



Hugh M. Hefner

1926 - 2017

Hefner is a member of the Hall of Fame because of the influence on American culture, not only of the magazine *Playboy*, but also of the clubs, TV shows, and, in later years, the Playboy Foundation. All were forces for women's rights, racial equality, and freedom from sexual repression.

Although I certainly enjoyed the photos, I was one of many young men and women who actually did read the magazine "for the articles." As an editorial in the *Daily Commercial News* claimed, *Playboy* was "one of the most intellectual magazines in America. For a magazine that is devoted to 'Entertainment for Men,' [*Playboy*] is strangely concerned with two things: namely truth and beauty."¹

There are many biographies of Hefner available today, including a highly recommended Amazon-Prime TV mini-series titled "*American Playboy: the Hugh Hefner Story*," and the book, *Mr. Playboy: Hugh Hefner and the American Dream*, by Steven Watts. The book, according to one reviewer, that "tells the compelling and uniquely American story of how one person with a provocative idea, a finger on the pulse of popular opinion, and a passion for his work altered the course of modern history."

Also, a brief but worthwhile introduction to the man and his works may be found online at: <https://www.biography.com/people/hugh-hefner-9333521>.

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Quotations from *The Playboy Philosophy*

The Playboy Philosophy, in which Hugh Hefner spelled out the "guiding principles and editorial credo" of the magazine, ran for 25 installments beginning in the December 1962 issue. While some have questioned its consistency, some its timeliness, and others its originality, such critiques do not detract from its overall correctness and influence on generations of young men (and women).

Sex, Gender, and Relationships

This nonsense about the body of man being evil, while the mind and spirit are good, seems quite preposterous to most of us today. After all, the same Creator was responsible for all three and we confess we're not willing to believe that He goofed when He got around to the body. [1-4]²

When the older magazines offer sex to their readers, it is usually in association with sickness, sin, or sensationalism. In *Playboy*, sex is offered in the form of pretty girls and humor. One approach emphasizes the negative side of sex and the other, the positive. It seems obvious to us which approach is the healthy, the natural and the right one. [1-5]

The first "Kinsey Report" hit the American people like a bombshell. Here was indisputable scientific evidence (though a great many tried to dispute it) that our entire society was living a lie. We were professing one set of standards and living quite another. [8-2]

¹ Hugh Russell Fraser, quoted in *Playboy* magazine, December 1962.

² Citations from *The Playboy Philosophy* [installment number – page number] HMM Publishing Co, Inc., 1963-64.

A sexually hypocritical society is an unhealthy society that produces more than its share of perversion, neurosis, psychosis, unsuccessful marriage, divorce, and suicide. [8-3]

Sex exists — with and without love — and in both forms it does far more good than harm. The attempts at its suppression, however, are almost universally harmful, both to the individuals involved and to society as a whole. [8-3]

The gap between our supposed sexual morality and our actual behavior is extreme and when an entire nation practices such hypocrisy, the results can be calamitous. [9-1]

Nudity, Obscenity, and Censorship

It was disconcerting when we first discovered that many of those who consider nudity and obscenity nearly synonymous often drag God's name into the act — this strikes us as a particularly blatant bit of blasphemy. The logic that permits a person to call down God's wrath on anyone for displaying a bit of God's own handiwork escapes us. [1-4]

If a person can look at the picture of a beautiful woman and find ugliness there, and obscenity, then it can only be that he carries that ugliness and obscenity within himself. If beauty is in the eye of the beholder, so is its opposite. [2-1]

Perhaps the solemn claim that the meek shall inherit the earth suited a time and place where nearly all men were slaves; but free men in a democracy have a right to be heard, have a right to disagree, have a right to be different and take pride in their differences. [2-8]

A complex, contemporary society must be run on terms suited to the normal adult, not some perverted exception and not children, lest the society thus be reduced to the level of the pervert or the child. [5-6]

Real knowledge of a subject and an interest in suppressing it do not often go hand in hand. [3-5]

Politics may be important in government, where national security is a vital consideration, but it has no place in art and literature. Not if America's art and literature, and indeed the country itself, are to remain free. [2-6]

We must never forget that this democracy draws its matchless strength from the continuous free exchange of differing ideas and by keeping open the channels of communication for even the most unpopular points of view. [4-1]

It has long seemed quite incredible — indeed, incomprehensible — to us that detailed descriptions of murder, which we consider a crime, are acceptable in our art and literature, while detailed descriptions of sex, which is not a crime, are prohibited. It is as though our society put hate above love — favored death over life. [6-8]

Religion and God

Religion should be a personal matter between man and God; it has nothing to do with man's relationship with government. They must be kept separate — totally separate — and apart. If they are not, man will not long remain free. [4-5]

The tyranny of man over his fellow man is just as great an evil when it is wielded in the name of God as in the name of the state. [4-2]

Most organized religion in the U.S. is rooted in a tradition that links man's body with evil, physical pleasures with sin, and pits man's mind and soul against the devil of the flesh. [4-3]

In these United States today, we speak of an ideal called religious freedom as though it were a reality, but an uncountable number of the rights and privileges we might reasonably expect in a truly free society have been subverted, distorted, or taken away through the encroachment of religion and religious prejudice into almost every aspect of American life. [5-2]

Religious influence in government can produce a breakdown in law and order through the enactment of laws that many of the people do not believe in and will not obey. [5-2]

More persons were put to death for religious reasons by our Christian ancestors than were killed in all of the European wars fought up to 1914. [9-8]

The coming of Christianity did not increase the status of women in society— indeed, the opposite proved true and the antisexual nature of the new religion produced a far greater antifemale attitude than had existed previously. [10-1]

Miscellaneous

Some seem to feel that a happy, even frisky, and romantic attitude toward life, and a savoring of its material pleasures, preclude seriousness, work, sensibility, a viable aesthetic. In our book this position is untenable. It belongs with such other evidences of semantic dysfunction as the unreasoning suspicion that medicine can't be good for you if it doesn't taste bad. [1-4]

For there is something far better than being just average, and if most of us aren't aiming for that something better, then the very average itself will drop lower and lower, along with our aspirations. [2-4]

Making sure that *all* American youth, regardless of race or economic position, receives the best and most complete education for which it is able to qualify makes sound economic sense for the nation and is one of the obligations of our Government. [3-3]

The primary aim and purpose of our government, [is] to achieve and perpetuate the maximum amount of freedom and opportunity possible for all of its citizens. [4-1]

True freedom also includes freedom from ignorance, sickness, poverty, and fear, without which the other freedoms would be meaningless. [4-1]