

# THE PLAYBOY PHILOSOPHY

*the twenty-first part of a statement in which playboy's editor-publisher spells out—  
for friends and critics alike—our guiding principles and editorial credo*

THIS INSTALLMENT in our editorial series is devoted to an edited transcript of the third of four religious round-table discussions in which we participated a few months ago with a priest, a minister and a rabbi, over radio station WINS in New York. This opportunity to exchange views with prominent representatives of each of America's three major religious faiths was a unique and stimulating experience. Because of the importance of organized religion to so many of the societal problems we have been considering in *The Playboy Philosophy*, we believe that a number of the opinions voiced in this interchange are pertinent and of special interest to our readers.

## THE THIRD RELIGIOUS ROUND TABLE

**BURNETT:** Good evening. The program is *Triologue* and I am Murray Burnett, your host. *Triologue* will attempt to bring to bear upon the leading issues of our time the thinking and wisdom of men trained to deal with our deepest needs. They will talk about these things that are truly important to all of us. This program is presented by the Public Affairs Department of WINS in cooperation with the Archdiocese of New York, The American Jewish Committee and The Protestant Council of the City of New York.

I would like you to meet tonight's panel: They are Father Norman J. O'Connor, Reverend Richard Gary, Rabbi Marc Tanenbaum and Mr. Hugh M. Hefner. And Hugh Hefner is, of course, Editor-Publisher of *PLAYBOY* magazine and President of Playboy Clubs International and the entire Playboy empire.

This is the third of four separate programs, with Mr. Hefner appearing as our guest panelist, in which our subjects are "The American Sexual Revolution" and "*The Playboy Philosophy*." And for those in our listening audience who do not happen to be *PLAYBOY* readers, it should be explained that *The Playboy Philosophy* is a series of editorials on the social and sexual ills of contemporary society that Hugh Hefner has been writing in his magazine for some time now.

## SEX AS SIN

**BURNETT:** I would like to begin tonight with a reconsideration of the ques-

## editorial By Hugh M. Hefner

tion of sex as sin, which I raised in one of our previous discussions, but which we never really got a chance to explore. Would anyone on the panel care to give me an answer to the question: Is sex sinful? What about you, Father O'Connor?

**O'CONNOR:** The best way to handle that question is to ask you to rephrase it.

**BURNETT:** All right—is sexuality a sin?

**O'CONNOR:** That sounds like the same question.

**BURNETT:** Yes, but you asked me to rephrase it.

**O'CONNOR:** No, I want you to put it another way, because sexuality can include everything from the act of coition between a married couple, to homosexuality in Central Park, to reading dirty magazines in a pornographic shop in Times Square . . .

**BURNETT:** All right, an unmarried boy and girl having sexual relations—is that sinful?

**O'CONNOR:** Speaking as a Roman Catholic, yes.

**BURNETT:** Father Gary?

**GARY:** I think you should rephrase the question. *(Laughter)*

**BURNETT:** How would you like it rephrased?

**GARY:** Well, under certain situations—you know, there's the desert island sequence, where there isn't any clergyman around. There are exceptional circumstances. But I'm more concerned about breaking a myth here, right at the outset—which is that sexuality, as such, is sinful. I think there are a lot of people who make this claim; but the sexual drive is really a neutral thing as far as morality is concerned. It's only as it affects the lives of the people involved, and the values which they have, that it becomes moral or immoral. So I think we have a certain obligation to sort of set our house in order by destroying any myths we can. I think the first one ought to be that sex per se is sinful—that ought to go!

**TANENBAUM:** In terms of further defining what we mean when we talk about sex and its relationship to sin, sex was not seen as a neutral capacity in the Biblical tradition. Sex was weighted in the Biblical tradition—the first reference to it is an altogether affirmative one.

The first reference, in the *Book of Genesis*, is: "Be fruitful, and multiply." It was seen as a human capacity or human potentiality, which Biblical tradition considered—if I may mix a metaphor—pregnant with affirmative possibilities.

**BURNETT:** Well, Hugh Hefner, in *The Playboy Philosophy*, how do you stand on this question of sex as sin, specifically related to premarital sex, or sex out of wedlock, or not for reproductive purposes?

**HEFNER:** The concept of "sin" is a religious one, of course, and somewhat outside of my province. But I certainly don't believe that sex can, or should, be limited solely to matrimony.

There seemed to be fairly general agreement amongst the panelists, at the end of the last discussion, concerning the fact that the unmarried members of society have sexual needs, too; and Rabbi Tanenbaum was quite eloquent, I thought, in voicing the concern that organized religion ought to feel over the lack of any positive moral tradition or code for coping with this question. Judaism-Christian morality has been oriented almost entirely to marriage and the family—which is understandable and certainly not improper, as far as it goes. But I think it is irrational to ignore the single members of society, or to assume that their sexual problems have been dealt with satisfactorily with a few simple prohibitions.

In my own moral view, I think there is a justifiable place for sex outside of wedlock. The place for the conceiving and rearing of children is marriage, because youngsters need the love, security and stabilizing influence of the complete family unit—especially in their early, formative years. But I think that sex has other quite legitimate purposes, apart from procreation—it can also serve as a significant source of physical and emotional pleasure; it offers a means of intimate communication between individuals, and a way of establishing personal identification within a relationship and within society as a whole; it can become, at its best, a means of expressing the innermost, deepest felt longings, desires and emotions. And it is when sex serves these other ends—in addition to, or separate and apart from, reproduction

—that it is lifted above the animal level, it seems to me, and becomes most human.

#### SEX AND THE MASS MEDIA

**O'CONNOR:** How do you express that point of view in the magazine, Hugh? Having looked through quite a few issues, the only area in which I can see this established, in any sense, would be in the pictures of the girls, I suppose, which introduce the idea that sex is very attractive. But in the rest of the contents of the magazine—apart from that particular element—how is it being expressed?

**HEFNER:** I think the over-all concept and content of the magazine, to whatever extent it is involved with sex, offers a positive, attractive, romantic image—one that is consistent with what I've just said. And as I have mentioned previously, PLAYBOY is only one part of our total society; if we sometimes overstate our position, or seem to overemphasize the subject, please remember we are speaking into a very strong wind in this puritanical society of ours—a wind that is blowing in the opposite direction.

**BURNETT:** May I interrupt for a moment, Hugh? You made that statement last week, and after the program I had an opportunity to think about it. And it occurred to me—isn't it ironic, or something of a paradox, that PLAYBOY would probably not enjoy the tremendous success it does if it were not for the very puritanism in society that the magazine opposes.

