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## Book Reviews

*Sex the Measure of All Things: A Life of Alfred C. Kinsey.* By Jonathan Gathorne-Hardy. (Bloomington: Indiana University Press, 2000. Pp. xi, 513. Illustrations, appendices, notes, bibliography, index. \$39.95.)

Alfred C. Kinsey, whose "Kinsey Reports," *Sexual Behavior in the Human Male* (1948) and *Sexual Behavior in the Human Female* (1953), made Indiana University into a center for research on human sexual behavior, was a controversial figure in the 1950s because of his outspoken challenges to official codes of sexual conduct. His success depended upon staunch support from Indiana University president Herman B Wells and the financial backing of the National Research Council and the Rockefeller Foundation. Voted "Hoosier of the Year" by the Sons of Indiana in 1954, Kinsey convinced leading scientists that human sexual behavior could and should be studied scientifically and that the results should inform discussion of public policy. At the end of the twentieth century, however, Kinsey remains a polarizing symbol. He has become the patron saint of gay liberation for his outspoken defense of homosexual acts and, in turn, is demonized by Christian fundamentalists as a sexual predator who used the cloak of science to legitimate personal misconduct.

Jonathan Gathorne-Hardy's biography of Kinsey, first published in Great Britain in 1998, reflects the contemporary struggles to expropriate Kinsey for service in our culture wars. Apparently Gathorne-Hardy's goal is to explain and defend a "great man" whose work remains the best that we have on human sexual behavior. Following in the wake of James H. Jones's deeply researched *Alfred C. Kinsey: A Public/Private Life* (1997), Gathorne-Hardy has few facts to add to the record, but he seeks to counter scholars who have written about Kinsey and failed to appreciate him with adequate enthusiasm. The result is a chatty biography in which the narrative is often interrupted both by critiques of Jones and Paul Robinson (whose *The Modernization of Sex* [1989] included an interpretation of Kinsey) and by amateurish forays into the philosophy of science. Gathorne-Hardy's case for Kinsey is strong on some issues, including Kinsey's methodology and the place of his increasingly compulsive personal sexual conduct within his research, but the argument is weak on the institutional and social contexts that Jones carefully explains and that are essential to this story.

Gathorne-Hardy justifies another long biography of Kinsey by claiming that "Jones' Kinsey was a man appallingly warped and distorted, driven by vicious personal 'demons,' to such a degree and in so many ways that eventually he almost ceased to be a moral being, and largely ceased to be an objective researcher, his data 'skewed' and 'flawed' to such an extent that, in effect, essential parts of his

science were fraudulent" (p. viii). However, Gathorne-Hardy's "totally different Kinsey" is basically the same man as the one portrayed by Jones. Jones certainly tried to make clear his respect both for Kinsey the pioneer sex researcher and for the man whose "great accomplishment was to take his pain and suffering and use it to transform himself into an instrument of social reform . . ." (Jones, p. 772). Gathorne-Hardy is clearly more sympathetic to the private Kinsey whose homosexual and masochistic acts posed dangers for his research project and ultimately his health, but that special empathy is a poor substitute for the critical perspective that Kinsey commands as one of the modern world's most important advocates of sexual reform.

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*Henry Clay the Lawyer*. By Maurice G. Baxter. (Lexington: University Press of Kentucky, 2000. Pp. x, 141. Appendix, notes, selected bibliography, index. \$24.95.)

This is a slim monograph and properly so, for there is not much to be said for Henry Clay's legal career. He practiced intermittently in Lexington, Kentucky, from 1798 to 1852, dealing mostly with routine land disputes and debt collection. Though he was a skilled practitioner who won a number of cases in the state and federal courts, it does not appear from these pages that he trained any lawyers in his office or made much of an impression during his brief stint as a lecturer on law at Transylvania University. Nor did he achieve distinction as a legal writer or expositor of the Constitution. His greatest claim to fame as a lawyer probably rests on his victories in the Supreme Court in four landmark constitutional cases—*Osborn v. Bank of U.S.* (1824), *Ogden v. Saunders* (1827), *Briscoe v. Bank of Kentucky* (1837), and *Groves v. Slaughter* (1841).

In truth, Clay was a consummate politician who did not much enjoy lawyering, let alone the science of law. Maurice G. Baxter does not pinpoint the dates, but between 1812 and 1820, and again from 1825 to 1829, Clay abandoned the practice of law. When he left his post as secretary of state in 1829, he remarked that he was determined "not to return to the practice of my old profession, and nothing but necessity will compel me to put on the harness again" (p. 126n). Always "interested in his remuneration" (p. 109) as Baxter kindly puts it, Clay continued to dabble in law after returning to Congress, "though compared with the incomes of other prominent lawyers, his remuneration was modest" (p. 59). In his last letter to his wife, which epitomizes his mercenary zeal for the law, he proudly reported that he had received a handsome fee of \$2,500 for winning a case in the Supreme Court.