



Sexual Development Conference

Mapping Uncharted Territory

On a topic where level-headed discussion is hard to come by, there is one point on which everyone can agree: there is a lot we don't know about children's sexual development. Last May, participants in The Kinsey Institute's Sexual Development Conference met to discuss this important—and little understood—aspect of human sexuality.

What methods are appropriate for studying sexual development in children and adolescents? How does child sexual abuse affect adolescent sexuality and, ultimately, adult sexuality? Is it possible to come to a consensus on what constitutes “normal” sexual development? Conference participants discovered that each of these questions contains a universe (some might say minefield) of other questions.

“Children are sexual beings in various ways. And we don't know very much about that,” says Institute director John Bancroft. But how to study, and then talk about, childhood sexuality? Very carefully. David Finkelhor is director of the Crimes Against Children Research Center at the University of New Hampshire. Finkelhor, who participated as a discussant, emphasizes that these are “complex conceptual and research issues.” Not surprisingly, methodological issues, and the difficulties inherent in studying normal childhood sexual development, were high on the agenda.

The conference, which was funded by the W. T. Grant Foundation, comes at a critical historical moment. Children are daily confronted with a plethora of sexual messages—from benign to abusive—and their responses to those messages are all over the map. William Friedrich, clinical director of Child and Family Services at the Mayo Psychiatry and Psychology Treatment Center, notes that the policies now being formulated to deal with the sexual behavior of children and young people are made on the basis of minimal data.

Like other participants, Friedrich came away with the realization that “we need more information, and developmental research is critical. We especially need a longitudinal study to bridge the gap

between pre-teen and adolescence.” Conference discussant Anke Ehrhardt agrees: “Sexuality isn't something that just suddenly starts in adolescence. We need to take a long-term look at sexual development.”

And yet long-term studies that trace the sexual development of a cohort of subjects from infancy to young adulthood are extremely rare. The focus—in research as well as in the media—has overwhelmingly been on the trauma of child sexual abuse. Ehrhardt, director of the HIV Center for Clinical and Behavioral Studies at the New York State Psychiatric Institute, points out that “it's very important to bring together people with different backgrounds to focus on children's sexuality, because this area is typically looked at only through the lens of abuse. Normal developmental issues have been almost entirely neglected and ignored.” To that end, this meeting brought psychologists, psychiatrists, clinicians, historians, anthropologists, sociologists, social workers, and other professionals to the table. “There were the sort of differences one would expect from mixed disciplines,” says Bancroft, “but this is a healthy dialogue to have.”

Diane DiMauro directs the Sexuality Research Fellowship Program at the Social Science Research Council. She was discussion leader of the conference's final panel, on the political and advocacy aspects of a potential consensus document. While a consensus statement on normal childhood sexual development may be further down the road, DiMauro observes that perhaps the biggest achievement of the Sexual Development Conference is that it brought the right people together to address the topic in an authoritative, serious, open way. “We wanted to try to carefully map out what is known and what is not known, and start filling in the gaps. This conference was an essential first step in that direction.”

A volume of essays developed from conference papers and the ensuing discussion is forthcoming from Indiana University Press in 2002.

“Children are sexual beings in various ways. And we don't know very much about that.”

KinseyToday

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The mission of The Kinsey Institute is to promote interdisciplinary research and scholarship in the fields of human sexuality, gender, and reproduction. The Institute was founded in 1947 by renowned sex researcher Alfred Kinsey. Today, the Institute has two components, an Indiana University research institute and a not-for-profit corporation, which owns and manages the Institute's research data and archives, collections, and databases.

Spotlighting the Collections

Henry Minton Unlocks the Thomas N. Painter Collection

Thomas N. Painter;
 photograph by
 William Dellenback

It's a scholar's dream: striking "a mother lode of archival riches." That's how Henry Minton describes his discovery of the Thomas N. Painter Collection.

In 1995 Minton visited the Kinsey to research a book on how homosexuals in the pre-gay liberation era tried to use scientific research as a vehicle for homosexual rights. He knew that Painter's unpublished manuscript on homosexual prostitution resided at the Institute, and he suspected that Painter would be of some importance in his work. But in the course of that first visit, Minton found a cabinet loaded with an astonishing corpus of archival materials, and he opened a door into a life that was rendered remarkably complete. Painter (1928-1974) became one of the principal figures in Minton's project.