**HEFNER:** This is true, to the extent that the magazine arrived on the scene at a time when society's shift away from puritanism was beginning to gain real momentum and needed a voice. Just consider the image of sex that was being projected through most of the mass media in the period immediately prior

to PLAYBOY, a little over a decade ago. It was asexual, at best—and much of it was downright antisexual.

The majority of American magazines approached sex as sensationalism, sickness or sin, with stories like: "How Wild Are Small-Town Girls?"—"The Low-down on the Abortion Business"—"The Multimillion-Dollar Smut Racket"—"Sin Town, U. S. A.!"—that sort of thing.

The so-called *family* magazines have never been edited to appeal to the diverse areas of taste, interest and intellect of the various members of an average American family; the approach has been, rather, to try to make the total contents of the publications fit and proper for all the family—and especially so on the subject of sex. Well, what do you derive from that? Printed Pablum. Magazines aimed at the mental and emotional level of the 12-year-old child. Magazines guaranteed not to offend Mom and the kiddies; and guaranteed not to nourish the intellectual or emotional growth of anyone else.

Why, even in the sophisticated Sixties—and the evolution of the over-all sexual sophistication in our mass media during the last decade or two has been nothing short of phenomenal—when *Life* occasionally publishes a photograph of a partially nude female, as in their recent story on the topless bathing suit, the editors can still count on receiving a number of protest letters from outraged parents who are horrified at the prospect that their little Peter or Penelope might discover *prematurely* (which seems to be almost any time prior to the age of consent for some) just what the mature human body looks like. Even in the 1960s, some parents are still trying to keep sex hidden away, as though it were some unspeakable, secret, obscene thing.

It is a paradox of puritanism that the least offensive sexual expression is considered the most offensive. That is to say, the prudish person objects primarily to the attractive and appealing images of sex in society; and he is not so likely to be disturbed when sex is associated with sickness or sin. Puritan prudery has its roots in sexual anxiety and guilt: A positive or permissive emphasis on the subject tends to make such insecurity more immediate and real; but with a negative emphasis, the prude may partially assuage his feelings of guilt and be more capable of suppressing and controlling the uncertainties that threaten him.

Unfortunately, the publishers of the family magazines, and the advertisers and the advertising agencies who support them, appear to be more influenced by this vocal minority of irrational prudery than by the increasingly liberal views of the rest of society.

In the women's magazines, sex is usually approached with the impersonal diagnostic detachment of a physician or psychiatrist. They're sick, sick, sick, where sex is concerned.

**BURNETT:** The sexual content of the women's magazines is rather high . . .

**HEFNER:** High, and getting higher. But the *quality* of their sexual content is something else again. We published an article on the subject several years ago, entitled *The Pious Pornographers*, that has since become a contemporary classic of a sort. It was written by William Iversen, but it appeared in PLAYBOY under a pseudonym, because it was a devastating satire of the prim pretensions and clinical explications on sex in the ladies' journals, and Iversen wasn't sure whether those lady editors had a sense of humor about either s-e-x or their own periodicals; as a free-lance writer, he had

to rely upon consumer magazines for the major part of his livelihood, so he picked a pen name for the piece, because he couldn't chance alienating the entire women's field.

I personally doubted that such a precaution was necessary; I was mistaken. A few days after that issue of PLAYBOY went on sale, we received a complimentary letter on the Iversen article from an editor of one of the most popular of the women's periodicals, which we printed in a subsequent issue; when her bosses read it, they promptly fired her.

Will Iversen is now a successful enough writer not to have to worry about what the editors of the women's magazines think about his work. A two-part sequel on the same subject, entitled *The Pious Pornographers Revisited*, appears in our September and October, 1964, issues—and these carry Will Iversen's own illustrious by-line.

There has been some improvement during the last decade in what Iversen calls "the ladies' home jungle," but the primary approach to sex in the pages of the women's magazines remains depressingly downbeat, with diagnoses, case histories, confessions and dilemmas ad infinitum—physical, psychological, emotional and marital. It apparently doesn't occur to the lady editors that their readers may be tiring of this morbidly compulsive diet of antisex and might appreciate a few simple paeans to the pleasure of it all. As a result, by what could almost be considered default, PLAYBOY has picked up a sizable secondary female readership: girlfriends, wives, secretaries, coeds—the playmates of PLAYBOY's primary readers—who also seem to appreciate a periodical that treats sex with a smile instead of solemnity and distaste.

You would tend to expect, I think, that the magazines edited especially for men would be the exception to this publication pattern of a decade ago, since they could presumably ignore the interests and sensibilities of women and children, and concentrate entirely on the entertainment and edification of the adult male members of society. But back in 1953, when PLAYBOY first began publishing, the men's magazines were actually just as antisexual as the rest.

Prior to PLAYBOY, the only magazine of national prominence and circulation that was presumably being edited for the urban male was *Esquire*. But *Eshy* had lost much of the editorial vitality that had brought it to prominence in the 1930s, and it was being reshaped—by its original editor, Arnold Gingrich, who had been rehired by the publisher for that purpose—into a new and strangely asexual image that has continued to the present time.

I'm not really certain what *Esquire* is today, but of one thing I'm reasonably sure—it isn't a men's magazine any long-

er, urban or otherwise; even though it still says "The Magazine for Men" on the cover and includes male fashions inside. The *Esquire* Girls are gone—full pages, spreads and gatefolds—photographs, in black and white and color, and the paintings by Vargas and Petty; the sophisticated cartoons are gone, too, that used to fill every issue; and so are most of the male-interest service features on various aspects of urban living. In their place is a wide range of literary stuffs—much of it very good, but of equal interest to both sexes. And I'm quite certain *Esquire's* editors planned it that way—the pattern is too well established at this point for it not to have been. The fact that I don't really understand the magazine isn't going to cause their editors any sleepless nights, I'm sure; there are probably aspects of PLAYBOY that puzzle them, too. I hope so, at any rate.

*Esquire* had the urban male all to itself in the early 1950s, because the big circulation success in the men's field after the War was *True*—and all the other male magazines of the period were consequently patterned after it: *Argosy*, *Male*, *Stag*, *Man's World*, and a half-dozen similar titles. The editorial emphasis in these publications was on outdoor action and adventure—hunting, fishing, trapping gators in Okefinokee, diving for sunken treasure in the South Seas, or scaling the Himalayas in search of the Abominable Snowman.

The curious factor in this formula was that the out-of-door doings seemed to be a substitute for associating with the opposite sex. The stress was on pastimes and pleasures to be enjoyed in the company of other males; and in the true-to-life adventure stories, it was man against the elements, or man against beast, or man against man, but almost never man against, or even in relatively close proximity to, woman. The editorial image projected by these publications was hairy-chested as can be, but from a psychoanalytical point of view, it was, well, something less than heterosexual.

