

car, and we went through the stamping and groaning routine. In less than 30 minutes, they were on their way back to Fort Knox and we headed back to our armory, where our beaming superiors told us that we had passed the test with flying colors and were "ready for 'em."

I hope if we are ever called on to control a real civil disturbance, the demonstrators or rioters will be charitable enough to disperse before we get too close to them.

(Name withheld by request)
Hamilton, Ohio

ABUSE OF FREEDOM

All over this country, groups of people are demanding more freedom. If it isn't women's liberation or gay liberation, it's the freedom to smoke pot, freedom from the draft or freedom to stage any sort of demonstration one wants, even one that gets out of control and infringes on the rights of others. Many spokesmen for these various liberation movements claim that the U. S. is going through a revolution that, in the end, will produce a beautiful world in which the individual can do whatever he wants, as long as he doesn't harm others. I don't believe that such a world is possible with human nature as we know it. Undisciplined people will always try to harm others, and the only means we have to prevent this are the institutions that keep order in this society, such as the police. Furthermore, many Americans are firmly opposed to this vision of total freedom and, if pressed, they will resort to severe measures to prevent its realization.

Thus, the people who demand freedom are tearing the country apart by making extreme demands and generating extreme opposition. They can get away with what they are doing because there is already a great deal of individual freedom in America. In Russia, for instance, a person carrying a protest sign in Red Square wouldn't last five minutes. Totalitarian governments don't let individual citizens rock the boat. In America, it is possible to rock the boat, but is it desirable? I think not. When people flaunt their freedom to the point where they endanger the stability of society, they may be within their legal rights, but they are acting foolishly. If the state's survival is threatened, it and those who support it will fight back with all the weapons at their command, and Americans will lose the freedoms they now possess.

John A. Palcer
Manassas, Virginia

THE HERESY HUNTERS

A recent incident in Edgewood, Iowa, seems, to me, a depressing parable on the whole horrible Agnew Age that we have entered. A young University of Iowa geology student, working on his master's thesis in vertebrate paleontol-

ogy, began exploring a large cave in the vicinity, seeking fossils that would relate the ancient animals of the area to their modern descendants. Occasionally, other students visited him to help with heavy work. Because they were young and because they did not wear their hair cut and trimmed, some local patriots decided they were—you guessed it—hippies. The rumor went out that hairy, Commie-loving monsters were living in the cave, smoking dope and probably engaging in un-American activities. A group of locals, armed with shotguns, went to the cave to confront this threat to the commonwealth. The student was not there at the time, so they smashed all his scientific gear and ruined nearly a year's careful work. The whole affair is terribly reminiscent of the Dark Ages, when scientists were treated like witches and ignorant mobs smashed their laboratories and tied them to stakes.

There is nothing surprising about this incident. When the President denounces dissenters as bums and aligns himself with rioting hard-hats, when the Vice-President fulminates against independence as impudence and plays upon the ignorant fears of the most ill-educated citizens, when the Justice Department sets out a legislative program aimed at chipping away the Bill of Rights, what can be expected of the masses? They follow their leaders, and the old spirit of the witch-hunt returns. Any stigma that might indicate heresy—opinions of the wrong sort, hair of the wrong length, even (this is increasingly common) meeting to play music of the wrong type—unleashes the fury of the mob. When this happened in the late Middle Ages, millions died (9,000,000, according to one historian of witchcraft). In Nazi Germany, the same hysteria killed 6,000,000 Jews, 1,000,000 gypsies and perhaps another 1,000,000 miscellaneous political-social offenders or deviates. Nixon and Agnew are sowing the wind again today; can sanity return to America before we reap the whirlwind?

John J. Allen
Des Moines, Iowa

LOSING FAITH IN TECHNOLOGY

In *The Engineering Mentality* (PLAYBOY, September 1970), Gene Marine perfectly describes the attitude of Western man that raises fascination with technique to a sort of irrational faith in it. This attitude is the exact opposite of scientific thought and prevents the correct posing of problems. Why is this so? Why are we fascinated; why are we locked into asking how to do things, when we are incapable of correctly defining what should be done? It is as if the more rational technology, administrative organization, planning, research and development and means of communication become, the more man adopts behavior and attitudes that are irrational.

