

Credulous Creatures

by Jack D. Douglas

"If the world will be gulled, let it be gulled."

—Robert Burton



Anna Mycek-Wodecki

Kinsey, Sex and Fraud: The Indoctrination of a People

by Judith A. Reisman and Edward W. Eichel

Edited by J. Gordon Muir and John H. Court

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Who now reads Alfred Kinsey? Almost no one. Who now remembers the great media event set off in 1948 by the publication of his "monumental" book of 804 pages on *Sexual Behavior in the Human Male*? Most Americans over 40 probably do, while most under 40 probably do not. Few college students today recognize the name, unless they have just had to pass a multiple-choice exam in *Sex and Society* 101.

Kinsey was not one of the *conquistadores* of sexology, among a pantheon of modernist cultural heroes who led the conquest of two eons of Christian tradition; he seems to have seen himself as a humble statistician document-

ing the thunderous truths of the Marquis de Sade, Krafft-Ebing, Freud, Ellis, Sanger, Malinowski, Mead, and others. By trade, Kinsey was an entomologist whose forte was the meticulous counting of specimens and items of behavior. His calling was the use of this trade to "mop up" the lingering traces of Victorian hypocrisy by burying them in an avalanche of statistics about the sexual behavior of twelve thousand men, boys, and babies.

Kinsey was well aware that his statistics were only the *ne plus ultra* of many decades of interviews, questionnaires, compilations, and analyses by many sexologists. But he also knew that, in an age of bureaucratic official information and technocratic journalists, a mountain of arcane numbers buried in myriad analyses would pulverize any public criticisms of the new faith of sexual liberation. Just as fifth-century Christians used their celibacy as a breastplate of Christian righteousness to humiliate their pagan enemies, so Kinsey used statistics as his scientific breastplate of righteousness to humiliate his Christian and scientific opponents with "proof" of rampant hypocrisy.

Stripped of all its complexities, Kinsey's argument was a bald assertion that "scientific statistics" on these

twelve thousand men (soon to be followed by a supporting cast of eight thousand females exposed in *Sexual Behavior in the Human Female*) "proved" that Americans were secretly committing a lot of sexual sins that they publicly denounced. The undecleared conclusion of his work was that this proof of hypocrisy also proved that the Christian tradition of sex confined to marriage was wrong, and therefore should be abandoned in favor of sexual liberation—that is, casual sex of whatever polymorphously perverse form fits one's fancy at the moment, be it animalism or Romantic Passion.

Though almost all the details of Kinsey's work have now been forgotten even by sexologists, that work did much to advance his calling in precisely the ways he anticipated. My review of a small sample of major texts on sex, marriage, and family shows that they still routinely refer to Kinsey's great impact through the mass media in the 1950's. No single work that I know of has noted the obvious facts that no one, least of all Christians, ever doubted that deviant sex and hypocrisy were rampant, and that ministers routinely advanced this fact as evidence of the need for Christianity. When the Great Spirit of an age decrees the triumph of a Great Myth, no amount of common

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sense or obvious facts will stop it, as Hegel might have noted. For whatever reasons, the Great American Spirit had decided in favor of sexual modernism, and Kinsey's "scientific statistics" struck a mighty media blow on its behalf.

The crucial point of *Kinsey, Sex and Fraud* is that Kinsey's statistics were not valid or reliable statistics, but were largely factoids (that in some instances may have been collected in criminal ways) used to defraud the public. The authors do a good job of pulling together the scholarly facts, which show that the statistics upon which *Sexual Behavior in the Human Male* are based were collected from a very biased sample, with great overrepresentations of prisoners and other subpopulations known by everyone to be, of all people, the most casual and deviant in their sexual practices. They also show that these biases were largely hidden or declared insignificant in the labyrinthine analyses of the book, and then largely forgotten by later generations of sexologists who used Kinsey's work as a media shibboleth to advance the cause of the new faith.

The authors do, however, overemphasize the more recent use of Kinsey's data in this way and the continuing impact of his "findings." As far as I know from my decades of contacts with social scientists, the great

majority of them are aware that there is something "foul" about the Kinsey statistics. After all, as the authors show, there is a whole literature by social scientists about what is wrong with them. The important point is that, in spite of this knowledge, a great many sexologists and some other social "scientists" continue to refer to Kinsey as a kind of scientific totem.

Kinsey, *Sex and Fraud* shows that Kinsey and his colleagues went to great extremes in their pursuit of sexual factoids. As Paul Robinson and others have already shown, Kinsey redefined sex in a totally egalitarian manner, insisting that *only* sexual "outlets" matter. By this method of scientific *ad hoc* assertion, one outlet of animalism is equal to Romeo's night of bliss with Juliet—one equals one, right? What could be more scientific? This "scientific" definition is the foundation of Kinsey's interview methods and statistics. Reisman and Eichel correctly note that "proof" by *ad hoc* assertion is very strange, but they proceed to overdo it by implying that Kinsey's strange idea of "sexual outlets" has greatly affected later studies and the development of sex education. It has not. I know of no one who now takes this idea seriously, and only we few with a historical interest in these curiosities even remember it.