The antisexual nature of the outdoor men's magazines is no longer as severe as it was a dozen years ago, but it's still there to a significant degree in most of them. The negative, almost nonexistent position of women in this "man's world" was especially obvious in the reader-editor dialog in the letters column of *True* at the time. Reader comments and editorial responses—putting women "in their place"—were a frequent and often highly entertaining portion of these columns and I remember one series of such letters quite vividly, because at the time I was struck by their psychosexual pathological implications.

It began with a reader writing in to ask whether—when his wife got out of line—it wasn't permissible to turn her over his knee and give her a good

thrashing; he had used this corrective measure frequently and with good results, he said, and had a better marriage because of it. *True* approved, and then—for the next several months—the letters columns were filled with mail on the subject: not just from male readers, but from females, too (at least the letter writers claimed to be female), stating that their husbands, fathers or boyfriends spanked them whenever they were unruly—sometimes clothed and sometimes bare-bottomed, with the hand, with a hairbrush, with a strap, or with whatever else happened to be handy.

The editors of *True* could probably have continued pulling and publishing these spanking letters indefinitely if they had wanted to, but someone probably pointed out what such mail implied about their readers, because even a casual student of sexual pathology would recognize this as one of the commonest forms of sadomasochistic perversion extant.

Whenever the outdoor men's publications included a little sex in their stories, it tended to be even more sensationalized and perverted than the women's publications: "The Sacred Sex Rites of Pango Pango"—"The Secret Life of a Modern Bluebeard"—"The Curious Case of the Motel Murders"—"The Phantom Strangler of Lovers' Lane"—"I Was the Captive of Sex Starved Amazons for 14 Months and Lived"—that sort of thing. The more successful of the adventure magazines resorted to a minimum of this sort of material; the smaller publications in the field relied rather heavily upon it.

A step below the cheapest of the outdoor adventure publications were the girlie magazines. They also reached a male audience and their attraction was primarily pictorial. There wasn't much nudity to be found in the girlie magazines of a dozen or so years ago; it was mostly net stockings, black lingerie and garter belts—unattractive pictures of unattractive women. There was also a strong secondary emphasis on perversion in many of the most popular of these periodicals: photos of women wrestlers, spanking scenes, whips, tightly laced girdles and boots with spike heels to appeal to the sadomasochistic; accents on long hair, bizarre clothing, gloves, exotic lace underthings and unusual shoes for the fetishist; women dressed partially, or entirely, in the clothing of men; and picture stories on female impersonators, to attract the transvestite and the homosexual.

This was the sexual climate in American magazine publishing in the early 1950s, when I began making plans to produce PLAYBOY. As a periodical for the entertainment and edification of an adult male audience, there was never any question about sex being one of our important editorial ingredients, but I



Religious round table in session. Left to right: Father Norman J. O'Connor, Reverend Richard Gary, Hugh M. Hefner, Rabbi Marc Tanenbaum.

was determined from the outset to try to approach the subject in a healthy, heterosexual, positive and appealing way.

### PLAYBOY AND LOVE

**O'CONNOR:** You used the expression "love" a while ago, Hugh, which I think is part of the problem and concern: The vision of sex that comes out of the magazine is one that seems highly mechanical.

**TANENBAUM:** But it is sex he has been talking about . . . it is not necessarily love . . .

**O'CONNOR:** It is sex, pure and simple. And this love concept, which you have expressed very well, Hugh, I think is one that some people have been looking for in your magazine. And I'm wondering, myself, in the ten or eleven years that you have been publishing *PLAYBOY*, where you feel you have injected it?

**HEFNER:** Did I use the word "love"? It can mean many different things to different people. Sex and love are not the same thing, obviously; and each can exist wholly apart from the other. But I think the best sex, the most meaningful sex, is that which expresses the strong emotional feeling we call love. And I think you can find the emotion implicit in a great deal of what the magazine has to say about the male-female relationship, because *PLAYBOY* is a very romantic publication . . .

**O'CONNOR:** But unreal?

**HEFNER:** There's a certain lack of reality in *PLAYBOY*, to be sure. I think the magazine includes portions of the real world and portions of the world of dreams, as well. And I think it is probably a good thing to include both. Without our dreams and aspirations, life would be a rather drab affair. But, again, this is only one part of living. I don't expect anyone to give up the real world . . .

**TANENBAUM:** Can you imagine living 24 hours a day in the *PLAYBOY* dream-world? You could certainly do an enormous business in vitamins. (*Laughter*)

**HEFNER:** Yes, and, Rabbi, such a humorous approach to the subject is also one of the important ingredients to be found in *PLAYBOY*, it seems to me—because levity and laughter can do so much to decontaminate sex and help to eliminate the guilt and anxiety previously associated with it.

**BURNETT:** But there has always been humor associated with sex. Literary history is really Rabbi Tanenbaum's field, but there was Rabelais and Boccaccio . . .

**TANENBAUM:** And the Bible itself . . .

**HEFNER:** I certainly don't mean to suggest that I think *PLAYBOY* invented either sex or a humorous approach to it.

**O'CONNOR:** But, Hugh, what about your commitment to the social idea that you're trying to help people, in terms of your *Philosophy*—you're trying to advance society, advance a sense of reality, advance this sexual revolution. And yet,

in the history of the magazine, you must admit that you can't point to too much that has done this, above and beyond the humorous content, or, possibly, the fact that you've published some pictures of some very attractive young women.

**HEFNER:** Well, I would say that if it has been possible, through the pages of the magazine, to make people a little less ashamed of the human body, and of sex as a subject of conversation, then this, in itself, is a tremendous step in the right direction.

**O'CONNOR:** Then you would say—you, yourself, admit—that you've never done anything with regard to the love aspect. You admit that sex operates out of a much bigger field than the pure and simple physical attractiveness of a man or a woman.

**HEFNER:** I certainly agree with the last thought, Father. But, as I've stressed before, *PLAYBOY* is not intended to be the whole and all of society . . .

**O'CONNOR:** It's the whole and all of Hugh M. Hefner.

**HEFNER:** Well, let me be more specific. I'll admit that I am a rather dedicated and one-way kind of a guy. But apart from my own place in it, I have some rather strong feelings about this society of ours and what I believe would help to make it a healthier, happier and better place in which to live. *PLAYBOY* is very much a part of that.

It is my feeling that we tend to rush headlong into the responsibilities of marriage and family in our society—long before most of us are really ready for them. And I see this as very much related to the tendency to grow up too quickly, to go steady too soon, to marry too early . . .

