"Playboy"'s First Year: a Rhetorical Construction of Masculine Sexuality.

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PLAYBOY'S FIRST YEAR:
A RHETORICAL CONSTRUCTION OF MASCULINE SEXUALITY

A Dissertation

Submitted to the Graduate Faculty of the
Louisiana State University and
Agricultural and Mechanical College
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in

The Department of Speech Communication

by

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ABSTRACT

The problem addressed by this study was twofold: what rhetorical strategies does a pornographic text actually employ? and what impact does that message have on its male readers' sexual ideology? The first year's issues of Playboy comprise the specific text to be analyzed because Playboy is still the most popular men's magazine in the world and because various critics indicated that it was the prototype for current pornographic texts. Furthermore, this pornographic text has always been a public artifact as opposed to the surreptitious or illegal forms of pornography, which made it an apt choice for a rhetorical study.

Three research questions are posed in this study: 1. What are Playboy's sources, 2. What are its rhetorical strategies, and 3. What are its goals and appeal. The first question was answered by using a combination of studies examining Playboy's history and the magazine culture of the 1950s. The second question was answered by using a modified version of Walter Fisher's Narrative Paradigm to examine the 502 pages of Playboy from October 1953 to September 1954 for narrative probability and fidelity. The third question was answered by comparing Playboy's message to the relational rhetoric of its competitors, and the socially influential Kinsey reports on sexual behavior.

This study concluded that Playboy presented a coherent and consistent version of male sexuality throughout its first year. It also concluded that the primary goal of most male endeavors in Playboy was sexual conquest. This textual emphasis on sexual conquest created a hierarchy of masculinity wherein male readers were encouraged to evaluate male status via the number of women a male possessed.
CHAPTER 1
INTRODUCTION

1.1 Background

The years following the Second World War were ones of unprecedented change for American society. William H. Chafe argues that these years of change were dominated by the new domesticity:

new families, taking advantage of the opportunities offered by the postwar economy, who purchased the four-room houses in suburbia, went back to college under the GI Bill, secured good jobs, and provided the vanguard for the burgeoning consumer society of the 1950s.

Of course, this change depended upon the prosperity of postwar America. Chafe notes that the “gross national product soared 250 percent between 1945 and 1960” (112). However, numerous historians, including Chafe, claim that this fabulous economic boom engendered a conformist culture in America. Tindall and Shi argue that “suburban life itself encouraged conformity”; other conformist pressures included the growth of giant corporations which stifled individuality and the presence of a “religious revival” movement (991-993). Chafe even characterizes Eisenhower as a representative President of the 50s, ”providing a symbol of serene benevolence after an era of upheaval” (141). James T. Patterson echoes this portrait of Eisenhower claiming he seemed like “a benign father bringing peace to a quarrelsome tribe” (365). Eisenhower also strongly endorsed traditional Christian values. He claimed that “‘Recognition of the Supreme Being...is the first, the most basic expression of Americanism. Without

1
God, there could be no American form of government, nor an American way of life’ “ (in Tindall & Shi, 993). Contemporaneous with this “benign” culture of conformity was the vicious McCarthy campaign. As Chafe notes, by “the end of 1950 the whole industry (television) was terrorized by professional anticommunists”(131). Despite McCarthy’s downfall in 1954, his powerful investigatory committee had a chilling effect on creative expression in all the arts, to say nothing of his attacks on the Army and fellow politicians (Chafe, 130-132). The pressures towards social conformity in the 1950s were powerful and mostly effective.

However, despite the numerous pressures toward social conformity the 1950s were a paradoxical era. Alongside the material conditions and institutions that encouraged conformity existed such critiques of American society as “David Riesman’s The Lonely Crowd, Erich Fromm’s Man for Himself, and William Whyte’s The Organization Man” (Chafe,143). Responses to the perceived emptiness of American culture took many forms, but one of the most vivid was the “Beat” movement. In a direct contradiction to the values of suburban America, “[T]heir road to salvation lay in hallucinogenic drugs and alcohol, sex and a penchant for jazz and the street life of urban ghettoes” (Tindall & Shi, 1001). Obviously, not all Americans in the 50s were conformists, desperately seeking the security of marriage, a house in suburbia, and traditional religious affiliation. Finally, as Chafe claims, “it is the theme of paradox that best describes the postwar era – diversity in the face of uniformity...the emergence of cultural rebels in the midst of chilling conformity” (144). One of the most successful “cultural rebels” was Hugh Hefner.
1.2 The Problem

The success of Playboy’s new model of masculine sexuality is well documented. As sociologist Gail Dines notes "[T]he first issue sold 53,991 copies, and by its first anniversary Playboy had a monthly circulation of 175,000 copies" (in Gender, Race & Class in Media, 257). With an at the time record circulation of over seven million copies in September 1972, Playboy had achieved a prominent place in American publishing history (Dines, in GRC, 259). The ongoing success of the Playboy model was not limited to the magazine; it also produced clubs, hotels, and a variety of other merchandise. Communication scholars Kallan and Brooks argue that “[F]rom a wider perspective, the success of Playboy has had a cultural dimension: a definite role in the sex revolution that began in the early 1960s” (328).

The major concern in the academic community, and the impetus for this study, is that Playboy was not confined to the lower classes or private surreptitious consumption. It was always a public artifact. Men bought and discussed the magazine openly. It was used as evidence in debates on college campuses over various issues. Playboy’s most radical move was not the publication of pictures of female nudes, but its claim to intellectual and social respectability. Even Playboy’s most vehement critics acknowledged its influence. For example, Harvey Cox, in 1963, states that the appeal of the magazine is that "Playboy speaks to those who desperately want to know what it means to be a man, and more specifically a male, in today's world" (174). Although the Playboy model of male sexuality was only one among several models of masculinity, it
represented a remarkably astute attempt to use the rhetorical construction of a new male sexuality to build a loyal consumer group for Hugh Hefner's products. As William Chafe notes, in *The Unfinished Journey*, the dominant version of 1950s masculinity emphasized the homosocial nature and protective function of males:

> Despite the vogue of togetherness, the ideal depiction of community was not of women and men living in families, but of soldiers and cowhands joining, through the bond of male camaraderie, to confront the evil of the world.

This “masculine mystique” was directly challenged by Hefner’s construction of male sexuality (Chafe, 134). Hefner used various rhetorical strategies to create the “playboy” icon: an urban male who competed with other males for status via sexual conquest. If the *Playboy* version of male sexuality was such a deviation from cultural norms, why was it so successful?

1.3 Research Questions

Accordingly this dissertation will ask the following three questions. First, what sources did *Playboy* adapt from both historical and 1950's conceptions of masculinity to form a new paradigm of male sexual identity? Secondly, what rhetorical strategies did it use to deal with inherent role contradictions and the opposition of its critics? Thirdly, what were *Playboy's* rhetorical goals and appeals? Answering these three questions should provide a clearer understanding of *Playboy’s* rhetorical sources, strategies, and goals and appeals.
1.4 History of the Question

The establishment, and continued success, of Playboy magazine was a significant point in the history of masculine sexuality because pornography influences its primarily male audience. Although definitions of pornography vary from generation to generation, and culture to culture, "it seems that most societies have had some sort of pornography, that is, materials consciously designed to be sexually arousing" (Bullough & Bullough, 184). However, despite the prevalence of pornography in both the ancient and modern worlds there is still no concrete definition of pornography or consistent regulation of material that could be considered pornographic. In fact, contrary to the views of various groups (in this case Radical feminists and some religious groups), U.S. Supreme Court justices in 1984 acknowledged pornography as speech, rhetorical discourse:

[they] accepted that pornography might well be an aspect of domination and might influence people's worldview, but it was, nonetheless, speech, and as such was protected by the First Amendment

in Bullough & Bullough, 197.

This overt acceptance of pornography by the U.S. Supreme Court was a significant change from the repressive legislation of the Victorian period, wherein pornographers were usually prosecuted under the "seditious libel" laws and the Comstock laws prohibited the distribution of almost all printed material dealing with sexuality in America. As Lynn Hunt and her colleagues point out in The Invention of Pornography, sixteenth century European pornography was "closely linked with political and religious subversion" so the use of political systems and courts of law to repress pornographers seems appropriate (35). However, Hunt also argues that in the 1790s the Marquis de
Sade "took the politically and socially subversive possibilities of pornography to their fullest possible extreme and...paved the way for the modern apolitical genre of pornography.... Pornography was now identified with a general assault on morality, itself" (330). Of course an assault on standard morality is political, but not in the specific, concrete manner of earlier pornography. The standard morality of 1950s America was a deeply conflicted conformism. Historians of the post war era, Chafe, Tindall, and Patterson all argue that “[I]ncreasing conformity in middle-class business and corporate life was mirrored in the middle-class home” (Tindall, 991). However, the label of “conformist” for the 1950s is vastly oversimplified. As the same three historians also note “thrusts against conformity” embodied by such characters as the “Beats,” Elvis, Marlon Brando, and James Dean “suggested that the 1950s were less serene and complacent than they sometimes appeared” (Patterson, 354). Obviously, male role models abounded in the 1950s. And while one of those models might have been the “corporate man” overtly sexualized male role models existed too. Hefner’s “playboy” was one of those overtly sexualized role models.

Many factors contributed to the social and legal changes regarding pornography. One of the most powerful cultural forces was the "ideological stance" which Bullough & Bullough label "sexual naturalism" (197). Hugh Hefner's Playboy magazine has taken this ideological stance, along with other persons and institutions, since the magazine's inception in 1953. The key elements of this stance are: "sexual expression is positive and natural" and "scientific evidence ...[shows] the lack of serious and likely harm" from pornography (Bullough & Bullough, 197). Therefore Hefner presented his magazine not
as pornography, but as "a primer for men", a legitimate didactic task which in the past had spawned a whole literature of self help books for men. Of course, this technique was not a new strategy for achieving the dispersal of sexually explicit material. Peter Wagner notes that as early as the Enlightenment period "[I]n many cases, science served as a veil or pretext for the discussion of issue [sic] that were otherwise considered obscene or taboo" (46). Hefner used the immensely popular scientific reports on the prevalence of sexual practices in America published by Kinsey in 1948 and 1953 as support for his views. Although these reports have subsequently been discredited as accurate surveys, in 1954 Donald Geddes, editor of An Analysis of The Kinsey Reports, claimed that "sex is important in our social as well as our personal and private lives, and that Kinsey has done more to expedite an understanding of it than anyone else" (11). Robert Knight of the Family Research Council asserts that Kinsey's "work had a profound effect on the morals and behaviors of millions" (in USA Today) This combination of prurient appeals and legitimate knowledge in pornography seems fairly common and probably contributed to the inability of the court system to neatly resolve the problem. Further complicating the regulation of pornography were the constantly shifting cultural definitions of legitimate and prurient; material that was shocking or obscene in the 1950s is probably perceived as normal or ordinary forty five years later. An example of America's changing hermeneutics, or cultural definitions, over time is that James Joyce's Ulysses, now considered a classic piece of literature, was banned as
obscene in 1922 until the Supreme Court overturned the decision in 1933 (Rottenburg, 294).

However, despite legal attempts to restrict sexually explicit material, and the subsequent influence of Playboy, it was not an unique artifact in the 1950s. As Michael Kimmel notes there was a "bevy of men's magazines that started up in the 1950s, such as: Male (1950), Real: The Exciting Magazine for Men (1950), Impact: Bold True Action for Men (1957), and True (1956)" (1996: 254). All these magazines, plus others, many available much earlier, advocated versions of masculine sexuality. Kimmel suggests that the men's magazines he identifies "glorify the testing of manhood...with the sexual conquest of a large-breasted woman as a kind of masculine payoff" (1996: 254). The common theme of these various publications was that the magazine set the standards for masculinity and provided a reward for achievement; the standards could include a variety of criteria (success in sports, business, outdoors adventures, or battling the forces of nature), but the reward was always the same. Playboy had a similar strategy, although it quickly became "'the Bible for the beleaguered male' and one of the most popular magazines in American history" (Kimmel, 1996: 254).

Despite the recognition by many critics of Playboy's influence on masculine codes or ideals, nobody has explained how this particular magazine came to dominate such a crowded field. Not only did Playboy become an instantaneous success domestically, but it became an icon of American culture generally with international editions and a host of acknowledged imitators. When a member of a traditionally despised genre becomes this successful rhetorical critics need to look at the confluence of factors which enable this
change. The rhetorical strategies Hefner used to advocate sexual naturalism and the historical context of Playboy's genesis and audience combined to make Playboy's version of masculine ideology into one of the most popular in the world. Therefore any study of Playboy requires an examination of the relationship amongst ideology, hermeneutics, and rhetoric.

1.5 Method

This study will identify the content of the Playboy male paradigm at inception, namely the first year of publication. It will detail: Playboy's historical and contemporary sources, its rhetoricity (via Fisher's narrative paradigm), and its appeal to the male audience of the early 1950's. Accordingly, this dissertation will draw upon the resources of three domains, rhetoric, ideology, and hermeneutics.

There are many versions of rhetorical studies. This study will employ a "critical rhetoric", specifically Fisher's narrative paradigm, because it incorporates both cultural ideologies and interpretive paradigms under the concept of rhetoric (McKerrow). The classical definition of rhetoric by Aristotle in On Rhetoric, exhorts the rhetor "to see the available means of persuasion in each case" (36). Aristotle insists that the appeal of rhetoric is based on three factors: logos (logic), ethos (credibility), and pathos (emotion). The framework for a rhetor's shaping of these three classical appeals is "to be formed on the basis of common [beliefs]" (34). Aristotle's inclusion of the audience as a major factor in the rhetorical process is important because it implicitly suggests that the interpretive process depends on the audience's belief systems or ideologies. Kenneth Burke expands on the Aristotelian version of rhetoric by claiming that persuasion is
achieved through "identification" with others. This identification is a result of the essential and natural division of human beings, so that rhetoric is always an attempt to bridge that essential division. Furthermore, Burke does not limit rhetoric to speeches; he includes a variety of cultural artifact and claims that "Wherever there is persuasion, there is rhetoric. And wherever there is 'meaning' there is 'persuasion'" (in Foss, Foss, & Trapp, 177). Therefore Burke sees all meaning as a result of identification between the rhetor, or rhetorical artifact, and the audience. In a related move, McKerrow states that the rhetorical critic should focus on "doxa" or cultural norms "[R]ather than focusing on questions of 'truth' or 'falsity'...[one should] shift to how the symbols come to possess power: what they 'do' in society as contrasted to what they 'are'" (104). McGee also argues that rhetorical critics "will be perceived as respondents and interpreters responsible for providing in a formal way the missing fragments of the object of criticism, its influence" (282). In other words the practitioner of a critical rhetoric must determine both the artifact's rhetorical strategies and how its strategies are received by the audience.

Thus any "critical rhetoric" study requires some analysis of the audience's ideology, because as Gramsci notes ideology is a "coherent" system of understanding reality (420). And the audience's method of understanding reality will necessarily use its ideology as an interpretive lens. This complex interaction amongst rhetoric, ideology, and hermeneutics is noted by John Thompson in his discussion of problematic definitions of ideology. Thompson both focuses the definition of ideology in a productive manner and argues that both rhetoric and ideology are epistemological. His definition of ideology as
"the mobilization of meaning in support of relations of domination" implicitly agrees with the principles of "critical rhetoric" (69). Thompson points out the epistemological nature of symbolic forms:

Symbolic forms are not merely representations which serve to articulate or obscure social relations or interests which are constituted fundamentally and essentially at a pre-symbolic level: rather, symbolic forms are continuously and creatively implicated in the constitution of social relations.

One concrete benefit of this epistemological approach to ideology and rhetoric, as Thompson notes, is that it removes the burden of proof from the analyst to demonstrate that symbolic forms are illusory. However, from a rhetorical perspective, Thompson's conceptualization of the study of ideology as "the mobilization of meaning in support of relations of domination" eliminates the ways in which a particular cultural artifact may both "support" and challenge relations of domination (69). In other words, Thompson's retention of the uncomplicated "negative hermeneutic", or critical aspect of Marxist theory, denies the inherently contradictory aspects of a discourse. As Foucault notes "[D]iscourse transmits and produces power; it reinforces it, but also undermines and exposes it, renders it fragile and makes it possible to thwart it" (in Mckerrow, 98). When critics are only looking for negative aspects of an artifact, they tend to overlook or minimalize contradictory mobilizations of power within their object of study. Therefore, this dissertation will accept Thompson's definition of ideology as "meaning in the service of power", but will elide his notion that ideology can only be used by a dominant group to maintain power over others (7). This epistemological conception of ideology, which
includes the contradictory or tangential aspects of power within one text, complements contemporary rhetorical theory. Therefore while this study has refined Thompson’s definition of ideology to include contradictory mobilizations of power, it accepts the epistemological definition of both rhetoric and ideology and the Gramscian notion that hermeneutics is at least partly accomplished through ideology. Although all these conceptions have been criticized as being too broad, they are the essential points of departure for any rhetorical analysis of postmodern rhetorical critics like Burke, McKerrow, and McGee. This study will adopt these principles because they provide a theoretical grounding for its three research questions. Critical rhetoric emphasizes the intersection of rhetorical strategies with cultural ideologies/beliefs and audiences’ interpretations of texts.

1.6 Justification of Study

Playboy is an excellent case study of the rhetorical construction of a 1950s sexual ideology for males for several reasons. The first reason for choosing Playboy is that traditional rhetorical criticism tends to evaluate rhetors in terms of their success with the audience: Playboy’s success is greater in terms of sales than any of its competitors. The second reason for studying Playboy is that as Kent Ono and John Sloop note rhetorical criticism tends to focus "on the discourse of the empowered, discourse of those who control, design, and create the public sphere" at the expense of more "vernacular discourses" (19). Thus, they argue critics tend to miss "important texts that gird and influence local cultures first and then affect, through the sheer numbers of local communities, cultures at large" (Ono & Sloop, 19). McKerrow makes much the same
point arguing that "Facts of Life' may never aspire to inclusion in the 'canons of oratorical excellence,' but it may have more influence on a teenager's conception of social reality than all the great speeches" (101). *Playboy* is a paradoxical rhetorical text in that it represents the pinnacle of achievement in an academically despised genre or "vernacular discourse". Therefore, an examination of *Playboy* at inception allows one to see how a rhetoric becomes dominant, how it expands its influence beyond its own "local culture" or specific audience. Finally, while there have been quantitative studies which demonstrate the negative impact of pornography on men's attitudes and quantitative reports by numerous researchers which demonstrate no "increases in delinquency and criminal behavior" from pornography, there are no studies which examine the rhetorical role of a specific pornographic text in the formation/change/maintenance of influential masculine ideologies (in Real, 101). This fact seems surprising in light of Real's contention that "men who maintain traditional sex role attitudes are more likely to be influenced by pornography than men who are less sex-typed and more androgynous" (103).

1.7 Review of Literature

1.7.1 Introduction

To understand the assumptions undergirding this study of the rhetorical relationship between *Playboy* and a culturally prevalent sexual ideology it is necessary to review two mostly separate literatures from a variety of disciplines. The first body of literature, on masculinity, comes from the disciplines of History, Anthropology, Sociology, and Gender and Women's Studies. The second body of literature, on pornography, is just as
extensive and originates from the same academic disciplines. However, these two bodies of literature only refer to each other peripherally or anecdotally. Furthermore, both literatures contain critical insights and limitations. This literature review will summarize the common conclusions of the major critical approaches. While this review of two bodies of literature can provide some general insight into the relationship between masculine sexual ideologies and pornography, it does not supplant the current study. No study reviewed below examines the rhetorical construction of a specific sexual ideology for men in *Playboy*’s first year of publication.

1.7.2 Masculinity

According to Kenneth Clatterbaugh, all the eight major contemporary perspectives on masculinity share two common elements: each "expresses an opinion about feminism and how it does or does not affect male reality" (4) and "originated with a need to confront the realities of feminist theory and practice" (205). As Joseph Dubbert notes “[A]merican men have to struggle with a mystique about being male, just as women have to contend with certain assumptions about what it means to be female” (Preface, x). Anthony Rotundo and Michael Kimmel also acknowledge their debt to feminist analyses of the female condition for their histories of American manhood. However, these commonalities do not indicate agreement about either the basic parameters of American manhood nor the historical development of masculine ideals. In fact, Clatterbaugh’s book is a summary of the eight major current perspectives on manhood. He details the various schools of thought and describes the various ideological disagreements. However, the major division among masculinity theorists is whether manhood is an
essential quality or a culturally produced quality. For the purposes of this study the
debate between theorists supporting an essentialist view of masculinity and theorists who
support the idea of culturally constructed “masculinities” is moot because both sides
agree that masculinity can be affected by cultural products. Tony Evans summarizes the
Promise-Keepers perspective on the influence of culture on essential masculinity:

I am convinced that the primary cause of this national crisis is the feminization of
the American male...a misunderstanding of manhood....men who abdicate their
role as spiritually pure leaders, thus forcing women to fill the vacuum
in Clatterbaugh, 184.

Even though Evans believes that manhood is an essential quality determined by God, he
acknowledges that manhood can be affected by symbolic constructs or rhetoric. John
Fiske argues that masculinity may begin in psychological or biological structures, “but
the contradictions in the masculine psyche are largely socially produced and certainly
reproduced in social conditions” (201). Regardless of individual theorists’ perceptions
of the source of manhood, all agree that cultural products can influence male behavior
and ideals. Furthermore, Rotundo summarizes the common importance most theorists
attach to “manhood”:

Our beliefs about manhood have played a powerful role in determining the kind of
life and the kind of society we have. These notions of maleness have left their
imprint...on political language, with its profusion of sports metaphors and its
preoccupation with toughness

6-7.

Root also notes the effect of ideals of manhood on society. He notes that studies asking
for a definition of "normal healthy men", "normal healthy women", and "normal adults"
found that definitions of adulthood and manhood were almost identical emphasizing the
qualities of "independence, self-reliance and resilience" (in Fiske, 200-201). To summarize the literature on masculinity all the theorists examined have presented two common conclusions: (1) Culture affects masculine behavior and ideals; (2) Various masculine ideologies have had a significant impact on society.

1.7.3 Pornography

Pornography became the site of struggle over both masculine and feminine ideals because it was, and is, one of the most visible places for the construction of sexual differences between males and females. Berger et al summarize the major division between various theorists:

In the 1980s the question of pornography emerged as a space where disagreement among feminists became highly pronounced....Radical feminists emphasized sexuality as a social arena of victimization and oppressive inequality for women, while libertarian feminists emphasized sexuality as an arena of constructive struggles toward women's sexual liberation.

Feminist theorists considered whether pornography typically demeaned women. However, implicit in each position was a perspective on pornography's influence on males. Radical feminist John Stoltenberg claims pornography is "‘the social power of men over women acted out as eroticized domination and subordination’" and that pornographic pictures "‘teach men to abuse women and children’" (emphasis mine, in Clatterbaugh, 54). Liberal feminist Small argues against the censorship of pornography stating that the "‘messages of pornography are insidious in part because they are virtually the only messages most men get about sex’" (in Clatterbaugh, 55). Both schools of thought agree that pornography has an effect on masculine behaviors and
ideals, especially about sex. However, their solutions differ. The Radical Feminists would eliminate all pornography because it is seen as a system of desensitizing men to women's rights. The liberal feminists assert that a new or better pornography may be "one of the chief weapons we may have in the dismantling of gender inequality" (Kimmel, 22).

Alongside the polemical, highly publicized political battles of the two groups above are a number of quantitative studies, both experimental and survey models. However, their evidence on the effects of pornography is inconclusive. Michael Real divides the research efforts into three groups: the conservative-moralist approach that "connects pornography to negative attitudes;" the liberal-erotica approach that yields "ambiguous and inconclusive results, with increased availability of pornography" in behavior; and the feminist approach which concludes that "a culture of subordination, discrimination, and aggression against women is reinforced and activated by violent pornography" (101-102, emphasis in original). Furthermore, as Robert Jensen notes, one must be suspicious of these studies' relationship to the real circumstances of pornography and pornography consumption. The major criticisms Jensen makes of the experimental studies is that they "may be incapable of measuring subtle effects that develop over time" and "[T]he lab experience is unreal in terms of both the physical and the psychological environments" (in GRC, 300). In conclusion, then, the survey data attempting to correlate the availability of pornographic material with the incidence of crimes against women is distinctly inconclusive. Baron actually found that an increase in the availability of pornography was correlated with a decrease in sexually violent crime (in Real, 101).
And the body of experimental data suffers from terminological confusion, ideological contamination, and unrealistic environments: i.e. what is violent pornography and what is non-violent pornography? Lowered validation of marriage is labeled a "negative attitude" and watching forty-eight minutes of pornographic film in a college setting does not replicate the normal environment for pornography consumption. In fact Jensen suggests that analysts dispose of the scientific model entirely because it seems impossible to prove "causation;" rather what they should learn from is "the testimony of women and men whose lives have been touched by pornography...how the material is implicated in violence against women" (in GRC, 302). Finally, like the literature on masculinity, the literature on pornography is contentious and divisive. However, there are two common conclusions: (1) Pornography has some impact on male sexuality (2) Pornography is the main conduit of sexual ideology for males.

1.7.4 Conclusion

While the literatures on both masculinity and pornography are contentious and contradictory, there are some common conclusions. The first of these common conclusions is that manhood, whether viewed essentially or from a social constructionist perspective, is precarious. Manhood can be affected or constructed by cultural artifacts. In other words, both camps agree that culture has an effect on manhood. The second conclusion is that conceptions of masculinity have powerful impacts on society. The third conclusion is that pornography can both shape and reflect current masculine ideals. Thus the crusades throughout American history against pornography, however it has been defined. Some theorists argue that the ideology of manhood just modifies
essential manhood for functional reasons; some theorists argue that the ideology of manhood perverts true manhood; and some theorists argue that the ideology of manhood creates its own dysfunction because there is no essential manhood. Whatever position one adopts, it seems clear that American manhood is a member of Gilmore's "Ubiquitous Manhood" wherein manhood is measured by the achievement of certain goals which are culturally determined. The commonality of these three conclusions, that manhood is precarious, ideological, and influenced by pornography, justifies this investigation of a specific text's influence on American males' sexual ideals. These background studies also provide support for this dissertation's examination of a particular pornographic artifact. The lack of an academic consensus about the true nature of masculinity implies that popular opinion is very susceptible to rhetorical influence. These studies, for the most part, also demonstrate a lack of awareness of the rhetorical nature of masculinity. Thus it seems past time for a rhetorical analysis of the construction of male sexual ideology in Playboy because it is the most popular men's magazine in the world.
CHAPTER 2

CONTENT ANALYSIS AND QUALITATIVE ANALYSIS

2.1 Introduction

This chapter details the construction of a scheme for content analysis and the selection, and modification, of a method of qualitative interpretation. The author's decisions about methodological and critical problems will be discussed.

Smith identifies three major purposes for content analysis: to describe the characteristics of content, to make inferences about the causes of content, and to make inferences about the effect of content (264). This study will simply describe the content of the 502 pages of Playboy's first year of publication as a necessary prelude to a qualitative interpretation of the text's rhetorical sources, goals, and strategies. A simplified content analysis has been chosen to present an objective picture of Playboy and to create a platform for the qualitative analysis of the text's rhetoricity because, as Smith notes, "descriptive... data usually serve as starting points for interpreting and evaluating discourse" (260).

2.2 Problems of Selection and Categorization

The chosen object of study is Playboy's first year of publication for reasons discussed previously. However, one common misconception, even in the critical literature, needs to be addressed first. Playboy's first year of publication was from October 1953 to September 1954. Many researchers assume that because the second issue of Playboy is dated January 1954 that the first issue came out in December 1953. Even Thomas Weyr,
who notes that the first issue was printed in October 1953 asserts that the magazine "went on sale in December" (14). However, another Hefner biographer, Russell Miller, claims that "by November 1953, it [the first issue] could be found on the racks of those newsstands in the bigger cities [other than Chicago]" (41). Given Hefner's financially precarious status and that the first issue is purposefully undated, it seems clear that the first issue of Playboy arrived at Chicago outlets in late October, especially since it was available in other cities by November. He left this undated first issue on newsstands until it sold out and he acquired enough capital to publish a regular monthly magazine.

Therefore the first calendar year of Playboy's publication included only ten issues. This fact may explain why the famous "Marilyn" issue (supposedly published in December 1953) contains no references to the Christmas season, while the January issue contains numerous holiday scenes.

The first problem when using a descriptive version of content analysis is deciding upon a reliable and consistent schemata; Berelson claims that "[C]ontent analysis stands or falls by its categories" (in Frey et al, 197). Playboy's own format, while helpful in indicating general categories, was too inconsistent and vague to support an academic analysis. However, this study does replicate the text's pagination with only one exception. All Playboy issues consist of numbered pages including the front cover as Page 1. Although the actual number is not present in the text the next page is numbered "2". The only exception this study makes to the basic schemata is the inclusion of the unnumbered final page previewing the next issue. However, individual pages as a unit of analysis proved inadequate for a precise description of Playboy because Hefner, in the
tradition of other popular magazines, breaks up the content of many individual pages in each issue. This technique is common in the print media where a page can contain three or four distinct stories or editorials in parallel columns. Thus this study's recording unit which "is the smallest body of content in which the appearance of a reference is counted" became one quarter of a page (Berelson, 135). In the 502 pages of Playboy's first year there is only one item smaller than a quarter of a page, which was subsequently elided from the analysis. The magazine's format dictated this decision as all categories could be counted as some multiple of one quarter of a page, with only one small ink drawing not counted.

The construction of categories for the content analysis rested on three principles: they must be simple and exhaustive; they must be representative of the text; and they must satisfy the requirements of "intersubjectivity or replicability" (Smith, 264). I established six topical categories: Pictorial, Fiction, Humor, Self-Promotion, Advice, and Cultural Commentary. The first three of these categories were derived almost exactly from Playboy's table of contents. The Pictorial Category refers only to the photographic presentation of nudes in which the sexual areas, breasts or buttocks, are presented. Therefore nude drawings or photographs of women scantily clad are not included in the Pictorial category. The Pictorial category is intended to measure the amount of uncontestable pornographic material in Playboy. Given the numerous and historically shifting definitions of pornography a narrow, concrete definition of pornography is required. Also this distinction prevents such obviously subjective
analysis problems like whether photographs of a scantily clad beauty contest winner count as Pictorial or Cultural Commentary.

The Fiction Category is defined as all elements, whether pictures or words, which contribute to a story with formal narrative characteristics and comprised at least one full page. For example, the first issue of Playboy contains the short story "The 8th tale of the 8th day", translated from Boccaccio's Decameron, which has the formal characteristics of narrative, namely: plot development, dialogue, and fictional characters. Obviously this study counted the cumulative quarter pages of text, but it also counted as Fiction the full page ink drawing depicting the two lovers because the drawing complements and is subordinate to the literary text.

Humor, which is a category used by Playboy, was modified and reduced to create consistency. In this content analysis Humor only refers to ink drawings, usually with a one sentence text, and the recurring one page collection of short jokes referred to as "Playboy's Party Jokes". It was necessary to narrow the definition of the Humor category because humor, as used by Playboy and the general public, is not only pervasive, but accidental and arbitrary. Without this reduction the Humor category would lack decision rules; the category would be a completely subjective construction creating an impossible overlap with other categories. Furthermore, the drawings and short jokes are primarily and overtly humorous.