Painter was not a professional sexologist.

He was, however, the first homosexual contact to establish a working relationship with Alfred Kinsey and the Institute. From 1945 through 1973, Painter entered almost daily reports in journals sent to Kinsey and successive Kinsey Institute directors, detailing his life in a gay male subculture. Those journals are only a part of the collection housed at the Institute.

While Painter was one of many contacts whom Kinsey encouraged to record their sexual experiences, his autobiographical records are among the most detailed and the most self-aware. Painter had a highly developed sense of his life as a story that was waiting to be told by a future biographer, whom he referred to as "Mr. X." Indeed, Minton found that the autobiographical



Director's Column

By Dr. John Bancroft



The Surgeon General delivered. In my last column I doubted that his Call to Action on Promoting Sexual Health and Responsible Sexual Behavior would survive the change of government. I was wrong; it appeared at the end of June. The White House kept its distance, and the Religious Right called for his resignation, but the media response was predominantly positive. It is a most important document. You can read it on the web at www.surgeongeneral.gov/library/sexualhealth.

It calls for an ongoing debate on the topics of sexual health and responsible sexual behavior. Its description of "responsible sexual behavior" includes respecting and avoiding physical or emotional harm to one's partner, ensuring pregnancy only occurs when welcome, and recognition and tolerance of other people's sexual values. It urges us all, as individuals, and as communities, to seek the common ground on which we can agree, and work towards a society in which sex plays more of a positive and less of a negative role. I hope that debate happens. It will need to be long running, and well informed, which is where The Kinsey Institute comes in. We need good research and scholarship in this field now more than ever before.

I have two main points that I want to add to the dialog. First, I see the single most important issue as the need for gender equality. Once we establish a society in which men and women are genuinely equal, most of our problems with sex will fade away. Second, the respect for diversity, which the Surgeon General advocates, is dependent on our recognition of the importance of responsibility. I will respect those who call for abstinence until marriage, even if I disagree with them, if their concept of marriage involves sexual responsibility and sexual equality; marriage has a long history as an institution for supporting male supremacy. Others may respect gays and lesbians, even if they don't agree with them, when they see their life-style as embracing responsibility; society has a long history of undermining such responsibility by stigmatizing them.

I am writing this a few days after the terrorist attack on the United States. We have all been profoundly affected, and nothing will be quite the same again. Maybe some good could result. I have been unable to separate this horrific event from the Surgeon General's report. I believe that if we had a world where women and men were truly equal, and where responsible diversity was respected, that attack would not have happened. ◀

For a more detailed presentation of the points made in this column see the Leading Comment, written by the Director, in Sexual & Relationship Therapy (in press).



“Painter was a talented writer-ethnographer with a sense of archival preservation.”

essays Painter had left for his hoped-for biographer were what helped him most in his own research. “That’s what’s so amazing,” says Henry Minton.

Though he was

not a professional researcher, “Painter was a talented writer-ethnographer with a sense of archival preservation.”

Minton’s work in the Kinsey collections is part of his forthcoming book, *Departing from Deviance: A History of Homosexual Rights and Emancipatory Science in America* (University of Chicago Press). While Painter’s biography is yet to be written, the Thomas N. Painter Collection has many stories to tell. ◀

Henry Minton is Professor Emeritus in the Department of Psychology at the University of Windsor in Windsor, Ontario.

Finding Treasures in the Archives

Thomas Painter left an astonishing variety of materials to the Institute—manuscripts, correspondence, photographs, drawings, bound journals, and much more—including manuscripts written under a pseudonym. Such large, diverse collections pose challenges for the archivist seeking to catalogue multifaceted materials and make them accessible for research.

Liana Zhou, head of the Institute Library, is creating tools that will make it easier to explore the Institute’s archival treasures. With funding from a Rockefeller grant—and help

from graduate student Julie Thomas, Indiana University faculty, and Kinsey Institute staff—she is creating brief abstracts, itemized inventories, and guides that will give researchers concise and accurate overviews of individual collections. Confidentiality protocols apply, achieving the delicate balance between preserving donors’ privacy and offering access to qualified researchers.