**O'CONNOR:** Have you said all this in the magazine?

**HEFNER:** I'm saying a good bit of it now in my editorials, in *The Playboy Philosophy* . . .

**O'CONNOR:** Up to this point, I don't remember ever having seen this subject discussed . . . ?

**HEFNER:** It has been implicit in the editorial concept and content of *PLAYBOY* from the very first issue; and I'm attempting to spell it out in more specific detail in *Philosophy*. The emphasis in the first installments of the editorial series has been on antisexuality in our society, especially as expressed in censorship and the laws regulating sex behavior, but with the completion of these considerations, I intend to offer an extended examination of the social and sexual patterns and problems in courtship, marriage and the family, with some personal suggestions on premarital and marital morality that I think would make sense in our contemporary civilization and that seem consistent with the primary principles already established in *The Playboy Philosophy*.

When a question is raised regarding

*PLAYBOY* and love, I must point out that a great deal of the magazine has to do with romantic love. What is actually being questioned, perhaps, is the lack of *PLAYBOY*'s involvement in the husband-wife-family orientation—with that aspect of love—and I have an important point I would like to make regarding that . . .

**O'CONNOR:** No, Hugh, I'm just using the concept that you started out with which was love: that I love a human being—and, therefore, we have a relationship. Do you feel that that's in the magazine?

**HEFNER:** I think so. Yes, definitely. In contrast to the outdoor men's magazines, for example—that offer editorial escape from association with the opposite sex—*PLAYBOY*'s entire concept, personality and point of view are predicated on romantic boy-girl involvement. After all, you can't be expected to reach the "I love you" stage without dating; and every regular service feature in the publication—male fashion, good grooming, food and drink, music and hi-fi, travel—is editorially associated with courtship.

Look, I am, myself, a very romantic human being . . .

**O'CONNOR:** I know you are.

**HEFNER:** . . . And I think that sentimental side of my nature, I think my romanticism, is apparent in the pages of *PLAYBOY*, because the magazine is, and always has been, a projection of my personality, a reflection of my own personal dreams and aspirations. I don't think it's a cold and impersonal publication. I think it's a very warm and romantic book . . .

**GARY:** It's not cold and impersonal, Hugh.

### A TIME FOR PLAY

**HEFNER:** I would like to express an opinion regarding this question that I think may help to explain something more about *PLAYBOY* and where I feel it properly fits in our society. It seems to me that the young man and young woman of today are unnaturally and unfortunately impressed with the idea of getting married the moment they are finished with their education. They are improperly pressured by a variety of social forces into prematurely going steady, becoming engaged, getting married, and accepting all the responsibilities of home and family—frequently before they are mature enough to cope with them.

The typical American male selects a mate and marries her—supposedly for a lifetime—before he has fully developed himself, into the adult human being he will be for the rest of his years. It's no better than a game of marital blind-man's buff, it seems to me, and it's unquestionably one of the major causes for the high rate of divorce in America.

The problem is more pronounced in the male, because he matures more slowly.

ly than the female—both physically and emotionally; a young man in his early 20s, for example, may still have a significant part of his maturing immediately ahead of him. He may actually become a very different person by the time he reaches his early 30s—with different tastes, interests, likes and dislikes; and yet this young man is expected to choose a wife who will suit the stranger he may very well be in another ten years.

If, on the other hand, those first years were devoted to work and play, as a single adult—then when marriage did come, a young man would be far better prepared for it . . . emotionally, intellectually, financially . . . in every way. He would have a far better notion of what would be important to him in a wife; he would be more able to appreciate marriage and a family, and more capable of accepting his responsibilities as a husband and parent.

PLAYBOY is editorially aimed at this premarital period, and by making these years of bachelorhood attractive, I think the magazine contributes a considerable service to our society.

**BURNETT:** In other words, are you saying that a judicious sampling of the opposite sex would help one to arrive at a better marriage? Is that what you're suggesting?

**HEFNER:** Statistically, there's no question about that, but it isn't really the point I'm making. What I'm saying is that, too often, boys and girls jump directly out of the protective environments of home and school into the roles of husbands and wives, before they're really prepared for them. If they would only wait a bit, and spend a little time finding themselves, before attempting to find their mates for a lifetime, we would have happier, more successful, more long-lasting marriages.

**TANENBAUM:** I'm impressed with this. I think you are saying something that's quite real and I agree with you.

**GARY:** I think there is a great deal in what you have just said.

**BURNETT:** I'm unimpressed—and I'll tell you why. And I'm amazed at you gentlemen, because you undoubtedly talk to many more people with marriage problems than I do. But I think we've fallen into the Freudian or 20th Century trap that suggests that sex is the end-all and be-all of marriage—the idea that once you straighten that out, you have no more marriage problems. Gentlemen, I do not think this is true.

**TANENBAUM:** I don't think Mr. Hefner is saying that, or even implying it.

**BURNETT:** Well, he's saying there are going to be a lot fewer divorces . . .

**TANENBAUM:** No, no, Murray . . .

**HEFNER:** Fewer divorces, because couples will be more emotionally mature when they marry, Murray . . .

**TANENBAUM:** I think that what is quite implicit, for me, in what Mr. Hefner has just said, is that the Freudian

revolution in America has been incorporated with second- and third-hand information, in the minds of parents, convincing them that the Puritan and Victorian practice of suppressing their children—preventing them from engaging in sexual play—is dangerous. This has produced a compensatory reaction, in which there is an overpermissiveness, allowing children to indulge themselves at a much earlier age; and, in fact, encouraging them in this.

**HEFNER:** But I don't believe the problem is sexually permissive parents or a sexually permissive society, Rabbi—quite the opposite. The extensive puritanism that still exists in American society, with its moral prohibitions against sex outside of wedlock, is one of the powerful pressures leading to early marriages. The religious person, convinced that premarital sexual relations are a sin, plagued with his or her own sexual desires—which, in the late teens and early 20s, are at their physical peak—finds marriage the only "logical" solution. And all too frequently these young people pay a bitter price, in hurt, heartache and misspent years, because their religion offered them no other moral solution to their sexual dilemma.

**TANENBAUM:** But I think this confusion has prevailed on both sides of the issue. I think during the Puritan period much of this sort of thing happened, precisely because of that kind of mentality; and I think, in reverse, some of this is happening today with early marriage.

I think that the atmosphere has been affected very much by this Freudian openness—that is to say, by parents who are not suppressing their children's sexual behavior. But I think there is another motive, which is entirely American, and which I take to be behind what you're saying about the early dating of children. That, I think, is the success motive in America. Parents are working out some of their success problems through the early success of their children: the popularity of their children; making their children more attractive so that they become, in a sense, erotically more successful with their mates, and end up in a much earlier marriage situation.