The fourth category is Self-Promotion which was created to encompass the magazine's self advertisement. Consistent with the definition of the Pictorial category above, the front covers of all issues were defined as Self-Promotion because there was

23
no sexual nudity or because the covers were drawings. Also included as Self-Promotion are: the table of contents, editorials, readers' letters, the preview of next month's issue, and the only advertisement in the text called "The Men's Shop". The only possibly controversial decisions for this category are the inclusion of the letters' page and "The Men's Shop" advertisement. However, given that the letters published were selected by the staff of Playboy to serve their purposes it seems fair to designate the letters section as Self-Promotion. "The Men's Shop" is included as Self-Promotion because of its location, just before the table of contents, and because there were no company names or corporate brands except the injunction to address all orders to Playboy. So either the single page of advertising in each of the first ten issues would be ignored or it would be seen as a Playboy shop organ. In other words, this advertisement is too small to warrant a separate category and while it advertised a variety of products it always advertised for Playboy.

The fifth category, Advice, is defined as explicit instructions to the reader on the performance of a concrete task. Examples of this category would include how to mix a specific drink or cook oysters. Naturally this category also includes the peripheral drawings and commentary that surround the concrete advice.

The sixth and final category is Cultural Commentary in which the author expresses an opinion about a current topic. The topics commented upon include: music, sports, business, movies, and the fine arts. Although other critics might prefer to use more precise or different categories, this schemata is true to the format of Playboy, a format based on the configurations of quarter pages rather than the more complex format of Playboy.
newspapers' column inches. Furthermore, this schemata grounds the study's qualitative analysis in a replicable discursive structure. (1)

Categories are designated 1= Pictorial  2= Fiction  3= Advice  4= Self-Promotion  5= Humor  6= Cultural Commentary.

*Indicates Second reader's count of the issue to the left and its correlation to my count of the same issue.

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FIGURE 1 Category Pages by Issue

(Fig. cont’d)
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### Number of Pages

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</tr>
<tr>
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<td>6. 9.65</td>
<td>6. 19.20%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total = 502</td>
<td>Total = 50.20</td>
<td>Total = 100.00%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

### FIGURE 2

Cumulative Text of *Playboy*’s First 10 Issues
2.3 Qualitative Analysis

The preceding establishment of replicable content categories amply demonstrates Playboy's complexity. Therefore the only appropriate type of analytical methodology is one which encompasses the various kinds of discourse contained by the text. Fisher's "narrative paradigm" which purports to encompass all kinds of human discourse from poetry to political discourse seems an appropriate choice when analyzing an object which is comprised of six distinct categories. His methodology is both specific enough to analyze individual categories and broad enough to analyze all the categories. Furthermore his inclusion of both "narrative probability" (the coherence of the text) and "narrative fidelity" (the text's correspondence to the audience's experiential reality) tends to prevent the rhetorical critic from over emphasizing either text or audience. The necessarily dualistic perspective created by Fisher's method seems to be a recognition of Branham and Pearce's assertion that "[E] very communicative act is a text that derives meaning from the context of expectations and constraints in which it is experienced" (19). Fisher's "narrative paradigm" provides specific questions which can be applied to both the text and the audience. While the questions Fisher provides for the two elements of his narrative paradigm are neither exhaustive nor absolutely necessary they do provide a flexible, yet concrete, method for analyzing an artifact's rhetorical appeal. However, Fisher's "narrative paradigm" lacks an evaluative mechanism. Therefore this study will draw upon the theories of Kenneth Burke to evaluate the rhetorical effect of Playboy.
The first consequence of the content analysis is a decision to eliminate the Pictorial category as a separate unit of analysis from this study of Playboy. The descriptive content analysis supports the earlier contention that Playboy's major purpose was not to be a "pornographic" magazine. The actual content that could be labeled pornographic, the Pictorial category, is smaller than the amount of Self-Promotion. In fact, the Pictorial category is quantitatively the second smallest category and only accounts for 8.5% of the complete text. Ancillary reasons for the purely supplemental analysis of the Pictorial category include: the lack of a well established rhetorical method for analyzing pictorials; the abundance of analysis of pornographic pictorials in other disciplines; and Miller's description of the pictorials as "indistinguishable from run-of-the-mill calendar cheesecake" (49). In other words, the Pictorial category is difficult to analyze, has been done, and provides no explanation for Playboy's spectacular success. Furthermore, Greer argues that pictorial images are often interpreted through their content while ignoring their context, whereas critics should emphasize the context:

Buckley stresses the importance of context in interpreting images, and in doing so, demonstrates...the significance of advancing a reading of Playboy that is informed by context, and not determined by "contents" – a discovery that... moves us towards a more comprehensive understanding of Playboy's meaning

Greer's point in the above quotation is that critics often analyze images (especially "pornographic images") by their content without regard to context. This technique distorts the meaning of the image. Critics almost inevitably conclude that either the female is "objectified" with negative real world consequences or they focus on how the male "gaze" creates negative attitudes towards women (Greer, 17). Myers makes a
similar point, arguing that "pornography" only exists because of its context:

> [U]ltimately the distinction between pornography and other modes of sexual representation cannot rest on the characteristics of the image. The differences between pornographic vaginal imagery and medical vaginal imagery are learned through contextualisation (sic): they are not innate

GRC, 269.

Given the numerous problems with image analysis detailed above, this study will invert the analysis techniques of other critics and only examine Playboy's “pornographic images” in context and insofar as they influence readers' conceptions of masculine sexuality. This focused, supplemental analysis of Playboy's images as adjuncts to the other five categories should avoid the charge of "partisan explication" Greer levels at other critics.

The second consequence of the quantitative analysis was the selection of a narrative model. A parsing of the magazine's topical divisions underscores the major rhetorical problem faced by Playboy in its first year, the construction of a persuasive masculine narrative. Thus Fisher's "Narrative Paradigm" seems an appropriate model for understanding a mediated communication form like Playboy. Fisher provides an ideal type for effective narration explaining how humans evaluate stories/rhetorical appeals with his two principles of "narrative probability and fidelity". His two formulations of narrative probability and narrative fidelity are useful analytical tools as together they incorporate logical and cultural tests. Narrative probability is defined as "what constitutes a coherent story" and narrative fidelity is defined as "whether or not the stories they experience [as an audience] ring true with the stories they know to be true in their own lives" (Fisher, 64). J. David Johnson makes a similar argument in his analysis
of magazine appraisal stating: “this research relates attributes of the medium to the functions they serve for the reader, a focus shared by other recent programmatic research” (149). Like Fisher, Johnson identifies the two most important aspects of appraisal as the text and readers’ relation to it. While there is no overtly quantitative element in Fisher’s narrative paradigm, its two concepts encompass the logical "coherence" of the text and the cultural experience/position of the audience. Despite recent criticism of Fisher for not drawing convincing theoretical distinctions between logic and narration, his two elements seem to account for the way in which audiences evaluate narratives or choose between rival stories. (2) This expanded form of logic seems especially appropriate for measuring the appeal of a popular culture artifact which, while internally consistent, also has to appeal to the tastes or values of its audience. It also seems appropriate to choose a “narrative paradigm” because Playboy’s largest single category is traditional fiction. Thus the appeal of Playboy, its credibility with its intended audience, will be measured using Fisher’s narrative probability and narrative fidelity. This assertion may seem to suggest a social scientific survey of Playboy’s audience which is not possible given the historical nature of the study. Furthermore, as Virginia Kidd points out, critics are never able to determine the exact influence on an audience of a single rhetorical artifact:

Assessing the exact influence of dramas presented in popular magazines on their readers is clearly impossible. To make such an assessment, a critic would have to know to what extent readers accepted what they read in their own lives. In addition, the critic would have to separate the influence of popular magazines from all other sources of influence. To do either is clearly impossible.
However, this inability to assess Playboy's actual influence can be overcome by using Virginia Kidd's historical research on other popular magazines of the era and Edwin Black's rhetorical theory. Black argues in his seminal article "The Second Persona" that a "critic can see in the auditor implied by a discourse a model of what the rhetor would have his real auditor become" (113). This deceptively simple article asserts that by analyzing the actual discourse critics can find out the ideological stance of the author and, correspondingly, his ideal audience. Playboy's overwhelming success suggests one is justified in seeking some isomorphism between the magazine's ideological discourse and the ideological desires of its audience. Kidd succinctly states that popular magazines "can be presumed both to reflect and inspire attitudes in their readers" (267). Or as Michael McGee notes the basic rule of effective rhetoric is that "[R]hetors are advised to ground their arguments in doxa, using the taken-for-granted rules of society as the first principle (premise) of a chain of arguments" (281). By combining the historically parallel research results of Kidd's study with McGee and Black's theoretical insights, it becomes possible to create an analysis of how Playboy intended to influence its audience and to what extent it both drew on and resisted the "doxa" or cultural opinions of the fifties.

However, McGee's statement still leaves the problem of discerning the doxa of a society or time period. Although much has been written about America in the 1950s, most commentary is on the level of platitudes or does not directly apply to the goals of this study. Therefore, in the interest of specific and concrete reference material, this study will use Virginia Kidd's analysis of popular magazines from 1951-1973 as an "indication of popular mood" (267). This particular article's conclusions seem the most
appropriate to examine Playboy's sources for creating an effective rhetoric for a variety of reasons. The most obvious reason is the time period studied; it covers magazine norms two years before Playboy's inception and continues well beyond the range of this study. The second reason is that Kidd is only analyzing "popular magazines" which are defined by two criteria: inclusion in Reader's Guide to Periodical Literature, which does not list specialized journals, and only includes magazines with a circulation over 1,000,000 (267). The third reason for using Kidd's article is her topic, "Advice on Interpersonal Relationships". While Kidd's article does not include Playboy it does give a concrete picture of the dominant relational model presented in popular magazines generally and presumably accepted by readers of the time. Kidd defines two dominant models for relationships which she labels "Vision I" and "Vision II". This study only uses Vision I because, as Kidd states, "Vision I dominated the journals in the 1950s and the early 1960s", and Vision II did not become operative until the mid sixties (267). The essential elements of Vision I are its rigidity and judgmental purpose:

Behavioral patterns were described as continually repeating, and the repetition established a pattern of normality. This standard of normality was indicated through the continually reappearing assumption that any given dramatized situation had only one correct line of action for the characters. Behavior was dramatized on a bipolar continuum. Issues were right or wrong, left or right, and behavior was acclaimed or condemned

Kidd, 267.

Even more important for this study is Kidd's assertion that in the popular magazines of the same time period as Playboy sex roles were presented in a completely authoritarian manner: "[F]emales and males were expected to behave according to traditional patterns, and when one did not do so, it was not the pattern but the individual's sexuality
that was at fault" (268). This "Vision" is an excellent model for examining the cultural attitudes which *Playboy* both incorporated and resisted. *Playboy*’s rhetorical goals and sources can be explained using this basic model of cultural norms from the appropriate time period. Further it must be remembered that Hefner's employment background was with *Esquire* as a promotional copywriter which was one of the popular magazines included in Kidd's study. In fact, Miller goes so far as to state that *Esquire* was Hefner's favorite magazine. He considered it to be the arbiter of taste and style, the very last word in male sophistication (27). However, Hefner's employment did not last very long as Esquire decided to move its headquarters to New York. Miller asserts that Hefner did not want to move to New York, but furthermore there were editorial disagreements. According to Miller, and others, although known as the "most daring men's magazine in America during the forties... [Esquire] was trying to disentangle itself from its prurient image" while Hefner believed "the magazine was not nearly bawdy enough" (27). Given this biographical information Kidd's article seems even more appropriate as a tool for analyzing how Hefner's product both used and challenged the success formulas of the American publishing industry.

Essentially this study will answer its first research question about *Playboy*’s sources using Kidd's research on popular magazines of the era, Hefner biographies, and the Kinsey reports on human sexuality. The second question on *Playboy*’s rhetorical strategies will be answered using Fisher's narrative paradigm. The third question concerning *Playboy*’s rhetorical goals and appeal will be answered using Black's theory that it is possible to ascertain a rhetor's ideal audience, and goals from his discourse.
And the rhetorical appeal of the text will be discussed by comparing Kidd's research on other popular magazines of the era (especially male oriented magazines like Esquire and Life) with this study's conclusions about Playboy's ideal version of masculinity.

After the analysis of the rhetorical sources, strategies, and goals and appeals of the five individual categories, this study will attempt to interpret the overall effect of the text using the Burkean notion of "Social Order". Burke's methodology seems to be an appropriate choice for a summary chapter as it encompasses all the terms previously used. The key rhetorical element of any artifact according to Burke is the process of standardizing any given symbol's meaning:

As soon as an act is brought within the realm of symbols, attempts are made by those in power over the symbols to universalize meanings which begin on a purely local level in Duncan, 133.

Hefner was trying through his power over symbols (publisher of the text) to universalize (authorize) his local beliefs (personal ideology). He offered his readers a text which presented a coherent and consistent form of a particular masculine ideal. While it is impossible to quantify the effects of Hefner's efforts, Burke offers the critic both an hierarchical analysis of order and a concrete method for analyzing the particular motives of the text. Burke's "Dramatistic Pentad" with its five terms is a methodical way of analyzing the motives behind any story. The five terms of Burke's Pentad (Act, Agency, Purpose, Scene, and Agent) work as ratios to explain the motives of symbolic acts or rhetoric. Chapter Seven of this study will apply Burke's theories to the results of Chapters Three through Six.
This chapter has created an authoritative, replicable categorization of the Playboy text and indicated the theoretical models that will be used to answer the study's three research questions. Furthermore, it has indicated that after the three research questions have been answered for each of the five remaining categories, a Burkean analysis will be used to interpret the effects of the text. The next four chapters will examine the individual categories by means of the three research questions.

2.4 Endnotes

1. Although I did not subject my schemata to rigorous inter-coder reliability test, two second readers were able to generate high correlations using my categorical schemata. The first second reader used my schemata to categorize Issue 2. His use of my schemata produced an overall correlation of .95. By category the correlations were as follows: Pictorials .93, Fiction .94 Advice 1.0, Self-Promotion 1.0, Humor .92, Cultural Commentary .89. The second second reader also produced an overall correlation with my reading of .95. By category the correlations were as follows: Pictorial .94, Fiction 1.0, Advice 1.0, Self-Promotion 1.0, and Cultural Commentary .88. Only one short meeting was required with each reader to produce an acceptable correlation in each case. However this process was valuable because it clarified my definitions of categories, especially the fiction category which was modified to include a quantitative element. The remaining difference between my coding of the text and the second readers’ can be accounted for by their lack of fine discrimination on the one quarter page recording units.

2. Although there have been criticisms of Fisher’s narrative paradigm (see Foss, Foss, & Trapp 331-333, for a summary) the most severe criticism is contained in Barbara Warnick’s "The Narrative Paradigm: Another Story", Quarterly Journal of Speech, 73 (May 1987) 172 -182. Warnick attacks Fisher on his assertion that narrative rationality, which all humans possess, will lead audiences to "have a natural tendency to prefer the true and the just" (176). Fisher is caught on the horns of a dilemma: his postmodern theory cannot be reconciled with his individual morality. Warnick is correct to assert that a critic cannot evaluate competing narratives using Fisher’s narrative paradigm. However, this critic does not wish to use Fisher to evaluate the Playboy narrative. My goal is to demonstrate how a specific narrative can be persuasive without using technical logic. As Fisher notes, in Human Communication as Narration, "a logic of good reasons is not a mechanism for resolving disputes over values, transcendent or otherwise....it provides measures for assessing elements in reasoning" (113).
CHAPTER 3

PLAYBOY'S FICTION

3.1 Introduction

This study will examine Playboy's Fiction first as it is the largest single component of the magazine. Although fictional works may lack the overtly persuasive appeals of traditional oratory, they do possess rhetorical elements. Many scholars agree that fiction of all kinds is inherently ideological and persuasive. Wayne Booth is perhaps the most prominent literary critic to insist that rhetorical elements are always present in literature (Modern Dogma and the Rhetoric of Assent). Walter Fisher also notes: "[W]hatever the genre of the discourse, the narrative paradigm allows one to view it as rhetoric" (143). Therefore this chapter will examine the rhetoricity of Playboy's Fiction with reference to the questions of its sources, rhetorical strategies, and goals and appeal.

3.2 Sources

Hefner's decision was not whether to include fiction or not, but what kind of fiction to include that was also affordable. Fictional works, short stories, and novels by installment, are also the traditional backbone of the magazine industry. In fact, the first issue of Playboy contained a Sherlock Holmes fragment which was originally published in Lippincott's Monthly Magazine, in February 1890, as "Science of Deduction", the first installment of Doyle's novel The Sign of the Four. In the time period under examination Playboy essentially contains three types of literature: stories by famous contemporary authors, classical stories, and parodies of famous stories by unknown
authors. It is fair to say that Hefner's taste was largely formed by Esquire's editorial policy, without Esquire's financial resources. Merrill states that the editorial policy at Esquire "may have rejected the star system when it came to its pictures of women, [but] that was exactly what they used in pursuing literature" (64). Playboy also used the "star system" for its fiction, but was forced to include cheap reprints of classical literature and parodies/knockoffs by unknown authors merely to fill its pages. Hefner's desire for literary stars is apparent because the first year of Playboy contains stories by some of the most famous writers of the period: Somerset Maugham, Erskine Caldwell, Ray Bradbury, and John Collier. As a fledgling magazine Playboy was only able, like Esquire in the early days, to afford the stories by famous authors that were considered too risque for more established magazines (Merrill 63-64). However, to complement the star system, Hefner ingeniously created a second type of literature by combining his ideological concerns (sexual naturalism) and his financial constraints to raid classical literature for appropriate stories. The most obvious example of this strategy is the inclusion of one story from Boccaccio's Decameron in all ten issues of Playboy. There are only thirty three short stories/novel installments in the entire text so the Decameron selections constitute a substantial proportion of the fiction category. The ten stories from the Decameron and the three selections from the Sherlock Holmes corpus were free of copyright restrictions and provided a certain classical tone for Hefner's magazine. The third kind of literature, parodies of famous tales, was often provided by Playboy staff writers like Julien Dedman. This third type of literature usually invoked popular literature without having to purchase the original work. One example of this technique is
Julien Dedman's "My Gun is the Jury", in the February 1954 issue of Playboy. This parody of Spillane's I the Jury was instantly recognizable due to the title and complementary ink drawing of a Spillanesque figure in fedora and trenchcoat. Weyr summarizes Hefner's desire for literary stars that fit the Playboy ideology:

Hefner's dogged pursuit of quality began to show through. He found a story by Erskine Caldwell he could afford and printed it in the February 1954 issue....His earthy southern sexuality quickly became a reader favorite. In June, Playboy landed Somerset Maugham; in July, Thorne Smith; in August, Robert Ruark. Sex, class, humor, adventure. The categories all fitted neatly.

The reason the "categories all fitted neatly" was that Hefner and his editorial team were all working on a common version of masculinity and from a common doxa or cultural background. Thus, the three sources identified for the Fiction component of Playboy's first year (current literary stars, classical literature, and staff parodies of popular writers) all possessed doxastic force. Even the first issue of Playboy was acknowledged as being in direct competition with Esquire by Newsweek and The Saturday Review (Miller, 42). Hefner's sources for his stories were very similar to the sources used by Esquire, the leading men's magazine of the period; the deviations from the norms of magazine culture can be attributed to Playboy's lack of finances. However, Playboy's major innovation was selecting stories that emphasized sexuality, material gains, and masculine cleverness. For example, one of the stories from the Decameron, "The 1st tale of the 3rd day", in the September 1954 issue, illustrates how an unemployed peasant concocts a successful plan to seduce nine young nuns and gain considerable wealth too. In Kidd's Vision I, men who are not monogamous are considered deviant humans; it is apparent that although
this tale is part of the literary canon it certainly advocates different values from the
culture of the American fifties. In fact the overwhelming theme of the ten tales
from the Decameron selected by Hefner was that sexuality of all kinds had no negative
consequences, provided that the male protagonist was clever enough to escape the
hypocritical censure of society. Conversely, Hefner included a supernatural horror story
"Bird of Prey", in the January 1954 issue, that showed the tragic consequences of a man
dominated by the social norms of sexual fidelity. In this John Collier story a man is led
to suspect that his wife's pregnancy is the result of infidelity by a supernaturally clever
parrot's mimicry of a conversation between the lover and his wife. The man does not
even attempt to verify his suspicions, but immediately kills his pregnant wife and
commits suicide. However, the story ends by casting doubt on the veracity of the bird's
mimicry. It is not so much the two deaths that give the tale its tragic flavor, but the
slightness of the suspicion and the almost automatic, overblown, masculine response.
The three Sherlock Holmes stories in the first year of Playboy, although Holmes is
traditionally asexual, demonstrate that simple deductive logic can penetrate the most
tangled sexual relations and bring them to a satisfactory conclusion. The ideal male, in
the stories Hefner and his staff selected, was one who pursues his own pleasures,
(money, sex, drugs) regardless of social prescriptions, and is smart enough to avoid the
various punishments doled out for deviation. The failed or unsuccessful male is the one
who is manipulated by either social conventions or emotionalism into acting against his
own interests. This binary opposition was in direct contrast to traditional ideals wherein
relational success is associated with diligent adherence to societal norms while failure is
associated with deviance. Hefner used his editorial power to promote a vision of masculinity from traditionally sanctioned sources that directly contradicted the socially prevalent vision of masculinity.

3.3 Rhetorical Strategies

Hefner's rhetorical strategy involved the selection of material which had already been sanctioned by the reading population of America. Whether it was the literary star, the story from classical literature, or the parody of a popular text, Playboy always presented fiction which was acceptable to mainstream audiences because it was written by famous authors, or selected from previously canonized literature, or invoked popular texts. This strategy was also apparent in the Pictorial section of Playboy. Hefner's very first nude photographs were of Marilyn Monroe (see Appendix A, 9). Marilyn was "America's Sweetheart" and a much smaller version of this photograph had already been on the cover of Life magazine. However, at the same time Hefner maintained a steady assault on postwar piety that intrigued his readers. This dualistic strategy was not difficult. As Ray Russell, first editor of Playboy notes, Hefner knew his audience and how to appeal to their sense of logic and desires:

"Remember that we were young men very much like our readers -- educated, but not overeducated, hip, fond of money and material things like snazzy cars, plush apartments, and dressing well. We liked that. We did not manufacture a phony image. It was sincere. Not all of us were swingers, but we believed in the complete package, just as our readers did. We were speaking to a group like ourselves and we spoke the same language"

in Weyr, 36.

If Russell is correct to assume that the staff of Playboy and their intended audience had similar characteristics i.e. beliefs, desires, and backgrounds, then Fisher's two concepts of
"narrative probability and fidelity" seem to be the natural choices for an analysis of Playboy's rhetoric.

The three relevant criteria in Fisher's narrative paradigm for narrative probability are: structural, material, and characterological coherence in the presentation of the male figure in the thirty three stories of the text (47 & 48). Structural coherence refers to the internal consistency of the text's argument; Fisher even proposes as an alternative name "argumentative coherence" (47). Therefore, it is necessary to examine all thirty-three stories for consistency of argument for a male ideal. The ten stories from the Decameron and the three selections from the Sherlock Holmes corpus have already been mentioned; their structural coherence has already been partially examined, but not their internal and complementary consistency. However, as Jonathan Usher notes in his introduction to the Decameron: "Boccaccio has cunningly undermined our confidence in the moral basis of human behaviour"(xxiii). Boccaccio's basis for human behavior becomes "reason and responsibility" instead of morality (Usher, xxiii). Boccaccio's advocacy of the rational, responsible pursuit of pleasure in the Decameron was an ideal match for the Playboy philosophy. Although the characters of the Decameron are very cognizant of their social status and concomitant responsibilities, their stories are guided by the triumph of reason over petty social restrictions. The internal coherence of the Decameron has been established. Furthermore, the complementarity of all the Sherlock Holmes stories, all based on the triumph of Holmes' deductive reasoning over all obstacles, should be apparent to anyone familiar with Doyle's famous detective.
Sherlock Holmes, in *Playboy* October 1953, explicitly celebrates reason over other modes of thought:

"Detection is, or ought to be, an exact science, and should be treated in the same cold and unemotional manner. You [Watson] have attempted to tinge it with romanticism, which produces much the same effect as if you worked a love-story or an elopement into the fifth proposition of Euclid"


The contributions of Ray Bradbury to *Playboy*’s first year of publication also embody a similar argument. In "The Flying Machine" a Chinese emperor recognizes the beauty of flight, but has the inventor put to death because all men would not use the invention for benevolent purposes. Given the recent history of World War II this story had a prescient tone; flying machines will be used for war and mass destruction, so the emperor's decision to execute the inventor is reasonable. The three installments which comprise the text of *Fahrenheit 451* show readers a male protagonist who gradually realizes the futility of complete social conformity and wins free of his former society. The society which condemned books, a concrete symbol of reason and free thinking, is destroyed.

Once again the basic storyline argues that thinking leads to freedom while mindless conformity, despite material inducements, leads to death. Max Shulman added a humorous note to the basic argument with his two satires: "Harry Riddle: Attorney at Law" and "Three Day Pass". "Harry Riddle", in the January 1954 issue, chronicles the misadventures of an idealistic young man who is continually failing due to his own idealism and stupidity. "Three Day Pass" shows another inept young man, who is made a hero and gets his girl back due to the machinations of his clever friend in the May 1954
issue. Erskine Caldwell also adds a light note to the argument in his short story "The Medicine Man" when the traveling tonic salesman is forced into marriage by a southern belle's exploitation of his sexual desires. Caldwell's writing is subtle enough that the reader is drawn along with the hapless "doctor" into the young lady's trap. (Vol. IV)

"New Cabin", in the February 1954 issue, is a complicated story in which all three characters, two men and one woman, misunderstand the depths of sexual attraction. The two lovers disappear into the swamp, presumably dead, while the other man escapes, but cannot realize his desire for the woman. This story is far more complex than the typical Playboy selection and resists easy categorization. However, it possesses an unmistakably tragic tone; neither man gets what he desires and the woman narrows her choices to infidelity or death. In an oblique way then, "New Cabin" does support the argument of Playboy's other fiction. The lack of a rational recognition and accommodation of sexual desires results in two deaths and frustrated desire. None of the three protagonists can rationally transcend the almost classically inevitable tragedy. In fact all the stories in Playboy's first year contributed to the argument that rationality could overcome most problems (with a emphatic emphasis on sexual problems) except three stories.

These three stories, "Black Country" by Charles Beaumont, "A Woman of Fifty" by Somerset Maugham, and "The Voice in the Night" by William Hope Hodgson, seem to contradict the "Playboy Philosophy". "Black Country" valorizes the passionate pursuit of music over the more attainable goals of sex or fame. As the narrator of "Black Country" attests: "...most of all he had the spirit -- the thing that you can beat your chops about it for two weeks straight and never say what it is, but if it isn't there,
buddy-ghee, you may get to be President but you'll never play music" (Vol. X, 20).

William Hope Hodgson's story "The Voice in the Night" (Vol., VIII) is a classic horror story with an unexplainable fungus taking over a man and a woman who have tried all rational solutions to no avail. Although they take the rational way out by remaining isolated and hopeless on their desert isle so as not to bring this horrific fungus to civilization, there is no solution. Finally Maugham's story "A Woman of Fifty" (Vol. VII) seems to question the power of rationality and indict sexual adventures. The narrator of this story meets a placid and unremarkable woman of around fifty years of age. However, as the narrator relates the story of her adventures twenty five years ago when she married a man only to have an affair and a child with that man's father, the reader realizes that underneath this placid exterior is a woman of passion. The story has tragic consequences: the woman's father-in-law is killed by his jealous son; the son is judged criminally insane and locked up for life; and the woman's child dies shortly after birth. One could argue that if the son had approached the problem rationally then the story would not have had such tragic consequences. But Maugham undermines this conclusion with a coda to his story which has a young student ask "how evil came into the world" (Vol. VII, 49). This juxtaposition seems to imply that the deceptively placid lady is "evil" and immune to the powers of masculine rationality. Despite these three notable exceptions, the fictional texts of Playboy's first year present an impressive structural coherence.

The other two aspects of narrative probability, material and characterological coherence, seem less important for assessing the persuasiveness of a text like Playboy.
Characterological coherence, which Fisher defines as "an organized set of actional tendencies" is merely an aspect of competent story telling (47). In other words, our suspension of disbelief, as well as the story's rhetorical efficacy, would be impaired if Sherlock Holmes began to act like Dr. Watson. The stories in Playboy all possess characterological coherence.

Material coherence, which Fisher defines as how well stories compare to "contrasting stories told in other discourses", is an impossible critical task if this study were to examine all the contrasting stories (47). No critic can assess how well Playboy's presentation compares to all oppositional discourses. It would first be necessary to define competing discourses, acquire them, and analyze the relative value of each discourse's logical appeals. However, in a comparison of Hefner's selected narratives with the traditional narratives of sexual fidelity and propriety, summarized by Kidd's Vision I, it is obvious that Hefner's narratives possess superior material coherence.

Playboy's Fiction is superior because it is ideologically consistent and it acknowledges and refutes opposing discourses. Fisher's definition of material coherence requires both internal consistency and a response to the "counterarguments" of opposing discourses (47). As noted earlier, Playboy's Fiction often incorporated the traditional male, but argued that this male was both irrational and unsuccessful. While readers may challenge the sophistry of this approach, it is a form of refutation to the standard morals and norms of fifties magazine culture. Furthermore, as Kinsey notes in his "Historical Introduction"
to Sexual Behavior in the Human Male, traditional narratives have actively discouraged even factual investigations of human sexuality:

Nothing has done more to block the free investigation of sexual behavior than the almost universal acceptance, even among scientists, of certain aspects of that behavior as normal, and of other aspects of that behavior as abnormal.

According to Kinsey even scientists were victims of the society's traditional narratives or authoritarian position on sexual behavior. Traditional narratives not only did not respond to counter arguments, they actively discouraged factual investigations of sexuality as inherently prurient behavior. Furthermore, one must remember that the three kinds of coherence are related; Hefner was on an ideological mission to challenge traditional mores replacing them with the rationality of sexual naturalism. Therefore the structural coherence of his selections almost presupposes a characterological and material coherence.

Fisher also proposes five questions to ascertain "narrative fidelity":

1. "Fact" or what values are espoused by a discourse?
2. "Relevance" or do the values espoused bear upon the decision?
3. "Consequence" or what would be the results of adhering to said values?
4. "Consistency" or do the values match ones already held?
5. "Transcendent Issue" or do the values match our goals for an ideal society?

For this particular project Fisher's five questions are reduced to three. The question of "Fact" is subsumed by structural coherence and the question of "Transcendent Issue" is not a question for the critic to answer, but a means to describe the efficacy of a rhetorical
presentation (see Endnote 2, Ch. 2). Thus this study will only ask three questions for narrative fidelity: are the values relevant? are the values consistent? and what consequences would adhering to the values presumably have?