It appears, from the beginning of history to the present, that man cannot be reduced to his rational dimension, that he cannot behave purely reasonably and that he is very unhappy in a society that is too well organized. The more technology and organization grow, the more they lead man to adopt aberrant attitudes. Pop music, hippies, Happenings and eroticism are examples of such attitudes. But the flight into irrationality can be completely unconscious, and a more common form of it is to take refuge in belief in technology.

Because of this belief, there is nothing more difficult, dangerous and troubling than posing the question, "Why does man have such faith in technology?" To ask this question requires one's adopting the same attitude as the questioning of God's existence would have required during the Middle Ages. Western man feels that there is no future except through technology and that all problems raised by the press, television, politicians and economists either can or should be solved by technology, which has specifically created an accumulation of effective methods and moves through successive solutions to new or more complex problems. Life seems, then, like a succession of problems solved progressively (and this is very often the way history is presented). Consequently, technology guarantees that a future is possible. And if one does not know how to answer some particular type of question, it is certain that sooner or later, technology will be able to do so.

Western man sees clearly that it is impossible to retreat. He is thus obliged to flee forward, but at the same time, he is incapable of giving himself the responsibility of creating a future, other than as a technician. It is at this point that he adopts a magical mentality toward technology. But perhaps we are reaching the limit; will it be possible to maintain this attitude for long? It seems that the new obstacles encountered by man and provoked by technology may be of such complexity, of such size, that man will no longer be able to extricate himself, either with his irrational dream of hypothetical technologies or with his normal growth of effective techniques. I think that the rupture of natural cycles, the ecological disruption and the growth in population will oblige man to take a new direction.

But we should not have any illusions; this will be a grave crisis, comparable with the religious crisis of the 15th Century. Everything will be put into question if we put technology into question. That is to say, if we accept as fact that it is the creator of nuisances as important as its benefits, if we reach the point of questioning basic problems not in terms of technical possibilities but in relation to a differently understood reality, it will be a

very serious crisis, for man will have the feeling that a future is no longer possible and that nothing makes sense. He will experience immense frustration. Nevertheless, this crisis is the condition required for a balanced development of human society.

Man does not want to question what he has done for three centuries; circumstances are going to make him do so. But man can still refuse to see the situation, he may take refuge in the dream and persist on the one-way street of technology, in which case "Whom the gods would destroy, they first make mad."

Jacques Ellul
Le Canon, France

Jacques Ellul is the author of widely acclaimed sociological books, "The Technological Society," "Propaganda," "The Political Illusion" and "A Critique of the New Commonplaces," as well as a series of shorter studies, including "The Presence of the Kingdom" and "Violence." He is professor of law and government at the University of Bordeaux.

KUNSTLER'S TRAVELS

The following quote from the *New Haven Register* is symptomatic of our times:

Attorney William Kunstler, leaving New Haven Tuesday after his speech at the Connecticut Bar Association's annual meeting, was arrested for allegedly stopping to pick up hitchhikers. State trooper Larry Ahearn said he arrested Kunstler . . . and gave him a citation to appear in 6th Circuit Court on Nov. 23, when Kunstler stopped his car in the middle of the roadway around 12:45 P.M. The lawyer, who the trooper said submitted passively to the arrest, had allegedly stopped to pick up two male hitchhikers. . . .

A few years ago, it would have been unthinkable for me to consider that the troopers were under orders to harass Kunstler. In today's growing repression and movement toward a police state, I find it hard to believe that it was accidental that Kunstler was arrested on this minor charge.

Gail Kinney
West Haven, Connecticut

PLAYBOY AS OPPRESSOR

I completely agree with William Kunstler's accusation (*Playboy Interview*, October 1970) that PLAYBOY symbolizes "a way of life achieved by the incessant, unrelenting and conscienceless oppression of millions of men, women and children, both here and abroad." Perhaps 20 percent of your magazine is devoted to advertising, the sole moral principle of which is that only sales are holy. Of course, PLAYBOY is no different from most other magazines in this

respect, but it deserves special censure because it has sought consciously to be more than a magazine; it advocates a life style. This life style includes the appreciation of excellence and the enjoyment of sex, both of which are good qualities; but when PLAYBOY also implies that conspicuous consumption is an indispensable characteristic of the ideal male, it earns severe censure.