**HEFNER:** I agree that a great many parents tend to manipulate the lives of their children to satisfy their own emotional needs—and I think this is unquestionably one of the important considerations creating a social environment conducive to early going steady, engagement and marriage. It is precisely this sort of parental orientation—with the offspring acquiring their fears regarding popularity and social acceptance from their mothers and fathers—that prompts the young to seek the security and status of going steady in high school, becoming engaged in college, and marrying immediately thereafter. But this is very

different from parental permissiveness regarding sex.

It isn't sexual freedom that Mr. and Mrs. America want for their children—it's the prestige of being well liked, of being pinned, of receiving, or giving, that engagement or wedding ring. It is the kids who, quite naturally, add sex to the relationships. And if they get into trouble, or are otherwise found out by their parents, dear old Dad is as apt as not to raise the roof, while Mother cries, and both demand to know how their children could have let them down this way—after all they've sacrificed in the offsprings' behalf.

Incidentally, I'm not opposed to early dating—it's the "going steady" part of this adolescent social pattern that I question. And my opposition to that isn't caused by any fears regarding early sexual intimacy—I just think a young person gets the most out of his or her teens, and is more apt to adjust successfully to the responsibilities of adulthood, if these first years of courtship are spent in the company of a variety of boys and girls, not just one or two.

As far as sex is concerned, I don't favor an entirely free or permissive attitude toward teenagers, by any means, but I do think we have a tendency in this society to ignore the sexual realities related to adolescence. And one of the serious sexual problems we face in the United States today—or, perhaps, *refuse to face* is a more accurate way of expressing it—is the significant gap between the age a person reaches sexual maturity and the legal age of consent, after which society more or less accepts his or her right to act accordingly. In the years between, a person may be considered a juvenile delinquent for simply doing what adults do, and getting caught at it. As a part of our puritan opposition to sex, our society refuses to acknowledge that young people reach physical maturity in their early teens, and by turning our backs on the problem, we only tend to increase and complicate it.

**TANENBAUM:** I'm not so sure we have. You look at your teenagers today, with the kind of parties they engage in, and the kind of clothing they wear. The pressures parents put upon them to compete with one another, to be popular and successful. A child's popularity is measured by the number of dates he or she has; or the fact of going steady with an acceptable mate.

**O'CONNOR:** Well, doesn't PLAYBOY do just that?

**TANENBAUM:** But what I'm saying is that it is possible to read into PLAYBOY this kind of incentive on either side, depending on your point of view. PLAYBOY could make marital intimacy so attractive . . .

**O'CONNOR:** Well, that's not his point. It's the play period, which we've just heard about.

**TANENBAUM:** Yes, but I'm saying it's

possible to see both things in this.

**HEFNER:** Marriage becomes attractive a bit later, after a person has gained some measure of experience and maturity as an unmarried member of adult society.

**TANENBAUM:** . . . You make the erotic act so attractive . . . and with the pressure against doing this prior to marriage . . .

**O'CONNOR:** The satisfactory solution would either be—if you're a playboy—playing with a playmate or performing the act of masturbation. Because that's the only way these tensions are relieved.

**HEFNER:** With or without PLAYBOY.

**O'CONNOR:** Right. But PLAYBOY adds to the problem.

**TANENBAUM:** I don't think so. My impression is that PLAYBOY addresses itself to a very specific kind of market—a very specific audience. I don't think this magazine reaches . . . well, it is my impression that it is aimed at a group that has passed the early marrying age. If a guy isn't married by the time he's 22 or 23, then he enters this period of extended bachelorhood, from 23 to the early 30s . . . and I have the feeling that the publication appeals to this group, which, in a sense, is committed to this kind of play philosophy.

**HEFNER:** And, in simple truth, they will be more likely to achieve permanent marriages, when the final commitment *does* come—both because of their own additional maturity and stability, gained through age and experience, and because they will then be far more capable of choosing a spouse with whom they will be satisfied and compatible all the rest of their lives.

Is a boy 19, 20 or 21 years of age—who has not yet become his own true adult self—yet qualified to select a girl with whom he will share all the problems and responsibilities of marriage, home and family? I don't think so.

#### WHAT SORT OF MAN READS PLAYBOY?

**GARY:** I have a bit of data to throw in here. On my way down to the studio today, I was riding with a cab driver and we got to talking about this . . .

**TANENBAUM:** About the magazine?

**GARY:** Yes. . . . And he said, "Oh, I know that magazine. That's a cute magazine." And I said to him, "Well, you could say that." And he talked about the difference in his generation and the present one . . . and the premium on liberation here, the freedom to talk about this, and so on. And I said, "You mentioned you have a teenage daughter. How do you feel about her?" And he said, "Well, I want her to know all about this, but not to do it."

Now, I detected this same thing in The Playboy Club, and in the magazine, as well. I don't think that it necessarily leads to overt sexual expression. There is a sense in which parents provide this magazine, have it lying around the house, and it's in the fraternity houses, and so

on, as a mark of liberation. . . . As the—you know—the American way of cultivating yourself for adulthood and of being, well, very smooth and blasé about it . . .

**TANENBAUM:** You don't use PLAYBOY in your house for that purpose.

**GARY:** Well, my boy is a little young yet, but that time will come.

However, I did some additional research you might find interesting. I had a group of high school students in, so I asked them, "Now, what about this magazine?" And there was this one boy—he was the only one present who was smoking a cigarette, which is very significant. (Laughter)

**HEFNER:** The hip one . . . !

**BURNETT:** Cigarettes, and whiskey, and wild, wild women . . .

**GARY:** I asked, "Is there anyone here who reads PLAYBOY magazine?" There were a few snickers around the room, and I said, "I'm familiar with it myself. How many of you read it?" Well, nobody read it.

So I said, "You must see it. I take it you're looking at the pictures." And this kid with the cigarette said, "Yeah, we're looking at the pictures." Then they discussed this a little. They see it around their houses, but they don't read this material, by and large, because it's above their level—which you've already indicated, Hugh. You're pitching the magazine at a higher level than these 15- and 16-year-olds.

So then I went to a college level group and I talked with them. And that group divided itself into those who look at the pictures and those who read the magazine. And very few do both, they say. You know, it's very smart and sophisticated to read this magazine and ignore those pictures.

That's all there is to my research. You've stated that the magazine is edited for an audience of young adults, and my little study confirms that that's exactly who you're reaching. But all of this has to do with the kind of liberation going on in American society today; and I think we're at fault here in our religious traditions, in not dealing more directly with this problem.

**O'CONNOR:** What do you mean, Dick? You keep using the expression "deal with the problem."

**GARY:** Well, I think that the whole process of creating an atmosphere of freedom, in which people can discuss their sexuality, and can face it, has been a problem largely given over to the public schools, and to other outside agencies. And it is not very often discussed within the churches. Our religion is, to that extent, failing to meet the challenge. Now, I'm not speaking of what's being done in the context of the parochial school, because I don't know.