The question of relevance is less salient in the fiction of Playboy than it would be in a specific policy debate. However, as Hefner indicates in his editorial in the first issue of Playboy, the purposes of the magazine are twofold: "to form a pleasure-primer styled to the masculine taste" and "to give the American male a few extra laughs and a little diversion from the anxieties of the Atomic Age" (Vol. I, 3). Playboy’s stated mission was to both provide entertainment and instruction for males on how to achieve pleasure. Thus Playboy’s realm of debate is severely circumscribed; it will only deal with issues of masculine pleasure. If one accepts this circumscription of Playboy’s mission, then the fiction only has to bear on male pleasure. The ten stories selected from the Decameron all focus on male pleasure. One story from Boccaccio’s work which has not been previously analyzed is "The Queen and the Stable Boy" (Vol. VI). In this story a lowly stable boy desires the Queen. However, he knows that the difference in their social status and her marriage to the King make an open relationship impossible. Therefore, he cleverly impersonates the King and manages to have sex with the Queen. The King discovers the deception and tries to trap the stable boy. The stable boy cleverly escapes the trap, but realizes that the King knows what happened and resolves never to give into his desire again. The theme of this story is relevant to male pleasure because although his desire seems impossible to achieve and fraught with real hazards, the stable boy can achieve his male pleasure through a clever combination of rational problem solving and
nerves of steel. Although the story takes place in an archaic setting, it has strong analogues in the modern era. Another story which is relevant to the discussion of male pleasure is Julien Dedman's "My Gun is the Jury" (Vol. III). Dedman's take on Spillane's immensely popular novel I the Jury escalates the protagonist's violent nature to the level of the absurd. For example, in Dedman's parody the culminating violence is expressed in completely unrealistic terms:

I squeezed the trigger of the bazooka triumphantly. A staggering roar shook the room as my atomic warhead seared into his flaccid belly.... My kind of job has its sunnier moments. Vol. III, 32.

Obviously this kind of violence is completely impossible. Bazookas do not fire atomic warheads; if they did the shooter could not possibly survive the resulting explosion, never mind enjoy the experience. However the similarity to the original is obvious:

The roar of the .45 shook the room. Slowly, she looked down at the ugly swelling in her naked belly where the bullet went in.
"How c-c-could you?" she gasped.
I only had a moment before talking to a corpse, but I got it in.
"It was easy," I said.


Dedman's story for the third volume of Playboy is mocking the machismo substitution of violence for sex in Spillane's original. In Spillane's original text the protagonist is obsessed with vengenance, not pleasure. Dedman's story has the protagonist, named Sledge, kill the fat male informant and return to the beautiful woman. In the Playboy narrative killing beautiful, willing, women is destructive of male pleasure. "The Star Maker" by Robert C. Ruark (Vol. IX), argues that Hollywood is entirely about sex. The protagonist of this story is a famous director who has an endless succession of sexual
partners and uses his sexual prowess to produce popular movies. By the story's conclusion the director has been sexually incapacitated by a jealous ex-husband and starts making movies that repress sexuality totally. Ruark summarizes the incapacitated director’s response and indirectly criticizes social norms:

_Embittered by his accident, an antagonism towards sex began developing in Jeter and appearing in his work. Sex became a very dirty word in all his pictures. If any of the characters seemed to be enjoying sex in the first reel of a Jeter production, you could be certain they would be jumping under a train...by the last reel._

Vol. IX, 35 & 46.

The relevance here is simply that despite appearances the people who are against sex, or any other form of harmless pleasure, are the ones who cannot enjoy it themselves.

There are only two stories of the thirty three in the first year of Playboy that are not relevant in some way to masculine pleasure. Hodgson's "The Voice in the Night" has already been discussed as an anomaly in the narrative probability section of this study. But while it does not possess any relevance to debates about masculine pleasure, perhaps this classic example of a horror story provides pleasurable reading for some, which is Playboy’s secondary purpose. The real anomaly for the relevance question of Fisher’s narrative fidelity is Ambrose Bierce's "A Horseman in the Sky" (Vol. I). This story about the Civil War presents a conflict between two kinds of duty: one's duty to his country versus one's duty to his father. The protagonist in this story is a Virginian who joins the Union Army against his father's wishes because the son feels it is his duty. However, the conflict becomes much deeper than this when the reader discovers that the man the protagonist just killed is his father. In fact, this reader wondered why the young
Union soldier hesitated so long about shooting the Confederate scout. This story concludes with a conversation between the young protagonist and a Union army sergeant:

"See here, Druse," he said, after a moment's silence, "it's no use making a mystery. I order you to report. Was anybody on the horse."
"Yes."
"Well?"
"My father."
The sergeant rose to his feet and slowly walked away. "Good God!" he said.

Vol. 1, 36.

This particular story seems to be irrelevant to either the mission of instructing readers about pleasure or producing a pleasurable response in readers. If it did produce a certain kind of literary pleasure in Playboy's readers, then it would be a qualitatively different kind of pleasure than that produced by the vast majority of Playboy's stories which usually had an obviously humorous, supernatural, or unreal component which distances the reader from real life consequences of fictional discourses. "A Horseman in the Sky" does not possess any of these elements that allow the reader to disassociate fiction from reality. However, despite this one notable exception Playboy's Fiction passes Fisher's relevancy test for narrative fidelity.

The second test, or question, concerning narrative fidelity is are the values proposed consistent with ones already held. According to the previous quotation from Russell, the values Playboy's Fiction proposed were consistent with the values already held by members of the Playboy staff. However, according to Kidd's analysis of other popular magazines of the era, most of Playboy's readers did not hold these values, at least not
publicly. Hefner's ground for challenging the values or social norms presented/reinforced in other popular magazines was Kinsey's study of the American male's sexual behavior, *Sexual Behavior in the Human Male*. Published in 1948, Kinsey's scientific study overtly states what *Playboy* only implies:

> the present study has been confined to securing a record of the individual's overt sexual experience. This has been because we feel that there is no better evidence of one's attitudes [values] on sex. Specific questions have been asked about each subject's attitudes toward his parents, toward masturbation, pre-marital intercourse, sexual relations with prostitutes, and homosexual experience; but we do not have much confidence in verbalizations of attitudes which each subject thinks are his own, when they are, in actuality, little more than reflections of the attitudes which prevail in the particular culture in which he was raised. Often the expressed attitudes are in striking contradiction to the actual behavior, and then they are significant because they indicate the existence of psychic conflict.

So while the values espoused in *Playboy*’s Fiction were not consistent with the values already held by their audience ("verbalizations of attitudes"), they were consistent with what readers believed was the actual behavior of Americans. As Kim Painter notes, despite the now recognized inadequacies of Kinsey’s method, after the reports were published “Americans never thought about sex in quite the same way” (USA Today, D1). In fact, compared to the Kinsey study on the sexual behavior of the American male, *Playboy*’s Fiction was very conservative. All sexual relations in *Playboy*’s Fiction were heterosexual ones. Furthermore, while *Playboy*’s Fiction challenged the cultural attitudes towards a variety of heterosexual acts, it did not challenge the attitudes towards more forbidden sexual acts and remained firmly grounded in the "objective" findings of the Kinsey report. Hefner was familiar with the Kinsey report of 1948 and its academic
credibility. As Miller notes, Hefner fully endorsed both the methods and results of the Kinsey reports:

In 1948, the first Kinsey Report was published. Hefner read every word and wrote an enthusiastic review for "The Shaft" [his college newspaper], attacking the hypocrisy of public attitudes toward sex

In graduate school at Northwestern University, Hefner wrote a sociology term paper on "Sex Behavior and U.S. Laws" which earned him an "A for research" but was marked down for the radical nature of Hefner's conclusions (Miller, 25). Simply stated, Playboy's Fiction only posited a challenge to the public attitudes towards heterosexual sex and grounded that narrow challenge in the prevailing doxa of scientific research.

Fisher's final question in this study's modified version of his schemata for assessing narrative fidelity is what the consequences of adhering to the values espoused would be "for one's concept of oneself, for one's behavior, for one's relationships with others and society, and to the process of rhetorical transaction?" (109). Although this study cannot measure the actual consequences of adhering to the values in Playboy's Fiction, it can analyze the ideal results envisioned by the text of audience adherence. Ideally adherence to the values espoused by Playboy's Fiction by its male audience would reduce what Kinsey labels "psychic conflict" (58). This reduction would be achieved because the gulf between public values and personal actions would be lessened. According to both Playboy's Fiction and Kinsey's study the disparity between behavior and culturally created values was the problem. Since men did not want to or could not change their behavior, an adjustment in values was mandated. Therefore, Playboy's Fiction presented new values which would create a revision of the individual male's self-concept. For
example, in "The Boss's Breeches" (Vol. VIII), the male protagonist spends most of the story resisting his desires because of cultural restraints. The "Boss" of this story resists his secretary's numerous sexual advances with phrases like: "Haven't you enough sense to get out?", "Suppose someone should come in and find you here", and "What would people think" (Vol. VIII, 8). The protagonist eventually cancels his engagement to his wealthy and worldly financee in favor of his more seductive secretary. Even at a remove of more than forty five years, one can see that the protagonist succeeds because he rejects cultural expectations in favor of his personal desires. Once he acknowledges and acts on his true desires he is no longer listless or despondent. Although one cannot know how many Playboy readers were in a similar situation or how many readers would act according to the values espoused, it is possible to infer from Black's "Second Persona" that the rhetor's ideal audience would consist of such men. One's relationship with others and society was cleverly managed by Playboy's Fiction. Usually the protagonist simply circumvented social conventions by various kinds of subterfuge or used social sanctions to persuade others to permit him his pleasures. One example of the latter technique is found in "The 8th tale of the 8th day", from Boccaccio's Decameron, wherein one husband discovering that his friend has had sex with his wife persuades the friend's wife that she has an obligation to have sex with him (Vol. I). The conclusion of the story after the first husband has sex with his friend's wife asserts that the lack of
sexual jealousy and bitterness enables both men and women to be happy:

"Zeppa [the husband cuckolded first] we are even and it is well. As dearest friends, we have shared all things but our wives -- and now we have these too, in common."

Zeppa agreed, and all dined together in the most peaceful way imaginable. And from that time on, each of the ladies had two husbands and each of the men two wives.

Playboy’s Fiction generally envisions the ideal consequences of its values as an increase in pleasure and social harmony. Social relations in this example for Playboy’s ideal audience are only improved by adhering to the values espoused. The second volume of Playboy contains a pictorial reinforcement of this theme. In a Pictorial section entitled “at home with DIENES”, readers see a picture of a nude woman who turns her head to look at the camera/reader (Vol. II). The model’s nudity is associated with a domestic scene by its juxtaposition with the title. However, there is no suggestion of either male possessiveness or female shyness. In the accompanying prose, Hefner indicates his approval of Dienes modern attitudes towards sexuality:

Some say you can judge a man by the way he furnishes his home. If that’s true, Andre de Dienes is just about the most interesting guy we’ve ever heard tell about. ....We’ve got to admit we approve of the decor and we’d like to furnish our own apartment in a similar style if Andre will just send us the names and phone numbers

Vol. II, 44.

There is no suggestion that this woman is Dienes wife or even the only woman in his domicile. Furthermore, both the model herself and Hefner’s text suggest that “interesting” guys or playboys know no jealousy. This visual element seems to reinscribe the masculine ideals of Playboy’s Fiction. Obviously traditional male values such as
sexual jealousy and possessiveness play no part in either Dienes or Hefner's lives. Other stories like "The Queen and the Stableboy", in the May 1954 issue, argue that unenlightened types like the King (another cuckolded husband) be gotten around by duplicity. *Playboy's* Fiction presented to its ideal audience two strategies for avoiding unpleasant consequences of the pursuit of pleasure: honesty for the enlightened and duplicity for the unenlightened. The final element of Fisher's consequence question, the process of rhetorical transaction is affected by the adoption of these fictional values because while there is a certain kind of logic to the values espoused, it seems that *Playboy's* Fiction also advocates deceiving those who do not subscribe to the *Playboy* ideology. This particular stance abrogates the traditional rhetorical appeal of "ethos". However, the ideal audience inferred, via Black, from *Playboy's* discourse was not a group of classically trained rhetoricians, but the typical white American male who would understand and accept the necessity for occasional deception.

3.4 Rhetorical Goals and Appeals

Thus far this chapter has examined two of three research questions about *Playboy's* Fiction: its sources and its rhetorical strategies. Finally the study's third research question is to ascertain what goal *Playboy's* Fiction attempted to achieve and why its vision was so popular. This will be done by comparing *Playboy's* model of ideal masculinity to Virginia Kidd's analysis of the sex roles prevalent in other popular magazines of the era, which she labels Vision I.

Vision I, according to Kidd, "dominated the journals in the 1950s and early 1960s and continues to be operative today [1974]" (267). Vision I's popularity was based on
the fact that "[T]he single standard gave clear meaning to behavior" (268). This fact meant that readers had an infallible guide to an ever-changing world; they could simply apply the single standard of Vision I and evaluate all behavior as either right or wrong, moral or immoral, normal or abnormal. Furthermore, Vision I's single standard was based on "social norms which praised selflessness, absence of open confrontation, and strategic interaction as positive relationship behavior" (Kidd, 270). Although Kidd was writing long before McGee, it is apparent that she was identifying the same phenomenon: Vision I was successful because it clearly reflected the doxa of its era. Vision I dramas also presented males as having a "greater sex drive" than females, so sex is more important to male happiness (Kidd, 268). Thus the Vision I "image of woman as the passive homemaker and man as the aggressive breadwinner" was prevalent (Kidd, 268). Vision I was firmly grounded in the doxa of its era and consisted of four key elements:

1. Its simplicity as an authoritative guide for interpreting behavior.

2. Its congruency with the social norms of self-sacrifice and practical considerations.

3. Its assertion that males are naturally more sexual and aggressive than females.

4. Its essentialism, with various experts asserting that this state of affairs is eternal.

in Kidd 266-270.

This extrapolation of the key elements from Kidd's article on advice in popular journals of the era provides a clear explanation of the popularity of Playboy's model of masculinity because it allows one to see precisely what elements of the prevailing doxa of

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other journals *Playboy* challenged and which elements it retained. *Playboy*’s Fiction maintained the authoritative element of Kidd’s Vision I. Most of the stories in *Playboy* leave the reader in no doubt as to the desirability of certain actions, or the identity of the hero or of the villain. *Playboy*’s fictional universe had moral absolutes. Readers were encouraged to identify with the usually creative, rational, pleasure seeking protagonist. Conversely, dutiful conformists were usually victims of their own inadequacies. Behavior in *Playboy*’s Fiction was judged according to the successful attainment of clearly defined masculine goals: freedom, success, and pleasure.

*Playboy*’s Fiction may not have proposed exactly the same criteria for the authoritative interpretation of behavior as Kidd's Vision I, but it did present an equally authoritative interpretive paradigm for its readers. It also based its authority on similar grounds to Vision I. As noted above, although the Kinsey Report has since been discredited as an accurate scientific survey, it was the most popular, and scientifically credible study of male sexuality available in the fifties. *Playboy*’s Fiction reflected a very narrow heterosexual selection of Kinsey's data. While completely ignoring the more outre aspects of male sexuality for 1950s America (like homosexuality, bestiality, and masturbation), *Playboy*’s Fiction argued that males' heterosexual desire was essential as proven by the culturally endorsed scientific studies of Kinsey. This essentialist argument is implicit in the similarities of fictional texts which come from both the modern and ancient times. So while *Playboy*’s Fiction may challenge the content of male sex roles (1) and the different levels of sexual desire in men and women (4) it replicates the function of these criteria by providing its readers with an authoritative interpretive
paradigm and a scientifically endorsed essentialist world view. In other words, Playboy's Fiction replicates the simplicity of sex roles, but inverts the criteria for interpreting behavior (more sex is better and the means of acquiring it are irrelevant) and is equally essentialist in its construction of sexuality, but states that both men and women have always been highly sexed.

The second and third elements of Vision I's popularity are only partially challenged by Playboy's Fiction. This category was completely congruent with the prevailing social norm Kidd identifies of "practical considerations". Hefner did not advocate confrontation with social norms or institutions, but rather emphasized the protagonists' circumvention of those customs which impede his acquisition of the desired goal. What Playboy did challenge was Vision I's social norm of "self-sacrifice". Self-sacrifice or denying one's desires was usually depicted as stupidity or had negative consequences. The shift from element three in Vision I to the Playboy model of masculinity was only partial. In a related move Playboy retained the more aggressive male, but implicitly denied that female sexual desire was inherently lesser than the male's. While females in Playboy's Fiction were rarely the sexual aggressors, numerous stories depicted the female as having a larger sexual appetite than the male. In the story from Boccaccio's Decameron "Putting the Devil Back in Hell", for example, the monk who first seduces the innocent young girl is completely exhausted by her desire. Sexual desire, at least implicitly and often explicitly, in Playboy's Fiction is equally present and equally essential in both males and females.
3.5 Conclusion

Playboy’s Fiction was rhetorically appealing because it replicated the structure and function of Kidd’s Vision I, but challenged the content of Vision I which served to constrain male behavior. Considering that Playboy was intended for a male audience, its popularity should come as no surprise. Basically, it gave male readers the permission to do what they were already doing or wanted to do. Furthermore by replicating the interpretive function of the traditional guide to behavior contained in Kidd’s Vision I, Playboy provided an alternative authority. By using classical stories and famous writers or texts as its source, Playboy provided a coherent and respectable version of masculine behavior that encouraged the unrestrained pursuit of pleasure.

The next chapter will examine Playboy’s Humor category using the same three research questions. It will analyze the sources of Playboy’s Humor, its rhetorical strategies, and its goals and appeals. Once again Kidd’s Vision I and Kinsey’s research will be used as guides to the dominant ideals of the period. Merrill, Weyr, and Miller will be used to provide context, especially insights into generic 50s magazine culture.
CHAPTER 4

PLAYBOY'S HUMOR

4.1 Introduction

This chapter will examine the humor section of Playboy's first year. Although this category was reduced from Playboy's broader definition to just ink drawings and the one page "Party Jokes" for objective categorization, it is still the second largest category examined in this study. Over one-fifth (more than 106 pages of 502, Fig. 2) of Playboy's text in its first year was humor. While some readers may not see humor as either rhetorical or ideological, Weyr suggests that humor, especially Playboy style, can be both:

some of the flavor that marked the early Playboy was of a college humor magazine – a little zany, irreverent, and terribly know-it-all, especially about sex. And because it was so knowing about women and how to bed them, it became an organ of rebellion, at times, of political rebellion.

Obviously, if Playboy's humor could cause a "rebellion" then it was both rhetorical and ideological. Like Playboy's Fiction, its Humor addresses an almost entirely male audience. Therefore the only rebellion that Playboy's Humor section could foster would be one that originated with men. This chapter will examine: the sources of Playboy's Humor, its rhetorical strategies, and its goals.

4.2 Sources

In the first year of publication, as defined by this study, Playboy's Humor was almost entirely created by the triumvirate of Hefner, Art Paul, and Ray Russell. The reason for
this small talent pool was financial. However, all three men had worked for other popular magazines of the era and consequently understood both the appeal and the limitations of other magazines' humor. Hefner, as previously noted, had worked for Esquire magazine as a copywriter, but according to Miller, his first independent publishing venture was a book of cartoons entitled That Toddlin' Town: A Rowdy Burlesque of Chicago Manners and Morals in 1950 (26). This book was a precursor of the humorous ink drawings with one line of text which became a Playboy mainstay in its first year and still are in 1999. Specific artistic influences included Leroy Neiman, a co-worker at the time, and Hefner's favorite artists from Esquire's early days Alberto Vargas and George Petty (Miller, 26 & 27). While Miller disparages Hefner's work in this early text, the example he provides clearly shows the connection between Hefner's first text and Playboy's humorous cartoons:

The cartoons were crudely drawn and not particularly subtle (one man to another, passing a girl with her skirt blown up around her waist revealing her garters: "I've really been looking forward to this chance to see the Windy City")

26.

Playboy's very first cartoon shows two scantily clad, voluptuous, young women. One holds an open diary and a fountain pen with the caption: "Jeannie -- what's the past tense of virgin?" (Vol. I, 9). Hefner's debt to Esquire for his cartoon style was noted by other critics as well. The Chicago Tribune called That Toddlin' Town "an irreverent satire...with a collection of drawings that look like the kind Esquire might judge too racy
for their readers" (in Miller, 27). Merrill makes the same point even more explicit:

It didn't take much analysis to see that the first issue of Playboy...was copied from Esquire. Playboy had a page of party jokes just like the "Goldbricking with Esquire" feature that magazine carried during World War II; there were sexy cartoons based on the Kinsey Report reminiscent of Esquire's days before the "New Language"

252.

Art Paul was the fledgling magazine's first art director. He had graduated from the Illinois Institute of Design and set up his own studio in Chicago (Miller, 36). This fact gave Playboy an essential element: a professional look. Ray Russell also had professional experience. He was a staff writer for the Walgreen Drug Store Chain house organ and a freelance writer who had sold a couple of pieces to Esquire (Miller, 22).

However, Paul, Russell, and Hefner were young, under thirty in 1953. Their combination of varied professional experience and youthful idealism is apparent in Paul's assessment of the state of magazine illustration in the 1950s:

"There was a tremendous look-alike quality that disturbed me. Illustrations were all the same, which was understandable since they all came out of that tight New York community.... "I wanted to identify with a fresh feeling in design and do exciting illustrations. People thought my things were exciting but wouldn't buy them because they feared the decision makers wouldn't" in Weyr, 14.

Russell agreed noting that he took the job with Hefner to get "real editorial experience" (Weyr, 22). So while even Hefner admits that his magazine was the "'son of Esquire" he argues that the "basic premise was new, and you did not find any social sexual values in Esquire" (in Weyr, 8). Playboy's Humor basically adapted the format or style of Esquire's early days, especially the bawdy World War II style, but it challenged the increasingly conservative content of Esquire with its own brand of irreverence.
Irreverence, the term used by numerous critics above, implies that Playboy's Humor was, in McGee's terms, challenging the prevailing doxa of the 1950's.

4.3 Rhetorical Strategies

Fisher's narrative paradigm is a useful tool for a rhetorical analysis because humor, to be effective, is based on an interpretation of cultural norms or a story. Readers unfamiliar with a particular culture, even those only estranged by time, are less apt to "get" the joke or understand the underlying issues. Therefore this study will examine Playboy's Humor category using Fisher's two principles of narrative probability and fidelity. Narrative probability refers to an artifact's internal validity. One can assess the level of narrative probability an artifact possesses by considering whether: it makes a coherent argument (structural coherence); it makes an argument that meets the opposition (material coherence); and it makes an argument that provides consistent characters (characterological coherence). As noted in Chapter Three, structural coherence is probably the most important question because a high level of structural coherence almost presupposes a high level of the other two kinds.

Only two kinds of humor are included in this study's humor category: the recurring one page collection of jokes called "Playboy's Party Jokes", and the numerous ink drawings with a one line caption underneath. The scope of this study does not allow an analysis of every instance of humor in Playboy's first ten issues, (there are 215 individual instances of humor even with this study's narrowed focus) but it will examine samples from every issue. The very first issue of Playboy sets the tone for "Playboy's Party
Jokes. Out of eight individual jokes, despite various situations and characters, seven were concerned with sex and society's attitudes towards it. For example the very first "Party Joke" satirizes male gullibility and sex as a marketing strategy:

Crazy Charlie, the used car dealer, was out to break all sales records with his "like new" models. A large sign in his window announced "A Blonde Free With Each Car." A delighted young wolf plunked down his cash and hot with anticipation, drove his newly won blonde out into the country. He parked, gave her a couple of preliminary kisses, and whispered a suggestion in her ear. She shook her head, smiled, and said, "You got that when you bought this car."


The reader must have a familiarity with social norms and linguistic traditions to understand this joke. Specifically he must know that: used car salesman are unscrupulous, blondes are considered to be more sexually desirable than other women, merchants of all kinds use sexual enticements to sell their mundane products, wolf means a sexually predatory man in this context, and the word "screw", which is not even present in the text, can refer to both sexual intercourse and losing on a financial transaction. If a reader does not possess these linguistic/cultural competencies then the humor is absent. However, since the joke still works forty five years later one can assume that male readers in the 1950s understood the joke and could fill in the textually absent punch line. This particular joke argues, in an implicit manner, that some men are victimized financially by their inherent sexual desire which is transformed into stupidity. Readers can feel superior to the young "wolf" because he has allowed his desire to impair his rationality. Sexual desire must be subordinated to rationality if one does not want to be victimized financially. This argument is present throughout the humor of
Plavbov’s first ten issues. In the July issue the same argument was presented in the ink drawing format. Once again money and sex were the themes. A dumpy little man in a pork pie hat with both arms full of groceries is walking through a sleazy alley and looking in a window. A voluptuous young woman, marked as a prostitute by the cigarette dangling from her mouth, her fishnet stockings, and bored expression, is sitting on a stoop right next to the window. The caption underneath reads "No thanks -- just looking." (Vol. VIII, 25). This commonplace response to other kinds of sales people underscores the point that sex is not romantic bliss, but often a purely financial transaction which requires that the buyer beware. In other cartoons, gifts often replace cash in the transactional process and women are vulnerable too. When the woman is talking her desire is more often for cash, career advancement, or expensive gifts. She trades sex for one of the above inducements. However, as one cartoon demonstrates, it is still a case of caveat emptor. In the February issue there is a two-page cartoon showing two beautiful young women in their bras and panties with movie cameras in the background. The caption underneath is "He promised me an important part in the picture, then I ended up on the cutting room floor." (Vol. III, 30-31). The double entendre of "cutting room floor" suggests that the young starlet both had sex with the unseen producer and then was edited out of the film. Whether men or women, Playboy’s Humor suggests that our rational abilities are often overwhelmed by our desires. However, the exceptions, both male and female, are valorized by Playboy. In the August issue one Party Joke functions solely through the husband and wife’s rational/financial
triumph over desire:

Coming home unexpectedly, the husband found his wife in bed with a naked man. He produced a pistol from a dresser drawer and was about to shoot the interloper when his wife pleaded,

"Don't, don't! Who do you think bought us that house in the country, that beautiful Cadillac, my sable wrap?"

"Are you the man?" asked the husband. The unclothed man nodded. "Then get your clothes on" roared the husband, "you wanna catch cold?"

Vol. IX, 23.

This example is funny because it invokes the social norm of vengeance for female sexual infidelity, then radically overturns it by having the wronged husband become inordinately solicitous of the stranger's health. While the husband's change of heart is obviously exaggerated for a humorous effect, the simple inversion of an accepted social norm questions the rationality of following social norms in sexual behavior and emphasizes the transactional nature of sexual relations.

In a complementary argument Playboy's Humor also suggested that sex was pervasive, both men and women enjoyed it. In the very first issue of Playboy there is a "Party Joke" which combines both themes:

The judge looked down at the sweet young thing. "You claim that the defendant stole your money from your stocking?" he asked.

"That's right, your honor, she answered.

"Well why didn't you resist?" the judge asked.

The girl blushed and lowered her eyes. "I didn't know he was after my money, your honor," she said.


The implicit argument in this joke is that even a "sweet young thing" enjoys sex, although she is aware enough of the social norms to blush when she has to indirectly
admit that the defendant had her permission to go into her stocking. Furthermore, her desire for sex or sexual contact caused her to lose money. Both predominant themes in Playboy are present in this one example. The two arguments complement each other. If sex is a natural and pervasive transaction, then readers should approach the transaction with the same rationality as all other transactions according to the implicit argument in Playboy's Humor.

Thus far in this chapter's analysis Playboy's Humor category presents an argument that is structurally coherent. But there is one discordant note about the pervasiveness of sexual desire in Playboy's Humor. While not present in a majority of cases, a significant minority of the wives and mothers presented seem to lack sexual desire. Sexual desire seems prevalent amongst all men of every age and station, but only present in young beautiful women. The September issue has a cartoon which illustrates the point. A mother in curlers and an old robe meets her beautiful young daughter at the door as a car pulls away from the house. The caption underneath reads "'Sorry I'm late, mamma -- my zipper stuck' " (Vol. X, 44). In one way this cartoon merely supports the consistency of Playboy's argument that sex was natural and practical considerations affected the process. However, it is also one of the few presentations of clear disapproval of sexual desire; the whole point of a parental curfew is to prevent sexual intercourse. It is also significant that the artist illustrates parental disapproval through the frumpy maternal figure. Obviously, having the father at the door would contradict Playboy's position that males are or should be enlightened enough to condone or tolerate all sexual desire.
Another more bawdy example of the wife's lack of desire is in the "Marilyn" issue:

A young man met his ex-wife at a party and after a few drinks, he suggested that they have another try at marriage.
"Over my dead body," she sneered.
He downed his drink and replied, "I see you haven't changed a bit."

The humor in this example depends on the transformation of "over my dead body". The woman means it as an emphatic refusal, but the man turns it into a derogatory comment on her lack of sexual desire. This particular inconsistency, the bifurcation of female desire, has been noted by other critics of Playboy including Michael Kimmel. Kimmel argues that the inconsistent portrayal of women, wherein some desire sex as much as men and some actively discourage sex, undermines Hefner's entire liberatory purpose. (Manhood in America). The apparent lack of structural coherence in Playboy’s Humor may be resolved in a fuller understanding of Fisher's criteria for material and characterological coherence.

Material coherence, as defined by Fisher, refers to how well the arguments presented incorporate or meet oppositional discourses (47). In narrative terms the arguments one supports become the "heroes" and opposing discourses become the "villains". Therefore the presence of women who actively discourage sex was not a lack of structural coherence, but an incorporation of oppositional discourses which created a more dramatic narrative. The presence of ideological villains also provided a reality base for readers and a way for them to evaluate the nominal hero's responses. In the January issue there was a cartoon which afforded an excellent example of competing ideologies

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personalized for dramatic and humorous effect. A young man and woman are sitting together on a couch with a window behind them which shows a big city night time skyline. The woman is beautiful, blonde, and posed seductively with one hand running through her hair. The man is obviously nervous: he is wearing glasses, his tie is still tightly knotted, and both hands are resting on his knees. After what has been an evening out on the town followed by a return to her ultra-modern apartment the caption underneath reads "'It's nice of you to ask me Miss Carter -- but without pajamas, a toothbrush or anything, I don't see how I could possibly stay the night'" (Vol. II, 11).

The woman fits the heroic mold for Playboy's Humor; she is modern, beautiful, and open about her sexual desire. The man on the other hand is a emblem of repressed sexuality. He misunderstands the true, in the Playboy world, nature of the invitation to "Stay the night". The villain, however, was not the man, but the ideology that has repressed his sexual instincts so completely that he could not act appropriately, at least for Playboy's ideal audience. Proponents of traditional sexual morality would have found nothing funny about this cartoon and would have seen the man as heroically resisting temptation. The woman would be seen as either a "fallen" woman or an evil temptress. But for Playboy's ideal audience the reasons the man gave for not staying the night would have been instantly recognizable as polite social norms and the man would be evaluated as a pathetic victim of those norms.

