12/31/10 Bruce Rind: Kinsey's Indiana University Institute is making film an important reason for the study of human sexuality. You need to work with the sex-film producers on films your research confirms to be a normal reflection of sex. You received from Kalog Kagathos Foundation the London Guardian report about Illinois State Professor Daniel Everett's research about the Amazon Tribe's total, uninhibited sexual relations, without the guilt imprinted by religious con-jobs making it a "sin." The porn film producers are begging for justifying their work and would pay you well to do a documentary that makes their films legitimate and proof against the laws that criminalize sex other than a man and woman (18 and above). With personal regards to you, Bruce; and the best for your 2011 Year.

Bruce S. Hopking

Kinsey's films, videos still a touchy subject

The late biologist's sexual materials are complicating things at Indiana University.

"There was an assumption the programmer would work with the collection but how to do that was a question for everybody."

And, as he prepares to open the college cinema theaque on Jan. 15, it still is.

The "Kinsey Collection" refers to the rough 14,000 films and videos belonging to the Kinsey Institute for Research in Sex, Gender, and Reproduction, which has offices on the school's Bloomington campus in southern Indiana. Biologist Alfred Kinsey, who started the institute in 1947 and died in 1956, and his researchers collected the films as part of his world-famous (and the institute's ongoing) research into human sexuality.

[See Kinsey, D10]
COLLECTOR'S ITEM: From the Kinsey Collection, a poster from director Phil Goldstone's 1985 film.

Meanwhile, there are those on campus who think IU Cinema should go ahead and "plunge into" the stag films without too much fretting, Gregory Waller, chairman of the school's department of communication and culture, believes the collection is a viable part of film history.

"That there's arguably pornographic stuff being shot as soon as people pick up cameras, it's a tradition as long as the history of the cinema," he says about the collection. "It's basically been unacknowledged and unwritten, so making the viable seems to be important."

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Wine and tulips in Kabul

Foreign invaders have always had a difficult relationship with Afghanistan. The diary of Babur, the first Moghul emperor, offers some lessons in how to manage—and to enjoy—the place.

On a bright winter's morning lines of plane trees and immaculately tended rose bushes fall away down terraces where the men crash out on carpets and sheepish young couples sit as close together as they dare. The fountains are fed by a central water channel, the signature feature of a Moghul garden. Below is the brown string of Kabul, beyond, monotonous.

The tomb of Babur, the first Moghul emperor, blasted and pock marked during the civil war of the 1990s, has been lovingly restored by the Aga Khan Trust for Culture. Some visitors come because it is now Kabul's most tranquil public space; some because Babur is emerging as an unlikely national hero in a country short of leaders worth admiring. People pray at the foot of his low, simple grave. One enthusiast sacrifices a buffalo to him every year, and distributes the meat to the gardeners who tend the place.

Born far to the north of modern Afghanistan, Babur went to Kabul only because he had failed in Central Asia. It was Samarqand he dreamed of capturing. Yet when the dynasts of building an empire drove him south, he yearned to return to Kabul.

For a man who achieved so much, he is strangely unknown outside Afghanistan. Not only did he create a dynasty whose empire stretched from Afghanistan to southern India and which gave the world some of its greatest cultural riches, but he also wrote an autobiography, which, though half a millennium old, is a far better read than most of the political and business memoirs churned out today. The Baburnama recounts the barbarity and hardship of a prince's life in a chaotic world; but it is also full of delight and humanity. Sometimes self-aggrandising, sometimes self-critical, Babur emerges from his autobiography as a real person, in a way no other great leader except Churchill does. And because the author is open, and the style so clear, the book offers an intimate view of a world the reader would otherwise struggle to imagine: “nearly every one was an experienced mind,” says Bamber Gascoigne in “The Great Moghuls”, “have recorded so wild an existence which combined to an extraordinary degree the romantic and the sordid.” It was first translated into English in 1922 by Annette Beveridge, mother of William Beveridge, architect of Britain's welfare state; “The Garden of the Eight Paradises”, a recent biography of Babur by Stephen Dale, has done it more than justice; yet it still lacks the fame it deserves.