**O'CONNOR:** I'm not going to defend that. What I wanted to say is, if you've

dealt with college students, I don't think that they have such a lack of knowledge about the facts of sex. College students are quite aware in this area. They know what's going on, they talk about it and all the rest of it, but the point they don't get—which is the point that was originally raised by Hugh, himself—is any overall philosophy and outlook on sex.

#### THE QUESTION OF MORALITY

**HEFNER:** Which brings us back again, I think, to what we should really be talking about here—which is not simply sex or sexuality, but the question of morality, and what kind of moral concepts we believe should be brought to sexual behavior. And it also reintroduces the question of whether or not the morality that has been established by previous generations, here in America, is working or not . . .

**O'CONNOR:** Yes, but, Hugh, sexual morality is not a brand-new problem. And premarital experience is not something that was first tried in 1964. And the question of early marriages is not something new to our time. Sexuality has an enormous history.

**HEFNER:** All right, let me throw a question back at you gentlemen, if I may. Most of the questions have been coming my way this evening. Now let me pose one: The traditional Judaeo-Christian concept of sexual morality is not working, gentlemen. People are not living by it in our society today. Now what . . .

**O'CONNOR:** Mr. Hefner, do you have a statistical analysis that you can give us that indicates this? Because I don't know how you can do it.

**TANENBAUM:** Look at the success of PLAYBOY.

**O'CONNOR:** I'm curious as to how you can define it in this fashion.

**HEFNER:** In our first discussion, there was a reference made to Dr. Kinsey and I believe that you used the adjective "dubious," which I wanted to answer at the time . . .

**O'CONNOR:** Well, I mentioned him, because I know you depend on his research . . .

**HEFNER:** Every so often, I'm confronted—in either my reading or in a discussion—with an attempt to dismiss the research and statistics in Dr. Kinsey's two monumental studies, *Sexual Behavior in the Human Male* and *Sexual Behavior in the Human Female*, with an attempt to negate the findings and conclusions of Kinsey and his associates, of the Institute for Sex Research, at Indiana University. My reaction is always to wonder about the point of such quibbles, because I do agree that the Kinsey statistics are probably no more accurate than the Nielsen ratings on TV . . .

**BURNETT:** Which are pretty accurate!

**HEFNER:** Kinsey's findings are, if anything, quite probably on the low side,

as the checks for consistency revealed some attempts at cover-up, in the case histories, related to specific areas of sexual activity. But all such factors are taken into account and discussed at length in the reports.

And what difference do such details make in the present discussion? The important point for us in these statistics is not whether we wind up with a 49.5 percent, or a 45 percent, or a 50 percent, but that Kinsey has clearly and quite accurately established the *general* frequency of all of the common forms of sexual activity in our society.

The Kinsey studies of human sexual behavior are the most extensive and comprehensive ever conducted—dwarfing all previous efforts in the field of sex research. The statistical data on both the male and female are drawn from an unprecedented number of individual case histories; the interviewing techniques were the most advanced on record; the checks on the reliability, validity and internal consistency of the data are without precedent in a research project of this sort. In addition, lesser studies by other scientists have only tended to confirm, not refute, Kinsey's findings.

For the first time in history, a culture has a clear, scientifically established, statistically detailed picture of its sex behavior. Not to use this information in the search for new insights regarding man's sexual nature, and as a major factor in an extended reconsideration of our society's sexual morality and sex laws is, to me, unthinkable.

And it is also clear that the traditional Judaeo-Christian concept of sex . . .

**O'CONNOR:** But, Hugh, would you tell me what the traditional Judaeo-Christian concept of sex is . . . in terms of today?

**HEFNER:** In terms of today, it would seem to me, there are significant signs of reappraisal and the establishment of a more enlightened morality, but I think the *traditional* view must still be considered that sex be limited to marriage.

**O'CONNOR:** Yes, but I can find you a Judaeo-Christian tradition for every ramification of what you have to say . . .

**HEFNER:** I'm sure you can.

**O'CONNOR:** . . . Whether premarital or marital, heterosexual or homosexual . . .

**TANENBAUM:** I'd like to hear more, because I think this is precisely the point Mr. Hefner is confronting us with, Norman.

**O'CONNOR:** Is what?

**TANENBAUM:** It's the question that has prompted Dick Gary's concern—namely, what do the churches and synagogues have to say to the present situation?

**O'CONNOR:** I will say this to you—that I think, in terms of the Protestant tradition, it's going to be a horribly confused one, because you can find every point of view imaginable, from top to bottom.

**TANENBAUM:** Let Dick worry about himself.

**O'CONNOR:** Isn't that true, Mr. Gary?

**BURNETT:** And to further confuse us, Dick Gary rides in taxicabs with Jewish taxicab drivers . . .

**O'CONNOR:** I know. And can tell about daughters who want to know all the facts of life, but don't want to practice them.

**TANENBAUM:** I think Dick is Catholic, as a matter of fact. (*Laughter*)

**HEFNER:** Let me pose the primary question once again. If the traditional, overriding Judaeo-Christian ethic in America has been that sex should be limited to marriage, and if this is not being lived by, I would think it would be a matter of concern to all of our religious leaders. And so I throw the question back at you fellows, to try and find out how you feel about it. In your opinions, is this just a matter of the behavior being wrong? Or do we agree that, in truth, our religious tradition has been—and still is—unrealistic?

**GARY:** Let me react this way. One of the problems we have in this society is the fact that we've got to speak to an interfaith community when we talk about this problem. You can't sit down with one clergyman who represents *the* major denomination in this country. We are all protected, so to speak, by the fact that there are so many of us and nobody has to assume the single responsibility.

**O'CONNOR:** Yes, but answer the question—in terms of the Judaeo-Christian tradition—from your own viewpoint. What kind of morality should we have?

**HEFNER:** As related to sex . . . as related to sex and marriage . . . as related to sex and love?

**GARY:** Well, I thought, despite the fact there was some disagreement, that Marc made a magnificent statement when he talked about sexuality with purpose. I don't want to just throw this back to him, but I thought he made a good point . . .

**TANENBAUM:** I did?

**GARY:** You made this statement earlier, and I thought it was very good.

**BURNETT:** About reproduction?

**GARY:** Yes—multiply and inherit the earth. Now, I'm saying that this is the basic purpose. But beyond that, of course, we run into difficulties . . . or complications.

