

and often sharply opposed political cultures, ranging from the Catholic right to the Socialist left, were asked to set aside their differences for the sake of patriotic unity. The President's agreement to meet with Claire can be regarded as part of his ongoing efforts to preserve that union. But the secular republican state's tolerance soon reached its limits, and it began to crack down on the campaigns. In 1917, for example, the Archbishop of Tours was charged for displaying a tricolour flag carrying the Sacred Heart.

But while Jonas's study displays the limits of the wartime reconciliation between Catholics and the Third Republic, he also makes clear that there were points of contact between the secularist republican elite and elements of the church hierarchy. Certainly that proved to be the case with Claire herself. After the war both anticlerical medical doctors and clergymen concerned about the church's being discredited by a fraud, dismissed Claire's troublesome visions as the likely product of hysteria. This diagnosis facilitated her sequestration in a religious community after the condemnation from the Vatican, which was not lifted until 1964. Claire died in 1972 in relative obscurity.

The Tragic Tale of Claire Ferchaud complicates and thus enriches our understanding of France during the First World War. There are points in the book where Claire herself disappears from view, and Jonas could develop comparisons between her and other Catholic visionaries in a bit more detail than he does. But he has located fascinating material and mined it to great effect; in addition to the themes highlighted in this review he makes perceptive remarks about religious imagery and spectacles, and writes in an engaging, accessible style. This thought-provoking book deserves a wide readership; it could be used with profit in courses dealing with modern France or the cultural history of the Great War.

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Miriam G. Reumann, *American Sexual Character: Sex, Gender, and National Identity in the Kinsey Reports* (Berkeley and Los Angeles: University of California Press, 2005).

Back in November 2004, the *New York Times* published an article by Benedict Carey entitled “Long After Kinsey, Only the Brave Study Sex.” In it Carey noted that in George W. Bush’s America, scientists who want to ask questions about human sexuality risk losing their funding if they ask those questions too openly. The parallels with Cold War America when zoologist Alfred Kinsey and his team were conducting their research are obvious. Thankfully historians of American sexuality are subjected to less scrutiny than researchers of sexuality itself (perhaps due to the relative lack of funding), and the field continues to flourish even when the subject itself is the controversial Kinsey Reports.

Miriam Reumann's *American Sexual Character: Sex, Gender, and National Identity in the Kinsey Reports* is an excellent addition to the fascinating history of sex and sexuality in the United States after World War II. The book places the two Kinsey Reports, *Sexual Behavior in the Human Male* (1948) and *Sexual Behavior in the Human Female* (1953), in their historical context and traces their effects instead of treating them as isolated cultural phenomena, which is how they can often appear in hindsight. The strength of Reumann's work is that it provides a close-up of the milieu of the Reports, the conversations about sex that had already started before the Reports were published, and the ways those conversations were changed permanently by the Reports.

As she notes in her introduction, the key to her analysis is the concept of "American sexual character," that is, "the mutual construction of postwar ideas about national identity, sexual, life, and personal and community standards of behaviour and ideology" (3). These ideas are usually working together at any given time to produce what a society thinks is 'normal,' but they came together in particularly intense (if sometimes contradictory) ways in Cold War America.

The combinations and contradictions are explored in five core chapters. The first unpacks the book's short title by analyzing the many obvious and subtle connections drawn between sexuality and 'national character' in the United States after WWII. The next two chapters focus on the Reports and their effects on discussions of male and female sexuality and gender. When the Reports' deliberately-dry statistics revealed that American men and women seemed to be doing a lot of things they were not supposed to be doing, particularly same-sex and extramarital activities, many deeply-rooted cultural narratives had to be re-worked or reinforced. The fourth chapter examines one of the narratives that became the subject of the most intense scrutiny and hand-wringing, that of the heterosexual marriage and the meanings of marital sexuality. Then, as now, marriage was laden with enormous social, political, and national importance, and even in the midst of rapidly rising post-war marriage rates the Reports seemed to suggest that there was something seriously wrong with the institution.

The final chapter examines the ultimate source of Cold War paranoia: homosexuality. Some of the most shocking evidence Kinsey presented was the sheer volume of same-sex behaviour American men and women were engaging in, simultaneously giving authorities more reasons to crack down on gays and lesbians in the name of national security, and giving gays and lesbians proof that they were not alone and were a lot more 'normal' than they had been led to believe. Kinsey's most lasting pop-culture effect may well be the large number of 'Kinsey 6' t-shirts in evidence at any large urban Pride Day, referring to the 6-point scale he developed to highlight that human sexuality is much more fluid and complex than the standard hetero-homo binary. The thousands of pages of

other kinds of statistical data in the Reports were (and are) often overshadowed by Kinsey's data on homosexual behaviour and desires because of the connections that were drawn to national character and security.

American Sexual Character draws on an impressive amount of research. It uses a wide range of published, mass-market sources from the 1940s-60s, from handbooks to women's magazines, in addition to the massive Reports themselves. Non-specialist readers will particularly enjoy Reumann's use of the 1954 *A Cartoon Guide to the Kinsey Report*, which is itself a fascinating way to assess how the *Reports'* contents were being interpreted by mainstream American popular culture. Unfortunately her primary sources (other than the Kinsey Institute's collections) are not listed separately from the secondary material, making it more difficult to appreciate the number and variety of sources used in the book.

Other critiques that can be made of the book are few and minor. The work is a bit repetitive at times, but that can be said of most first monographs based on dissertations. The title is misleading in that large sections of the book do not mention Kinsey at all, and at times the connection to the Kinsey Reports seems tenuous. A more accurate (albeit less-marketable) subtitle would have been "Sex, Gender, and National Identity in the Era of Kinsey." One notable and questionable omission is that Reumann assumes the reader already knows the story of how Kinsey, a zoologist whose previous obsession was wasps, came to lead the most famous study of human sexuality to-date, as well as the controversies around his methodology and research subjects. It is clear that Reumann wanted to avoid the polarizing debates that have characterized biographical studies of Kinsey, and maintain a wider view that puts the Reports in context, but a few brief paragraphs would have gone a long way to making this book more accessible for a non-specialist. Nonetheless, this book gives the Kinsey Reports their due by putting them in their proper place in the history of Cold War sexuality, and is a welcome addition to the historiography.

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Harlan Greene. *The German Officer's Boy* (Madison, Wisconsin: Terrace Books, 2005).

The murder of German diplomat Ernst vom Rath by Herschel Grynszpan is a dramatic, yet seemingly inexplicable, historical event that has given rise to significant speculation. Vom Rath was a relatively low-level member of the German embassy staff in Paris. In ordinary times, his death might have become a minor diplomatic incident, but little more. The murder took place in 1938, however, by a young Jew. The Nazis caught hold of the issue, whipped up a propaganda frenzy around it, and subsequently used it as the excuse for