Babur's pedigree primed him for greatness. On his father's side he was descended from Timur-i-lang (Tamerlane), whose empire stretched from the Caucasus to Delhi; and on his mother's side from Genghis Khan, who conquered Asia from the Black Sea to Beijing. But by the time Babur was born, in 1483, the empire had crumbled and the emperors' descendants had multiplied into a set of princelings fighting for loot and territory. The problem was unique to Central Asia. As E.M. Forster put it, “At the first that Washavelli was collecting materials for ‘The Prince’, a robber host made in need of advice, was scurrying over the highlands of Central Asia. His problem had already engaged the attention of the Florentines; there were too many known states and not enough kingdoms.”

They got going early in those days, Babur's memoirs tell us, and he was 11, while tending pigeons in an ill-constructed tower that toppled into the ravine below the palace, leaving his son in charge of the province, Ferghana. At 11, Babur headed off to capture Samarqand, the former imperial capital, a jewel built by craftsmen who had kidnapped from India, Persia and Arabia. When he got there, he found a couple of young cousins already besieging the place; though one was more interested in the daughter of a local noble than in the city. The lover got the girl, but Babur did not get Samarqand.

He tried again the next year, succeeded briefly and was ejected three months later. In the meantime, a Mongol steppe had put his 12-year-old brother on the throne in Ferghana. So Babur was homeless; most of his followers had left him; treacherous relations had murdered his tutor. “It was very hard for me. I could not help crying a good deal.” He was, after all, only 14. Babur struggled on in Central Asia for a while, but was crushed between Uzbeks.
drinking. She made a pass at him: "I got rid of her by pretending to be drunk." Babur was not much interested in women. He explains that he had married early, and neglected the girls. He uses that to introduce the subject of his passion for a boy called Babur whom he sees in the bazaar. Until then, he says, he had "no inclination for anybody, and no knowledge of love or desire." His passion for Babur drives him to distraction. Shyness prevents him from approaching the boy. He quotes a Persian couplet:

"I am ashamed when I see my friend; My companions look at me as I sit in the other way..."

Whether he got anywhere with Babur is not clear.

But poetry and parties were not enough. Babur was ambitious, and his domination in Kabul was limited by the Afghans' insubordination. He needed to expand elsewhere. He tried again to take Samarkand, and was again beaten back. So he raided what is now Pakistan, found the people of the plains easier meat than the mountain tribes, and by 1532 pretty much controlled Lahore.

Delhi was in his sights. But it had been part of Timur's domain. Babur maintained that it was legitimately his, and wrote to the ruler (a Lodhi, originally from Afghanistan) to stake his claim. Sultan Ibrahim, understandably, ignored him, so Babur marched south and defeated him at the battle of Panipat. The sultan was killed, along with 5,000-16,000 of his troops.

Babur stayed in Delhi to consolidate his power, but he had India. His list of complaints offers a good indication of the things that mattered to a 16th-century emperor:

- Hindustan is a country of five elephants. There are no good-looking people, there is no social intercourse, no receiving or paying of visits, no genius or manners. In its handicrafts there is no form or symmetry, method or quality. There are no good horses, no good dogs, no grapes, musk melons or first-rate fruits, no ice or cold water, no good bread or food cooked in the bazaars, no hot baths or colleges, candles, torches or candles.

The only things Babur liked about India were the abundance of gold and silver and the weather after the monsoon. He built gardens to remind him of China, and ordered his gardeners to clean out the string of Ashawani, the Afghan equivalent of hash browns.

Babur's life became a long series of parties interspersed with brief interludes of warfare and administration. There was music, poetry, beauty—and vast quantities of alcohol. In October 1529, for instance, Babur rode out to visit his friend. His laws were one sheet of trefoil; its pomegranate trees yellowed to autumn splendour, their fruit full red." They drank, off and on, for several days. At one point one man said some "disturbing" things, fell down drunk and was carried away. Another could not mount his horse. At that moment some Afghans approached. Somebody suggested that, rather than leave the drunk to the treasurers, they should chop his head off and take that horse. That was, Babur points out, a rather 18th-century joke; eventually they got the man back in the saddle and headed for home. Once Babur was so drunk that he was sick and could not remember riding home the night before. Oddly, his grandson had that episode illustrated too. Babur struggled with his habit—though not very hard. He wrote that he was planning to give up in his 40th year, so "I was drinking to excess, now that there was less than a year left."