Carroll Moore
Seattle, Washington

After being attacked by William Kunstler in the October 1970 *Playboy Interview*, you answer:

Rather than reply to your allegation that PLAYBOY is somehow involved in and symbolic of human oppression—which PLAYBOY despises and opposes as vigorously as you do—we would prefer to let reasonable readers of this magazine draw their own conclusions about the validity of your indictment.

All right, here is the conclusion I draw: You do not despise and oppose oppression. If you did, you would not pay tremendous taxes, a large portion of which goes to the destruction of Vietnam and the murder of its inhabitants. You would not carry ads for such polluters as the manufacturers of alcoholic beverages, cigarettes, cars, motorcycles, dune buggies and motorboats. You would not publish fashion features that urge men to waste textiles by buying new wardrobes several times a year. You would not engage in mail-order advertising for subscriptions, for the Playboy Clubs and the like, thereby wasting mountains of paper.

You know that our capitalistic system lets the rich get richer and the poor, poorer. If you despise oppression, how can you continue to make and keep your profits, when that money could be redistributed to the underprivileged of this nation?

John Patrick Emerson
San Diego, California

The syllogism Kunstler suggested and you apparently support is: Capitalism oppresses people; PLAYBOY portrays the favorable aspects of life in a capitalist society; therefore, PLAYBOY is a symbol of oppression. But both premises and the conclusion are false. Oppression, far from being intrinsic to the American economic system, is actually detrimental to that system. As Henry Ford figured out when he started raising the wages of the men who worked on his assembly lines, the poor, the ignorant and the downtrodden do not make good customers for the kind of products American industry has to offer. Furthermore, oppression exists in one form or another in every quarter of the globe, regardless of the prevailing economic system.

Oppression is made possible by economic scarcity, and it is a condition that is being corrected as technological progress offers an ever-improving standard of living to an ever-increasing portion of the world's people.

That sort of progress, in this country, arises from a cycle in which consumption creates jobs and advertising encourages consumption. Besides supporting the general prosperity, the advertising in PLAYBOY supports this magazine's efforts to change the American way of life for the better, which includes publishing interviews with such people as William Kunstler. Advertising, the bane of so many superficial critics of American society, is just as rampant in collectivist societies around the world, both in its ordinary form as a sales message needed to keep the wheels of commerce turning and in the form of government propaganda—the government being identical with industry and commerce in such countries.

To suggest that PLAYBOY should stop paying taxes, and then to say that wealth and profits should be taken from the rich and redistributed to the poor, indicates unawareness that this is precisely one of the functions of taxation. We think that a great deal of the money we shell out to the Government is being misused, but we also think our function is to communicate opinions that may change Government actions, not to waste our resources hassling over taxes. If we were to stop carrying advertising, quit doing our own advertising and stop paying taxes, the combined consequences of these decisions would probably put PLAYBOY out of business. If there are 40,000,000 underprivileged people in the U.S. and if the liquidation of PLAYBOY and its related enterprises made \$100,000,000 available for distribution to them, each deprived person would get \$2.50. And all PLAYBOY employees would be added to the unemployment rolls. Proposals like this are pure foolishness.

Through greater individual freedom, through continued scientific and technical progress and through more vigorous efforts to establish political equality and equality of opportunity, our society can evolve toward one that satisfies human needs better than any that preceded it. Oversimplified moralizing doesn't contribute to this process.

"The Playboy Forum" offers the opportunity for an extended dialog between readers and editors of this publication on subjects and issues raised in Hugh M. Hefner's editorial series, "The Playboy Philosophy." Address all correspondence to The Playboy Forum, Playboy Building, 919 North Michigan Avenue, Chicago, Illinois 60611.