4-1-1993

**Review of *Kinsey, Sex and Fraud: The Indoctrination of a People* by Reisman, J. A. & Eichel, E. W.**

Kevin M. Marett

Follow this and additional works at: https://scholarsarchive.byu.edu/irp

**Recommended Citation**

This Book Review is brought to you for free and open access by the Journals at BYU ScholarsArchive. It has been accepted for inclusion in Issues in Religion and Psychotherapy by an authorized editor of BYU ScholarsArchive. For more information, please contact scholarsarchive@byu.edu, ellen_amatangelo@byu.edu.

Reviewed by Kevin M. Maret, PhD, Brigham Young University School of Social Work

One of Hans Christian Andersen's fairy tales, *The Emperor's New Clothes*, is about a couple of fashion experts who sell an emperor a suit of magical cloth. These experts inform the emperor and his court that only those who are intelligent and competent will be able to see the grandeur and beauty of the clothes, while those who are stupid or incompetent will see nothing. The emperor and his subjects, all believing in their superior intelligence—and fearing the ridicule of the experts—claim to see the clothes when in fact there are no clothes to see. The emperor changes the affairs of the kingdom to fit the advice of these fashion experts, even though this advice is contrary to his experience and common sense. The entire kingdom is subsequently invited to a procession to view the emperor's new clothes with everyone claiming to see what the experts said they should see, until the procession passes a young child who had not been exposed to the experts. He verbalizes the obvious when he states quite simply, "The emperor is naked." At that point the emperor and his distinguished subjects realize they have been deceived and reject the experts and their advice.

The message of the book, *Kinsey, Sex and Fraud*, is essentially the same as that in *The Emperor's New Clothes*. The work of some experts isn't necessarily reality-based, what these experts tell the public isn't necessarily so, and people will do amazing things to keep from being scorned by the experts. The authors of *Kinsey, Sex and Fraud* take on the role of the little boy from the *Emperor's New Clothes* and say simply, "Kinsey was a fraud."

The research of Alfred Kinsey and associates on the sexual attitudes and practices of American society is scrutinized in this book, with the major
premise being that Kinsey and company, even though supposed experts in their field, deceived the public with information from faulty research. This information was presented to the public with the bind that only a "repressed and prudish society" would not accept these "facts." This information was subsequently used in the establishment of norms and policies that have had and will most likely continue to impact American social and sexual values.

The authors include a warning early in their book that the reader must be willing to "suspend disbelief" in order to accept what is offered because the statistics generated by Kinsey and refuted by this book are so deceitful and erroneous. It is difficult to believe that the research conducted by Alfred Kinsey and his associates contained in *Sexual Behavior in the Human Male* (1948) and *Sexual Behavior in the Human Female* (1953) continues to be accepted and taught by sex educators 40 years later rather than being rejected for the misrepresentation that it is.

The authors summarize the research of Kinsey, Pomeroy, Martin, and Gebhard (1948, 1953) pointing out the inherent flaws. Briefly stated, Kinsey and his associates used a national sample to gather statistical data which was then used as the basis for their books on male and female sexuality. This research produced norms for sexual behavior in terms of frequency and practices. This research also led to the development of the Kinsey sexuality scale, which hypothesizes that sexuality falls along a continuum from exclusively heterosexual to exclusively homosexual with bisexuality as the balanced position in the middle. According to this scale, only a small percentage of the population are either exclusively homosexual or heterosexual, with the greater majority of the population having both heterosexual and homosexual tendencies. Kinsey’s research concluded that 10% of the population were primarily homosexuals. Kinsey further advocated premarital sex as well as sexual relations between children and adults (and even between humans and animals) claiming that all sex was good, that "an orgasm is an orgasm," and that any trauma or adverse effects experienced from these sexual encounters were the result of the irrational reactions of a repressed society.