Villainous social norms were also embodied in the person of the domineering wife in a cartoon from the March issue. This cartoon has no caption, merely a drawing of a husband and his wife in a crowded theater where everyone is watching the screen with
3-D glasses. On the screen are two buxom females in low cut dresses kicking up their legs. All the other male patrons are avidly watching the screen, but the wife is glaring at her husband as she snatches his 3-D glasses off his face (Vol. V, 11). The wife’s disapproval of her husband's innocent pleasure was a personification of social norms. Interestingly, the wife was drawn as significantly larger than her husband and as physically unattractive. These facts about the visual portrayal of the disapproving wives/mothers were consistent throughout Playboy’s Humor. So at least in Playboy’s Humor section there is structural coherence because the women who lack and/or disapprove of sexual desire are always marked as dramatic "villains" by their size and lack of physical beauty. These techniques of personifying values and indicating approved and disapproved values by the presence or lack of physical beauty are standard for many literary genres. Furthermore the inclusion of oppositional discourses, whether personified or not, increases the level of material coherence without really lowering the level of structural coherence. The ideal audience for Playboy’s Humor receives a consistent argument tempered by a modest dose of realistic opposition. What Kimmel and others do not understand when they criticize Playboy for its inconsistent portrayal of women is material coherence. Fisher explicitly states that rhetorical efficacy requires a response to competing discourses. In Playboy’s Humor there is a high degree of material coherence, embodied in the female who is antagonistic to any forms of sexual desire, but those sanctioned by the prevailing social norms of monogamy and domesticity.

Fisher’s third question for narrative probability is characterological coherence. This question concerns the predictability of characters. Essentially there were only two kinds
of characters in Playboy's Humor, men and women. Furthermore, the text only presents readers with two variations on men and two variations on women. Male characters in this category are all essentially sexual, but one type of male is sexually liberated and the other is not. As noted above, in the section on material coherence sexually liberated males are the heroes of the text's humorous narratives, while sexually repressed males are portrayed as the victims of social norms. From the Playboy perspective the young man who misunderstands the true nature of the invitation from a beautiful young lady to "stay the night" was merely a victim of repressive social norms (Vol. II, 11). His essential sexual desire is not questioned, merely the appropriateness of his response. All men were characterized as possessing an essential sexual desire. Any humorous appeal this drawing possesses is dependent on the readers' assumption that all men desire sex. Without that basic frame of reference in the readers' minds the ink drawing ceases to be humorous.

Female characters in Playboy's Humor also play a bifurcated role in the humorous narratives. However, the difference here is a bit deeper than between the two types of men. Females are either willing participants in sexuality or overtly antagonistic to sex. However, once again these two types of females are necessary for material coherence. Also the two types were clearly marked in the text. The cooperative type of female who has sexual desires of her own and is willing to participate in the competitive, transactional, world of male sexuality was always depicted as young and beautiful. The women in Playboy's Humor who were antagonistic to sexual desire were always depicted as large, matronly, women. Readers would have known from the visual depiction of
females what kind of attitude they would have possessed. Despite the dual nature of both the male and female characters in Playboy’s Humor this study concludes that it possesses a high degree of characterological coherence because: 1. the duality is so simple; 2. the clear visual indicators of the divisions; and 3. the rhetorical necessity of the dual depictions of both men and women.

Therefore, despite perceived inconsistencies by other critics, this study concludes that Playboy’s Humor possesses a high level of narrative probability. Any deviations from either structural or characterological coherence in this category serve to create the equally important function of material coherence.

However, three questions remain to determine narrative fidelity. This study's modified version of Fisher’s narrative fidelity examines the fit between the high internal consistency of the text (narrative probability) and the relevance of the text to the issues at hand, the consistency of the text's values to those already held by its readers, and the consequences of adopting the text's values.

The first question to be examined is the one of relevance. As noted in Chapter Three, Playboy limits its mission to "entertainment" and instruction to males on the pursuit of pleasure (Vol. 1, 3). Playboy’s Humor, even when as severely circumscribed as by this study's definition, is entertaining. The primary topic of Playboy's jokes and cartoons was sex. Secondary topics included: finances, drinking, and sports. All these topics were traditionally supposed to entertain men and were prevalent in other popular journals of the time, especially Esquire (Merrill). However, beyond the techniques of humor, exaggeration, parody, and puns to entertain its readers, Playboy’s Humor possess some
serious didactic instructions for males pursuing pleasure. The first relevant lesson on the pursuit of pleasure, and certainly the one for which Playboy as a whole has been most vilified, was that sex was a transaction wherein women can be persuaded to exchange sex for some kind of financial gain. This lesson is apparent in Playboy’s recurring use of the "casting couch" mentality:

A director was interviewing a pretty young actress who had just arrived in Hollywood from the east. After the usual questions, he looked her up and down and asked, "Are you a virgin?"

She nodded, then realizing a job might hinge on her answer, she added, "But I'm not a fanatic about it!"


Even more blatant examples of the proposition that sex can be bought or rented are in the July issue:

"I'm sorry, George," she said, "I can never learn to love you."
"Gee that's too bad," said George, "and after I'd saved nearly ten grand too."
"Give me one more lesson"

&

"I'm awfully sorry, miss," said the store clerk "but this five dollar bill is counterfeit."
"Damn it," she exclaimed, "I've been seduced."

Vol. VIII, 29.

These two examples posit females as mercenary creatures willing to trade sex for money. The second one is funny because it shows that even the most mercenary women can be fooled. Once again the transactional nature of sex is emphasized, along with the cleverness and calculation of both sexes. However, not all the women in Playboy's Humor were mercenary: some just matched essential male desire with their own. This kind of woman is the ideal type in Playboy's Humor. In the May issue there is a cartoon
which argues that even wives have sexual desires to match their husbands’. A man and
his wife are in a huge canopied bed together and their little boy is in a crib beside them.
The little boy is wide awake, sitting up, with a big smile on his face watching his mom
and dad. Both the man and woman are looking in the child’s direction with frustrated
expressions on their faces. And the caption underneath reads: "'Sedgewick, will you
please go to sleep?" (Vol. VI, 47). The equality of male and female desire is indicated
by the reader’s inability to tell which character is speaking.

The second relevant lesson contained in *Playboy*’s Humor was that male hierarchy is
determined by the relative levels of sophistication about sexual matters. In the June issue
there is a Party Joke in which one man finds out that his wife is sleeping with another
man. Determined to be sophisticated and businesslike about the matter, he dictates a
letter to his secretary:

"Sir: It has been called to my attention that for some time now you have been
carrying on an affair with my wife. So that we can settle this matter intelligently,
please see me in my office at 3 P.M. on Friday."

However, the man’s rival is only "amused" by the husband’s sophistication and goes one
better dictating a letter to his secretary:

"Dear Sir: Received your circular letter this morning. You are advised that I
will attend the scheduled conference on time."

Vol. VII, 34.

The key words in the above quotation are "circular" and "conference" because they imply
that the husband’s wife has been having sex with numerous men. Furthermore, it mocks
the husband’s attempt at being sophisticated. *Playboy*’s readers would have recognized
that the second man has "topped" the husband for sexual success and level of sophistication. Another example of Playboy Humor's construction of male hierarchy is contained in a cartoon from the September issue. In fact this cartoon seems to be a visual and textual embodiment of the Playboy male hierarchy. There are three people in the drawing: an obviously rich, sophisticated, 30ish man in a tuxedo; a beautiful young woman dressed in an almost see through gown that emphasizes her breasts; and a younger man, with glasses, wearing a regular business suit. The woman has an expression of boredom and frustration; the older man is glaring at the younger man; and the younger man has a big hopeful smile on his face. The entire situation is brought into focus by the caption which reads: "Now that you've chosen between us, Eileen, do you mind if I watch?" (Vol. X, 12). The relevance to the pursuit of pleasure should be obvious. The older more sophisticated, richer man wins the transactional battle for the woman. It is worth noting that the figure of the older man bears a striking resemblance to Hefner. Playboy's Humor meets Fisher's "relevance" criterion for effective rhetoric. It constantly advocates values that are "appropriate to the nature of the decision that the message bears upon" (Fisher, 109). Furthermore, this category creates a consistent hierarchy amongst males; men who can circumvent social norms restricting sexuality are heroic, while those who cannot are either ideological victims or losers in a homosocial struggle. Although males are almost never present in the Pictorial sections of Playboy, when they are it is clear that males are superior to women and some males are superior to other males. One example of this technique is Hefner's inclusion of a Hiller's photographic recreation of a sixteenth century "hysterectomy". In this photograph the
naked woman is the patient and three men are holding her down while the “surgeon” performs the work (Vol. VI, 39). While only the female patient’s breasts are visible, her head is thrown back, mouth open, in what is obviously a pseudo-sexual position. However, the three male assistants are only holding her for the dominant male. In fact, the three lower status males do not even seem to be looking at the female patient.

Although this section purports to be a historical recreation, one can clearly see the sexual imagery at work. The female figure’s upthrust breasts, out-flung arms, open mouth, and closed eyes all mimic idealized sexual response. A response to the dominant male, the surgeon. This picture is not an historical recreation, but an indicator of masculine control over female sexuality. Once again the traditional markers of female sexuality are used to indicate the superior status of the idealized male.

While this study cannot directly answer the question of consistency due to its historical nature, it can compare the values of Playboy’s Humor to the values espoused in other popular magazines of the period. The didactic, argumentative nature of Playboy’s Humor suggests that it is critiquing some of the social values prevalent in the 1950s. If one remembers Kidd’s Vision I and what numerous historians have said about 1950s domesticity, it is obvious that Playboy’s Humor was proposing a revolution for male behavior. Kidd asserts that the popular journals of the era argued that "a genuine desire to create happiness for others was [combined with] the promise that those who brought such kindliness would be rewarded" (269). The humor section of Playboy posits a much more competitive world, at least for males. Playboy’s ideal reader would have been laughing at the ineptness of one male character or admiring the cleverness of
another. In *Playboy*'s Humor even female characters are expected to take care of themselves, chivalry is truly dead. As Gail Dines points out the pursuit of sexual pleasure is closely identified with the principles of the marketplace and "[N]owhere is the combination of sex and status more clear than in the *Playboy* cartoons" (256). So while Hefner may have challenged the values already held by his readers about interpersonal relationships (as indicated by Kidd's survey of popular journal advice), he only replaced them with the common values of the marketplace. *Playboy*’s values may have been inconsistent with the generally accepted social norms for romantic relationships, but they were completely consistent with the more realistic norms of the primarily homosocial business world. Dines calls this process "commodifying sex" and argues that it accounts for much of *Playboy*’s success (257).

The final question this study uses from Fisher's conception of "narrative fidelity" is consequence. The consequence question can be translated as changes in the reader's self concept, behavior, relationships, or rhetorical transactions due to adopting the values contained by the text. While this study cannot assess the real world consequences of *Playboy*’s readers adopting its values, it is possible to assess what consequences were intended. Hefner actually argues that his magazine was not espousing values different from those already held by its readers:

"for the first time in print, they [readers] found expressed what they believed in and weren't finding anywhere else. No other publication was expressing that point of view which was the same as you'd get discussing these things...in a college dorm" in Weyr, 26.

In other words, Hefner was validating his constituency as well as guiding it. He believed
that his vision of sexual activity lessened the difference between the ideal interpersonal relationship portrayed in other popular journals and what Kinsey had "discovered" was typical male behavior. Therefore the ideal consequences for males' self concept would be to lessen the dissonance between the social norms identified by Kidd's Vision I and actual male behavior as identified by Kinsey.

However, the text of Playboy's Humor cannot be construed in such a positive manner even for the ideal consequences with reference to relationships and rhetorical transactions. Playboy's Humor primarily denigrated any lasting, loving relationship by emphasizing the temporary and transactional nature of sexual relationships. The competitive nature of transactions often seemed to negate friendly relations between men. The March issue contains a Party Joke which is paradigmatic of male competition:

Two actors pretend friendship for each other, but really hate each other as:

...one, with sudden inspiration ran his hand over the other's bald head, and exclaimed "By God, Fred, that feels just like my wife's derriere!"

The other ran his own hand over his head, and nonchalantly retorted: "Well I'll be damned Jim, so it does, so it does!"

Vol. IV, 19

In this instance, the wife becomes merely a "marker" in the males' competition. The brutal logic of the financial world, male competition, also taints the following example:

"That man made love to me judge" said the plaintiff in the breach of promise suit. "He promised to marry me, and then he married another woman. He broke my heart and I want $10,000".

She got it.
The next case was a damage suit brought by a woman who had been run over by an automobile and had three ribs broken. She was awarded $300.

Moral: Don't break their hearts, kick them in the ribs

Vol. IV, 19.
The rhetorical message is unusually blatant. The joke overtly recommends applying financial principles to relationships. It also denigrates women and appears to advocate violence against women. Surely readers were not supposed to take the entire "Moral" seriously, but the essential argument was that relationships are all about money: a man's money. The consequences intended for Hefner's ideal audience as inferred from Playboy's Humor seem to be: a reduction of the dissonance between men's desires and their actual behavior, and an increased efficacy in attaining sexual desires by applying the principles of the marketplace to romantic relationships. The objectification of women is also apparent in the Pictorial category as numerous feminist critics have noted. However, the important issue in this study is what function the pictorials serve for constructing an ideal masculine sexuality. One centerfold from the May issue of Playboy seems to crystallize the central tenet of male sexual success. This example is no different than numerous other pictures objectifying women, except for the chosen background. The nude female model is posed on an enormous tiger skin rug (Vol. VI, 26 & 27). The tiger skin was a symbol of wealth and status in America. Most men would never own a tiger skin rug, just as they would never "own" the beautiful naked model on top of it. Thus the playboy inferred from the pictorial is indelibly associated with extreme wealth and its attendant social status. By placing the object of male desire on such an obvious marker of wealth and status, Hefner clearly indicates the parameters of his male hierarchy.
4.4 Rhetorical Goals and Appeals

Finally, this chapter will examine the third research question: What are the goals of *Playboy*’s Humor and why was it so popular? Both parts of this question can be answered by comparing *Playboy*’s Humor category to other popular magazines summarized in Kidd’s Vision I. Kidd argues that Vision I was so popular because: (1) it created an authoritative interpretive paradigm for sex behavior; (2) it encouraged the behavioral norms of self-sacrifice and practical considerations; (3) it reflected the social belief that men were more sexual than women; and (4) it asserted via scientific “experts” that current sexual norms were essential qualities for both males and females (266-271).

*Playboy*’s Humor substantially reflects the four key elements of Kidd’s Vision I. The high level of narrative probability in both the Party Jokes and the various cartoons creates an aura of authority for *Playboy*’s interpretive code of sexual behavior. It also encouraged the social norm of practical considerations such as finances and legal issues for men and women. Further males were presented as possessing an essential sexuality which generally made them more sexual than women. These similarities between *Playboy*’s Humor and the magazine culture of the era gave the text doxastic force. By replicating the function and format of other popular magazines, Hefner cleverly achieved a kind of superficial credibility by association for his magazine.

However, *Playboy* would not have become the instant success it was unless it challenged some of the traditional elements of other magazines. *Playboy*’s contention with traditional social sexual values was firmly grounded in the "objective" scientific surveys of sexual behavior done by Kinsey and associates. While much of the authority
Playboy's Humor possessed as an interpretive paradigm for sexual behavior came from its narrative probability and fidelity, some came directly from the two Kinsey Reports. The very first issue of Playboy contains a two page collection of ink drawings with captions which mention Kinsey:

Dr. Alfred Kinsey and associates have just completed a very impressive, 1,000 page volume on sex. It's jam packed full of fascinating charts, figures, tables, and graphs and represents nearly five years of exacting, objective research. The drawings on these two pages are on the same subject and represent almost no research whatsoever. Dr. Kinsey makes sex seem very, very serious and oh so scientific. Virgil Franklin Partch II just makes it funny as all hell -- and personally, that's the way we prefer it.


Despite the joking tone above and the overt disclaimer of scientific research, just mentioning Kinsey invokes the objective presentation of sexual behavior. Playboy Humor's presentation of sexuality as a transactional process which should be governed by rationality was supported by the rational approach Kinsey took to his research. So while Playboy’s interpretive paradigm differed from the traditional journals', Hefner clearly undergirded the new content of his paradigm with the latest scientific research. Furthermore, the one major inconsistency noted above in both Playboy Humor's narrative probability and fidelity (the issue of intrinsic female sexuality) was merely a rhetorical explanation of the Kinsey data. According to Kinsey 's data in Sexual Behavior in the Human Female, there was a huge variation amongst females who were sexually active in the incidence of pre-marital coitus (from once in ten weeks to 14 plus times per week) and reaching orgasm (from never to one hundred percent of the time sometimes with multiple orgasms) (288-290). Obviously, there was a huge difference
between different women. Kinsey listed what he felt were the top three factors limiting female pre-marital sexual activity:

1. The sexual unresponsiveness of many younger females
2. The moral tradition of our American culture
3. Lack of experience, and the individual's fear of engaging in an unfamiliar activity.

_The Human Female_, 316.

The first reason Kinsey lists fits the Vision I portrayal of sexuality, but the other two reasons suggest, along with Kinsey's data, that certain women may actually possess more inherent sexual desire than men. This inconsistency is similar to the one noted in _Playboy_'s Humor. Therefore Humor's presentation of females as both highly sexed and lacking sexual desire only reflected current "data". Furthermore, _Playboy_'s assertion that male sexuality is essential and that generally males must compete for females was supported by Kinsey's statement that: "relatively few females have coitus with anything like the regularity that is typical of the male" (_HF_, 289). So while _Playboy_'s Humor supported the traditional assertion that males have a essential and generally higher desire for sex than women, it also included the Kinsey data which reveals that some women have more sexual desire (as measured by orgasmic potential) than men and that sexual desire in women is not essential.

However the most controversial challenge _Playboy_'s Humor presented to traditional principles was that it reduced the pursuit of sexual pleasure to pragmatics. The idealism of "self-sacrifice" is completely eliminated in _Playboy_'s Humor. In fact, self-sacrifice is
portrayed as stupidity or ineptness. Deferential husbands or polite schoolboys are the "butt" of Playboy Humor, the unwitting victims of traditional sexual norms. The amoral, rational, sophisticated, male who uses all his skills to achieve success is the hero.

Playboy’s Humor was popular because it replicated some of the functions of traditional versions of sexuality (providing an authoritative interpretive paradigm with seemingly solid scientific proof) while challenging some of the traditional versions' content (the essentialism of female sexuality and the efficacy of self-sacrifice).

The goal of Playboy’s Humor is congruent with the goal of its fiction: to advocate a new perspective on human sexuality and a new method for achieving male goals. The humor in Playboy uses the traditional journalistic techniques of humor to reveal the transactional, competitive nature of sexuality for both men and women. And for men, Playboy’s Humor completely inverts the ideals of self-sacrifice and self denial for the values of the marketplace. The same attributes that make men successful in the marketplace will also make them successful in their sexual pursuits. Furthermore, Hefner was striving to explode "that safe, tut-tut attitude about sex going on in other books" (in Weyr, 26). Playboy’s Humor was intended to present a more realistic vision of American sexuality.

4.5 Conclusion

This chapter has analyzed Playboy’s humor section, specifically its sources, its rhetorical strategies, and ideological goals. Its sources were primarily the popular journals of the era, especially Esquire. The rhetorical strategies employed possess a high degree of narrative probability and fidelity: the only problem being the inconsistent
portrayal of female sexuality. However, this problem is explained by an examination of the parallel inconsistencies found in Kinsey's *The Human Female* and the rhetorical requirements of material coherence. Furthermore, the logical inconsistency of the female character did not have any impact on *Playboy*'s popularity. Kimmel's argument indicates the division between what Fisher labels "technical" and "narrative" discourse. Technical discourse according to Fisher is "the concept of knowledge that denies a role for values, the separation of logic from everyday discourse, and the privileging of experts and their discourse" (9). Obviously, the narrative of *Playboy*, while not fulfilling the requirements of "technical" discourse, meets the requirements of narrative discourse in that it was acceptable to its audience. The ultimate goals of *Playboy*'s Humor were to demonstrate that sexuality was a transactional and competitive process, very similar to financial competition, and illustrate how a new male hero styled the 'Playboy' achieves his sexual goals. The next chapter will examine *Playboy*'s Cultural Commentary with respect to the same three research questions.
CHAPTER 5

PLAYBOY'S CULTURAL COMMENTARY

5.1 Introduction

This chapter will examine Playboy's cultural commentary. Cultural Commentary is defined as elements of the text that are neither fiction nor humor, but focus on contemporary social issues. Comprising over 96 pages out of Playboy's 502 total, Cultural Commentary is the third largest category in this study and encompasses both textual and visual material (with the exception of nude photographs). This category is more obviously rhetorical than the other categories because the individual authors are overtly persuading readers to adopt a certain perspective. It is also more overtly ideological. While the topics in this category are very diverse they all conform to the Playboy manifesto of providing instruction on typically male leisure activities or providing entertainment (Vol. I, 3). However, although the topics vary from the reasons behind Marilyn Monroe's popularity to an analysis of the tobacco industry, the cultural commentary in Playboy is also a forum for serious discussion of social issues that affect men. Therefore this chapter will examine the sources of Playboy's Cultural Commentary, its rhetorical strategies, and its rhetorical goals and appeal.

5.2 Sources

As with Playboy's Fiction and Humor, its Cultural Commentary reflected the magazine milieu of the 1950s. Playboy commented on the same topics that other men's magazines did: the arts, sports, and business. Merrill emphasizes Playboy's debt to
Esquire arguing that in the famous Marilyn issue Hefner draws almost directly on
Esquire:

there was an article about the big-band leaders, the Dorsey Brothers, that couldn't help but remind readers of the Esquire Jazz Poll...there was an article on gold-digging women, the subject that had inspired hundreds of Esquire cartoons.

Merrill's argument is well founded because virtually all the rest of Playboy's Cultural Commentary in its first year is culled from other magazines and books. Even Hefner admits that "[T]he book was largely reprint material and pictorial features bought from Graphic House....[I]t was pickup stuff" (in Weyr, 25). Readers could find similar articles in the other popular magazines of the era and the quality of those articles was usually superior due to the larger budget of magazines like Time, Look, The New Yorker, and Esquire. As Weyr notes, Playboy did not have an extensive staff or a large budget in its first year; as late as Christmas 1954 only seven people worked at Playboy: "Hefner and his 'sextet' -- Paul, Russell, Sellers, Paczek, Pitner and Pappas" (28). Pitner and Pappas were secretaries, Paul and Paczek took care of illustrations and layouts, while Sellers "acted as general manager" (Miller, 43). Hefner simply could not afford to purchase the talent of established journalists, so he often purchased cheap reprints of articles that had already been published.

A second source of Playboy's Cultural Commentary articles was to purchase photographic reprints and have Hefner or Russell write the text. For example, the famous Marilyn centerfold purchased from the Baumgarth Co. is accompanied by two pages of Hefner's editorial text answering the question "What makes Marilyn?" (Vol. I,
As Weyr notes the actual information was "fan-book material available on every newsstand", but Hefner's prose "radiated the authority of deep conviction" (10). Weyr argues that Hefner's talent was in "counterpunching myth...and rearranging the pieces so that old information sounded new, fresh, vital, important" (9). So the second source of Playboy's Cultural Commentary was common knowledge reworked by Hefner or Russell to seem like original material.

While there were two primary sources for cultural commentary articles in Playboy, one must remember that Hefner either wrote the articles or selected them. However, Hefner's control produced an almost paradoxical quality in Playboy's Cultural Commentary. The articles on sports and art were very traditional, almost conservative, while the articles that discussed sexual matters directly contradicted traditional mores. For example, the first issue of Playboy contains two articles that illustrate the contradictory nature of its Cultural Commentary. The first article, "Miss Gold-Digger", clearly demonstrates Playboy's antagonism towards marriage. The text contains a revolutionary statement: "[T]here's no denying, eliminating alimony would sharply reduce the legalized prostitution now popular among certain segments of our population" (Vol. I, 8). In direct contrast to the doxastic norm of Kidd's Vision I which emphasizes "self-sacrifice", this article argues for self-preservation:

The Pennsylvania legislature has taken the logical stand that a man's duty to support a woman is a part of the marriage contract, and that it ceases when the marriage does.

This article ends with the warning that the gold-digger may be "after the wealthy playboy, but she may also be after you" (Vol. I, 8). The revolutionary nature of this article should be apparent as it characterizes some women as mercenary predators and denigrates the legal system for supporting them with alimony. The allusion to the principles of the marketplace, the notion of marriage as a "contract" wherein the women gives sex and the man money, is implicit in the argument that men should cease giving money when they cease getting sex. Or as Barbara Ehrenreich characterizes Hefner's position, "[T]he issue was money: men made it, women wanted it....To stay free, a man had to stay single" (in Merrill, 259). In direct contrast to the rebellious nature of the "Miss Gold-Digger" article is the conservative sports article in the same issue entitled "The Return of the All-Purpose Back". The University of Illinois supplied the old photos of Red Grange and the text for free. This article celebrates the history of traditional football as played by Red Grange. The issue that makes this topic appropriate for Cultural Commentary was the new NCAA rule that required single platoon play. The writer of this article celebrates the new rule because now "the scouts are searching the high school gridirons of the nation for backs who can not only run and pass -- but kick, tackle, and block passes as well" (Vol. I, 37). The rest of the article is a summation of Red Grange's phenomenal career. It concludes with "the new rule will help football return to the exciting era of the all-around gridiron athlete" (Vol. I, 38). Although Hefner and Russell may be proposing a revolution in sexual matters, their other cultural commentary articles are usually a glorification of traditional values. If Hefner is seen as the primary source for Playboy's Cultural Commentary in that he wrote some articles
and selected all the others, we can clearly see the paradox that Ehrenreich identifies: "Hefner, himself was not a political dissident in any conventional sense, the major intellectual influence in his early life was the Kinsey Report" (in Merrill, 259). The only topic in Playboy’s Cultural Commentary that was not firmly grounded in the doxa of the 1950s was sexual relations. However, this single topic is important because it comprises nineteen of forty-nine articles. Although the sources for the articles on sexual relations and other topics were exactly the same, the selection process reflected the dichotomy present in Hefner. He bought traditional, doxastic articles on sports, business, and art, but he bought the articles on sexual relations which challenged traditional values. Weyr summarizes Hefner’s technique accurately as "an artful blend of innovation and tried-and-true" (8). The "innovation" in Playboy’s Cultural Commentary is primarily a collection of articles that challenged traditional views of sexual relations while the "tried-and-true" is revealed in the essentially conservative articles on other topics, both gleaned primarily from previously published material.

5.3 Rhetorical Strategies in Articles on Sexual Relations

While Fisher’s narrative paradigm, comprised of narrative probability and narrative fidelity, illuminates the rhetorical strategies of Playboy’s Cultural Commentary, the dual nature of this category mandates an extra level of analysis. This study will divide Cultural Commentary into two sections: articles dealing with sexual relations and articles dealing with other topics. The articles that have sexual relations as their theme, or primary focus, will be examined first to ascertain their rhetorical strategies. Then the articles that focus primarily on other issues will be examined to determine their rhetorical
strategies. Using Fisher's narrative paradigm for both sections of Cultural Commentary will enable one to see how, and if, the rhetorical strategies employed in the two sections are similar or different.

Of the forty nine articles in Playboy's Cultural Commentary nineteen articles focus on sexual relations. This plurality of articles on one topic (more than thirty seven percent of all the articles) suggests that the issue of sexual relations was Playboy's primary concern. While this study cannot analyze all nineteen articles on sexual relations, it will examine at least one article from each issue. The method of examination used will be Fisher's narrative paradigm. The first level of analysis will be "narrative probability" which is comprised of structural, material, and characterological coherence. The first question in ascertaining narrative probability is: does the artifact possess structural coherence, or a consistent argument? In the second volume of Playboy there were only three articles designated as cultural commentary and all three have sexual relations as their focus. In typical Playboy fashion, due partly to the financial constraints mentioned above, all three articles are primarily reprints with some commentary by either Hefner or Russell. The three articles are entitled "Playboy goes to an Art Ball" (12), "Lace" (19), and "Playboy's Christmas Present" (36). The most representative text comes from "Playboy's Christmas Present", which shows Bob Hope judging a beauty contest. The editorial comments suggest that Hope is interested in more than judging: "Hope jots notes on his cuff...names, phone numbers" (V. II, 37).
Furthermore, as the editorial voice also notes:

Our judge's choice -- not one, but two delightful Christmas cuties -- a twin package to brighten your holidays. If you have been a good playboy all year, look for them under your tree on Christmas morn. Vol. II, 38.

That feminists criticize Playboy for objectifying women is clearly supported by the language used to describe the beauty contest winners. However, the important issues for this study are the suggestions: that one woman is not enough for one man (the two winners), that women can be purchased like Christmas "packages", and finally that only if "you have been a good playboy" should you expect this kind of present. In other words, the implicit three part argument is that men are naturally more sexual than women, women respond sexually to financial incentives, and that to "get" women, men must adopt the Playboy style as personified by the suave Bob Hope. A pictorial in the April issue makes a similar argument about ideal male sexuality visually. This pictorial contains two photographic images of a nude woman and the Playboy bunny icon (Vol. V, 46 & 47). The bunny represents male sexuality and there is only one bunny for four women. Furthermore, two nude females have been shrunken to fit inside the bunny's eyes. From a visual perspective, the bunny's singularity and greater size suggest a higher level of sexual desire than the nude females. The bunny is also fully dressed in a bow tie, dress shirt, and jacket while the female models are nude. The formality of the bunny's pictorial representation argues for the success, and power, of the "playboy" figure. Just like Hope in an earlier issue, this pictorial presents a suave dominant male figure engaging four subordinated women. The obviously constructed pictorial combination of
drawing and photography posits the same three themes as the Hope article above: higher male sexuality, suave dominant male, and submissive, objectified females.

This tripartite argument is presented again in the February 1954 issue as "Playboy Tours the Hottest Spots in Paris" (37). The playboy in this instance is the late Toulouse Lautrec who, according to the editorial voice "is most famous for his brilliant lithographs of the Moulin Rouge and Folies Bergere" (V. III, 38). Activity that might been seen as sleazy, acquires a rhetorical patina of respectability by associating strip clubs with a famous artist. The naturalism of sexuality is emphasized by stating that "Paris is still a naughty city. Though the houses of prostitution are now legally closed, sex still walks her streets" (V. III, 38). The implication of this sentence is that women are still (and always will be) sexually available for a financial consideration. However, the personification of female sexuality in this editorial is not some nameless streetwalker, or a mere beauty contest winner, but "a single, dusky skinned beauty named Yvonne Menard, billed simply, and quite correctly, as ‘The most beautiful nude in Paris ‘’ (Vol. III, 38). This statement by the anonymous editorial voice makes it seem like he has personally been to see the show. To give the editorial voice even more credibility, a French songwriter, Georges Tabet, is quoted as saying that Menard (in a striking parallel to the first issue's description of Marilyn Monroe) has "got a 'petit quelque chose' a little something that you have to be born with" (Vol. III, 40). The description of Marilyn is "She is natural sex personified" (Vol. I, 17). The editorial voice also expressly notes that these famous clubs spend "hundreds of thousands of dollars" producing shows for their "paying customers" (Vol. III, 38). Obviously, the sexual appetites of men span the
economic range from streetwalkers to Yvonne Menard. The "playboy", though, will be found only in the exclusive, expensive, clubs. The connection between financial transactions and male sexuality is continued in the August issue by an article entitled "A Bump, a Grind, and a Gimmick". This article, which uses reprint photos of famous strippers, is written by Hefner. The article's central argument is presented immediately:

There was a time when a girl could count on an enthusiastic audience by simply peeling down to her birthday suit. Not so today. The modern male is a jaded animal and the show lounge beauties have found it takes a clever idea, device, or gimmick to keep the customers coming back for more.

