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21 March 1947

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NRC
Sex
Research
(Kinsey)

Dear Kinsey:

I submit the enclosed as a draft for the introduction and I submit it for criticism or rejection, not for acceptance. In other words if you don't like all of it, don't take it - or if you want part but want something more or less, tell me and I'll try to catch and rephrase your idea. I've been laid up for three weeks or I'd have gotten this done sooner.

I'm taking this as your personal request and therefore not clearing it with Weed or Corner or Yerkes.

Best of good wishes to you and all,

Yours sincerely,

Dr. A. C. Kinsey
Department of Zoology
Indiana University
Bloomington, Ind.
enc.

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Seen from the four points of the compass a great mountain may present aspects that are very different one from the other, - so different that bitter disagreements can arise between those who have watched the mountain, truly and well, through all the seasons, but each from a different quarter. Reality, too, has many facets - some too readily disputed or denied by those who rely only on their own experience. Nor can science itself rightly lay claim to finality or the complete comprehension of reality, but only to honesty and accuracy of the additional facts it may be permitted to discover and report. I say 'may be permitted' since the human race is familiar with the suppression of truth in both small matters and great. The history of science is part of the history of the freedom to observe, to reflect, to experiment, to record, and to bear witness. It has been a perilous and a passionate history indeed, and not yet ended.

Living creatures possess three basic characteristics or capacities - growth, adaptation and reproduction. In human biology, the reproductive function has been the least and the last studied, scientifically. To the National Research Council's Committee on Sex Phenomena belongs the credit of sponsoring a more significant series of research studies on sex than has been accomplished perhaps by any other agency. Among these studies the findings of Dr. Alfred Kinsey and his associates at the University of Indiana deserve attention for their extent, their thoroughness, and their dispassionate objectivity. Dr. Kinsey has studied sex phenomena of human beings as a biologist would examine biological phenomena, and the evidence he has secured is presented from the biologists' view point, without moral bias or prejudice derived from current taboos.

Certainly no aspect of human biology in our current civilization stands in more need of scientific knowledge and courageous humility than that of sex. The history of medicine proves that in so far as man seeks to know himself and face his whole nature, he has become free from bewildered fear, despondent shame, or arrant hypocrisy. As long as sex is dealt with in the current confusion of ignorance and sophistication, denial and indulgence, suppression and stimulation, punishment and exploitation, secrecy and display, it will be associated with a duplicity and indecency that lead neither to intellectual honesty nor human dignity.

These studies are sincere, objective and determined explorations of a field manifestly important to education, medicine, government, and the integrity of human conduct generally. They have demanded from Dr. Kinsey and his academic colleagues very unusual tenacity of purpose, tolerance, analytical competence, social skills, and real courage. I hope that the reader will match the authors with an equal and appropriate measure of cool attention, courageous judgment, and scientific equanimity.