From a purely scientific standpoint, there were several flaws in Kinsey’s research methodology that invalidate the results. Perhaps the biggest problem was sampling error, which Kinsey did little to address or even acknowledge. If Kinsey and associates wanted to make statements applicable to the general public, then they needed to draw from samples that would be representative of the larger population. Instead, their samples included prison inmates, homosexuals and sex offenders in numbers substantially greater than are found in the larger population. Consequently it is questionable as to how applicable the results from their samples are to the public.
There is also the issue of experimenter bias, or keeping the experimenter's preconceptions and biases out of the research. The authors present a sound case to suggest that Kinsey had predetermined what he would find before he started the research and consequently selected his associates and the samples in such a way as to enhance the likelihood of finding the results he wanted.

Part of this experimenter bias came through in the interviews where it was assumed that volunteers had experienced the different sexual practices under investigation unless they aggressively maintained otherwise.

Another problem with using volunteers is that of social desirability, of volunteers giving answers they think will please the interviewers. The authors provide evidence to suggest that the issue of social desirability along with the biased nature of the interview format produced a pronounced volunteer bias. Kinsey was warned of this problem by Abraham Maslow before the sample was conducted but chose to ignore it.

The techniques and processes Kinsey et al. used to study the orgasmic potential of children, from infancy to adolescence, is another issue that requires suspension of disbelief. Even making allowances for the different social mores and conditions of the time, it is inconceivable that this research was ever permitted, much less published. Kinsey and associates attempted to bring children to orgasm through very questionable and unethical/illegal means to support his contention that humans are basically sexual from birth and should be allowed to express that sexuality without inhibition.

The authors address other problems with the research, but the above mentioned flaws are sufficient to render the findings questionable at best, meaningless at worst. How the conclusions gained acceptance as readily and as widely as they did remains one of the great mysteries of our time.

Along with a critical examination of Kinsey's research, this book examines some of the ramifications of that research. For example, based on skewed samples, Kinsey used statistics to define "normal," with Kinsey's definition radically different from society's, purporting that all sex was good, whether it was heterosexual, homosexual, cross-generational (between children and adults), or cross-species (between humans and animals). If the statistics resulted from proper sampling technique, then it would be representative of the larger population and the inferences could be drawn. But Kinsey's samples were not drawn using sound sampling techniques and therefore were not representative of society. In spite of this discrepancy, Kinsey's statistics are still used to forward the cause of two major groups: homosexuals and pedophiles. Whether Kinsey's research is to blame or not, the book demonstrates the gradual eroding of social mores since the male and female reports were published. This is particularly evident in the transformation of homosexuality from a "sexual deviancy" when Sexual Behavior in the Human Male was published in 1948 to its current status as an "alternative lifestyle."
The book also points to a trend by certain groups to achieve a similar transformation with adult-child sex. Although the efforts of these pedophile groups seem inconsequential now, the handwriting is on the wall.

As informative and interesting as *Kinsey, Sex and Fraud* is, it has its limitations. Perhaps the biggest drawback is the way the authors use the same facts and sources over and over and over to make the same arguments, from chapter to chapter and even within the same chapter to the point of becoming tiresome and laborious. Better organization of the material would have eliminated the need for the majority of the repetitions and a damper on the didactic thrust of the book would eliminate the rest.

One of the strengths of the book is that the authors draw numerous conclusions based on a wide variety of well-researched documentation. Most of the conclusions flow logically and are well supported. There are times, however, when these conclusions seem to get carried away, suggesting conspiracies and plots that rival those found in supermarket tabloids.

Overall, this book is recommended for those who do not accept the current sexual mores that run counter to traditional values. It provides facts and information to counter the prevailing arguments for sexual license. The authors appear to be serious and ardent in their mission to make the public aware of a grave injustice that is seriously eroding the moral fiber of this country. Although the book tends to be moralistic in tone, its scholarly content still dominates. For those who have strong Judeo-Christian or conservative values, this book is a welcome resource. The authors take a stand against a social-moral outrage and do so in a responsible and professional manner. They provide logic and support for others also interested in resisting this aspect of our national moral decline.

References