At one party Babur saw a very surprising sight: a woman...
Lee's life, not his myths

[Lee, from DI] can history. "I thought that by this point you could take a look at how he really was, without setting up the myth and knocking it down. We're at a stage where you can play it straight."

Playing it straight still offers plenty of surprises, and Lee emerges as a complex, even, at times, tormented figure. "Robert E. Lee," shows the proud Virginian's fierce ambition and discipline as a young man. He emerged from battlefield success in the Mexican War as one the United States Army's rising stars.

The film also describes Lee's anguish over the declaration of Southern secession and the ensuing conflict: He originally wanted to sit out the war rather than fight against the U.S. forces, which had served for decades.

Lee's life, Zwitnitzer says, had been dedicated to ideas of honor and loyalty instilled during his self-appointed Virginia upbringing and his education at West Point.

"But when it came time to decide which side he was going to fight for," Zwitnitzer says, "those things weren't enough. They didn't point him in one obvious direction. It was a very difficult decision. But once he made it, he didn't look back."

The documentary looks at Lee's ups and downs on the battlefield and in his life during the war years. The general, who was in his 50s during the war, often slept at camp, some nights resting no more than two hours.

"Joseph Glaththaar, a history professor at the University of North Carolina at Chapel Hill and author of "General Lee's Army: From Victory to Collapse," says military historians today, regarding their politics, regard Lee very highly."

"Lee was unbelievably smart," says Glaththaar, who is in the film. "He was able to grasp very complex military operations — his own army, the enemy, the terrain. He was a very careful planner and very good at reading his opponent's mind."

Because the Union had greater numbers, Lee knew he had to work fast and fight as close to the border as possible in order to shock the North into losing its will. "He slammed into the Union Army and took very heavy casualties," Glaththaar says. But while Lee lost a lot of men — roughly 20,000 in one especially bloody week — he also punched well above his weight. His army, about a quarter of Confederate forces, caused about half of Union casualties.

As the film shows, Lee was a morally complex figure. While he's embraced by hero-worshippers as an exemplary Christian, he ignored or resisted religion until late in life. He had the misgivings about slavery typical of his class, but was hardly ahead of his time on the issue.

Lee could also be severe: He ordered public executions of deserting soldiers, thinking decisive action necessary for discipline, and would march soldiers past the corpse. Lee, says Zwitnitzer, could be relentless with an unyielding "willingness to sacrifice his life and body and family for this cause — and expecting everyone else to."

After Lee surrendered to the Union Gen. Ulysses S. Grant in 1865, he withdrew to life in Richmond, Va., and assumed the presidency of what's now Washington and Lee University. He was most reports tormented by the South's loss, but did not publicly denounce U.S. policies and Reconstruction. Five years after the war's end, he died from a massive stroke, and a transformation began. The "lost cause" movement turned the very human Lee into a symbol — a dignified, chivalric deity.

These Confederate apologists, says Joan Waugh, a professor at UCLA and author of the award-winning "U.S. Grant! American Hero, American Myth," react, "the general "into someone who was almost godlike in his perfection. Who ... was a gentleman, someone who believed in the old-fashioned kind of war. Which is ridiculous given his casualties."

The neo-Confederates, Waugh says, also believed themselves in a relationship to slavery and its role in the war. "The idea that he didn't see himself as defending a slave republic ... this is preposterous."

But the heroic worship of nostalgic Southerners, Waugh argues, dovetailed with a larger postwar effort to reconcile North and South. "We wanted to win the war to keep the country whole," she says. "And when the country engaged in reconciliation, we acknowledged how brave and courageous the soldiers on both sides were." So Lee became widely admired both inside and outside the South.

The film largely reflects this point. Zwitnitzer knows that hard-core neo-Confederates may not like his film. "I find Lee the guy a really fascinating, important figure, and one worth knowing," Zwitnitzer says. "And I don't think the myth of Lee — which was used to whitewash the reason for this war — is half as interesting."

someone else."

"Lee surrendered to the Union Gen. Ulysses S. Grant in 1865, he withdrew to life in Richmond, Va., and assumed the presidency of what's now Washington and Lee University. He was most reports tormented by the South's loss, but did not publicly denounce U.S. poli-