Having begun with these scholarly warm-ups, the authors get to the heart of their work. Their "Dedication" anticipates the shocking charge of criminality: "To the several hundred children who suffered inhumanely in the illegal sex experiments that constitute the basis for a significant portion of Dr. Alfred Kinsey's book *Sexual Behavior in the Human Male*." What the authors charge is that someone was reported by Kinsey *et alia* to have made systematic, timed, and logged sexual experiments on children down to the age of two months and to have proved in this way that even babies have orgasms.

I had no memory of Kinsey saying anything about child orgasm, nor did any of the several social scientists I asked about it. But Reisman and Eichel are right. Pages 175 to 182 of *Sexual Behavior in the Human Male*, entitled "Pre-Adolescent Orgasm," presents detailed, numerical, tabular information about sex experiments performed by some unnamed "trained observers" on at least 317 boys aged from two months to fifteen years. Kinsey reported that these observations show that infants from five months on can have orgasms. Indeed, he solemnly reported that one infant sex athlete had 14 orgasms in 38 minutes, almost one every two minutes; and another sexual Olympian of four years had 26 orgasms in 24 hours.

Even after I checked to make sure Kinsey actually said those things, I had a suspicion the authors must have stretched a point by implying that Kinsey, his colleagues, or people trained by them (or someone) actually performed these sexual experiments. But a preliminary textual analysis leads me to conclude that they wrote in good faith. On page 181 Kinsey *et alia* note that T.V. Moore had observed in 1943 that he could find no single instance in which Freudians said they had directly observed infant sexual behavior of the sort they believed exists. Kinsey apparently saw this as a crucial question in the study of sexuality in general, so he set about getting such "records from trained observers." Kinsey says, "Complying with the scientifically fair demand for records from trained observers, and answering Moore's further demand that 'writers . . . test their theories . . . by empirical study and

LIBERAL ARTS



VIVE LA DIFFÉRENCE?

As Richard Rothschild reported in the *Chicago Tribune* last June 25, California psychiatrist Diane Mosbacher, daughter of Commerce Secretary Robert Mosbacher, has revealed she's a lesbian, saying, "It's important for gay people to have role models and for others to realize we are everywhere." She said of her father, "I love and respect him very much, but we're as different as a Republican and a lesbian activist could be."

statistical procedures,' we have now reported observations on such specifically sexual activities as erection, pelvic thrusts, and the several other characteristics of true orgasm in a list of 317 pre-adolescent boys ranging between infants of five months and adolescence in age."

The crucial item here is the phrase "records from trained observers." The tabular records in this section look remarkably like other tables based on Kinsey's and his associates' own studies. Did they themselves make these sexual experiments? I doubt it very much, because in spite of what Kinsey says, I do not think children have orgasms at all and I am recalcitrant enough to find the idea of a four-year-old having 26 orgasms over 24 hours utterly bizarre. I also still believe, in spite of all of the above and more, that Kinsey was basically honest and that, had he made such direct observations of children, he would not have report-

ed that they had orgasms.

My guess is that Kinsey or some co-worker(s) tried to turn some pederasts—perhaps from their prisoner or ex-con sample—into "trained observers" and that the pederasts either were delusionary enough to believe that their victims enjoyed their victimization (in the same way some rapists believe women enjoy being raped) or they were "putting on" the mad scientists. My hunch is that on this matter Kinsey was hoodwinked by someone in the same way he was taken in by a great many of his sex-talkers. He probably fell into the same trap that caught Margaret Mead in Samoa when she studied love under the palms among Samoan girls, and that journalists routinely step into when they ask politicians, "Do you believe your program will serve the public good?" In short, Kinsey was very gullible in all the ways you would expect an entomologist studying human sexuality to be.

More importantly, sexologists, social scientists, and the general public have been even more gullible in believing that "scientists" were presenting them with the truth about themselves. But this is not surprising. Gullibility is the external sign of the Great Myths of the age. The textbook writers who refer to the "great" work of Kinsey do not remember what bizarre things he actually said, nor do they care. They will likely not read this book, but will probably denounce it, the way anthropologists voted in a general meeting to condemn Derek Freeman's revelations in *Margaret Mead and Samoa* before they even saw the book.

I suggest that sexologists and the University of Indiana have a public responsibility to determine as clearly as possible at this late date what really *did* happen in this famous—or infamous—study. But I have a hunch that this will not be done.



Amore Mistico Palese

by Peter Russell

Everyone admires the beauty of the Stars.
When have the stars known Love as we know
Whose bodies to each other reveal
Bodies as radiant veiling inner worlds
Secretly manifest between the veils?

Children at school we were taught literal truths
We took for granted like the outer forms . . .

There comes a time though when the moon
Rises and the stars are dimmed
And hidden worlds light up in silver light . . .

The old world's nothing but smoky bonfires
And ugly shouts from end to end the earth.

When She reveals her golden breasts and drops
Silken and glistening her black mass
Of jet on the luminous bloom
Of waxen ivory shoulders,
In the thoughtful amazing shadow
Starlight and moonlight fade,
And brighter light from darkness that is golden
Issues precipitous in talking silences.