**TANENBAUM:** And the terrible thing is that we have no theology for it.

**HEFNER:** Father O'Connor, do you have the feeling that Reverend Gary is avoiding my question?

**O'CONNOR:** Very much so.

**GARY:** Well, I am. (*Laughter*)

#### SEX IN SWEDEN AND THE U.S.

**O'CONNOR:** I'm looking at a clipping from *The New York Times*, Sunday,

April 26th, commenting on an official publication called *Our Church*, in Sweden, which says that premarital relations should not be condemned as a sin as long as the couple involved sincerely plans to marry.

**HEFNER:** What's interesting about that, however, since we know that Sweden is a rather liberalized country, is that there have been several news stories on similar statements from members of the clergy in England in the last year.

**GARY:** Let me make one point here. In both of these instances, in England and Sweden, you have a more or less homogeneous religious group, addressing themselves to a national problem. They have this responsibility and they've got to face it, so the Church of England developed an elaborate statement about the legitimacy of sex between consenting adults—married or unmarried, heterosexual or homosexual. Now, this is pretty far out, in terms of its implications. But nobody in this society is going to do it, because I'm competing with Father O'Connor here, trying to have a better morality in the Episcopal Church than he's got in the Catholic Church, and he's competing . . .

**O'CONNOR:** The question is, how are you competing with the so-called "New Morality," in terms of what Hugh Hefner claims the facts to be?

**GARY:** You cite a newspaper story regarding the Church of Sweden, and I'm supposed to relate to it, because it's vaguely Protestant. And I'm saying that they assume this responsibility, which I don't assume, you see, because I have a basically sectarian point of view on this, just like you have in this society. And as long as we operate within this pluralism, we tend to protect ourselves with it.

**TANENBAUM:** I'm not sure it's altogether that, Dick. I think it's a significant factor, in terms of the way we counter one another on this question and find comfort in evading it, but I think the nature of the culture is also significantly different. From what I have read about the problem of sexual freedom in Sweden, it has reached rather rampant proportions.

**BURNETT:** What problem?

**TANENBAUM:** The problem of sexual promiscuity between unmarried males and females, with a kind of national license that operates there. And, in fact, there isn't the same kind of puritan mentality about this that we have here. There isn't the feeling of guilt or troubled conscience in Sweden. I'm not saying there is any cause and effect, but some sociologists extrapolate from this an explanation for the enormous suicide rate in Sweden, which is associated with the breakdown in traditional morality.

**BURNETT:** Barry Goldwater says it's because they are a socialist state.

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the guise of individualism. Because I have achieved a certain level of life, everyone should do the same. Inequity, poverty, limited circumstances are viewed not as realities, but as illusions that exist only in the mind.

However, there is another view of success that is quite different in its motivation. Only as each person does strive to do his best and has the possibility to do this will society become more of what we believe it ought to be—free and productive. As long as there are persons held in bondage—financial, religious, racial and circumstantial—our human resources are held in check and our society remains limited. As those who have achieved a sense of success in life move from a selfishness that affirms “every man must do what I did,” to the realization that “I am responsible for the conditions of life that exist about me,” only then have we done more than fallen for affluence. The uncommon man is the one who recognizes his dependence upon and his responsibility to the world in which he lives.

One of the most sensitive areas of life that *The Playboy Philosophy* touches on

is that of religion. It is at this point that Mr. Hefner takes issue with our culture as a whole. The Bill of Rights states very specifically that there shall be no official church. On the positive side this means that there shall be freedom of religion. And, as Hefner correctly indicates, this we have successfully protected. But there is another side of the issue that we have not maintained. That is—freedom from religion. It is this freedom that is at the heart of the liberal religious movement, and it served as the impetus for the initiation of Unitarian Universalism two centuries ago.

The freedom-from-religion concept does not suggest that there should be an absence of religion in the nation; but it does imply that there must be an absence of religious infiltration into the institutions of that society. Almost anyone who thinks about this for a moment realizes how difficult, if not impossible, it is for this to occur.

But it is just because it is too difficult that the ideal must not be neglected. Hefner points out that “at the heart of the matter is religion’s belief in itself as an absolute: There are thousands of

different organized religions throughout the world and each is convinced that its own basic beliefs are divinely inspired and true.” This is the precise danger that religion presents. Because of its belief in its own absoluteness, it carries with it inherent tendencies toward totalitarianism.

Most religions are based on faith, while democratic society requires the constant utilization of reason. As a result, the dictums of religion tend toward the irrational or, at least, the nonrational. This means that society as a whole is placed in an impossible position; it cannot challenge the decisions of religion, because these are supported and maintained by presuppositions that cannot be discussed or argued.

However, Mr. Hefner tends to create the impression that authoritarian and nonrational aspects are inherent in all religions. “America’s religious heritage,” he writes, “stresses selflessness, subservience to a greater Power and the paying of homage to Him in long-established, well-defined, well-organized ways; democracy teaches the importance of self, a belief in oneself and one’s own abilities.” He goes on to compare the religious ideas of living for others, meekness, and being born in sin with the democratic concepts of competition, the necessity of speaking out and the inborn goodness of human nature. What Mr. Hefner describes as the cornerstones of democracy happen to be the foundation blocks of liberal religion. It is for this reason, it seems to me, that Unitarian Universalism is the only religious orientation today that is thoroughly consistent with the democratic view of man. This discussion of religion in *The Playboy Philosophy* is essential, because it points up the inconsistencies that exist between democracy and Puritan-based religion in this country. It is about time that we come to the realization that certain forms of religion are directly opposed to the idea of an open and free society.

A large section of *The Playboy Philosophy* deals with the question of morality. Many of the criticisms that have been leveled against Mr. Hefner’s thinking suggest that he advocates the libertine. The critics feel that he is encouraging promiscuity when he writes, “Modern American morality is an amalgamation of the superstitious paganism and masochistic asceticism of early Christianity; the sexual anxieties, feelings of guilt and shame, witch-hunting sadism and sex repression of the medieval Church; the desexualized courtly love of the troubadours; England’s Romantic Age, wherein love was presumed to conquer all; and the prohibitively strict, severe, joyless, authoritarian, unresponsive book-banning, pleasure-baiting dogma of Calvinist Protestantism, Puritanism and Victorianism.” Hefner then makes his

point: “This is a morality that virtually assures us our high incidence of unhappy marriages, frequent divorces, impotence, masochism, frigidity, frustration and perversion.”

It is a well-known psychological fact that continued suppression of feelings will result in violent eruptions in the life of an individual. This is precisely the difficulty with overprotection of the young. In an effort to shelter a child from life, parents oftentimes have the idea that they can keep their child free from what they term “the ravages of life.” Unfortunately, just the opposite occurs. Long ago John Dewey and William James pointed out that it is only by participating in life that the individual comes to develop values that are his own. Attempts to indoctrinate a person are ineffective. Promiscuity and perversion are not the results of freedom; rather, they are the fruits of the inhibited life.