Finding aids for fifteen collections have been completed so far, and even more will be available on the Institute’s Web site by the end of the year. Browse abstracts

for the following collections at www.kinseyinstitute.org/library/abstract.html:

- B.E.M Erotica Manuscript
- Harry Benjamin
- Le Mon Clark
- Alex Comfort
- Robert Latou Dickinson
- Albert Ellis
- Havelock Ellis
- Alice Field
- Magnus Hirschfeld
- Alfred Kinsey
- Kinsey Institute
- Carney Landis
- John Money
- Thomas N. Painter
- Society for the Scientific Study of Sexuality

Discussing Female Sexuality

When Cynthia Graham and Stephanie Sanders began recruiting for focus groups on female sexuality, there was no shortage of volunteers. From November 2000 until March of this year, eighty women participated in nine groups facilitated by Graham, Sanders, and assistants Sarah Upchurch and Kari Burns.

The data they gathered will be used to design a questionnaire intended to collect accurate information on what enhances or inhibits sexual arousal in women. “We didn’t want to simply modify the questionnaire used for men,” says Cynthia Graham, Clinical Assistant Professor of Psychology at Indiana University. “We wanted to start from scratch.” Kinsey Institute Associate Director Stephanie Sanders adds that “the data we collected in the focus groups is rich and is proving to be quite helpful in identifying a variety of factors

relevant to sexual excitation and sexual inhibition.” And aside from its value in developing the questionnaire, that data is itself “worthy of publication,” says Sanders.

In their call for volunteers, the researchers quickly met their quota for student participants. Non-white, non-student participants were harder to get. So fliers went out to a variety of locations off campus, including churches, laundromats, and grocery stores. The resulting pool of women ranged in age from 19 to 84. Of the nine focus groups, six were divided on the basis of age, with two groups each representing women 18-24, 25-45, and 46 and older. These groups included students, non-students, and women of mixed ethnicities. Two groups were devoted to



Lobby card, PRC Pictures

lesbians and bisexuals, and one was composed of African-American women. At the conclusion of each focus group, all contact information was destroyed, preserving participants’ privacy.

Graham found that “not only were the participants eager, it was hard to get them to stop talking!” Instead of having to rely on scripts to guide discussion, facilitators found that the women themselves brought up key issues—for example, body image. The focus groups proved to be as valuable to the volunteer participants as they were to the researchers. “These women were getting information and reassurance about their own sexuality.” ◀

Surgeon General Issues Call to Action

In June 2001, Surgeon General David Satcher released his *Call to Action to Promote Sexual Health and Responsible Sexual Behavior*. This document is the product of a collaborative process involving experts from the academic, medical, and religious communities, as well as policy-makers, teachers, advocates, parents, and youth. In the *Call to Action*, Satcher notes the “serious public health challenge regarding the sexual health of our nation” posed by a number of problems, including sexually transmitted diseases; HIV; unintended pregnancies; child sexual abuse; and rape.

Satcher outlines three “science-based” strategies that will help Americans promote sexual health and responsible sexual behavior:

- **Increasing awareness and access to information** – in the parent-child relationship, in school education, and in church and other community settings;

- **Implementing and strengthening interventions** – through strong families, and well-trained health professionals who deal with sexual issues; better access to health care services for the economically disadvantaged, racial and ethnic minorities, people of different sexual identities, the disabled, and adolescents; and
- **Expanding the research base** – promoting further scientific study of human sexual development and reproductive health throughout the entire lifespan, not just the reproductive years.

In addition to outlining these strategies, Satcher emphasizes that the call is directed at “all of us” and is a first step in trying to find “common ground” in discussing sexual health. The full text of the Surgeon General’s *Call to Action* can be found at www.surgeongeneral.gov/library/sexualhealth. ◀



Seated man and woman, 1922. Lithograph by Michel Fingesten adopted by Nancy Lethem

Adopt a Work of Art on November 14

On July 31, the Institute held its first “Adopt a Work of Art” event. Friends of The Kinsey Institute viewed unframed photographs, prints, drawings, and paintings—many of which had never before been seen by the public—and selected their favorites to frame. More than thirty works of art were adopted that day, and on November 14 the opportunity comes around again.

