

# Newsweek

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# All About Eve: Kinsey Reports on American Women

In January 1948 a new name entered the main stream of American conversation: Alfred C. Kinsey. With publication of his "Sexual Behavior in the Human Male," the obscure Indiana zoologist vaulted into the same prominence once occupied by such scholars of sex and reproduction as Charles Darwin, Sigmund Freud, and Havelock Ellis. Starting with a pessimistic first printing of merely 5,000, the statistics-crammed 804-page book sold more than 250,000 copies.

Kinsey's report on men was hailed with enthusiasm by some physiologists and philosophers and attacked with equal fervor by others. Any individual's

all about Eve that Eve chose to tell the investigators, it compares her physically and psychologically with Adam. Here, in concise and easy-to-read language (shorn of the unwieldy charts and repetitious comments of the first book), Kinsey batters at some contemporary ideas about the female's slower sex responsiveness, her earlier sex development, her greater extent of erogenous (sexually sensitive) zones, and her emotional reactions in sex relations. Out of material gathered from 5,940 white United States females, one thing strikes Dr. Kinsey as outstanding: "... the range of variation [of sex behavior] in the

took place. When the Kinsey researchers believed that they had discovered emotional blocks, deliberate exaggerations, or obvious blinks, they either discarded the record or retook the interview. On the whole, Kinsey found that females interviewed answered "as readily and honestly" as did the males. "Actually, we got so many women to talk so much, we couldn't stop them." These seem to be the salient findings of the report:

First of all, the Kinsey survey indicates that *females have less sex activity than males in early life*. While 92 per cent of the Kinseyan males had had some sort of sex experience by the age of 15, only 27 per cent of the females recalled having been aroused sexually before adolescence (between 12 to 13 years). Simple exhibitionism accounted for almost all pre-adolescent female sex experience. Some 24 per cent of all the women remembered that during pre-adolescence they were approached by men who appeared to be making sex advances.

In the first study, Kinsey found that 92 per cent of the males at some time in their lives had practiced onanism. Among females, *only 62 per cent engaged in auto-eroticism in the course of their lives*. While men learned the habit by watching companions or talking to them about the practice, the great majority of females who learned at all learned through self-discovery; nearly half (43 per cent) got the idea from printed or verbal sources primarily designed to discourage the practice.

**Petting:** Among the younger interviewees, only one in 100 females who was *not married by 35 had failed to have some form of heterosexual "petting" experience*. Women born before 1900 indulged in "... courting, bundling, spooning... smooching... larking, sparking, and other activities which were simply petting under another name," in about 80 per cent of their histories. *Today, up to 95 per cent of females have had petting experience at the age of 18 years.*

During the four decades on which Kinsey has data, no other aspect of female sex behavior seems to have changed as much as that of premarital relations. The major change took place in the generation born in the first decade after 1900—the generation in its teens and early 20s during the first world war—and the years immediately following, in the legendary Roaring Twenties and the Jazz Age. Kinsey's mass study shows that premarital sex activity of girls today has not differed over the years since 1920 from the activity of their mothers and grandmothers. *Nearly 50 per cent of these*



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Kinsey and his co-workers compiling another best seller\*

attitude depended on whether he accepted Kinsey's basic notion that man's behavior is dictated by biological needs and subject to the same biological rules that govern lower animals.

In the five and a half years since the Kinsey report on males, Alfred Kinsey and his top associates, psychologist Wardell B. Pomeroy, statistician Clyde E. Martin, and anthropologist Paul H. Gebhard, have compiled a second progress report, "Sexual Behavior in the Human Female."\* It will be issued publicly in book form Sept. 14. This week, they are permitting the release of reviews of the book. Herewith is NEWSWEEK's:

The new book is much more than a simple voluntary public-opinion poll of feminine sex activities. Besides telling

