



Free Previews | Top 10 Features | Video on Demand | Playboy TV | Shop Playboy | Special Editions

PLAYBOY.COM
BOOKMARK US »

Members log-in here

Not a member? Click here

Playboy Magazine | Playmates | Cyber Girls | Features | A&E | World of Playboy | Sex | On Campus

FEATURES

guy 101 | playboy.conversation | wheels | blueprints | playboy gaming

MARTIN AMIS

THE PLAYBOY.COM CONVERSATION

MA: Revulsion. But I thought, that's his language, not mine. And actually, he is more like one's least favorite nephew doing the same thing.

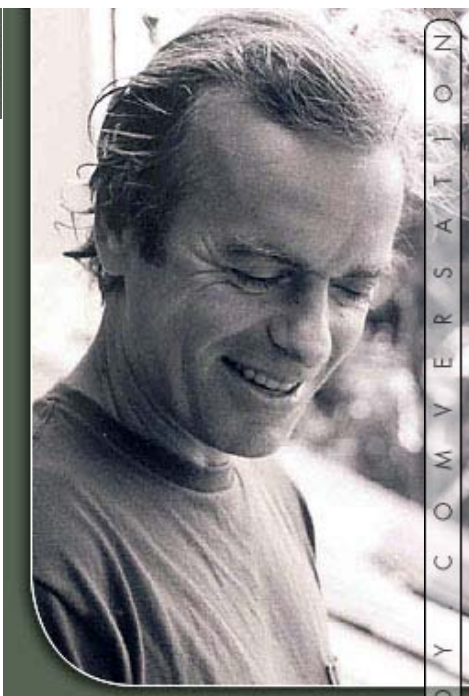
PB: He's not really familiar to U.S. audiences....

MA: I'm very glad to hear it. Long may it continue. But he's sealed up his own coffin.... It's a minor thing, but he must already know that this will stick with him and may be the only thing he will be known for. Salman Rushdie taught us that novelists should stick together, and not use the press to defame fellow novelists. I talked to American friends who said that if that had happened in America, someone would have been carpeted -- fired. Whoever commissioned and printed it. It's just contemptible. But there it is.

PB: If you see Mr. Fischer, will you have any desire to deliver a beating along the lines of the one that opens your novel?

MA: I think I've seen him once, from the rear, and he's a little bit of a fat-ass troublemaker. He is widely disliked everywhere. I wouldn't like you to get the feeling that I'm obsessed with him. [Laughs] He's a spoiler, and a wretch, and a creep.

PB: It's hard for Americans to understand literary figures going at each other like this.



THE PLAYBOY CONVERSATION

AUDIO EXCLUSIVES

Amis on pornography

Amis on "the democratization of the navel"

moveyourmousefast

34.1 pixels/sec

MA: I think that's all much exaggerated. Beyond middle age, I don't think writers are in competition anymore. After all, we're not all trying to write the same novel. We're all trying to write our own novel. In a sense, we're all trying to write a novel called, "The Way We Live Now," you know, the Trollope novel. But with such an individual slant that one's not in competition. It's only these saps and losers like Tibor Fischer.... It shows that he's not of the front rank at all that he was prepared to do it. Its own language gives it away. It's like a whimper of neglect.

PB: In the book, your main character Xan sees a drink on a bar menu called a "blow job." It reminds him of clothing companies with bastardized names, like FCUK, and he briefly contemplates what you call the "obscenification" of everyday life. Have sex and obscenity become too pervasive?

MA: Well, that would be a fruitless position to take. Even as you get older, your tolerance mustn't fail. We're all in this together. You're looking to comment on it and maybe satirize it, but you can't really regret it because this is human nature in the next manifestation.

PB: But you still have misgivings....

MA: It now seems that pornography is the leading sex educator in the Western world. And the idea of having your sexual nature determined by a medallion-in-the-chest-hair artist out in Los Angeles is really humiliating. I'm not talking about me, but I'm talking about my children's contemporaries, kids aged 18. They're getting their sex tips from some charlatan at Wicked Video. Whereas we were all formed by God knows what -- lots of D.H. Lawrence and a more respectable brew than they're being influenced by. And I think that's shocking.

More broadly, it seems to me there's a whole carapace of inhibition that's been carved off in the last 10 years. We see it in various manifestations. For instance, there's the mobile phone, with people having passionate arguments with their

loved ones in crowded buses, as if inhibition has never been. Or this new thing with the democratization of the navel. I don't know how ubiquitous it is in America, but everyone here in England shows their navel, no matter what kind of state it's in. The jewel festering in the navel, never mind the fold and the stretch marks and the outie. It's sort of great to see, but it looks to me like an illusion. When you see a fat woman showing her navel, she is clearly liberated by it and showing the benefit of this disclosure.

PB: What do you think that says about society?

[next](#) 

[01](#) • [02](#) • [03](#) • [04](#)

photo: Isabel Fonseca

© **Playboy.com** All rights reserved. Your California Privacy Rights

[advertise with playboy](#) • [corporate info](#) • [legal notices](#) • [privacy policy](#) • [ICRA](#) • [home](#) • [RSS](#) • [site map](#) • [write to us](#) • [help](#) • [webmasters](#)