Vol. IX, 40.

The characterization of male sexual appetite is revealed in the phrase "jaded animal". Like the article on Parisian strip clubs, the editorial voice suggests that sexuality has become a marketable commodity which must be presented in a manner which suits the customer's tastes. Nudity, at least as a presentational commodity, is not enough to satisfy the culturally modified tastes of the audience. Nudity is also a rhetoric that must be adapted to cultural and social changes. Jaded, a slightly derogatory word for sophisticated, implies that males' natural sexual inclinations have been modified by the modern availability of sex. And the successful marketers of sex respond to the difference in their customers. Like any other financial transaction, where supply is adjusted to demand, the successful strippers have adjusted their product to the new demands of their customers. In fact, the rest of this article goes on to detail the problems this adjustment presents for various marketers/strippers. The article details the problems associated with using snakes, undressing under water, and using doves in the strip act. However,
generally these women were very creative marketers. For example, there was one member of this elite club who used the problematics of her gimmick, a parrot who took off her clothes to acquire some free publicity:

A stripper named Yvette Dare had a rather embarrassing experience one afternoon on a New York street corner when her friendly parrot started going into the act. Dare was nearly bare when they pulled the parrot off her. This "accident" was well documented by a press agent's camera, however, and resulted in lots of nice publicity for both Yvette and the bird"

Vol. IX, 43.

These women are characterized as clever marketers of a product for a specific audience. Moral judgements are conspicuously absent. The argument is cast solely in terms of the financial transaction; demand, essential male sexual desire, is met by supply; clever female marketers, and the editorial voices of Hefner and Russell merely comment on successful marketing strategies.

The three constant themes in the presentation of sexual relations articles in Playboy’s Cultural Commentary are: essential male desire, female marketing strategies, and the financial transaction as the overwhelming determinant of sexual relations. Although male desire may have been modified by "modern" times, it is still the same. Thus Playboy’s Cultural Commentary articles on sexual relations possess structural coherence. The only deviation, similar to the deviation in the Humor category, is that the portrayal of women is a bit inconsistent. Some women enjoy sex for its own sake without any financial incentive. One reprint article in the July issue characterizes the two female extremes in Playboy’s Cultural Commentary. Although neither Hefner nor Russell wrote the text of this two page article, it would certainly match their bifurcated view of women. Entitled
"Our Feathered Friends", the article contains two types of birds that are understood to have human analogues: "The Full-Breasted Pushover" and "The Red-Headed Henpecker". These two types of females demonstrate the lack of consistency conceptualizing the female role in sexual relations:

THE FULL-BREASTED PUSHOVER
Female, friendly bird, plumage gaudy, inclined to molt completely at slightest suggestion, migrates along bars greater U.S.
CALL: Yes! Yes! Yes!

AND

THE RED-HEADED HENPECKER
Female, generally mated to much smaller bird, domineering, given to emitting loud squawks when commands are not obeyed instantly.
CALL: Where are your rubbers?

Vol. VIII, 30.

The one female seems sexually receptive while the other seems sexually unavailable, despite the double entendre of "rubbers". Both types of females as characterized in this article also seem to be outside the realm of the financial transaction. However, this inconsistency, or lack of an essential definition of females, does not affect the coherence of Playboy's Cultural Commentary argument because the vast majority of articles posit female sexuality as part of a financial transaction. Overtly sexual relations between men and women, whether the women are wives, strippers, or prostitutes, are characterized as financial transactions.

Fisher's second question to ascertain narrative probability is whether the object of study possesses "material coherence". Material coherence is defined by Fisher as the
extent to which a particular narrative challenges opposing narratives (47). Most of the articles examined above for structural coherence do not overtly acknowledge an alternative narrative. However, there are three substantial articles that not only contain alternative narratives, but clearly challenge those narratives. These articles are: "Miss Gold-Digger" (Vol. I), "Sin in Paradise" (Vol. V), and "Virginity" (Vol. X). Spaced in such a way as to suggest a conscious decision, these are substantial articles comprising a total of nearly thirteen pages. The significance of these articles' size should not be overlooked. The average length of a Cultural Commentary article is less than two pages long, so these three articles are clearly exceptions. "Miss Gold-Digger" has already been examined above. This article argues against the modern trend towards alimony for wives, stating that marriage is a contractual issue and once the contract is broken all obligations between the two parties should cease. "Virginity", as suggested by its title, is a direct attack on the culture of female chastity. This article which has no copyright acknowledgment and is supposedly written by a "Frankenstein Smith", is probably a Ray Russell creation. Although "Virginity" is written in a slightly "tongue-in-cheek" manner, it confronts objections to the Playboy philosophy on sex. This article begins with a clear definition of the playboy's problem:

All sophisticated playboys are interested in virginity. We trust that the matter of your own virginity has already been satisfactorily taken care of. You must now face up to the problem of virginity in your female friends and acquaintances.  

The word "problem" is emphasized by this author because the word inverts the social norms of the 1950s. While there may have been some tolerance of male sexuality,
suggesting that female virginity was a "problem" was definitely a radical argument in 1954. However, the best and most sustained example of material coherence is the advocacy of sexual naturalism in William Bradford Huie's "Sin in Paradise" reprinted in the April issue of Playboy. Taken from Huie's 1951 text The Revolt of Mamie Stover. "Sin in Paradise" documents the evolution of sexual transactions in Hawaii from the 1800s until the end of World War II. According to Huie, sexual relations between the female natives of Hawaii and the men on ships was called punalua; "it was only pagan simplicity and friendliness....Hawaiians had no words for adultery or chastity or jealousy" (Vol. V., 8). However this enlightened and natural state of affairs was not allowed to persist. "Reformers" and "white wives" campaigned to make public fornication (sex on the beaches) and women swimming out to the ships illegal (Vol. V., 8). This legislative victory by the enemies of sexual naturalism had two results:

The sailors...rioted for a week, destroyed property, beat up cops, threatened to burn down the churches

AND

The Lord's folks...drove punalua behind curtains, then they segregated it, and thus gradually they were able to convey punalua into prostitution (Vol. V., 8).

However, transforming punalua into prostitution was not the reformers final goal. They also tried to eliminate prostitution. But as Huie notes: "[W]hen the reformers began trying to eradicate prostitution, however, the powerful tradesmen blew the whistle on them....[because] Tradesmen are realists, men of facts and figures" (Vol. V., 8). The explicit argument Huie makes is that natural sexuality can only be perverted by the
moralists, never eliminated, because sexuality is both a natural urge and an essential part of the financial marketplace. Hawaii's history of sexuality serves as a compact, real world example to refute the proponents of standard morality. *Playboy*'s Cultural Commentary either presents an attractive alternative to opposing narratives or overtly questions the efficacy of opposing narratives. Therefore, the articles on sexual relations in *Playboy*'s Cultural Commentary possess material coherence because they all meet, implicitly or explicitly, the objections of oppositional discourses (Fisher, 47).

Characterological coherence, the last criterion Fisher uses to assess an artifact's narrative probability, requires that characters act in a consistent or predictable manner (Fisher, 47). Obviously, in the *Playboy* world of sexual relations there are only two recurring characters: the Male and the Female. The male figure in these articles is characterologically consistent because all the male characters have an innate heterosexual desire. For example, the article "One Man's Meat", in the June 1954, issue implicitly assumes that all men desire women and merely attempts to hypothesize about individual male preferences. This article presents four "types" of woman characterized solely by their bust, waist, and hip measurements, then "scientifically" measures which type is most appealing. Despite the different preferences of older and younger men, the conclusion of this article is almost a summary of *Playboy*'s appeal:

A guy can dream about Miss Grapefruit, the fabulous "X" type beauty, and still be happy with one of the less sensational varieties. And considering the scarcity of "X" type females it's a damn good thing.


The "X" type is, of course, the standard, idealized, Playmate measuring 36", 22", 36".
This characterization of males is very consistent across *Playboy*’s Cultural Commentary. While individual male characters may vary in their levels of sexual desire, success, and taste, males are always primarily interested in sex. Females, on the other hand, are characterologically inconsistent in *Playboy*’s Cultural Commentary. In the same issue of *Playboy* as "One Man's Meat", which depicts women as the object of essential male desire, is an article titled "Open Season on Bachelors", which depicts women as the male's enemy. The language used to describe women in "Open Season" is completely different than the language used to describe them in "One Man's Meat". Women in "Open Season" have been transformed from the simple object of male desire into a cunning predator:

more heated, more desperate -- and much more dangerous.  
She asks no quarter and gives none  
Vol. V., 37.

AND

All woman wants is security. And she's perfectly willing to crush man's adventurous, freedom-loving spirit to get it  
Vol. V., 38.

The simple object of male desire, reduced to merely her physical measurements, in one article becomes a cunning, single-minded predator in another article in the very same issue. Although the article "Open Season" provides guidelines to the hunted male for escaping matrimony, the authorial conclusion is that males do not have much chance to escape the predatory female:

Armed with the basic truths set down here, you may successfully avoid wedlock during this month of June. You may, in fact, continue to enjoy the freedom of bachelorhood indefinitely. You may, but we doubt it  
Vol. V., 38.
While males are characterologically consistent in *Playboy*'s Cultural Commentary, females constantly shift between simplified objects of essential male sexual desire and sophisticated, efficient, predators. This fact is the basis for Kimmel's criticism of *Playboy* as noted in Chapter Four. However, within the didactic nature of *Playboy*'s goals to instruct and entertain men, emphatically stated in its very first editorial, this bifurcation of the female character makes sense. The simplified object of desire can be seen as entertainment, whereas the cautionary articles like "Open Season" can be seen as instruction. So although female characterization is not consistent within the narrative, it is consistent with both *Playboy*'s ideal audience and dual purpose.

Therefore, according to Fisher's three questions for narrative probability (structural, material, and characterological coherence), the nineteen cultural commentary articles on sexual relations possess a high level of narrative probability. The only blatant exception to the three kinds of coherence is female characterization. And this deviation is parallel to the stated goals of *Playboy* magazine. However, one must still assess the "narrative fidelity" of sexual relations articles in *Playboy*'s Cultural Commentary. The three questions Fisher proposes to evaluate narrative fidelity are: the text's relevance to personal decisions, the consequence of adopting the text's values, and the consistency of the text's values to ones already held by the reader (109). This study will examine the articles on sexual relations for narrative fidelity separately from the other articles designated as cultural commentary for the reasons noted above.
Playboy's primary mission is to be a "pleasure-primer", so for the articles to be relevant according to Fisher they only have to focus on male pleasure (Vol. I., 3). Out of nineteen articles on sexual relations defined as cultural commentary five are overtly didactic. These five articles are all essentially "how to" articles which focus on the maintenance or betterment of masculine pleasure. Obvious examples of this type of article are "Playboy Goes to Paris" and "Bump and Grind". Both these articles focus on female strippers with advice to men on the most famous or best strippers. Other examples give readers instructions on how to avoid marriage ("Open Season") or how to persuade women to engage in casual sex ("Virginity"). The "Virginity" article is relevant because it addresses one of the social norms Kidd identifies which make pleasure difficult for the playboy: females are less sexual than males. The article also replicates one of Kinsey's reasons for the lower prevalence of sexuality in the female, namely "[T]he moral tradition of our American culture" (The Human Female, 316). The author of "Virginity" identifies the carriers of "the moral tradition" stating that the playboy will meet some opposition:

from young ladies who have been previously misguided by narrow minded mothers, teachers, maiden aunts etc. The purpose of this article is to show you how such resistance to learning (a form of social lag) can be most easily overcome.

Vol. X., 9.

The author's attitude towards female virginity and the premium placed on it by certain members of society is apparent in the words "misguided" and "narrow minded". This article, like the other four "how to" articles, attacks the logic of certain restrictive social norms and encourages males to circumvent them.
The other fourteen essays in Cultural Commentary on sexual relations are relevant because although they do not provide overt arguments against social norms, they do demonstrate the prevalence and popularity of Playboy’s sexual ideals. For example, the September issue contains a photo spread of popular film star Gina Lollobrigida who is characterized as "a girl of real beauty, with a warm personality, plenty of charm, and a small, but adequate amount of acting talent" (Vol. X., 39). The implication of this quotation is that Lollobrigida’s real "talent" is her physical beauty and willingness to make films partially nude. The villain in this editorial puff piece is the U.S. Customs: she has made over twenty five pictures, but only a fraction of them have penetrated the Cellophane Curtain of purity surrounding the U.S. Vol. X., 38.

While there is no overt argument in the passage above, any reference to "Curtain" in 1954 certainly implies an undemocratic (Communist) restriction of male pleasure. A similar kind of implicit argument on the prevalence of sexuality is contained in the March 1954 issue. The article is titled "Sex Sells a Shirt". Besides giving readers an inside look at advertising strategies, there are numerous photographs of the female model scantily clad. However, this article meets Fisher’s relevance criterion primarily because of the editorial text. The editorial text notes that the advertising agency is using a female model to promote name brand awareness for Hartog, makers of men's shirts, because men are inherently sexual:

sex as the most natural approach for an ad aimed at men, but decided that sex given a high fashion treatment would be the real stopper in a masculine magazine Vol. IV., 39.
Playboy's vision of sexual desire as the prominent common denominator for men is contained in this editorial description of an advertising strategy: any approach to men is best made through sexual appeals. The article also explicitly notes that this particular advert based on sex appeal "was the hottest advertising campaign of the year and [produced] the biggest sales in Hartog's history" (Vol. IV., 39). The implicit argument is twofold: despite the puritanical social norms everybody from artists to businessmen is using sexual appeals and that these sexual appeals work. Even the Cultural Commentary articles that just seem to be light entertainment repeat the same thematic arguments. Every article supports Playboy's position that sex is natural, harmless, and irrepressible. Therefore, Playboy's Cultural Commentary on sexual relations articles possess a high, though often subtle, level of relevance for the debate on sexual naturalism.

In this study Fisher's second question to ascertain narrative fidelity is "consistency: Are the values confirmed...in one's personal experience?" (109). While this study cannot examine the personal experiences of Playboy readers in 1954, it can compare the values proposed with two intensive cultural studies of the era. The first study is Kidd's analysis which presents three key elements of American culture as it was represented in popular magazines. The second study is Kinsey's two volume report on human sexuality which was presented as an objective description of Americans sexual behavior. Kidd argues that according to her 1972 survey of popular magazines 1950s Americans believed that: men were essentially more sexual than women, self-sacrifice and practical considerations were both integral parts of a relationship, and this relational knowledge was derived from
the essential nature of human beings (266-270). Kinsey's two reports on Americans' sexual behavior (The Human Male, 1948 & The Human Female, 1953) were widely hailed as the definitive, scientific studies of actual sexual behavior. These two reports were instant best-sellers because they both disrupted cultural assumptions about sexual behavior. In contrast to the beliefs Kidd discovers in the popular magazines of the era, Kinsey et al argue that mature women are as innately sexual as men and that any differences between male and female sexual behavior are a result of cultural restrictions (The Human Female, 316). However, the real surprise in the Kinsey reports was that although Americans may have believed sex was sinful in the 1950s, their behavior did not reflect that belief. This disjunction between public values and private behavior created the opportunity for Playboy. Miller summarizes both the results of Kinsey's findings on male sexual behavior and Hefner's response:

Kinsey's findings, indicating that 86 percent of American men experienced sexual intercourse before marriage, 70 percent had intercourse with prostitutes, and 40 percent indulged in extramarital intercourse, revealed an extraordinary discrepancy between private behavior and public attitudes that Hefner thought was truly shocking. Therefore Playboy was constructed to be consistent with men's sexual behavior, as "documented" by Kinsey, instead of what Hefner saw as hypocritical public attitudes. Although Kinsey's findings have been thoroughly discredited since 1957 as science because of methodological flaws, at the time Hefner and his audience believed that Playboy was the only magazine whose sexual values were consistent with male sexual experience. Thus the Cultural Commentary articles on sexual relations possess a high level of consistency.
Fisher's third question to ascertain narrative fidelity is consequence wherein the critic would examine the actual consequences of adhering to the values proposed by a particular discourse as one method of assessing the level of narrative fidelity. While this study cannot examine the actual consequences readers would experience if they adopted the values espoused by Playboy's Cultural Commentary because of its historical nature, it can, according to Edwin Black, infer the consequences the author intended for his ideal audience. Like Playboy's Fiction, its Cultural Commentary articles on sexual relations do not recommend that readers confront repressive sexual norms. Instead of confrontation readers are given methods to evade the socio-sexual cultural norms that from the Playboy perspective restrict men's natural sexuality. Examples of the evasion, not confrontation, method abound in the Cultural Commentary articles. This study has already analyzed articles on avoiding alimony payments ("Miss Gold-Digger"), persuading female virgins to have sex ("Virginity"), and indulging one's male desire at strip clubs ("Paris Hot Spots"). The consequences for Hefner's ideal audience would be a reduction in the difference between males' sexual desire and social norms without too many negative consequences. As Miller states Hefner's ideal audience is himself multiplied many times:

He made no secret of the fact that he produced the magazine for himself; it unashamedly pandered to his fantasies. He wanted to be a suave, sophisticated man-about-town, sexually liberated, irresistible to women, and a masterful lover.

Hefner's position was that there was a large disjunction between the behavioral norms espoused in other popular magazines and the actual behavior of American men as
"objectively" described by Alfred Kinsey et al. Ideally, the results of adopting the sexual naturalism ideology espoused by Playboy's Cultural Commentary would be a reduction of the disjunction between actual behavior and American ideals. While other men's magazines of the time were, according to Jim Bryans (a writer for Men), "warning readers to stay away from X Street and its sinful fleshpots", Playboy was telling its readers that sex was natural, fun, and available (in Weyr, 4). Furthermore, the consequences of flouting social conventions were envisioned as transforming men into that irresistible, suave "man-about-town" that they, like Hefner, always wanted to be. While the consequences envisioned by the text may seem unbearably naive in an era concerned with the consequences of sex (sexually transmitted diseases, unwanted pregnancies, and failed marriages), Hefner saw the "prurient Victorian" attitude as a more serious barrier to successful sexual enlightenment and enjoyment (Weyr, 46).

In summation this study concludes that Playboy's Cultural Commentary articles on sexual relations possess a high level of narrative fidelity. The nineteen articles in this category meet Fisher's criteria for narrative fidelity: relevance, consequence, and consistency. These nineteen articles also possess a high level of narrative probability. The combination of narrative probability and fidelity produce narrative rationality which is an immensely effective rhetorical strategy because it provides "good reasons" based on "values" for accepting the advice of a rhetor or rhetorical artifact (Fisher, 48). However, this study must also analyze the rhetorical strategy of the other thirty articles in Playboy's Cultural Commentary section that are not primarily focused on sexual relations.
5.4 Rhetorical Strategies in Other Articles

The major problem in analyzing Playboy's other thirty Cultural Commentary articles is the diversity of topics. The topics vary from business analysis, to sports commentary, to musical styles, to fine art without presenting any clear pattern or purpose. However, within the eclecticism dictated by Playboy's financial constraints two overtly rhetorical strategies emerge: imitation of more established mainstream magazines such as Esquire and Life, and incorporating sexually provocative or titillating images and text. These two tactics are considered rhetorical because imitation of successful magazines is an example of "doxastic" appeals, and sexually provocative images or text reinforce Playboy's ideology of sexual naturalism (McGee). Either or both of these strategies would enhance Playboy's overall popular appeal. Thus this dissertation will examine a selection of the articles that complete Playboy's Cultural Commentary section to determine if their two rhetorical strategies meet Fisher's criteria for the narrative paradigm.

However, in a discourse which encompasses so many topics it is futile to look for topical coherence. Thus Fisher's three questions for narrative probability will be reduced to the search for one or both of the rhetorical strategies noted above in each article. Fisher's original conceptualization was appropriate for assessing individual arguments, but without a single argument or topic it is necessary to look for a different kind of coherence: a coherence of rhetorical strategies. Fisher, himself endorses the
modification of his paradigm:

The criteria for assessing, say, a scientific text will differ from those one would use in assessing a popular film, but the principles of coherence and fidelity apply no less to a scientific treatise than to a filmic communication.

Accordingly, this study will further modify Fisher's criteria for assessing a specific text's narrative probability, but will maintain the principle of "coherence".

Miller asserts that Hefner knew before he started Playboy that he wanted "a new men's magazine that would combine elements of those already available -- the editorial quality of Life and Esquire" (31). The inaugural issue of Playboy shows how Hefner implemented his strategy. The very first article that does not have sexual relations as its theme is "The Dorsey Brothers", reprinted from Downbeat magazine. As Merrill notes, this article "couldn't help but remind readers of the Esquire Jazz Poll" (252). The two cultural commentary articles in the February issue of Playboy that do not have sexual relations as their theme focus on the mainstays of both Life and Esquire. Life presented numerous articles previewing sports events like the Olympics or next year's baseball season. Playboy invokes the quality of Life magazine with its article titled "Playboy's Ring Preview for the Year". This particular article is methodical and thorough, moving down from the heavyweight class to the flyweight class. While Playboy could not afford to hire a qualified sports writer like Life (this article was probably written by Hefner or Russell), it could imitate Life's format and authoritative tone. The same technique is used in the article "That Brooks Brothers Look". Playboy takes the fashion world that Esquire had popularized amongst American males and presents its own slightly satirical
version of fashionable conformity. Once again, Playboy could not afford a fashioneditor, but it could appropriate one of Esquire's most popular topics. As Merrill notes,
Esquire was "best known for...[among other things] its promotion of fashion" (261).
Although this article satirizes the prevalence of the "Brooks Brothers" noting that this
"Look...is spreading like the oak blight to yonder hinterlands", it still invokes the
authority and taste of Esquire (V. III, 16). The March issue of Playboy also contains an
article which invokes the Life editorial model. In an article called "Trouble in
Tobaccoland", author Glen Douglas details how cigarette manufacturers in their
competition for a larger market share may have inadvertently damaged the entire
industry:

> it was Kent and their "Micronite" filter that really threw the entire industry a curve
last year....Smokers were supposed to notice that Kent's stain wasn't quite as big
or as brown as those left by brands A, B, C, and D, but some smokers were
apparently sufficiently impressed by the demonstration to forget about smoking
entirely. 1953 marked the first drop in U.S. cigarette consumption in over twenty
years

Vol. IV, 16.

In this article national trends and historical data are combined to present the kind of
authoritative opinion piece Life had been publishing for over twenty years.

The second kind of rhetorical appeal Playboy's Cultural Commentary relied on was
the incorporation of sexually provocative images or text. There are numerous examples
of this kind of appeal. Some of the most blatant examples are in Playboy's presentation
of artists. Two issues of Playboy contain the work of Heinrich Kley. The text of the
June 1954 issue introduces Kley as an "audacious" painter:

A German painter of some note in the early 1900s Kley turned from portraiture and still life to the audacious pen work that has made him famous....His humans rarely wear clothing, but his animals may appear in top hats, coats and spats. Vol. VII, 19-21.

There is, of course, a subtle argument in this editorial statement that humans wearing clothes to cover and repress their sexuality is just as silly as animals wearing clothes. However, Kley's art presents a provocative sexuality. Some of his pictures include a naked woman wrestling with tigers, three naked women serving champagne to an older man wearing only a strategically placed top hat, and a centaur abducting a young naked girl. All these images are focused on sexuality; the drawings present a titillating version of a mythical/fantastical sexuality. Kley's appearance in the August issue is shorter, but no less provocative. The article entitled "Kley's Summer" contains no text, just drawings which show a naked woman riding a centaur and tiny clothed people living on a voluptuous, naked, woman. Regardless of a reader's interpretation of Kley's art, it is sexually provocative. Two other examples of this rhetorical approach are contained in the May issue. Both articles, "Nudes by Weegee" and "Surgery", combine pictorials and text. "Nudes by Weegee" is simply a one page collection of photographs that have been manipulated to show the female nude in distorted form. A headless female with three breasts is the least distorted of the bodily images. The short editorial text states that these are actual "photographs" of reality found in "a book titled Naked Hollywood (Vol. VI, 15). Furthermore the editorial voice concludes that "Weegee found Hollywood a very naked place indeed, and just as out of this world as we'd always heard it was" (Vol.
VI, 15). While this article is obviously a manufactured, short filler piece only present because of Playboy's financial constraints, it demonstrates the repetitive use of sexually provocative pictures and text as a rhetorical appeal. The article "Surgery" is a more subtle version of the same rhetorical strategy. "Surgery" is a four page article which combines photographs and text showing the work of Lejaren a Hiller's recreation of historical surgeries. Smuggling a little pornography into a text under the cover of "Art" was a common practice. As Miller notes, "nudes were largely confined to naturist publications...or photography magazines, which were able to publish nude studies as 'art photography'" (17). Inevitably, in a men's magazine most of the patients are nude females, while the male doctors and his male assistants, are fully clothed. Just in case the naive reader has missed the point of this particular article the editorial voice comments on Hiller's photographic recreation of ancient surgery:

In the thirty years since its conception, no major error has been detected in the work. Some admirers, however, have questioned the master about the lack of clothing on his women models compared to the men while undergoing similar operations....To such questions, Hiller only smiles and says, "I prefer them that way" Vol. VI, 42.

If the sexually provocative images have not completely persuaded the reader, Hefner includes a quotation from the artist Hiller which indicates that the only thing more important than the historical accuracy of his project is Hiller's preference for nude female models.

The consistent use of these two rhetorical strategies (the imitation of mainstream magazines and sexually provocative photographs in Playboy's Cultural Commentary
articles satisfies Fisher's principle of coherence. Consistent use of only two major
rhetorical strategies unifies the diverse topics of thirty articles. So while this study could
not apply its original modification of the Fisher schemata of three questions used
previously to ascertain the level of narrative probability, it has demonstrated that Fisher's
principle of coherent rhetorical practice has been followed. Therefore one can conclude
that, despite the variety of topics and authors, Playboy's Cultural Commentary section
possesses a high degree of narrative probability; it is internally consistent from a
rhetorical perspective.

The second element of Fisher's narrative paradigm, narrative fidelity, must also be
further modified to fit the diversity of Playboy's Cultural Commentary. In previous
chapters this study has used a truncated version of Fisher's original schemata to ascertain
narrative fidelity. However, without a primary focus on sexual relations, or anything else
for that matter, this section of Playboy's Cultural Commentary cannot be analyzed for
narrative fidelity by applying the questions of relevance, consistency, and consequence.

Much like Fisher's analysis of Reagan in Human Communication as Narration, wherein
Fisher claims that "Reagan's presidential discourse... fails the tests of the narrative
paradigm", Playboy's Cultural Commentary would fail the tests of the narrative paradigm
(145). However, both Reagan and Playboy were successful rhetors. Fisher's solution to
Reagan's seemingly irrational success is to argue that Reagan's character grounds his
specific policy proposals; "The man and the mission were one" (150). Essentially Fisher
argues that Reagan's perceived credibility sustains his rhetorical appeals. The same
argument will be applied to Playboy's Cultural Commentary. Three elements of this
section of Playboy's Cultural Commentary guarantee a positive audience response: the imitation of respected magazines, a serenely confident tone, and a positive attitude towards its male audience. These three elements bear a close resemblance to the three elements of "ethos" or credibility identified by Aristotle: trustworthiness, competence, and goodwill towards the audience. In other words, this section of Playboy's Cultural Commentary does not directly argue for the ideology of sexual naturalism, but it does establish the magazine's general credibility.

The audience may not have made the connection on a conscious level, but Playboy's non-sexual cultural commentary articles are obviously imitative of Life one of America's most respected magazines. This claim is based on the overlap of topics in both magazines. (See FIGURE 3)

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Life Articles</th>
<th>Similar Playboy Articles</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1. May 11, 1953</td>
<td>1. October 1953</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>&quot;One Platoon Football is Back&quot;</td>
<td>&quot;The Return of the All-Purpose Back&quot;</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>&quot;Ingres'Art&quot; includes a female nude.</td>
<td>&quot;The Art of Heinrich Kley&quot; numerous female nude drawings.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>&quot;Nightclubs&quot;</td>
<td>&quot;Paris Hot Spots&quot;</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

FIGURE 3:
Similar Articles in Life and Playboy (Table cont.)
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Date</th>
<th>Title</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>4. March 1954</td>
<td>Trouble in Tobaccoland Focuses on results of Kent's Micronite Ad</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5. May 25, 1953</td>
<td>Marilyn Monroe Takes Over as Lorelei</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5. October 1953</td>
<td>Sweetheart of the Month -- Marilyn Monroe</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>6. June 1, 1953</td>
<td>The Old OO-LA-LA</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>6. August 1954</td>
<td>A Bump and A Grind</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>7. June 15, 1953</td>
<td>Give me Land, Lots of Land article on Frank Lloyd Wright's contribution to American homes.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>7. August 1954</td>
<td>The Builder A chronological description of Wright's career and personality.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

FIGURE 3 (cont.)

Similar Articles in Life and Playboy
The author of this study does not claim to be an expert on *Life*. However, the fact that even a casual perusal of *Life* for five issues uncovers seven topical similarities between the two magazines strongly suggests that Hefner was consciously imitating *Life*. Other "coincidences" indicating that Hefner was imitating America's magazine abound. As Weyr notes, Hefner probably got the idea of using the Marilyn Monroe nudes in the first issue because "*Life* had even published a stamp-size takeout in a MM cover story" (9). If *Life* reflected the values and interests of Americans, *Playboy* reflected *Life* insofar as it could. *Playboy*'s use of familiar topics and formats must have created in the audience a sense of familiarity, of recognition.

The second element of ethos is competence or reliability. Obviously, given *Playboy*'s limited finances and staff of seven, it could not compete with established magazines like *The New Yorker* or *Life* for coverage of current events. As noted earlier *Playboy* did not even have its own staff photographer until after the period covered by this study.

Hefner cleverly limits the scope of *Playboy*'s interests in the first issue's editorial:

> Affairs of state will be out of our province. We don't expect to solve any world problems or prove any great moral truths. If we are able to give the American male a few extra laughs and a little diversion from the anxieties of the Atomic Age, we'll feel we've justified our existence. Vol. 1, 3.

This specific disclaimer allowed *Playboy* to ignore the research issues of the era.

Furthermore, by focusing exclusively on matters of taste or fashion *Playboy* could appear authoritative without having to invest the time and money required to do serious research. As both Weyr and Miller observe the reliability of *Playboy*'s articles rests on
two factors: an American explosion in the number of young, insecure, urban males and its authoritative tone. Even Hefner admitted that *Playboy* was intended for uncritical readers:

[it] was intended as a book of service that points the way...as it were for a new world or jungle that you know a young man is just arriving at. *Playboy* is most concerned with that period of self-discovery when men establish their identity. We were trying to communicate in a way that supplied a certain authority in *Weyr*, 57.

Miller reinforces this view claiming that "*Playboy* was welcomed as a guidebook to this new 'good life'...[I]t's authoritative tone soothed their anxieties" (46). There are numerous examples in *Playboy*’s non-sexual Cultural Commentary of this "authoritative tone." An article in the August issue on the roots of jazz confidently claims that Storyville "produced an exciting new kind of musical expression called jazz" (9).