*female far exceeds the range of variation in the male."*

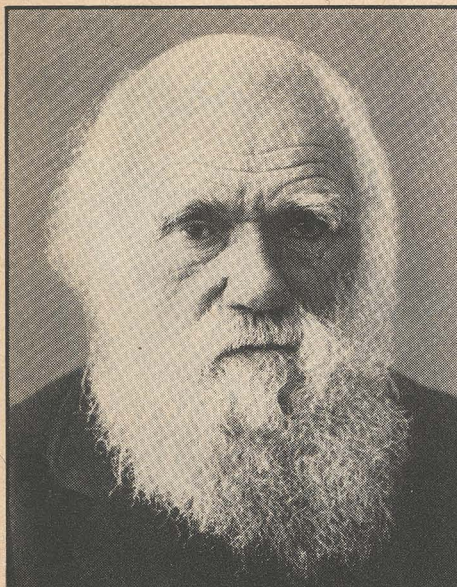
This wide range has accounted for the delay in publishing the book so eagerly awaited by the general public for at least three years. Only Kinsey and his associates, Pomeroy, Martin, and Gebhard, recorded the case histories (with Kinsey and Pomeroy gathering 81 per cent), punched 200,000 IBM cards, tabulated the statistics, and wrote the book.

The authors are fully aware of the biases introduced by their sampling techniques; they recognize that some errors may have crept in when a woman mentally distorted her first sexual experience out of all proportion to its value or was unable to understand it when it

\*Facing, left to right, Dr. George Corner of the National Research Council, Kinsey, Pomeroy, Martin, and Gebhard.

\*W. B. Saunders Co. Philadelphia. 850 pages. \$8.





International

Forebears: Charles Darwin . . .

latter-day married women sampled had had sex experience before their weddings. This is more than twice the number of females born before 1900 who said that they were experienced at the time of marriage but is well under the large number of males (92 per cent) with premarital sex experience.

*Single Standard:* The slow destruction of the double standard of sex behavior, Kinsey reasons, has resulted from freer consideration of sex matters in our times; the "emancipation" of the female, increased knowledge of contraception, anonymity of persons living in urban areas, control of venereal infection, draft armies which allow American men and women to observe foreign cultures, and drives against organized prostitution (which have drastically reduced the frequency of male contacts with prostitutes, and increased, correspondingly, the frequency of contacts with females not for direct hire).

Kinsey's research reveals that among unmarried females who have had sex relations, only 30 per cent of all ages said that they did not intend to have more. For 69 per cent of the still unmarried females who had had sex relations, there was no regret; an even larger proportion (77 per cent) of the married women who had done so felt no remorse for premarital relations.

In the Kinsey report, a striking biological difference in the sexes is noted: male sexual responsiveness increases with the approach of adolescence, reaches its peak three or four years later (at about 18 years), then declines. *Females are most sexually responsive in their late 20s and 30s, and their capacity remains more or less constant into their 50s and 60s.*

Kinsey attributes this responsive disparity in the sexes largely to glandular

factors which are little known by anatomists and gynecologists and unexplainable by psychologists.

In the male, the 17-ketosteroids (hormones which originate in the adrenal cortex and the testes) drop steadily after hitting a peak in the late teens. In the female, the hormone quantity remains constant for a long period of years. The hormones of the pituitary gland, necessary for growth and development of all physiological capacities, including the nervous system on which sex behavior is so dependent, similarly drop in the male species of fowl tested in the laboratory; the level of pituitary secretions among female fowl, however, remains constant over the years.

But Dr. Kinsey sounds a warning against the indiscriminate use of hormones to stimulate sex response. While hormones may affect the intensity and frequency of sex response, there has been no evidence to show that hormone therapy will have a deep or lasting effect on sex capacities.

*Removal of the adult female's ovaries does not modify her sexual capacity, the report shows.* Some of the most sexually active women interviewed were in their 50s and 60s, well past the age of menopause, some of whom had had their ovaries removed ten to fifteen years before.

**Her Reputation:** The reputation of the American wife comes out of the Kinsey study with fewer scratches than those upon his American husbands. *Among married women interviewed, 26 per cent had extramarital relations by the age of 40.* At 40, 50 per cent of the men had stepped out on their wives. Among the women, Kinsey finds that the incidence of satisfactory response to extramarital sex activities (85 per cent) was slightly higher than that of marital relations (about 75 per cent).