For a donation to help cover the cost of archival framing, your name will be displayed on a label with the framed piece. To arrange a viewing, or if you can’t make it to the Institute on that day, contact Catherine Johnson by e-mail (catjohns@indiana.edu) or by phone (812-855-7686).

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“The Power of Seduction” at the Institute

Seduction: “to lead astray, to attract or charm, to be alluring and tempting.” Using this definition, Wayne Manns, a student in museum studies at Indiana University, has curated an exhibit for The Kinsey Institute Gallery. In it, Manns captures the glance, the touch, and the subtleness of seduction at work.

“The Kinsey collection of erotic objects offers a vast body of material to examine the act of seduction,” says Manns. The exhibit includes anonymous photographs, a silk painting from China, a pair of tiny women’s shoes, a porcelain sculpture by contemporary Japanese artist Akio Takamori, and “seductive” works by Picasso, Matisse, Chagall, and George Platt Lynes.

The show runs through January 2002. Find more information on the Web (www.kinseyinstitute.org/services/events.html).



PHOTOGRAPH BY SHECKELL

Sex and Humor: Selections from The Kinsey Institute

February 8 – March 9, 2002

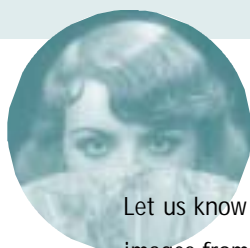
Early next year, The Kinsey Institute will collaborate with the Indiana University School of Fine Arts Gallery to present a unique exhibition of nearly 200 works from the Institute’s collections. Art by widely known figures such as William Hogarth, Hans Bellmer, and Jean Dubuffet will appear alongside

anonymously produced drawings and photographs, comic books, erotic figurines, and commercially produced novelties. Seen together, these diverse pieces illustrate what we all know: human sexuality remains a reliable source of humor, both subtle and outrageous.

A book, *Sex and Humor: Selections from The Kinsey Institute Collections*, will be published by Indiana University Press. Featuring four scholarly essays on the topic of sex and humor, with more than forty illustrations from the exhibit, the book will also serve as an exhibition catalog.



Kinsey Today



www.kinseyinstitute.org

Let us know what you think of our new Web site design, which includes images from our collections, an updated “navigation system,” sexuality information links, access to the library catalog, and on-line forms for Friends membership and donations.

2001 Summer Institute

By all reports, the 2001 Summer Graduate Training Institute was a huge success. Thirteen faculty members and 25 students from 7 countries explored research questions related to high-risk sexual behavior. Issues included personality factors relevant to high-risk sexual behavior, relevance of sexual identity to sexual risk, the adolescent and sexual risk, cross-cultural aspects of sexual risk-taking, male-female differences in sexual risk-taking, sexual risk-taking in special populations, and ethical aspects of research in this area.



Faculty included John Bancroft, Cynthia Graham, Stephanie Sanders, David Strong, and Bill Yarber from The Kinsey Institute. Invited faculty included Joseph Catania (University of California San Francisco); Ralph DiClemente and Gina Wingood (Emory University); Dennis Fortenberry, Eric Wright, and Greg Zimet (Indiana University Purdue University–Indianapolis); Andrew Mattison, (University of California San Diego), and Michael Ross (University of Texas). The summer institute was supported by a grant from the National Institutes of Mental Health.

Next summer's workshop, "Interventions for High-Risk Sexual Behavior," will take place June 9-16, 2002. More information is available at www.kinseyinstitute.org/graduate and from the Institute office.

Staff Notes

Associate Scientist **Erick Janssen** received the Hugo G. Beigel Research Award from the Society for the Scientific Study of Sexuality at its annual meeting in October. The award, which recognizes the outstanding article of the year in the *Journal for Sex Research*, was given to Janssen and his colleagues for the 2000 article "Automatic Processes and the Appraisal of Sexual Stimuli: Toward an Information Processing Model of Sexual Arousal."

Librarian **Liana Zhou** led the U.S. librarians' delegation at the annual conference of the China Library Science Society this fall in Chengdu. Zhou received a grant from the Office of International Programs at Indiana University.