Matters of opinion, such as appropriate office furnishings or the future of automobile design, were confidently proclaimed. In the first issue of *Playboy* there is an article on "Desk Designs for the Modern Office", which confidently asserts that using the modern design it recommends will certainly impress visitors:

A visitor comes away with the feeling that this executive and his firm are as up to date as tomorrow, know where they are going and will use the most modern methods to get there Vol. I, 41.

Obviously, the statement above cannot be proven. Yet for the young man uncertain of appropriate office decor, the tone of complete confidence provided an ersatz reliability. Limiting articles to topics which were irresolvable by factual proof allowed Hefner's confident writing style, honed by "writing mail-promotion pieces," to seem authoritative.
to young male readers (Weyr, 13). There was also a conscientious attempt to publish articles by experts like the article "Tournament Bridge" by reigning champion Bill Rosen in the September issue. However, the financial and time constraints of Playboy's first year meant that most of its "authority" with readers emanated from the confident editorial voice both Hefner and Russell had mastered.

The final element of narrative fidelity for Playboy's non-sexual Cultural Commentary articles was a sympathetic attitude towards its readers. Goodwill towards an audience can take many forms, but Playboy's version of goodwill was unusually blatant. An article in the July issue, "What's Happening to Baseball?" demonstrates Playboy's version of goodwill towards its audience. Readers expecting another diatribe on the declining quality of baseball would be pleasantly surprised as author Jay Gould argues that current day players are better than the legends of the past:

> If a team of the ten best men in the majors today could play the ten best of two generations ago at their prime, today's players would beat the ancients ten games out of ten. Vol. VIII, 17.

Although this claim cannot be objectively proven, that it was made at all must have pleased a generation of young males. In a similar vein "How to Succeed in Business Without Really Trying" also posits the younger male as superior to the older generation. Furthermore this article is important because it is composed of five separate articles which span Playboy issues May through September. All these satirical articles puncture
the older generation's values of hard work, humility, and dedication as the means to success:

If you have education, intelligence, and ability so much the better. But remember that thousands have reached the top without them. You, too, can be among the lucky few. Vol. VI, 11.

Mead continues, in this article titled "How to Apply for a Job", instructing young males on deceptive strategies to overcome the difficulties of getting a job. These strategies in every article in the series involve younger men deceiving older men who hold the reins of power. Although the advice rendered in this series of articles is obviously humorous, it does directly emphasize the interests and concerns of young males. Hefner and his male staff were all under thirty years old at this point in time, and so was the majority of their audience. Therefore, Hefner selected and wrote articles that favored the younger generation of males. As Miller observes, Hefner knew that his magazine was popular with younger males "since the volume of mail pouring into Playboy attested to the magazine's popularity on campuses across America" (58). Campus populations swollen by "millions of young men who had never expected to go to college and were the first in their families to do so" provided much of Hefner's audience (Weyr, xvi). Hefner's awareness of his audience is demonstrated by the sympathy for young men in his magazine's articles.

These three elements combine to provide Playboy's non-sexual Cultural Commentary with narrative fidelity. The imitation of established magazine formats, the confident tone of articles, and favoring young men's modern tastes all function to conform to the
audience's experiences, desires and values. Fisher argues that "[W]e identify with stories... when we find that they offer 'good reasons' for being accepted" (194). Those good reasons include being: (1) true to and consistent with what we think we know and what we value; (2) appropriate to whatever decision is pending; (3) promising in effects for ourselves and others; and (4) consistent with what we believe is an ideal basis for conduct (Fisher, 194). Thus this study concludes that despite the diversity of topics contained in Playboy's non-sexual Cultural Commentary section its ethos presents "good reasons" for acceptance amongst its mostly male audience; it has narrative fidelity.

5.5 Rhetorical Goals and Appeals

Despite the differences between the nineteen cultural commentary articles on sexual relations and the thirty on non-sexual issues, they both serve the same purpose. Miller argues that Playboy's major goal was to persuade its readers to see "sex as a healthy and enjoyable recreational activity, free from guilt" (46). The direct argument of the Cultural Commentary articles focusing on sexual relations obviously supports this goal. These articles form an argument for modifying social norms from the repressive, foolishly romantic, Vision I model to the supposedly objective "Vision" drawn by Alfred Kinsey. However, the part the non-sexual articles play in this rhetorical process is more oblique. Michael McGee reminds us that rhetors should "ground their arguments in doxa" and "advocates are urged not to 'insult the intelligence' of audiences by directly proving what can safely be taken for granted -- doxa is silent and should be kept silent"(281). In a simple binary arrangement one can see the Cultural Commentary articles on sexual relations as the "argument" and the non-sexual Cultural Commentary articles as the
"doxastic ground" for Playboy's argument. Hefner clearly understood that for his arguments for sexual naturalism to have any force, he had to create a backdrop that quietly matched the magazine norms of the era. In other words, the non-sexual Cultural Commentary articles clearly imitate the doxastic American magazines, most notably Life and Esquire, to gain acceptance for the revolutionary principles of sexual naturalism: thus the popular defense "I only read it for the articles". Readers have adopted Playboy's basic tactic for their own rhetorical defense.

The appeal of Playboy's Cultural Commentary section as a whole is that it provides a forum for both radical revision of sexual mores and a guidebook to good taste; revolutionary ideas and doxastic instructions share the same space. As Weyr observes, Playboy's appeal in the fifties was that it challenged old ideas while not completely deserting the status quo:

> Sex became a way of expressing opposition to the status quo; and by embracing the concept of sex as not only a moral good but a moral imperative, Playboy offered collegians a chance to express themselves and to oppose their elders, and to do so without endangering future careers. At Playboy you could have your cake and eat it too. xvi.

Hefner was a true conservative in all non-sexual matters. He imitated the articles of Life and Esquire because he considered them the finest magazines available. Hefner knew his audience because his audience was composed of ambitious, but naive young men like himself. Obviously his fantasies were shared by a lot of young men. Barbara Ehrenreich in The Hearts of Men argues that Playboy's appeal was simply that it "shed the burdensome aspects of the adult male role" (in Merrill, 259). Although the two kinds of
articles defined as Cultural Commentary in this study may seem to be contradictory, they are actually complementary. The non-sexual articles, which possess both the principles of coherence and fidelity, provide the doxastic ground or credibility for the ideological argument with existing social norms in the articles focusing on sexual relations. This combination of doxa and revolutionary sexual mores was what made Playboy a force for social change. Although the rhetorical strategies may be different for the two types of Cultural Commentary articles, their goals were identical and their appeals complementary sides of a grand rhetorical strategy.

5.6 Conclusion

This chapter has examined Playboy's Cultural Commentary category through the three research questions. The sources of Cultural Commentary, although diverse due to Playboy's limited finances, achieve coherence through Hefner's editorial control and his ideological focus. While this category required an extra modification of Fisher's narrative paradigm as a result of the variety of topics it contained, this author concludes that the two sub-categories, sexual topics and non-sexual topics, both satisfy Fisher's essential principles. Each sub-category employed consistent strategies to achieve a high level of narrative probability and fidelity. The only major problem was, once again, the inconsistency of the female character. This fact's importance is lessened by Playboy's male audience and the requirement to provide material coherence. Finally the goals of the two sub-categories were found to be different, but also to reinforce the overall purpose of the text. Non-sexual articles established a certain credibility for Playboy as they imitated more established magazines. Then this sub-category served as the ground
for the more ideological argumentation of the sexual sub-category. Cultural Commentary's appeal was characterized as imitating the authoritative tone of older magazines to provide its readers with their desired lifestyle. The next chapter will apply the three research questions to two minor categories, Advice and Self-Promotion. While these categories are not overtly argumentative or ideological, they too must possess narrative probability and fidelity to complement the rest of Playboy's categories.
CHAPTER 6
PLAYBOY'S ADVICE AND SELF-PROMOTION

6.1 Introduction

This chapter will examine two categories of Playboy's first year, Advice and Self-Promotion. Advice was defined in Chapter Two as articles that provide guidance on the performance of concrete tasks. Self-Promotion was defined as: image management devices confined to both front and back covers, general editorials, the table of contents, the one page preview of the next issue, readers' letters and the one page recurring advertisement "The Men's Shop". These two categories will be examined in a single chapter because although they are distinct categories, together they comprise less than 18% of the entire text. Neither category is substantial enough to devote an entire chapter to its analysis. Furthermore both categories serve the same rhetorical purpose: to establish Playboy as the premier men's magazine in America. All three research questions about sources, rhetorical strategies, and goals and appeals will be applied to both categories.

6.2 Sources

In its first ten issues Playboy faced the critical problem of being different from its competitors, but not too different. Hefner's very first editorial addresses this problem by bluntly stating how Playboy will be different:

The magazines now being produced for the city-bred male...have, of late, placed so much emphasis on fashion, travel, and "how-to-do-it" features ... that entertainment has been all but pushed from their pages. PLAYBOY will emphasize entertainment


This attitude towards other men's magazines explains both the choice of topics covered and the scarcity of advice articles. There are no articles advising readers on topics Hefner despises like "avoiding a hernia" or "building your own steam bath" (Vol. I, 3).
All advice articles focused on leisure activities. On average there are fewer than three pages of advice articles in each Playboy issue. Hefner lacked money to compete for involved, well-researched, articles written by experts. In this case he was not interested either. While Hefner and Russell scoured the public domain for cheap, but excellent fiction, the advice articles came primarily from itinerant free-lance authors. For example, Miller notes that Thomas Mario, who wrote three of the twelve total advice articles, "had been the headwaiter at a men's club on Long Island and was appointed an editor after contributing a feature in 1954" (62). In other words, while Hefner recognized that he had to imitate other magazines by providing advice articles, he changed their focus to leisure activities with apparent unconcern about their quality.

Sources for the Self-Promotion category are completely different in that Hefner had a keen interest in self-promotion, as well as personal experience. From the beginning Hefner took upon himself the creation of editorial quality and hired Art Editor Arthur Paul before he put together the first issue. The category of Self-Promotion as defined by this study was completely an "in-house" production. All visual aspects were created by Paul and Hefner took care of the enthusiastic editorials, "The Men's Shop", and published responses to readers letters. The basic format of this category was copied directly from magazines like Life and Esquire, but the actual work was all done by Playboy staff. Therefore the Self-Promotion category is probably the best indicator of Playboy's individuality and success. Finally, the sources of both categories, Advice and Self-Promotion, can be traced to Hefner because what he did not create himself he chose. As noted in Chapter Five, Hefner produced Playboy for himself; it reflected his tastes, experiences, and ideas.

6.3 Rhetorical Strategies

Despite the different sources for Playboy's Advice and Self-Promotion categories, all elements in both categories had to meet with Hefner's approval. Therefore this study
will limit its analysis of rhetorical strategies to the central theme Hefner clearly identified for his magazine: "a pleasure-primer styled to the masculine taste" (Vol. I, 3). Hefner seems to have intuitively understood the rhetorical process because this defining phrase could be recast as "a didactic argument for sexual naturalism shaped to the target audience". Hefner understood the two interactive elements of persuasion as demonstrated by his presentation of both the speaker/rhetor's purpose and audience values. Fisher's narrative paradigm seems to be an especially appropriate rhetorical method of analysis because it too has two elements: narrative probability and narrative fidelity. Narrative probability analyzes the rhetor's coherent presentation of a position, while narrative fidelity examines how that presentation resonates or is faithful to the audience's experiences or values (Fisher 47 & 109).

In this study's modified version of Fisher's narrative probability three significant questions are applied to a rhetorical artifact: (1) Does it possess structural coherence? (2) Does it possess material coherence? (3) Does it possess characterological coherence? In other words, to have narrative probability the Playboy categories Advice and Self-Promotion must consistently advocate sexual naturalism, refute opposing ideologies, and maintain a consistent portrayal of recurring characters. While this study cannot analyze all instances of both categories there will be at least one example from each issue of either the Advice or Self-Promotion categories.

The Self-Promotion category consists of six elements: 1. front and back covers, 2. editorials, 3. "The Men's Shop", 4. readers' letters, 5. the preview of the next issue, and 6. the table of contents. The format of this category mimicked that of the more successful, mainstream magazines. However, all these elements in Playboy combined to present a different image. Fisher's first criterion for narrative probability, structural coherence, can be seen most clearly in the recurrent images and text of Playboy's front covers and tables of contents. Every issue's front cover reaffirms Playboy's purpose with
the phrase "ENTERTAINMENT FOR MEN". Furthermore the first eight issues of Playboy have a front cover which combines the famous bunny icon with a suggestively posed, or drawn female figure. An example of this technique is the front cover of the July issue which has an outline of the bunny icon drawn in the sand, with a bikini top representing his eyes and a bikini bottom representing a big smile. Regardless of the critic's interpretation of this imagery, Hefner makes it clear what the male bunny is smiling about with a pair of obviously female legs in the bunny's line of sight. This kind of juxtaposition was not accidental. While Arthur Paul was responsible for the famous bunny's creation, it was Hefner who "suggested a rabbit in a tuxedo as being 'cute, frisky, and sexy' and thus embodying the personality of the magazine" (in Miller, 38). Just the presence of the title, the defining phrase "ENTERTAINMENT FOR MEN", and the bunny logo, all mark the magazine as a magazine for men. The constant presence of female figures on the front cover of the first eight issues defined precisely what kind of entertainment Playboy would provide. So while there is no direct or overt verbal argument the combination of visual images and text on the front cover clearly indicated Playboy's position on sexual relations. The only two front covers which do not present a female figure of some kind, August and September, show the male bunny icon enjoying himself: in the August issue the bunny is in the sun lazily smoking a cigarette over a bay filled with sailboats and in the September issue the bunny is playing a horn in a room full of jazz musicians. These deviations from the previous theme of sexuality are minimal as the theme of masculine pleasure being derived from females has already been well established by the previous eight front covers.

Back covers, a preview of the next issue, and the table of contents were all necessary elements in magazine culture. Every respectable magazine had them. In Playboy these three elements of Self-Promotion simply reinforced and expanded on the implicit argument of the front covers. For example, while the recurring table of contents page
serves the essential function of listing the numerous articles a particular issue contains, every table of contents page is headed with the phrase "CONTENTS FOR THE MEN'S ENTERTAINMENT MAGAZINE". Furthermore every table of contents page had a photograph or picture of the female figure on it. This kind of consistency, reflecting the style of the front covers, strongly suggests that the table of contents page was more than simply functional; it suggests that beyond the functional purpose of listing articles, authors, page numbers, editors, and copyright acknowledgments, the table of contents page also presented an implicit argument for sexual naturalism. Seven of the ten issues examined in this study had back covers that reinforced the ideological argument of the front covers. Sometimes this reinforcement was done with visual imagery, sometimes with text. The back cover of the first issue combined both methods with a pen drawing of a man embracing a partially clad woman and the text "A HUMOROUS TALE OF ADULTERY Page 12" (Vol. I). Obviously the back cover of any magazine was not the most important part of the magazine. Basically the back cover of magazines maintains the tone of the front cover and gives the potential consumer an incomplete summary of the magazine's contents. Thus the back cover was not included in my content analysis count of Playboy's pages because it merely replicated some of the functions of the front cover and the table of contents. However, although back covers contain nothing new they do serve a promotional purpose for the magazine while it is on the news stand. Therefore the back covers of Playboy highlighted the articles that Hefner thought would have the most appeal to his customers. So while three issues did not have any overt reference to sexuality, they did not overtly contradict the tone of the front cover. And they did provide instant credibility for Hefner because the potential consumer could see the quality inside without having to open what may have been seen as a "bawdy" magazine. An example of this technique is the January 1954 issue which has the sexually suggestive front cover and a back cover with no sexual innuendo. The front cover has a
life sized Playboy bunny with his arms around two female beauty contest winners who visually appear to have been unwrapped as a Christmas present. The back cover does not contain any images or text that are overtly sexual. However, it does continue the visual motif of a Christmas package with a ribbon around a box and it does refer to the front cover with the text "a Christmas Gift from BOB HOPE page 36" (Vol. II). However, unless one has read the text one does not know that this article has sexual connotations. Finally, even the back covers that did not contain an overt reference to sexuality were merely a more subtle continuation of the front cover.

"The Men's Shop" is the only form of advertising in the first year of Playboy. As noted in Chapter Two, this one page recurring advertisement is included in the Self-Promotion category because, although it advertised products, it also promoted Playboy magazine and the Playboy ideology. "The Men's Shop" status as a shop organ is demonstrated by the fact that customers can only order the products advertised by writing to:

THE MEN'S SHOP,
C/O PLAYBOY,
11 E. SUPERIOR STREET
CHICAGO 11, ILLINOIS.

The address above was Playboy's corporate headquarters after March 1954. "The Men's Shop" address for the three issues preceding the March one was the same as Hefner's personal apartment " C/O PLAYBOY, 6052 S. HARPER AVENUE, CHICAGO 37, ILLINOIS". This use of his home address for a merchandising scheme demonstrates how closely Hefner identified with Playboy, it also demonstrates that "The Men's Shop" was purely an extension of Playboy magazine. The Playboy ideology, the playboy lifestyle was also promoted in "The Men's Shop". An excellent demonstration of this
A Fiberglass ice bucket with a can-can girl design
by famous artist Jaro Fabry that will please any
playboy. It holds 2 1/2 quarts (2 trays of cubes) for 24 hours. $10.00
Vol. II, 3.

Any analysis of this advertisement suggests that Hefner is trying to sell sexual naturalism
with a touch of class in the form of an ice bucket. It is the "can-can girl" that "will please
any playboy", not the ice bucket. And noting the "famous" designer adds a touch of
class or respectability to the sexual ideology just in case the potential playboy is not fully
persuaded. In the April issue, the connection between a product and male sexuality is
not so explicit. However, Hefner uses the term "playboy" to sell both a penholder and a
travel iron. Even the most prosaic items were implicitly linked with the playboy lifestyle.

Weyr argues that Hefner's inclusion of "The Men's Shop" was a smart business decision
because it demonstrates Hefner's understanding of marketing strategies:

[he] flogged leisure products with little initial success, but the idea of including
one showed Hefner's intuitive grasp of magazines as merchandisers and mail-order
deptment stores

10.

The reason there was "little initial success" in sales is that Hefner was really "flogging" a
lifestyle, a sexual ideology. Until the playboy lifestyle was popular, the actual products
had no particular appeal. As Weyr also explains "[E]ventually he [Hefner] sold millions
in Playboy products" (10). The clear inference to be made from both the text of "The
Men's Shop" and Weyr's observations is that Hefner was pushing products with his
playboy philosophy and the products did not sell until male readers bought the
philosophy.

Editorials in Playboy's first year were rare. In fact, the only true editorial was
Hefner's mission statement for Playboy magazine in the first issue. However, by May
1954 the magazine incorporated "Playbill" which Weyr describes as "the up-front
summary introduction to each month's issue" (56). Weyr is correct to indicate that the
"Playbill" was always in the first part of the magazine, but it was far more than a
"summary". The very first "Playbill" is more than descriptive:

A number of our readers, while commenting favorably on the Hartog Shirt story
in the March issue, complained at not seeing more of the lovely model,
Joanne Arnold. The best way to quiet these mumblings, we felt, was to feature
Joanne as a Playmate of the Month, so you'll find her on page 26 with nary a
shirt in sight

Vol. VI, 4.

This passage demonstrates that "Playbill" was far more than an objective expansion of
the table of contents as Weyr implies. Under the guise of responding to readers' requests
the editorial "we" suggests that what men really want is unclad women and Playboy is
the best place to find them. The casual attitude projected by the editorial voice indicates
that persuading "Joanne" to pose was no problem. One of the major tenets of Playboy's
ideology is that men are essentially sexual. Hefner, while discussing the selection of
Playmates puts the matter in more colloquial terms:

"If a guy digs a broad," he [Hefner] explained, "you'd expect him to dig photos of
broads. And if he doesn't dig broads, he's got a problem"
in Miller, 48.

Although the five "Playbills" within the scope of this study do not always emphasize
sexuality so clearly, this major tenet of sexual naturalism is always present.

The letters section is designated Self-Promotion because either Hefner or Russell
chose the letters to be published and they also had the opportunity to respond to the
letters in print. Complete control of all the material seen by your general audience, while
pretending to be objectively presenting dissenting opinions, gave Hefner all the rhetorical
advantages. Therefore an analysis of the cumulative letters and editorial responses
should provide the clearest illustration of Hefner's ideological position. Obviously most
of the letters published were quite complimentary. Hefner divided the letters pages into
sections and one constant category is "THE CHEERING SECTION". The letters in this sub-section are generally complimentary as this one from the July issue demonstrates:

To say that PLAYBOY is different would be stupid, you already have thousands of letters to attest to that fact. To say that PLAYBOY is good would be a lie -- it isn't good it's perfect!

Howie Lasseter
Ft. Worth, Texas

Vol. VIII, 2.

Letters like the one quoted above received no editorial reply. Furthermore Hefner showed an excellent grasp of rhetorical strategy by selecting other readers' letters to respond to specific complaints about previous issues. For example, in the June issue one letter criticizes the April Playmate:

What gives with the April Playmate? Was the photograph distorted or is the girl's body really that bad? Bust, waist, back, arm, everything's out of proportion. Your other Playmates have been excellent, but Miss April -- ugh!


While there was, wisely, no editorial response to this letter, it was framed by two other letters concerning Miss April. The letter immediately preceding the one above states "ooh, la, la, let's have more Miss April in the future" (Vol. VII, 3). And the letter immediately following the negative comments on Miss April exclaims:

Miss April -- what is her name? That exquisite angel, that heavenly body, can't be mortal! It must be Venus. Stop looking for Playmates. No one else can ever rate now.


Instead of the biased voice of the editor defending his choice of a Playmate, Hefner simply presented two complimentary opinions to one negative opinion. Beyond being a clever rhetorical move this tactic also reinforced the essentially sexual nature of males.
However, the clearest statement of the Playboy ideology was found in the August issue's letters' section. The single letter asks if Playboy knows of "the harm you are doing to young America" because "[Y]oung people twelve and sixteen years old, who constitute the vast majority of those who read PLAYBOY, have no business doing so" (Vol. IX, 3). The author of this letter, one Armin J. Edwards, also criticizes Playboy's fiction and pictorials:

Would you want your child to grow up with the wrong idea about sex? Would you want his Bible to be Boccaccio and his idea of woman to be personified by a voluptuous nude in the most seductive of positions

Vol. IX, 3.

Hefner's editorial response to this letter was a four step process. First, he notes that he has been expecting this kind of letter, but "the June issue was our seventh, and your letter is the very first" (Vol. IX, 3). Obviously Armin did not have a lot of support in this liberated era, according to Hefner. Second, Hefner agrees in a condescending manner that Playboy is not for children, but is published solely for men:

You're right though -- PLAYBOY really isn't suitable for small children. A second perusal may convince you it isn't just right for adolescent school girls or maiden aunts, either. You see, PLAYBOY is a magazine for men -- and sophisticated, city-bred men, at that

Vol. IX, 3.

This particular section strongly implies that a hierarchy exists among men, with the "sophisticated, city-bred" man at the top of that hierarchy. Third, Hefner clearly articulates his position on sex:

As for sex, we think it's here to stay and we think it belongs in a magazine for men. It is one thing almost all men seem to have a common interest in -- and we're a little suspicious of those few who don't... we believe that sex should be enjoyed right along with nasty pleasures like drinking and gambling

Vol. IX, 3.
In this compact blurb, Hefner manages to: assert the ubiquity and permanence of sex; affirm the essentially sexual nature of men; slander the "few" who are not interested in sex; and undermine the romantic or moral significance of sex. This editorial response affirmed all the central tenets of sexual naturalism. Fourth, Hefner argued for the social benefits of adopting social naturalism as an ideology. He argues that he wants his boys, although he has none at this point, to read *Playboy* when they grow up because it will enlighten them:

> We'll second that motion for a cleaner American mind, Armin, and hope that it becomes a broader, less hypocritical mind too.

Once again Kinsey's observations about the dichotomy between Americans' sexual beliefs and their actual behavior was invoked. Adopting *Playboy*'s version of sexual naturalism would lessen American hypocrisy and broaden limited perspectives was Hefner's concluding argument. While there was no supporting evidence in this editorial response, it was clearly a coherent argument in favor of sexual naturalism and the *Playboy* male hierarchy. Although the sales oriented format of all popular culture artifacts discouraged formal debate, this editorial response demonstrates that Hefner was not adverse to an overtly ideological debate given an opportunity.

In conclusion the letters section is representative of the entire Self-Promotion category. Although the six elements of Self-Promotion did not always use the same rhetorical techniques or were not always overtly ideological, they all complemented each other and reinforced the argument for sexual naturalism. No element of Self-Promotion contradicted the tenets of sexual naturalism. Thus this study concludes that the Self-Promotion category meets Fisher's criterion of structural coherence. Now it will examine the twelve articles defined as the Advice category for structural coherence. While one cannot expect "service features" to exemplify the characteristics of a formal
argument, it will be sufficient to discover a coherent projection of an ideal lifestyle to satisfy structural coherence.

The first indicator of structural coherence is the nature of the topics in the Advice category. All twelve articles were addressed to males and there were no advice articles on labor intensive topics like repairing your car, or preparing your income tax return, or maintaining your health. The four major topics covered in the Advice category included specialty drinks, sports, exotic foods, and masculine decor. Furthermore, the topics selected always seemed to be "practical" advice because they enhanced readers' chances for a sexual encounter. An obvious example of this strategy is in the article "Won't You Step Into My Parlor" in the May issue. Ostensibly this article is about appropriate masculine apartment decor, but the introductory paragraph defines appropriate as promoting sexual activity:

LIKE MR. SPIDER, the smart playboy keeps his surroundings inviting -- and that means simple and modern. You can forget the idea that a cluttered apartment is typically masculine and, therefore, charming as hell to the ladies.

Vol. VI, 9.

This particular passage assumes that all males are interested in a heterosexual encounter; the article argues that specific furnishings would help a man "catch" the "ladies". There was also the subtle, but unavoidable implication, that the "smart playboy" i.e. the most sexually successful man, was far superior to the ordinary man, unlabeled but omnipresent, who will be sexually unsuccessful. One can see why Hefner hired Thomas Mario as Food and Drink Editor after reading "Playboy at the Chafing Dish" in the September issue. Mario's culinary and writing skills may be questionable, but his adherence to the Playboy ideology was unmistakable. The subtitle of this article prepares the reader for the true topic of this piece: "Catch her eye with that romantic blue flame and you'll have her eating out of your hand" (Vol. X, 29). The final result of
mastering the art of cooking with a chafing dish according to Mario "creates an effect something like that achieved by Dr. Mesmer. [Y]our subject is under complete control" (Vol. X, 29). Mario also provides a name for the incompetent man who cannot master the chafing dish (or his young lady) labeling him the "bobbish young man" (Vol. X, 29). Obviously, this article gave instructions on the chafing dish simply to enable the playboy to catch women and establish his place at the top of the male hierarchy. Even something as simple and straightforward as a drink recipe was colored by the Playboy ideology. In the January issue Hefner presents one full page on the "American Beauty". In small print are five ingredients and two instructions, but the majority of the page is taken up with a pen drawing of a voluptuous, nude woman drinking from a cocktail glass. Employing an associational logic the strategy was not to promote the drink, but to promote cognitive juxtaposition between the drink and males' essential interest, women. This conclusion is inevitable given that this one page article was a reprint from Saucier's book Bottom's Up. The common drinking phrase is given new implications by the inclusion of a female nude with every drink recipe. The two exceptions to this general rule of only imparting advice that enhances a man's sexual prowess were "Scoring a T.V. Fight" and "Tournament Bridge". Both articles were written by experts and focused solely on the actual topic, the actual skills to be learned. While both articles argued that readers could increase their enjoyment by really understanding the sport or game, there was no association between acquiring skills and becoming a playboy sexually. However, the other ten Advice articles all, explicitly or implicitly, linked the acquisition of skills with a male's sexual conquest. In other words, the Advice category has a high level of structural coherence because ten out of twelve articles "sell" the skills, recipes, or even products by stating or implying that they will serve to satisfy man's essential desire, sex. It is significant that the man Hefner hired as an "editor", Thomas Mario, consistently made explicit connections between culinary skills and sexual success. The two articles
that did not make this connection, also did not deny the connection. On the basis of such consistent linkage this study argues that both the Advice and Self-Promotion categories in *Playboy*'s first year consistently advocated Hefner's version of sexual naturalism. Structural coherence is very strong in these two categories.

The second criterion Fisher recommends to assess narrative probability is material coherence. This criterion is meant to measure the effectiveness of a rhetor's response to opposing discourses (Fisher, 47). In effect there were two opposing discourses to *Playboy*'s sexual naturalism: other men's magazines and general social attitudes towards sex. For the Advice and Self-Promotion categories to possess material coherence, they must both possess a response to the opposing discourses of these two groups. One should not expect to find responses to both opposing discourses in every element of the two categories, but there should be some acknowledgment and refutation of opposing discourses.

The accepted format of magazines and the financial realities of the marketplace forced Hefner to limit the arenas for polemic debate. Accordingly, the search for material coherence has been confined to the letters section and editorials in the Self-Promotion category and the articles in the Advice category which overtly recommend sexual naturalism. This limitation has been imposed because the nature of the other elements of the Advice and Self-Promotion categories precludes the incorporation of material coherence.

As noted earlier in this study, there was only one true editorial in *Playboy*'s first year. Therefore Hefner's editorial in the first issue is the only example of material coherence in editorials. As even the usually critical Miller admits, Hefner "finally produced a masterly piece that intuitively touched base with his generation" (38). Much of the appeal of this editorial was found in what Hefner promised *Playboy* would not be. The first opponent
Hefner addresses is the female audience:

we aren't a "family magazine." If you're somebody's sister, wife, or mother-in-law and picked up the magazine by mistake, please pass us along to the man in your life and get back to the Ladies Home Companion


Hefner was expecting some moral outrage from female members of society and cleverly preempted any moral indignation by arguing that Playboy was produced solely for males. Just as women had magazines produced solely for female consumption men had a right to magazines produced solely for them. Remembering Kidd's research on American beliefs about the differences between men and women this particular argument had some doxastic force. Americans already believed that men and women were different and that men possessed an innately higher sex drive and Kinsey's data seemed to support that conclusion. The second issue Hefner addressed was how his magazine would differ from other men's magazines. The two key differences according to Hefner are that Playboy will "be spending most of our time indoors" and "will emphasize entertainment" (Vol. I, 3). There is a clear argument here against the stereotypical men's magazine and its emphasis on conquering the great outdoors. The second part of Hefner's criticism of other men's magazines was their emphasis on practicality. The examples he uses to demonstrate the tedious nature of other men's magazines are "avoiding a hernia to building your own steam bath" (Vol. I, 3). These activities require hard work and physical discipline, while Hefner encouraged the creative, classy enjoyment of leisure. Finally, Hefner disposes of the highbrow intellectuals by stating that "[A]ffairs of state will be out of our province. [W]e don't expect to solve any world problems or prove any great moral truths" (Vol. I, 3). The implicit argument here was that political and ideological disputes were not resolvable in any magazine, despite the various attempts. There was also a disingenuous element because Hefner was trying to prove a "great
moral truth” or at least disprove the socially prevalent moral truth about sexual relations. However, Hefner met the three major objections to his magazine that could potentially be raised:

1. Your magazine is morally unsuitable for a general audience of American adults.
2. There are already enough "men's magazines".
3. Your magazine is unacceptable because it does not focus on important or newsworthy issues.