Kinsey clashes with accepted notions about advice to newlyweds on a satisfactory sex life. When he asserts that sex response is not dependent on elaborate, varied, and prolonged lovemaking techniques, he is at odds with most marriage counselors.

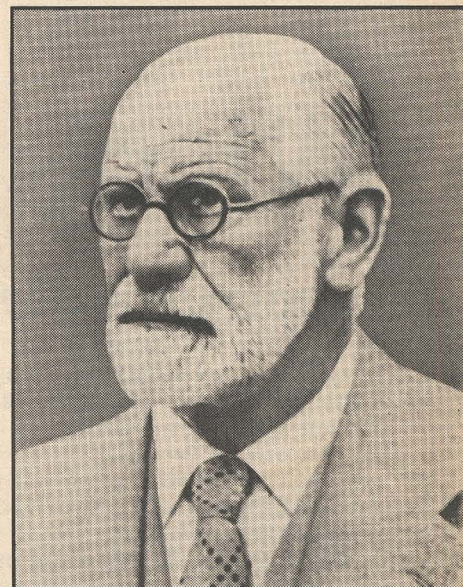
Education, home backgrounds, economic status, urban or rural living, and occupation seem to have little connection with the rate of female extramarital relations, Kinsey reveals. In the male study, the subject's socio-educational level was important in the particular pattern of sex behavior. *Among females, however, religious devotion and the decade of birth were the prime factors determining over-all sex habits.*

*In the field of general sex education, the Kinsey report also touches on a ticklish point.* The report shows that more than a quarter (28 per cent) of older unmarried women never experienced sexual satisfaction at any time in

their lives. In this group are teachers, club and youth-organization directors, public-service workers, and religious leaders—many of whom are responsible for the sex education of young people. *"When such frustrated or sexually unresponsive, unmarried females attempt to direct behavior of other persons, they may do considerable damage,"* is Kinsey's controversial opinion.

*The homosexual activity of all females is far less than among males.* At the age of 45, 28 per cent of the females (compared with 50 per cent of the males) had had homosexual experience. Female homosexuality was found largely among single women and, to a lesser extent, among previously married ones, widowed, separated, and divorced.

*Kinsey regards homosexuality as essentially a psychological problem.* An accidental contact which may lead a person into his or her first sexual experience with a person of the same sex,



Associated Press

. . . Sigmund Freud . . .

may, he contends, set off a homosexual pattern. *"... The behavior of any animal must depend upon the nature of the stimulus it meets, its anatomic and physiologic capacities, and its background of previous experience. Unless conditioned by previous experience, an animal would respond identically to identical stimuli, whether they emanate from some part of its own body, from another individual of the same sex, or from an individual of the opposite sex."*

While Kinsey agreed with the psychoanalytic school to some degree in his previous study of the male, especially in the development of homosexual habits, he now makes a complete break with the psychoanalytic concepts. *"We just didn't have time to develop our theories fully in the nine years it took to do the male report. But with fifteen*



years behind us, and a lot more assistance from experts in medicine, psychology, neurophysiology, animal behavior, psychiatry, marriage counseling, and biology, we have learned much more."

**Kinsey's concept is this:** While psychoanalysts and some clinical psychologists have centered their attention on individual backgrounds and subconscious motivations, they have minimized and often neglected the significance of stimuli in the immediate situation. There are no basic differences in the neuromuscular systems of male and female, both having originated from essentially similar embryonic structures. But slight individual variations in nerve and muscle systems exist. Men (and women) are created equally but are not equally endowed.

**The Extremes:** In responses which depend primarily on physical stimulation, the report says, the extreme female surpasses the male; but in responses which are dependent on mental stimulation, such as sex reveries, males surpass females. Here Dr. Kinsey recognizes the fundamental psychological differences in the sexes, lists 33 areas of difference, and concludes that women have fewer sex dreams than men.

