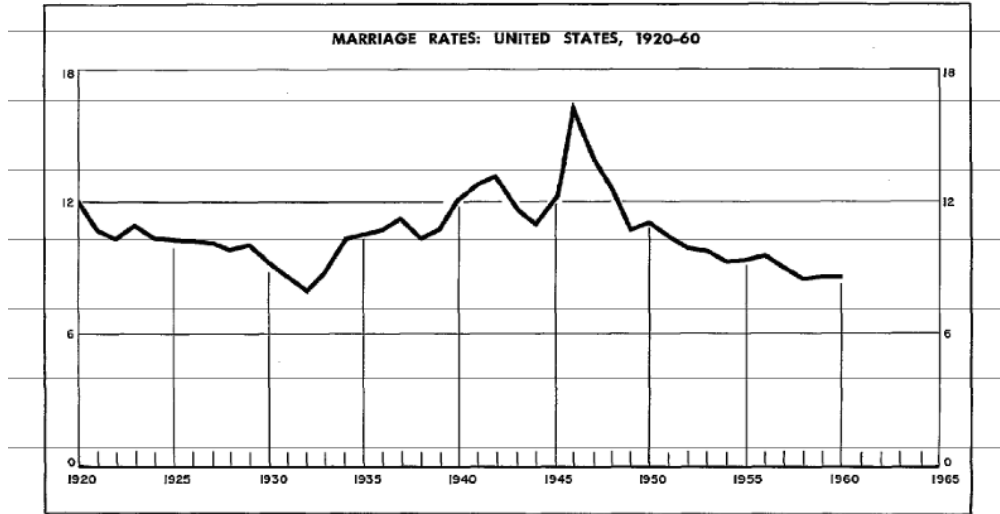
*Playboy’s* ideal bed for the bachelor. Presented in April 1965, editors thought that an upscale bedroom with a fireplace and television would be more inviting for female guests. (Photograph courtesy of *iplayboy* online archive)



Photograph courtesy of the U.S. Census Bureau.

SECTION 1 - MARRIAGES AND DIVORCES

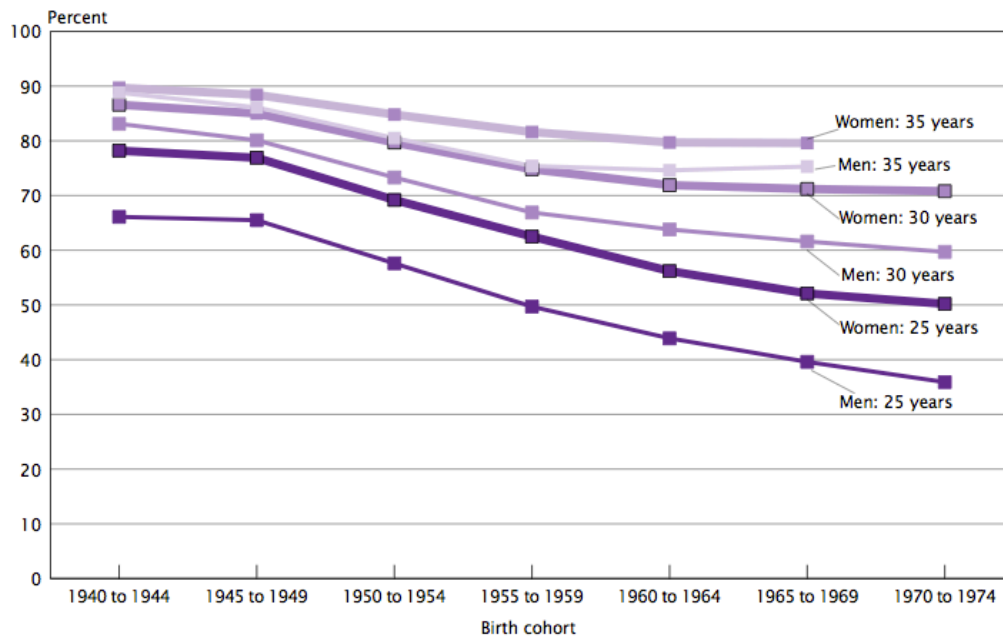
FIGURE 1-1



Photograph courtesy of the U.S. Census Bureau.

Photograph courtesy of the U.S. Census Bureau.

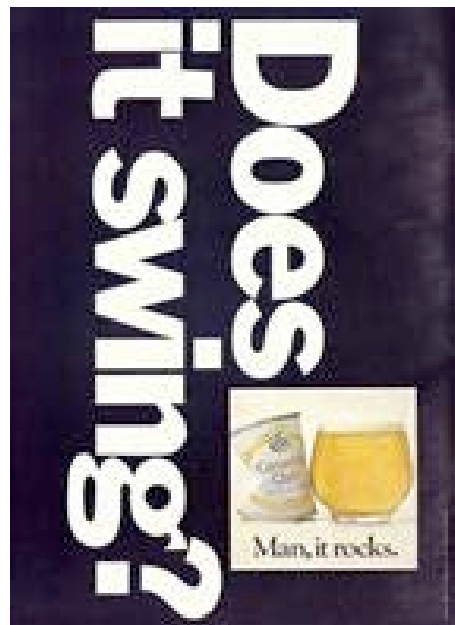
Figure 2.  
**Percentage of Men and Women Ever Married by Selected Ages and Birth Cohorts: 2009**



Source: U.S. Census Bureau, Survey of Income and Program Participation (SIPP), 2008 Panel, Wave 2 Topical Module. For information on sampling and nonsampling error, see <[www.census.gov/sipp/sourceac/S&A08\\_W1toW3\(S&A-12\).pdf](http://www.census.gov/sipp/sourceac/S&A08_W1toW3(S&A-12).pdf)>.



An article discussing the lifestyle of swingers in the April 1969 issue of *Playboy*. (Photograph courtesy of *iplayboy* online archive)



In June 1964, *Playboy* included advertisements such as this that were promoting a swinging lifestyle. (Photograph courtesy of *iplayboy* online archive)

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