Hefner's first editorial was an excellent example of refutation that demonstrates the importance of Fisher's material coherence. However, this author considers the five "Playbills" as editorial writing also. Surprisingly, given how the various "Playbills" created structural coherence, they provided absolutely no material coherence. One assumes that their function as expanded tables of contents precluded any response to opposing or alternative discourses.

The major forum for opposing discourses in Playboy's Self-Promotion was the letters section. As previously noted, the editorial control over which letters are published, in which order, in what proportion (supporting versus opposing views), and the possible, but not required, editorial response provided excellent structural coherence. This flexible format also provided the best arena for material coherence. Alternative views can be contained, managed, and refuted easily in this section. Furthermore, Playboy earned a reputation for open-mindedness by publishing letters that were openly critical of the Playboy ideology, without threatening the prevalence of that ideology. Hefner seems to have instinctively understood the rhetorical process. The second issue of Playboy, obviously there was no letters section in the first issue, contained eight letters. Seven of these eight letters praised Playboy for its innovation. Only one published letter presents
an alternative viewpoint:

That "Miss Gold-digger" article in your first issue was the most biased piece of tripe I've ever read. Most men are out for just one thing. If they can't get it any other way, sometimes they consent to marry the girl. Then they think they can brush her off in a few months and move on to new pickings. They *ought* to pay and pay and pay

Muriel Bordon
Memphis, Tenn.

Vol. II, 2.

Interestingly, Hefner and Muriel shared the same view of male sexuality; they both believed that sex was the most important thing to men. However, while Hefner believed that society should accommodate the essential nature of men, Muriel believed that men should be punished for their machiavellian methods of getting sex. The editorial response to this letter is simply "Ah, shaddup!" (Vol. II, 2). Hefner had no need to respond in any more depth because the two preceding letters both praised the "Miss Gold-Digger" article. Hefner's first editorial was almost prescient in that the substantial ideological criticism came primarily from females. Male criticism, as represented by the letters section, only addressed specific issues, not the ideological perspective. The one exception to this observation is Armin J. Edwards' letter in the August issue discussed above. One letter written by a male and published in the June issue demonstrates his loyalty to the *Playboy* ideology:

my secretary didn't feel as enthused about your fine magazine as I, and after minor discussion over a cartoon, she up and quit


This letter contained an implicit criticism of the *Playboy* philosophy. A woman, according to the letter, actually quit her job because she disagreed with the *Playboy* ideology. Of course, in reality there may have been other factors in her decision to quit,
low pay, long hours, a lecherous employer, or family concerns, but the published letter strongly implied that quitting was purely a result of disagreement with the Playboy ideology. However, the most powerful example of material coherence was a letter in the August issue wherein a female reader challenged the Playboy assumption that men do not want to get married. In a stunning reversal of the playboy philosophy, she argues that “real” men do not fear marriage:

...men are not afraid of marriage. To the contrary they welcome it.

It is, rather, the weak-minded little idiot boys, not yet grown up, who are afraid of getting "hooked." These infants, so easily swayed by malicious stories and facetious articles such as yours, are the only ones who think marriage is a trap

Vol. IX, 3.

Although she was commenting on one article in particular, "Open Season on Bachelors" in the June issue, she challenged Playboy's entire male hierarchy. She also questioned Playboy's assertions about the ultimate male pleasure, a variety of sexual partners. She argues that "this constant sampling (numerous sexual partners) dulls the taste and fogs the senses. [A]ll pleasure is then lost from overindulgence" (Vol. IX, 4). She concludes her letter with a quotation from Socrates:

"The happiest life consists in ignorance, before you learn to grieve and rejoice"

Vol. IX, 4.

This closing quotation allows Playboy to maintain its ideological position with a clever retort about Socrates' wife: "We have a feeling that Socrates would be on our side Judy. Wasn't he married to Xantippe, the most famous shrew of all time?" (Vol. IX, 4). Simply put, Hefner rejected her ideology because she was a woman; she could not possibly have understood what men really felt or thought.

While there are not many letters that present an alternative ideology, Hefner did present the major objections to his philosophy. He provided material coherence by
answering objections raised in print. While his responses may not have adhered to the rules of formal logic, they seemed to satisfy his audience. Therefore, this study concludes that despite the limited number of opposing discourses in the Self-Promotion category, it does possess material coherence because the major ideological objections to Playboy's version of sexual naturalism were both presented and answered.

The Advice articles which strongly imply that sexual success can be obtained by acquiring the recommended skills should also possess material coherence to be truly persuasive, according to Fisher. Unfortunately, the ten articles which suggested that sexual pleasure was paramount and might be obtained via certain foods or drinks did not present any views which overtly disagreed with their underlying assumptions. Thomas Mario was simply the worst offender rhetorically because he constantly associated food and drink with sexual encounters. He wrote four articles for Playboy in the time period of this study and all four presented a single minded ideology. For example, one of the articles "By Juniper" about the history and preparation of gin drinks in the August issue claims that "a tall gin drink will make her cool and cooperative" (Vol. IX, 37). Nothing was allowed to interfere with the assumption that this "fact" was the reason men read such articles. The same single-mindedness was apparent in most of the other Advice articles. They constantly implied that the benefit of this knowledge was sexual conquest. In short, the Advice category of Playboy's first year lacks material coherence.

Characterological coherence is Fisher's third criterion for assessing narrative probability. The only two recurring characters in Playboy were the Male and the Female. According to Fisher, characterological coherence results in "predictability" of a character's actions. The large number of characters, their anonymity, and the format of the categories Advice and Self-Promotion constrain analysis to the essential division amongst humans, gender. For example, a letter writer is a character, but he or she will only appear once so one cannot make any judgement about individual characterological
coherence. Another problem with individual analysis of characters is that in the Advice category authors generalize about members of each gender. These problems do not allow one to examine characterological coherence on an individual basis as would be possible in more traditional kinds of fiction. All one can do is ascertain the predominant behavior or characteristics of both sexes and note the deviations from the magazine's norm for both groups. Furthermore analysis of characterological coherence will be limited in the Self-Promotion category to the magazine covers, "The Men's Shop", and letters section; one cannot really expect to find characterization in a table of contents or the "Playbills".

The ten magazine covers all have the male bunny icon present. In fact the five issues from May through September enlarged the bunny and made him a prominent actor on the front cover. In eight issues the bunny figure was presented in interaction with or juxtaposition to an attractive female figure. This fact suggests that the Male is primarily interested in females. One example of this characterization of a male figure is the April issue where the cover has a huge bunny on the front cover, top hats blowing in the background, and a drawing of a woman's skirt blowing up almost to her waist in his eye. Other issues have a male bunny opening a bottle of wine and the cork falling into a female bunny's cleavage (June 1954), and a life-sized drawing of the male bunny with his arms around two photographs of beauty contest winners (January 1954). The consistent presence of the male figure on the eight front covers is almost matched by the consistent presence of the female figure. This association of the female figure and the bunny icon is also present in the Pictorial category. In the April issue the bunny icon is a part of Miss April's personal mirror (Vol. V, 26 & 27). The suave male figure becomes a mirror for the female to see herself in. Females, whether photographs of real women or drawings, were always voluptuous and either scantily clad or posed in a seductive position on those eight covers. The covers of Playboy gave readers a consistent portrayal of both the Male
and Female figures: they are both sexually liberated and sophisticated.

"The Men's shop", as the title of this recurring advertisement page suggests, really only characterized the Male. Although there is a practical element to "The Men's Shop" with products like pen knives and traveling cases, the vast majority of products carry connotations of sexuality and sophistication. For example, the January issue carries an advertisement for the book Bottoms Up which is simply a collection of drink recipes. However, the advertisement's text appeals to Male sexual desire:

This volume is handsomely bound and illustrated to a playboy's taste. Besides innumerable sketches... the book includes a dozen full page, full color nudes by some of the nation's top artists

Vol. II, 3.

Despite the presence of purely practical products and their affordable prices, "The Men's Shop" primarily characterizes men, through product appeals as essentially desiring sex. The constant use of the word "playboy" in product blurbs also reinforces Hefner's version of sexual naturalism.

The letters section in the Self-Promotion category contains a consistent characterization of the Male, but an inconsistent characterization of the Female. As previously noted in this chapter, there was only one letter in the entire Playboy corpus written by a man that criticized the tenets of sexual naturalism. Other letters from male writers critiqued specific elements of the magazine, but they never criticized its basic position. Even a critical letter from a male reader in the April issue demonstrates the point:

The main disappointment was the photo feature "Playboy in Paris." Why were the pics so small and so few? The drawings got in the way and cut the eye appeal down 50%. Stop running Conan Doyle -- brother Sherlock can be dropped any time...I know this letter will find its way into the nearest trash can, but even with the gripes PLAYBOY is the best mag on the stands

Despite this reader's "disappointment" with the February issue of *Playboy*, he does not disagree with the magazine's purpose. Every letter from a male writer, with that one notable exception in the August issue, has supported the *Playboy* ideology; sex and sophistication are what men want. The Male figure as presented in the letters section may be inconsistent about which kind of fiction He prefers, what kind of sports should be covered, and whether Miss March is prettier than Miss April, but He never suggests that *Playboy* is an immoral or unappealing magazine. Tastes may vary, but the essentials are constant. The Female figure as presented in the letters section is more problematic. As discussed in previous chapters, *Playboy* has been attacked by various critics (most notably Michael Kimmel) for an inconsistent portrayal of females. Females as represented by the letters published in *Playboy* seem to be inconsistent as well. Some female letter writers thoroughly disapproved of, and challenged, the *Playboy* version of sexual naturalism; some actually liked the magazines themselves; and some simply saw it as appropriate entertainment for the men in their lives. Unlike previous discussions of female characterization in other categories, the letters section does not provide a simple binary opposition: sexual female ideal and sexually antagonistic female adversary. Instead the letters section presents a spectrum of female characterizations. For example, in the June issue one female writer reinforces the *Playboy* version of male sexuality:

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Please, oh, please send a year's subscription
of your excellent magazine to my panting husband!
The strain of watching the newsstands each month
is beginning to tell on him. By the way -- I
enjoy it too!                                 Vol. VII, 3.
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However, her emphatic declaration that she "enjoys" the magazine contradicts the usual *Playboy* characterization of wives. Females that completely disagreed with the *Playboy* philosophy have already been discussed. The third type of female as characterized by the
letters section was the "tolerant" type. This kind of female did not enjoy the magazine, but would tolerate her husband's enjoyment. There are two of these kind of letters in the April issue:

Please accept my check for a three year gift subscription to my husband, Alexander. I'm giving him this for his birthday because there isn't anything he'd appreciate more.

AND

My husband enjoyed your second edition of PLAYBOY so very much I have decided to get him a year's subscription to your magazine. My husband is very hard to please, but he liked your book very much.


These three kinds of letters make an essentialist or consistent characterization of women impossible. However, they did give Hefner a rhetorical advantage over antagonistic females. Finally, it is important to remember that Playboy's audience was primarily male, not female. Furthermore at least a part of Playboy's overall appeal was the, to males anyhow, inconsistency and incomprehensibility of females. The consistent characterological presentation of the Male in the Self-Promotion category outweighs the partially inconsistent presentation of the Female. The Male character is consistent throughout the Self-Promotion category, while the inconsistency of the Female is only apparent in the letters' section.

The Advice category, however, presents an almost perfectly coherent characterization of both the Male and the Female figure. The Advice category contains twelve articles and ten of them present a coherent argument for sexual naturalism. These ten articles also have characterological coherence: men are characterized as sexually driven and women are characterized primarily as resistant to sex. One of the best examples of this characterological coherence is found in Mario's article in the July issue "How to Play
with Fire". In this article after the man has created the perfect barbecue, steak and corn, he can see his female companion acquiesce to his essential desire:

as she sips the ale you [the man] detect in her eyes a kind of yielding rapture. Are any further stratagems necessary? Your battle, of course, is won

Vol. VIII, 35.

This characterization of males and females is typical of the four Mario articles. It was also typical of the general population's understanding of sexual relations. As Kidd notes popular magazines characterized the male as having an inherently higher sex drive than females (278). Therefore, this recurring theme in the Advice articles of the Male persuading the Female to have sex because he can impress her with his skills, must have possessed a certain resonance for the audience.

Both the Self-Promotion and Advice possess characterological coherence with respect to the Male. Male figures are almost always presented as sexually obsessed. However, the Female figure is sometimes absent and inconsistently characterized. While neither category possessed complete characterological coherence in portraying Female sexuality, this fact probably enhanced narrative fidelity for the primarily male audience. Despite the scarcity of material coherence and lack of characterological coherence for the Female, both Playboy's Advice and Self-Promotion possess strong narrative probability. The strength of the structural coherence criterion, combined with Hefner's conscious attempt to provide material coherence and the flawless characterological coherence of the Male figure more than compensate for two weaknesses in Playboy's adherence to Fisher's criteria for narrative probability.

Narrative fidelity is the second part of Fisher's narrative paradigm which has been assessed by the application of three questions on the values of the rhetorical process. These three questions are: (1) Are the values espoused relevant? (2) Are the values consistent with those already held? (3) What are the consequences of adopting a
discourse's values? (Fisher, 109). These questions Fisher claims will allow both the critic and the audience to "transform a logic of reasons into a logic of good reasons" (109).

The question of relevance, as noted in Chapter Three, is limited by Hefner's editorial in the first issue to male pleasure: either Playboy will provide it or inform readers how to get it. Therefore the Advice and Self-Promotion categories will be relevant if they either provide pleasure or inform readers how to get pleasure. The front and back covers of Playboy magazine are considered one element of Self-Promotion. The front covers of Playboy's first year either provided pleasure or indicated methods of acquiring pleasure. Eight out of the ten covers provided pleasure, from the perspective of sexual naturalism, with photographs or drawings of scantily clad women. The remaining two issues which did not have any female figures on the cover recommended a day at the beach or going to a jazz party. All Playboy's front covers focused on traditional conceptions of male pleasure. While the back covers did not provide any obvious male pleasure, they all functioned as indices to the masculine pleasure to be found within the magazine. One example of this technique is the back cover of the August issue which has a male face inside the sun giving the reader a knowing wink. Below this male sun face in bold text are the highlights of the magazine: "HUMOR...NUDES...CARTOONS...PLAYBOY'S PLAYMATE OF THE MONTH" (Vol. IX, Back cover).

"The Men's Shop" was relevant because it provided the "necessary" implements of pleasure. In the February issue Hefner breathlessly extols the virtues of a blender because "the married playboy can give it to his wife for the kitchen, then use it to mix fancy drinks and cocktails for himself" (Vol. III, 3). The relevant point in this particular advertisement is that a man can buy a blender for his wife, to avoid the shame of seeming too feminine, while still being prepared to make great party drinks. The implements for achieving male pleasure cannot be allowed to disrupt the masculine image. The products
advertised in "The Men's Shop" were all intended in some either practical or intangible way to enhance male pleasure.

The five "Playbills" and the ten tables of contents all fulfilled the same function as the back covers of *Playboy* magazine. Neither element provided pleasure, but both provided a quick index to the reader's favorite sections of *Playboy*. The Playbills also served the didactic function of telling the reader why the featured articles would provide pleasure.

The June Playbill informs readers why *Playboy*'s art is so good:

> Art directors, publishers, advertising agencies, and artists throughout the country submitted their best work. From the more than 10,000 entries, a distinguished panel of judges* selected less than 375 as representative of the finest editorial and advertising art of the year. Franz Alfschuler's illustration for...

"Bird of Prey" in the second issue of *PLAYBOY* was one of those chosen.

Beyond establishing the magazine's credibility as a quality product, there is a strong didactic element in this passage.

The letters section of the Self-Promotion category seems too overtly argumentative to be pleasurable. However, Hefner seemed to have been aware of this potential problem because in the January, February, March, and April issues there is a small picture of a nude woman. By the May issue the nude woman was replaced by the simple bunny logo. Only after five issues did Hefner feel comfortable with an element of his magazine being devoid of sexual enticements or didactic notes on the pursuit of masculine pleasure. One could argue that the letters section provides intellectual pleasure, but even then the pleasure would be substantially different than the pleasure provided by other elements of the magazine. The important fact is that Hefner was rhetorically aware enough to ensure that he provided visually pleasing material even in the letters section. Furthermore, he only eliminated the female nudes after his fledgling
magazine was successful. The Self-Promotion category meets Fisher's relevance criterion for narrative probability as there are obvious strategies to either provide masculine pleasure or instruct readers in the acquisition of pleasure.

The Advice articles all provided didactic instructions on improving the level of masculine pleasure. Even the articles that did not focus on sexuality explicitly state their purpose. An example of this clear focus on masculine pleasure is apparent in the article "Scoring a T.V. Fight", which claims "here are some scoring pointers that can make your T.V. fight nights more enjoyable" (Vol. II, 16). The instructive nature of "how to" articles can only be justified in an entertainment magazine if they instruct readers on methods to increase their pleasure. Masculine pleasure was the stated focus of Playboy magazine. With very few exceptions both the Advice and Self-Promotion categories meet Fisher's criterion of relevance. Therefore these categories seem relevant to Playboy's ideological mission.

Fisher's second question for assessing narrative fidelity is consistency: Are the values proposed consistent with values already held? One could argue that the sales figures of Playboy indicate that the tenets of sexual naturalism were consistent with values already held. However, according to Kidd's characterization of magazine culture in the 1950s, this claim is only partially true. Readers' values, as reflected in popular magazines, indicate that most Americans believed that men were more sexual than women and that self-sacrifice and practical considerations were the foundations of a successful relationship (Kidd, 266-270). Playboy's sexual naturalism both challenges and reinforces these values.

The first value, or belief, that men are more sexual than women was generally reinforced by both the Advice and Self-Promotion categories. The Advice articles consisted primarily of tips to men on techniques for persuading women to have sex. The implicit belief of all these articles, especially those written by Thomas Mario, was
that women are inherently less interested in sex than men. The letters written praising Playboy are almost exclusively from men. However, taking note of the Kinsey report on female sexuality, Hefner presented some images of women who seemed more interested in sex than men. For example, the front cover of the May issue depicts a voluptuous female leaning over a fence to flirt with the casually reclining Playboy bunny. Although the male bunny may be as interested in sex as the female figure, it is the female figure who is shown making the aggressive move. Miller summarizes the impact of Kinsey’s second report on human sexuality in America:

If Sexual Behavior in the Human Male, published in 1948, was a shocker, the report on female sexual behavior that followed five years later [1953] was a sensation, revealing to America a remarkable truth: nice girls did have sex (emphasis in original) 46.

Hefner and his magazine were at the forefront of changing American beliefs and values. It was probably no coincidence that Playboy’s depiction of more sexual females occurred after the Kinsey report on female sexual behavior. Despite, this partial challenge to general American mores with the more sexualized female figure, Playboy still presented males as more sexual than females.

The real challenge to generally held American values in Playboy’s Advice and Self-Promotion categories was to the notion of self-sacrifice. These categories encouraged the indulgence of male desire. Weyr argues that in the debate on "traditional sexual morality" Hefner is "the didactic popularizer of a tempered hedonism as religion" (xvii). A simple survey of the five recurring topics in Playboy’s tables of contents demonstrates its challenge to the Protestant work ethic: Humor, Pictorial, Fiction, Food & Drink, Sports. These five topics were present in every issue. The only effort or work required by Playboy was the necessary effort to increase masculine pleasures. Barbara
Ehrenreich summarizes *Playboy's* rebellion this way:

> If Hefner was a rebel, it was only because he took the new fun morality (the 1950s consumer ethic) seriously. As a guide to life, the imperative to enjoy was in contradiction to "conformity" and *Playboy's* daring lay in facing the contradiction head-on in Merrill, 259.

As one letter writer summarizes *Playboy's* appeal "[H]urrha! [S]omeboy has at last started putting the fun back in a sexy magazine" (Vol. V, 3). Hefner's famous editorial in the first issue overtly challenged the "serious" morality and suggested the American male was overburdened. In the final sentence of this defining statement Hefner confirms Ehrenreich's analysis:

> If we are able to give the American male a few extra laughs and a little diversion from the anxieties of the Atomic Age we'll feel we've justified our existence Vol. I, 3.

Both categories advocated the indulgence of male desires, which was a direct challenge to traditional values. Hefner seemed to have anticipated McGee's formulation of effective rhetoric: he grounded his challenge to orthodox values in traditional values and Kinsey's "scientific" research. So while neither the Advice or Self-Promotion categories was completely consistent with the values of *Playboy's* audience, they both grounded their appeals in the prevailing beliefs of the era and proposed a change in behavior that reflected new "scientific" data.

The final question used to ascertain narrative fidelity is consequence. While one cannot know the actual consequences of individuals' adopting *Playboy's* values, one can "see in the auditor implied by a discourse a model of what the rhetor would have his real auditor become" (Black, 113). Ideally Hefner would have had his audience become more enlightened about human sexuality and learn how to overcome societal obstacles to natural sexual desire. These two ideal consequences are derived from the two
categories: enlightenment from the Self-Promotion category and overcoming obstacles from the Advice category.

The Self-Promotion category presented an enlightened vision of sexuality. The front covers emphasized female sexuality and the playfulness of heterosexual encounters. Probably the best example of this playful attitude towards sexuality is the June cover. The male Playboy bunny and a female companion are sitting on a sofa and as the bunny opens the champagne the cork flies out and down the female’s cleavage. What has obviously been a formal date (the male bunny is wearing a tuxedo and the female bunny an evening gown with a fur wrap) is frozen at moment full of sexual innuendo, but also a humorous moment. Sex and humor are not incompatible. Also art editor Paul characterizes the cover of the first issue as having " 'the air of a college humor magazine and I think that had a lot to do with people picking it up " (in Weyr, 15). The letters section primarily shows people enjoying the magazine. Once again the consequences of relaxing and enjoying oneself are constructed as a positive experience for both men and women. One letter in the June issue demonstrates the consequences Hefner envisions for his audience: "[I]t's a toss-up between my husband and me as to which one enjoys your magazine the most" (Vol. VII, 2). This kind of consequence, wherein both males and females are enjoying Playboy’s mixture of sex, humor, fiction, sports, and food and drink, embodies the enlightened attitude Hefner envisioned his audience acquiring. However, for the sexually unenlightened, usually depicted as women, the Advice category recommended male strategies for overcoming resistance to their natural desire. These strategies usually included some appeal to the physical senses of the female which it was assumed would overcome her social inhibitions. The most blatant example of this type of article is Thomas Mario's "By Juniper". Mario provides detailed instructions for males to overcome the socially constructed female distaste for gin drinks. Deception seems to
play a large part in his advice:

Then you tell her she is drinking gin, a sloe gin fizz.
"It doesn't feel slow, darling," she says.
"Not s-l-o-w," you explain, "S-l-o-e. It's gin made from the sloe berry.
Of course, every honest student of liquor knows that sloe gin isn't gin at all...
Your deception is entirely legal. Like any liquor, the sloe gin gives leeway to her nerves

Vol. IX, 37 & 38.

This kind of article acknowledged that women may be less sexually enlightened than males. However, these articles suggest that men can still satisfy their desires by following the expert advice of Playboy writers. The two consequences for Playboy's audience inferred from the Advice and Self-Promotion categories are frequent sex and more enjoyable sex respectively. Hefner did not envision any negative consequences for his ideal audience. And he did provide both a sexually liberatory ideology and concrete advice on overcoming resistance to inherent male desire in socially acceptable ways. Thus the Advice and Self-Promotion categories combine to provide appealing consequences for their ideal audience. While the presentation of humorous, more enjoyable sex in the Self-Promotion category may seem irresponsible, and the masculine strategies advocated by the Advice category completely reprehensible, Hefner was determined to liberate sexuality from social conventions.

The two categories under examination, Advice and Self-Promotion, meet the three criteria of relevance, consistency, and consequence for narrative fidelity. Their only deviation from the recommended principles of Fisher's rhetorical model is to challenge American beliefs about self-sacrifice as essential to sexual relationships. However that specific challenge is made from the "doxa" of higher male sexual desire and directed at a primarily male audience. Hefner obviously knew his audience, young men

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6.4 Rhetorical Goals and Appeals

Although the Advice and Self-Promotion categories share the same ideological foundation of sexual naturalism, their specific goals are subtly different. The goal of the Self-Promotion category is to persuade readers that sexual naturalism is a worthy ideal. From the front covers' portrayal of both real and fantasy figures to the letters sections' ideological debates, to the Playbills' delineation of the magazine's contents, all elements depict an idealistic version of human sexuality. Sexualized pleasure becomes both available and guilt free in the fantasy world of Playboy's Self-Promotion category. Readers are encouraged to indulge themselves, to eliminate the gulf Kinsey noted between sexual mores and sexual behavior. However, Hefner is aware that his ideal world of sexual naturalism is not a reality. Therefore, while the Self-Promotion category presents the as yet only fantasy world of sexual naturalism, where your wife buys you a subscription to Playboy, the Advice category provides ways for men to evade the currently restrictive social norms. These two categories are complementary because Self-Promotion supports the future implementation of sexual naturalism and the Advice category strongly suggests how individual men can achieve sexual satisfaction even in an unenlightened world.

The appeal of this two-pronged approach to American males in 1953-54 must have been very strong. Kinsey's "documentation" of both male and female sexual behavior proved that many Americans were having sex frequently with numerous partners. Although we now know that Kinsey's methodology was flawed, when the first report on male sexual behavior came out in 1948, many men must have felt that their sex lives
were inadequate. Miller summarizes the appeal of Playboy this way:

To read Playboy was to join an imaginary smart set of guys who lived in penthouses, drove sports cars, and were worldly-wise about wine and women. For 50c. a month, a struggling insurance salesman with a nagging wife and mounting debts could enter the wonderful world of Playboy.

The appeal noted above was a two part process. The Self-Promotion category created an image of an "imaginary", idealistic world of masculine pleasures, especially sex. But it was the complementary Advice category that provided readers with the instructions necessary to become "worldly-wise about wine and women".

6.5 Conclusion

This chapter demonstrates that the two categories examined do possess narrative rationality according to this study's modified version of Fisher's Narrative Paradigm. The major deviations from the requirements of the Narrative Paradigm are contained within narrative probability. Both categories, Advice and Self-Promotion, present an inconsistent female figure thus deviating from Fishers's requirement of characterological coherence. However, this deviation has been shown not to be a serious one because: the Male figure was extremely consistent and the primarily male audience probably had experienced inconsistent female behavior. A more serious problem is the lack of material coherence in the Advice category. This category focused on instructing males how to achieve pleasure. However, it lacks material coherence because there is no presentation of an alternative viewpoint. Unlike the letters' section of the Self-Promotion category, the Advice category does not include any dissenting opinions on what constitutes male pleasure. Still the majority of Hefner's readers as judged by the letters' section seemed to agree with this one dimensional perspective. This major flaw in Playboy's rhetorical strategy seemed to go unnoticed by its audience.
The second aspect of Fisher’s Narrative Paradigm is narrative fidelity. Both
categories meet Fisher’s three questions for narrative fidelity: relevance, consistency, and
consequence. As noted above Playboy’s rhetoric was relevant to the question of
sexuality, especially male sexuality, and only envisioned positive consequences for its
primarily male readership. Also the text’s one deviation (challenging the cultural norms
of self-sacrifice) from complete compliance with Fisher’s criteria for narrative fidelity
only provides male readers with a more rational, less restrictive model for their sexual
behavior.

While the two categories under examination do not possess perfect narrative
rationality, they do work in complementary fashion. Self-Promotion presents the ideal
sexual world while the Advice category provides instruction on methods for achieving
the primary male goal. This complementarity of the two categories negates the
inconsistent portrayal of the Female figure, the lack of material coherence in the Advice
category, and the denial of “self-sacrifice” as a pragmatic virtue. Even in minor
categories one can see both Hefner’s rhetorical strategies and ideological vision.

The following chapter will summarize the results of chapters Three through Six to
illustrate the consistency of Playboy’s rhetoric, when it is examined through Fisher’s
narrative paradigm. Furthermore it will attempt to analyze the effect of Playboy’s
rhetoric on 1950’s model of masculinity using the theories of Kenneth Burke. Using
Burke’s “dramatistic” model Chapter Seven will speculate on the “order” or male
hierarchy Hefner’s rhetoric would have ideally achieved. Finally Chapter Seven will
make suggestions for further studies on the intersection of ideology, rhetoric, and
various masculinities.
CHAPTER 7
CONCLUSION

7.1 Summary of Research Question Results

The previous four chapters, in answering this study's three research questions, have demonstrated that the constituent categories of Playboy's first year form a cohesive rhetorical pattern. The first research question on Playboy's sources demonstrated the fledgling magazine's reliance on the conventions of magazine publishing. Numerous critics, like Miller, Weyr, and Merrill, have explicitly noted Playboy's resemblance to Esquire. This consistency is not very surprising when one considers that even as late as 1968 "Hefner insisted on final approval of virtually everything in the magazine" (Miller, 139). Hefner's position as the major stockholder in Playboy and experience working for Esquire almost guaranteed that Playboy's first year would be firmly grounded in the "doxa" of magazine culture. The one exception to the traditional nature of Playboy's sources was Hefner's obsession with the ideology of sexual naturalism. Although Hefner used the traditional sources of American magazine culture, the pieces selected almost always reflected his personal position on human sexuality. Research question two focused on Playboy's rhetorical strategies as they were deployed in the actual text. This question became the foundation of this study because it seemed most likely to provide the answer to the problem of Playboy's instantaneous and unlikely success. Using a modified version of Walter Fisher's narrative paradigm, six questions were posed in each category: three questions to determine narrative probability and three questions to
determine narrative fidelity. As noted in Chapter Two, two of Fisher's original questions for narrative fidelity "fact" and "transcendence", were eliminated as being either redundant or critically invalid. Narrative probability's three questions all focus on a text's coherence. Fisher argues that persuasive discourse must present a coherent argument (structural coherence), meet major objections from other discourses (material coherence), and create characters who behave in a predictable manner (characterological coherence). Narrative probability is primarily concerned with the internal logic of a discourse. Narrative fidelity, on the other hand, focuses on a discourse's external validity, its reception by an audience. The three questions retained from Fisher's original schemata for narrative fidelity are: relevance, consistency, and consequence. Relevance is assessed by a discourse's appropriateness to the topic being discussed; consistency refers to the level of similarity between a discourse's values and those already held by the audience; and consequence is intended to measure the actual consequences of adopting a discourse's values. Obviously, Playboy's narrative probability, or internal validity, was easier to assess than its narrative fidelity in a historical study. Assessing cultural values or consequences at a remove of almost forty five years is obviously a difficult undertaking. However, it was possible via a study on magazine culture by Virginia Kidd to acquire the four accepted principles of sexual relations as they were reflected in popular magazines of the era. (See Chapter 3). This summary of popular magazine articles on relational roles provided an index to the American views on sexuality in the 1950s. It is important to note that Kidd's analysis was reinforced by the more general analyses of Miller, Weyr, and Merrill. The other problem involved in using Fisher's
principle of narrative fidelity was the question of consequence. However, while this study could not ascertain the actual consequences of adopting the Playboy values, Edwin Black provides a method wherein it could infer the rhetor's intended consequences for his audience from the discourse itself. All five categories of Playboy's first year were examined for both narrative probability and fidelity using this modified version of Fisher's narrative paradigm. A consistently high level of both narrative probability and fidelity was discovered in each category.