Receiving sex stimulation from viewing clothed or nude bodies, burlesque shows, or outside sex activity and engaging in exhibitionism and sex discussions, all these were more male attributes than female. Only in a few areas did women respond erotically to the extent of males: watching movie love scenes (48 per cent) and reading romantic literature (60 per cent). *Although American women have until recently been reluctant to experiment in sex techniques, in later generations there has generally been more variety of methods in their sex contacts.*

Perhaps Dr. Kinsey gives the key to the emphasis on the importance of psychological factors in sex behavior when he writes: "In some fashion which no biologist or biochemist understands, living plant and animal cells, and groups of cells and tissues and organs in more complex animal bodies, are modified by experience." In the female report, although he has used only 20 per cent of the information gathered in the interviews, Dr. Kinsey provides much useful material for future psychological investigation.

**Controversy Coming:** The female volume is bound to be a controversial book. Kinsey and his associates have made a contribution to man's limited scientific knowledge of human sex behavior. By presenting an immense mass of evidence, gathered by empirical investigation, they have given their concepts a certain statistical validity, but it is subject to limitations and possibly misinterpretations imposed by a purely materialistic approach.

Inevitably, the new book will bring

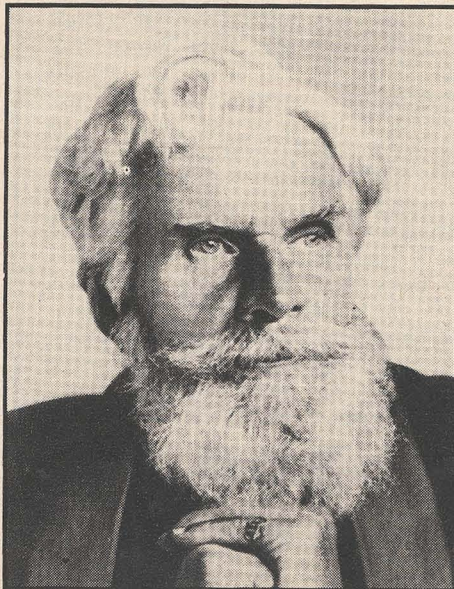
protests from those who perceive the workings of morality as opposed to plain animal desire in sex and from scientists who may not approve of the doctor's method of collecting his case histories. It is not a strictly clinically controlled work. The people to whom Kinsey talked wanted to talk.

**Wasps to Women:** Once a critic contemptuously referred to zoologist Kinsey's monumental study of 150,000 specimens of a single species of gall wasp, in which 28 factors in the life history of the wasp were measured, as an intensive preparation for sex research. A wisecrack grew: Dr. Kinsey was measuring human sex behavior with the same calipers he used to determine the variations of wasp wingspreads.

To this Alfred Kinsey simply replied: "I am a fact finder. I have never evaluated and analyzed my material, and this I refuse to do in the future."

At 59, the tall, heavy-set, soft-spoken scientist shows fatigue in his bluish hazel eyes, tense mouth, and hard jaw. His seven-day-a-week (including evenings) job of interviewing, cataloguing, and writing, leaves little time for enjoying his immense phonograph-record collection and for tending the beautiful grounds of his self-designed red-brick home in Bloomington, just a few blocks from the campus of the University of Indiana. He has had no vacation in fourteen years.

The two tomes on the sex behavior of the American male and female mark the start, merely, of a long list of sex studies, growing out of the histories accumulated since July 1938, which Alfred Kinsey proposes to write. The list includes: sex laws and sex offenders, sex life in penal institutions, homosexuals, sex attitudes of children, sex factors in marriage adjustment, physiological studies of sex, prostitution, and erotic elements in art.



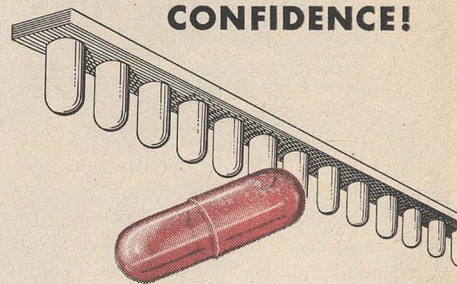
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... and Havelock Ellis

August 24, 1953

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