In a recent issue of *PLAYBOY*, Hefner answered a critic who said that *PLAYBOY* was violating the law of God. Hefner wrote, “We do not favor ‘free love’ or any blind or irrational pursuit of pleasure—we have never suggested a pattern of behavior based on the premise: Live for the moment and let tomorrow take care of itself. We have proposed a philosophy of living, rather, that places its emphasis on both today and tomorrow. We do not advocate sex as simply a sport and we do not believe that any human conduct should be removed from its consequences.”

Psychiatrists, psychologists, sociologists and sensitive religionists have expressed this idea for decades. The irrational suppression of human feelings will result in irrational human responses. This is the source of the libertine, irresponsible life. It is the shackled individual who develops antisocial tendencies. It has been those in society who have felt that man is basically evil, who have attempted to restrain and control human nature, and who have led man into his current moral plight.

Yes, I do believe there is a need for a new morality, and here I am in perfect agreement with *The Playboy Philosophy*. To suggest that our moral heritage is no longer viable is not to imply that immorality is the greatest good. We shall not achieve this new morality by attempting to return to the rigidities of Puritanism. Nor shall we arrive at a more enlightened position through a justification of our actions because of an “everybody does it” attitude. The morality that I seek is one that is centered on the welfare of persons and the ends of love in each situation. Of course, this requires rules and laws, but they will be guides to behavior, not prison bars of conscience. The morality of which I speak will seek ordered liberty, self-control, the discipline of a seeking mind



“At this point I’d like to acquaint you with what we call our winner-take-all plan . . .”

and a loving heart and it will require the ability of human beings to renunciate the trivial in favor of the significant. The authoritarians will be displeased because this morality will be flexible and responsive to new situations and new truths. But it will not be possible to practice such an ethic until we unshackle ourselves and our children from the irrationalities of the past and the rigidities of outworn restrictions. In a phrase, only free people can be true to themselves. If we really believe in the possibility of human evolution, we must create conditions through which man can develop to new heights.

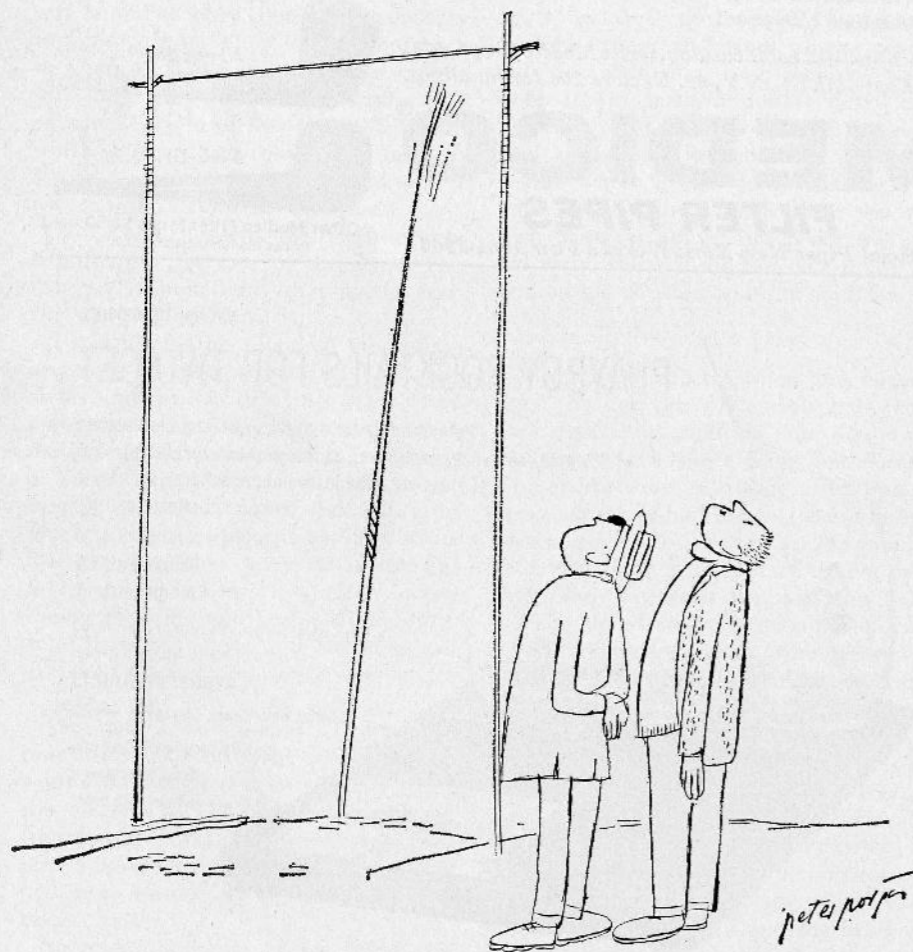
In essence, one’s philosophy of life will depend on one’s view of man. He may be looked upon as evil, who, when given freedom, will degenerate into little more than an animal-like creature. But to live with such a view is to ignore everything that the history of man has taught us and it is to refute the democratic ideal that brought this nation into being. It is to deny what the great teachers of mankind have lived and died for through the centuries. Oppression of the human spirit by religion or by society can and will transform us into something less than human. If we are given the opportunity, we can seek after truth and beauty. If we are free from the domination of irrational forces, we will discover a way of life that is based on reason. If we view ourselves as significant persons, we will come to believe that the purpose of life is to be found in living

and thus we will be free to venture forth utilizing our own powers to the fullest. As Hefner writes, “Man should be free to explore the whole of reality—in the world and in himself—to strive, to achieve, to progress.”

“One of the clearest dangers in modern society,” writes Joan W. Gardner in his book *Self Renewal: The Individual and a Vital Society*, “is that men and women will lose the experience of participating in meaningful decisions concerning their own life and work, that they will become cogs in the machine because they feel like cogs in the machine. All too often today they are inert components of the group, not participating in any significant way, but simply being carried along like grains of sand in a bucket.”

Call it what you will—*The Playboy Philosophy*, the liberal religious ideal of the free mind or the democratic belief in the worth of the person—it is a view toward life predicated upon the affirmation that the chief end of man is to glory man and enjoy him forever.

“*The Playboy Forum*” offers the opportunity for an extended dialog between readers and editors of this publication on subjects and issues raised in our continuing editorial series, “*The Playboy Philosophy*.” Address all correspondence on either “*Philosophy*” or “*Forum*” to: *The Playboy Forum*, *PLAYBOY*, 232 E. Ohio Street, Chicago, Illinois 60611.



“Well... this ought to establish a new record.”