There were, however, two recurring deviations from Fishers ideal discursive model, one in narrative probability and one in narrative fidelity. The major deviation from Fisher's ideal model for rhetors in narrative probability is the question of characterological coherence. While not a problem in the Fiction (Chapter 3) or Advice categories (Chapter 6), the characterization of the generic or essential female character was inconsistent in the other three categories. The generic or essential male character of the other three categories was always presented as intrinsically interested in heterosexual encounters, but the female character's attitudes toward sex varied widely. Sometimes she is more interested than the male character and sometimes she is portrayed as antagonistic to any sexual desire, but that sanctioned by the Church and State, i.e. marriage. Kimmel argues that the inconsistency of the female character undermines Hefner's advocacy of sexual naturalism. If sexual desire is not inherent in females then the tenets of sexual naturalism cannot be defended. Females must be portrayed as having a consistent sex drive for an essentialist ideology like sexual naturalism to be logically coherent. Perhaps even Fisher would argue the same point, but this study responds that, first, narrative
probability is not the same as formal logic in its rigorous application of deductive formulae; second, one of Kidd's four elements of magazine culture clearly indicates men are more sexual than women; third, Kinsey's two reports on human sexuality also indicate that women can be more or less interested in sex than men; and fourth, an audience consisting primarily of men almost certainly experienced the sexual desire of actual females as variable. Therefore this study concludes that rigorous aesthetic formulae are inadequate guides to the experiential reality of the audience. Certainly, *Playboy's* popularity did not suffer as a result of this inconsistent characterization of women in the Humor, Cultural Commentary, and Self-Promotion categories.

The second rhetorical problem, according to Fisher's narrative paradigm, was that *Playboy's* values were not always consistent with the dominant values that Kidd and numerous social historians identify as prevalent in America in the 1950s. Kidd claims that the values of self-sacrifice and practicality are central to American sex roles. These two considerations were seen as complementary and essential to a relationship's success (Kidd, 269-270). *Playboy's* text completely denied this symbiotic interaction and focused on practicality. Practicality in the *Playboy* opus even extended to outright deception. Self-sacrifice, both as a moral value and efficacious relational tool, was ridiculed or absent in all of *Playboy's* five categories, since "nice guys finish last" in the playboy world. This denial of a publicly accepted moral value would seem to undermine *Playboy's* rhetorical effectiveness. However, one must remember there is a difference between publicly endorsed values and private experience. While other magazines of the era were espousing self-sacrifice as necessary to relationships, *Playboy's* success
indicates that its ridicule of self-sacrifice was consistent with "values confirmed or validated in one's personal experience" (Fisher, 109). In other words, Playboy's values were more consistent with its audience's experiences than other popular, more established magazines.

Although this analysis of Playboy did not create a separate category for the Pictorial section for various reasons discussed in Chapter Two, pictorials were found to provide a complementary vision of masculine sexuality. The various photographs discussed amply demonstrate that the Pictorial section also emphasized a definite male hierarchy based on the acquisition of females, associated sexual conquest with financial status, and argued for sexual naturalism. These pictures did not create an image of masculinity, but they effectively reinforced Hefner's other rhetorical strategies.

This study's third research question, on Playboy's goals and appeals, is answered by the evidence of the first two research questions. The first and second research questions reveal that Playboy is a paradoxical combination of the traditional and the innovative. Its sources are traditional, but reflect Hefner's belief in sexual naturalism and its rhetorical strategies follow the conventionally effective rhetorical patterns Fisher identifies except for the two "problems" noted above. All Hefner's traditional sources and rhetorical strategies merely imitate the models established by Life and Esquire. What distinguishes Playboy from its competition is the advocacy of sexual naturalism. Gail Dines argues that Playboy's distinguishing feature is "[R]ather than just commodifying sex, Playboy also sexualized commodities, a combination few advertisers could resist" (GRC, 257). While it is true that this study found evidence of both commodified sex and sexualized
commodities, these two traits do not explain *Playboy's* success. Most men's magazines had some version of both traits. Rhetorically speaking, *Playboy's* success is found in its innovation, its loudness to reverse McGee's metaphor of doxa as silent, wherein traditional pieties are directly and publicly challenged. As Weyr notes, "[E]ditors at other books gaped unbelievingly at Hefner's daring and insouciance" (7). Furthermore, *Playboy's* first year was hugely successful without any paid advertising. Therefore, on a rhetorical level, Hefner's strategy was not to attract advertisers, but to entertain and instruct his primarily male audience. Promoting the ideology of sexual naturalism seemed the perfect technique to distinguish *Playboy* from its competitors and attract a huge male audience. As Hefner himself states "the basic premise was new, and you did not find any social sexual values in *Esquire* at all" (in Weyr, 8). Merrill concurs with Hefner's opinion stating that "*Esquire* offered only a diversion. *Playboy* was proposing a revolution" (259).

*Playboy*’s goal in that first year determined its special rhetorical niche. There was nothing else in *Playboy* that its audience could not have gotten elsewhere. Classic fiction was a staple of every respectable magazine, articles on masculine style were abundant, and even *Life* magazine had a "summer 1953 cover [which] showed starlet Terry Moore sitting in the California surf, her colored shirt soaked and properly revealing" (in Weyr, 7). Furthermore, as already indicated, Hefner's financial constraints meant that all the items he was offering his readers were derivative or imitative, hence of a lower quality than the features offered by his competitors. In the time period covered by this study *Playboy* magazine only had seven employees; it did not have any staff writers or
photographers. What Hefner really offered his audience was a version of sexual naturalism that eliminated the unpleasant consequences of sex and publicly defended men's right to pursue sex as a "natural" desire. Hefner also grounded his revolutionary proposal in a credible imitation of the authoritative tone of other magazines. Essential male sexual desire was no longer a dirty little secret; supported by the "objective" findings of the Kinsey reports Playboy celebrated heterosexual desire. In some ways Playboy was the first example of a "Men's Rights Movement". The poor beleaguered American male was given public permission to have sex, tips on how to get more sex, encouragement to enjoy the other secondary masculine pleasures, and the pleasure of the text itself. In the blatant Playboy narrative/drama, people pursuing sex are heroic and people preventing sex are villainous. This complete inversion of social norms about sexuality must have come as an enormous relief to men who believed that their sexual desires were sinful deviations. In 1954 Geddes argued that the major sexual taboo of the era was both ineffective and anxiety causing:

> Ours is one of the few societies that has a general taboo against sex prior to marriage. This taboo is not effective; it makes more people sinners and criminals and sufferers – the "sexually miserables," as Dollard has called them – than we like to admit. Preface, 25.

These comments about the sexual taboo of the fifties reflect the opinions of both Hefner and Kinsey. After Kinsey's "scientific" research demonstrated the ineffectiveness of American society's primary sexual taboo, Hefner was able to argue for a new sexual ideology.
However, while Hefner's version of sexual naturalism was rhetorically effective, this study has not yet addressed the effects of this new ideology. Kidd claims that popular magazines can be powerful carriers of rhetorical messages:

Popular magazines, reaching vast numbers of readers, are an important element in the furthering of rhetorical visions. They can be presumed both to reflect and to inspire attitudes in their readers.

Thus far this study has closely examined the text of Playboy with a combination of cultural history and rhetorical theory. Its primary goal, in Kidd's terms, has been to explicate Playboy's rhetorically effective strategy, of openly celebrating the covert values or "attitudes" of its target audience of young, urban, males. The analysis that follows is a theoretical examination of the attitudes Playboy inspired.

7.2 The Effects of Playboy's Rhetoric

Kenneth Burke's theories of rhetoric, rooted in our biological nature, seem particularly apt methods to examine the effects of Playboy's rhetoric. Burke finds rhetoric an essential human activity, defining human beings through our use of symbols:

Man is the symbol using (symbol-making, symbol-misusing) animal, inventor of the negative (or moralized by the negative), separated from his natural condition by instruments of his own making, goaded by the spirit of hierarchy (or moved by the sense of order) and rotten with perfection in Gusfield.

Thus, humans use rhetoric to bring order and meaning to the world. They invent names and structures in a desperate attempt to rescue their actions from meaninglessness.

As already noted, Playboy's constant claim was that all men are inherently sexual beings. Fisher labels this consistency characterological coherence. Playboy's
advocacy of sexual naturalism is a logical extension of this essential claim. Ideological systems are always based in an essentialist claim about some aspect of reality. In the interaction amongst ideology, rhetoric, and hermeneutics, ideologies can only be established after their rhetoric has been interpreted favorably by an audience. However, a Burkean analysis would suggest that although this technique of identification is rhetorically effective, it is also one of those "'mystifications' that cloak the state of division" (Rhetoric of Motives, 141). Burke argues that this kind of identification is "compensatory to [essential] division", wherein humans can never be wholly identified with each other or consubstantial (R.M., 22).

In some sense, then, all rhetoric is based in an identification of values or substantive interests that is always only partial or temporary. Furthermore no identification or rhetoric can overcome humans' essential division. Despite Burke's claim that the identification process is always partial or temporary, "[F]or Burke, the rhetorical, identifying practices are crucial ways in which the social order is created and sustained" (Gusfield, 40) Clearly, Burke indicates that rhetorical practices are essential to the creation and maintenance of social order or the emplacement of ideological systems. The question now becomes what "social order" did the rhetorical, identifying practices of Playboy's discourse create or maintain?

If social order is a term for symbolic community created by the interaction of rhetorical and hermeneutic processes, then the central aspect of all ideologies for Burke is hierarchy. The centrality of hierarchy is demonstrated in Burke's claim that the "hierarchic principle itself is inevitable in systematic thought" (R.M., 141). Within
this study's application of Fisher's narrative paradigm, *Playboy*'s first year certainly qualifies as "systematic thought". In ideological discourse a dominant motive gives structure to the symbolic action. The dominant motive in *Playboy*'s discourse was hedonism. Burke’s Pentad contains five terms: Scene, Act, Agent, Agency, and Purpose. As numerous critics have pointed out, including Sonja Foss, these five terms correspond to the journalistic mantra of “Where, What, Who, How, and Why” (337). The previous examination of the text indicates that Scene for *Playboy* was essentially the whole human universe throughout time, although it possesses an ethnocentric appeal by prioritizing the Western world. Act, in the *Playboy* world, was the pursuit of pleasure, especially male pleasure. The greatest pleasure as indicated by the sheer volume of material devoted to it was sex. Agent, in the *Playboy* text, was the Male character. Women acted, but both the magazine’s title and the preponderance of its articles indicate that the Male was the primary agent. Agency, like Scene in *Playboy*, was an amorphous element. Agency was highly varied, how pleasure was achieved was almost irrelevant. Purpose, became almost completely irrelevant to *Playboy*: pleasure was pursued for itself; there were no higher or ulterior motives indicated. However, just describing or locating the various terms within a text does not provide a critical analysis. Almost any text will contain all five terms. Burke notes that the usefulness of his terms lies in the “ratios” because they are the “principles of determination” of a rhetor’s motive (*Grammar of Motives*, 15). Furthermore, in any rhetorical analysis one term in the ratio will be dominant. An example Burke himself uses is “‘terrain determines tactics’” where the Scene-Act ratio is employed and the Scene is the dominant term (*G.M.*, 12). The most important ratio in
Playboy is the Act-Agent ratio. Hefner explicitly defines his magazine as “a pleasure-primer styled to the masculine taste” (Vol. I, 3). “ENTERTAINMENT FOR MEN” on the front cover of every issue only reinforced Hefner’s position. Entertainment is the Act, and men are the Agents in the Playboy world. Furthermore, despite the variety of scenes (a king’s bedchamber, or a convent) the male Agent is most often evaluated by his resourcefulness at acquiring sex. Hefner’s selection of articles makes the Act-Agent ratio apparent. For example his selection of the Benjamin Franklin article “Advice on the CHOICE OF A MISTRESS” clearly evaluates the male in terms of the sexual act:

I know of no Medicine fit to diminish the violent Natural Inclinations [sexual desire] you mention, and if I did, I think I should not communicate it to you. Marriage is the proper remedy. It is the most natural state of Man... Your Reasons against entering into it at Present appear to me not well founded....they are small in comparison with the Thing itself


The overwhelming importance of the Act (sex) to the Agent (man) is further demonstrated when Franklin suggests that if his “young friend” does not get married, he must at least acquire a mistress. This fact indicates that Agency is also subordinated to the Act-Agent ratio. What matters is not how the male gets sex, whether through a wife or a mistress, but the essential issue is that he get the “Thing itself”. The unscrupulous Advice articles of Thomas Mario (discussed in Chapter 5) also reduce Agency to a mere footnote. The article above is also a representative case of the subordination of Scene to the Act-Agency ratio. Even when the Scene is colonial America, the Act-Agent ratio is the primary consideration. Even Purpose in this article is subordinated to the Act-Agent ratio. Franklin advises his young man to choose an older woman for a mistress. The
reason or Purpose for this advice is satirically summarized as “and lastly, they are so
grateful” (Vol. V., 15) Hefner’s selection of this kind of reprint material created the
Act-Agent ratio wherein the Agent (man) was evaluated almost solely by his Act
(acquisition of pleasure, usually sex). The variability of Scene and Agency indicate their
insignificance. And Purpose as an individual member of the Pentad, was almost always
collapsed into the Act.

All these elements imply that Hefner’s intended audience was only American males.
Perhaps Hefner only desired to close the gap between American males’ sexual behavior
and social norms. However, by advocating sexual naturalism he created a powerful side
effect. As noted in Chapter Four, Hefner’s humor often presented women as simply
markers in a masculine competition. If readers accepted Hefner’s ideology of sexual
naturalism, based on the evidence of essential male sexuality, then male sexual behavior
could no longer be evaluated using the social norms of Kidd’s Vision I. The Playboy
version of sexual naturalism, when accepted by readers, would reduce what Kinsey refers
to as the "psychic conflict" between public attitudes and actual behavior, but it would be
replaced with the open market struggle for sex. Gail Dines makes much the same point
arguing that for Playboy readers the "real prize" was women (256). She also argues that
it is the playboy’s acquisition of status, as defined by wealth, that enables him to get sex.
However, if monetary status results in the acquisition of the "real prize", sex, then
perhaps the true marker of masculine status is sex. A textual example of this claim
would be the "The 1st Tale of the 3rd Day", in the September 1954, issue wherein the
young peasant gets to have sex with nine young nuns. His acquisition of a modest
income comes about as a result of his sexual prowess after he has had sex with the nuns. Furthermore, American males were already familiar with the markers of monetary success; what Hefner added to this pre-existing male hierarchy was the contention that without all the "high-quality women he wanted" any man's success was flawed or lessened, or not truly a masculine success (Dines, 256).

It was Hefner's addition to the pre-existing male hierarchy of monetary success which made his magazine revolutionary. Burke argues that even the lowest members of a hierarchy participate in its ideals:

Though hierarchy is exclusive, the principle of hierarchy is not; all ranks can "share in it alike." But: It includes also the entelechial tendency, the treatment of the "top" or "culminating" stage as the "image" that best represents the entire "idea" (R.M., 141). emphasis in original.

Which means that while every man cannot be a "playboy", every "man" in Playboy's rhetoric shares the desire to become one. Furthermore, the "top" or "culminating" stage of the male hierarchy is indelibly associated with the possession of women. The visible sign of an attentive, attractive female is the only certain method of distinguishing a "playboy" from a successful entrepreneur or executive. In accordance with Burke's entelechial principle "playboys" are best represented by the male's acquisition of a desirable female. This is the "image" that characterizes the "playboy" figure.

Therefore, while Fisher's narrative paradigm clearly demonstrates why Playboy was such an effective rhetorical artifact, it is necessary to apply the Burkean conception of "hierarchy" to understand the social effect of Playboy. Hefner's conscious use of rhetorical strategies to persuade his audience to accept sexual naturalism as an
alternative ideology was successful. He cleverly combined the doxastic belief that males are essentially sexual with Kinsey's "scientific" data on sexual behavior to propose a new sexual ideology. This strategy was successful because it reduced male guilt brought about by disjunction of the romantic and religious ideals and what men knew or thought they knew about males' sexual behavior. However, while attacking the sexual hierarchy amongst males based on adherence to social norms, Hefner inadvertently replaced it with an equally rigorous sexual hierarchy. Instead of men being evaluated by the social norms Kidd enumerates in "Vision I", especially the notion of "self-sacrifice", the Playboy model of masculinity evaluates men by their heterosexual conquests. This rhetorical battle between equally hierarchical ideologies seems to adequately justify this study's definition in Chapter One of ideology as "meaning in the service of power". Power in this instance being the establishment of a new model of masculinity. As Burke argues "[T]o say that hierarchy is inevitable is not to say that any particular hierarchy is inevitable; the crumbling of hierarchies is as true a fact...as their formation" (R.M., 141).

This study has demonstrated the means by which a rhetorical artifact implemented a new ideology. Furthermore, via the theories of Kenneth Burke, it has also postulated the probable effect of this new ideology as creating a new hierarchical model of masculinity.

7.3 Suggestions for Further Study

This study's demonstration that Playboy's first year of publication was a coherent rhetorical presentation of a new masculine ideology does not lessen the need for more studies on both the nature and impact of pornography on masculine ideology. While Playboy was the first men's magazine to make the argument for sexual naturalism public,
numerous magazines have since imitated Hefner's ideological stance. As Andrew Ross notes "By 1980, over 200 hard-core and 165 soft-core straight male magazines...were established in more or less legitimate markets and submarkets that had surfaced and flourished by democratizing elements of the Playboy discourse for more popular or speciality audiences" (222). This statement illustrates the increased number of men's magazines that are published in "more or less legitimate markets". Obviously, this increased number of men's magazines suggests many more male sexual ideologies are present in Western culture than Playboy's.

Therefore, the first suggestion for further studies on male ideals in men's magazines would be a longitudinal study of Playboy. The current study could be used as a base to examine the changes in Playboy's rhetoric over the preceding forty five years. Valuable research questions would be: 1. Whether Playboy's masculine ideals have changed 2. How those changes, if any, corresponded to cultural norms 3. Describing the text's rhetorical strategies. Often popular cultural artifacts that succeeded initially because of their innovation become staid and reactionary by not adapting to changing cultural norms. A study of this kind would provide useful evidence about whether a reactionary or progressive rhetoric is more effective in an established magazine. Two obvious adaptations Playboy has made since the time period covered by this study are the reduction in the amount of fiction and the inclusion of advertising. The reduction in the amount of fictional work in Playboy is simply a mark of the changing magazine culture. But an analysis of the advertising content compared to the editorial content might illuminate the complex interaction between financial imperatives and ideological goals.
Finally the continued dominance of Playboy in the marketplace requires an analysis of its long term rhetorical appeal.

A second research project would involve the comparison of Playboy to its top three or four competitors: Penthouse, Hustler, and Swank. Penthouse and Hustler have already been featured in the mass media. Penthouse, an acknowledged imitator of Playboy, has faced court challenges because some of its pictorials seemed sadistic. And Hustler magazine founder Larry Flynt has been the subject of a mainstream motion picture and an academic dissertation. Both the film and the dissertation argue that the main ideological purpose of Hustler was the American right to free speech. But as Joseph Dominick asks "[I]s Flynt a rebel whom we should thank for defending free speech or simply a slimy character who got rich degrading women" (37). Oversimplifications of pornographic texts like those above seem the result of a lack of specific textual analysis and comparison with similar texts. Perhaps a study of this nature, comparing specific pornographic texts from specific time periods, would reduce the number of assumptions about pornography and establish a relative scale of social harm based on textual analysis instead of sweeping generalizations.

The preceding two suggestions for further study of pornography would provide a more concrete basis for quantitative studies on the social impact of pornography. As noted in Chapter One of the current study, researchers on pornography agree that pornography has some impact on male sexuality and is the primary conduit for information about sexuality for males. But, the usefulness of these two insights are negated by the lack of research on specific pornographic texts. One cannot assume that
because both Playboy and Penthouse are labeled "soft-core porn" and share a similar format that the effect on their mostly male audience will be the same. Textual analyses of specific texts as suggested above could prepare researchers for a field survey of actual effects, instead of the ideologically contaminated and unrealistic experiments now being conducted. For example, if a longitudinal study of Playboy found that it consistently advocated sexual naturalism with sexual conquests being the "god-term" of masculine competition, then a quantitative researcher could compare heavy consumers of Playboy and light consumers of Playboy and compare the two groups' responses to questions on masculine ideals. The present author does not possess the statistical skills or necessary resources to pursue such a research project. However, this kind of study would avoid generalizations about the effects of pornography and the artificial setting of most experimental studies on pornography consumption. Such a study would eliminate the necessary caveats of the following summary on the effects of consuming pornography:

"viewing pornography, whether violent or nonviolent, tended to increase aggressive behavior, at least as measured in the laboratory" (Dominick, 549. emphasis mine).

Pornography, even Playboy, is not typically consumed in the laboratory. Before theorists of any persuasion use quantitative research to support their more political academic theories it is necessary to create an operational hypothesis that can be tested against the real consumption of pornography.

Finally, the current study has been concerned with the rhetorical impact of a specific pornographic text on conceptions of masculinity, but studies on masculinity even in America are very limited. David Gilmore, a cultural anthropologist, claims that while the
A study of masculinity would be as profitable as the resurgent interest in constructions of femininity “masculinity, though equally problematic, still suffers from the ‘taken for granted’ syndrome” (2). Studies on the rhetorical exhortations aimed at modern males about masculine ideals would be very useful. Is it true, as Men’s Rights advocates Farrell and Haddad claim, that contemporary males are placed in a “no-win” situation:

The masculine gender ideal is contradictory; it reveals the powerlessness of men in the face of social reality. Any boy or man who tries to abide by that ideal fills his life with no-win situations

in Clatterbaugh, 74.

Obviously, such studies would have to be limited in some way; focusing on specific rhetorical artifacts concerning ideal male behavior. Such studies would also have to be concerned with not re-inscribing or accepting at face value manhood cliches. Probably the best method would be one analogous to the one used by Rita Hubbard in “Relationship Styles in Popular Romance Novels, 1950 to 1983”. Hubbard selects an immensely popular cultural artifact, the Harlequin Romance, and completes a “fantasy theme analysis” of their rhetorical vision. This kind of study reveals the relational rhetoric that a vast readership of women consume. Proving Gilmore’s point about the scarcity of studies on masculinity, this author did not locate any rhetorical studies on masculinity. A study of popular male myths and the popular artifacts that carry those myths could demonstrate the incoherence, the contradictory nature of male myths. Hubbard in her study on females concludes that “[W]hile romances are generally considered escape entertainments, they can also recommend and validate specific social orders for those caught up in their visions” (in Foss, 310). Her study is an excellent
example of the kind of work that could be done on masculinity. Perhaps the equivalent kind of text for males would be the Western novel. Then rhetorical critics could compare the visions of masculinity contained in the Western novel with the vision of masculinity contained in a specific pornographic text. This author suspects that just as there is an impossible, contradictory myth of the “Superwoman” there is an equally impossible, contradictory myth of the “Superman”. However, only studies that examine the rhetoric of masculinity will be able to substantiate this belief.

7.4 Concluding Remarks

This study resulted from the author’s dissatisfaction with the acrimonious debate between feminists about pornography and masculinity. Radical feminists, like Dworkin, MacKinnon and Morgan all subscribe to the theory that “male sexuality [is] naturally rapacious and gynocidal” and that “pornography is the theory, rape is the practice” (in Ross, 233-234). In other words, males’ sexual activity is intrinsically harmful, brutal to women and pornography teaches them how to do it. This perspective in which the male figure is essentially the predator and the female figure the victim seems both overly simplistic and dangerously close to releasing men and women from responsibility for their decisions. As Gayle Rubin, an anti-anti-pornography feminist notes, there are four major reasons that the Radical feminists’ position cannot be taken seriously:

1. Do not conflate pornography and violence as the vast majority of pornography contains little or no violence.

2. Pornography is not really a documentary of abuse of women.
3. Pornography is not at the center of women’s subordination because some of the most liberated societies allow pervasive pornographic artifacts, while some of the most repressive societies ban them totally.

4. The word "pornography" did not come into existence until the Victorian period and cannot function as a transhistorical paradigm to explain the subordination of women.

   in GRC, 244-251.

However, despite these logical protestations of the Radical feminists’ position, liberal feminists acknowledge both the popularity and influence of pornography on masculinity. In fact, Kimmel goes so far as to suggest that pornography may be “one of the chief weapons we may have in the dismantling of gender inequality” (22). One school of thought would eliminate all pornography and the other would “improve” pornography to implement gender equality. Neither position seems either practical or logical and both would create an ideological morass for the individual male struggling to assert and assess his own identity.

Another problem with the study of masculinity is that scholars seem oblivious to the contradictory, but still compelling, myths of ideal masculinity that pervade our society. Hefner’s challenge to what Kidd calls the Vision I version of relationships released males from the contradiction of being defined by their culture as more sexual, but being required to be “self-sacrificing”. However, Hefner’s new version of masculinity wherein sexual conquest is the “god-term” of masculine achievement (while internally consistent) did not eliminate the previous ideals of self-sacrifice or marital fidelity. Hefner could not completely replace previous ideals; he could not replace the emphasis on marital fidelity. Instead of replacing previous “masculinities”, he merely added another one to the already
overcrowded field. Perhaps this inability to completely replace previously dominant conceptions of ideal masculinity is why critics such as Kimmel and Rotundo perceive masculinity as in crisis. The crisis they note, which often seems perpetual, may only be the palimpsest effect as new versions of masculinity partially obscure older ones.

Further complicating any study of masculinity is our societal norm of defining both masculinity and femininity in contrasting terms. This practice leads to gender stereotypes, such as males are aggressive and females are passive, ideals that completely deny individual traits. These stereotypes are nothing less than reified ideals which marginalize people whose traits (sexual and otherwise) do not fit the gender ideals associated with their biological sex. Hefner could not avoid the stereotypes or reified ideals of his era. Instead of liberating men from a repressive ideology, he merely instituted a new, but equally authoritarian ideology wherein the stereotypes of masculinity were re-arranged with sexual conquests becoming the determining measure of masculine success. This model of masculinity, while revolutionary at the time, did not provide his audience with a more functional ideology by which to evaluate their own manhood. Hefner merely replaced the “Father Knows Best” ideal of masculine sexuality, monogamous, domesticated, and pious, with the bachelor ideal of homosocial competition for sexual conquests. He believed in his new model of masculine sexuality. In fact, Hefner became the paradigmatic symbol of the “roving” bachelor.
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APPENDIX

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While this author thinks that the visual elements of *Playboy* have been over analyzed by a variety of critics, he intended to include a representative sample of them in this study. However, *Playboy Enterprises Inc.* is very rigid about its proprietary interests. Without legal permission to reproduce some of the visual elements of *Playboy*, this author can only hope that his readers either have access to the visual elements discussed in this study or are satisfied with the author’s verbal description. A good university library should have the first ten issues of *Playboy* on microfilm. The following two pages are exact copies of a facsimile received from *Playboy Enterprises Inc.* explaining its position on the reproduction of visual elements. Readers will notice that the company’s position on the reproduction of centerfolds, the most famous and representative visual element of *Playboy* magazine, is absolutely non-negotiable. In a telephone conversation the author also learned that even the humorous drawings cost thirty dollars per page to reproduce. This combination of financial restrictions and absolute refusal to release material made it impossible to include any visual elements. The author apologizes for the lack of visual elements in this dissertation, but if readers have access to the first year of *Playboy* they will easily be able to find the visual elements discussed in this work.
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Dear Mr. Lambkin:

I'm sorry but we cannot give you permission to use the photos as explained below. I'm clearing the use of the cartoons with our cartoon editor, Michelle Urry. Please be aware that she usually charges a $50 reprint fee for use in dissertations. I've asked that she consider waiving the fees.

I'll get back to you as soon as I hear back from her.

Diane

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<td>5 and 6 (nude girls on both sides of rabbit, who has girls for eyes)</td>
<td>April 1954</td>
<td>&quot;Playboy's Eyeful&quot;</td>
<td>Graphic House</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

PLAYBOY DOES NOT OWN THE COPYRIGHT. No record of where we purchased the photos. Hiller took the photos in the 1920s. It's quite possible that they are now in public domain.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Fax page (description)</th>
<th>Issue</th>
<th>Feature</th>
<th>Photographer</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>7</td>
<td>May 1954</td>
<td>&quot;Surgery&quot;</td>
<td>Lejaren 'a Hiller</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
PICTORIAL IMAGES. It's against company policy to release these images.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Fax page (description)</th>
<th>Issue</th>
<th>Feature</th>
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</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>8 and 9</td>
<td>April 1954</td>
<td>centerfold Marilyn Waltz</td>
<td>Hal Adams</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>10 and 11</td>
<td>May 1954</td>
<td>centerfold Joanne Arnold</td>
<td>J. Baumgarth</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>12</td>
<td>December 1953</td>
<td>centerfold Marilyn Monroe</td>
<td>Tom Kelley</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

CARTOONS. Must be cleared with our cartoon editor.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Issue</th>
<th>Page</th>
<th>Cartoon Caption</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>January 1954</td>
<td>11</td>
<td>“It’s nice of you to ask me, Miss Carter— but without pajamas, a toothbrush or anything, I don’t see how I could possibly stay the night.”</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>March 1954</td>
<td>11</td>
<td>3D movie</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>May 1954</td>
<td>47</td>
<td>“Sedgewick, will you please go to sleep?”</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>September 1954</td>
<td>12</td>
<td>“Now that you’ve chosen between us, Eileen, do you mind if I watch?”</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Cartoonist</th>
<th></th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Locke</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Julien Dedman</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Rea</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Jack Cole</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
David John Lambkin was born to Daniel Harley Lambkin and Beverley Maxine Lambkin on November 30, 1959, in Wingham, Ontario, Canada. The oldest of four children, he attended the University of Western Ontario. His first attempt at post-secondary education was notably unspectacular. However, his sheer perseverance produced a bachelor's degree in English language and literature in 1984. His father's death on April 24, 1984, and his mother's resulting illness necessitated a hiatus from academia. When he finally returned in 1988 to pursue a master's degree in English at the University of Guelph, he had a brain aneurysm. His recovery was slow, but helped immeasurably by his significant other, Marie Elizabeth Smith.

After he received his master's degree from Guelph, he was inveigled into attending the doctoral program in Speech Communication by the inimitable Dr. Andrew King and Marie's determination to get a Master of Fine Arts degree at Louisiana State University. Blessed with a child, Lauren Elizabeth Jocelyn Lambkin, during his studies at Louisiana State University Mr. Lambkin still managed to complete his doctorate and enjoy the unique culture of southern Louisiana.

His future plans include: having more healthy, happy children with the lovely Marie, teaching at a Canadian university, and quitting smoking,
VITA

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DOCTORAL EXAMINATION AND DISSERTATION REPORT

Candidate: 

David John Lambkin

Major Field: 

Speech Communication

Title of Dissertation: 

Playboy's First Year: A Rhetorical Construction of Masculine Sexuality

Approved:

[Signature]

Major Professor and Chairman

[Signature]

Dean of the Graduate School

EXAMINING COMMITTEE:

[Signatures]

Date of Examination:

2 March 1999