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Intimate Inequalities: Interracial Affection and Same-sex Love in the “Heterosexual” Life of Yone Noguchi, 1897–1909

AMY SUEYOSHI

LOVE COURSED THROUGH Japanese immigrant Yone Noguchi as he climbed up a hillside bursting with spring flowers in Oakland, California. He gathered poppies and buttercups into a bouquet and offered them to his new imaginary love. Yone had just begun corresponding with western writer Charles Warren Stoddard, and he felt intoxicated with affection. Throwing kisses east toward Stoddard’s Washington, D.C., bungalow, Yone sealed his love for his dearest Charlie.¹ At the turn of the twentieth century, as Yone wrote torrid letters of love to this man more than thirty years his senior, he simultaneously impregnated writer Léonie Gilmour, proposed marriage to journalist Ethel Armes, and finally married his Japanese housekeeper, Matsuko Takeda.² Few have explored the implications of Yone’s private life, though hundreds of publications detail his later contributions as an expert on English and American literature. If scholars do address his personal life, they have done so briefly and recounted only his heterosexual affairs.³ Indeed, for those in the serious business of history, an individual’s sexuality often appears frivolous in the larger project of reconstructing a more important past.⁴ Yet Yone’s largely ignored private life serves as a provocative springboard in reconsidering interactions of gender, race, and sexuality at the turn of the century. While historians typically document interracial commitments from this period as resistive acts against racism and misogyny or as unexpected alliances that worked against the status quo, Yone’s interracial affairs both with women and men more aptly signified how these relationships reinscribed racial, gender, and imperial realities. These intimacies, undergirded by inequality, illuminate how affection might more powerfully comprise layers of condescensions rather than sentiments of egalitarian camaraderie.

In 1999 over twenty historians came together to publish a collection titled *Sex, Love, Race* on the historical significance of interracial sexuality. The impressive volume both summarized previous scholarship and set the

tone of future scholarship on interraciality. Cross-racial encounters pointed to the “permeable boundaries” of not just race and sex, but “margin and center” as well. Moreover, in these discussions of racial mixing, “instability and choice” characterized the language of sex and sexuality. On the eve of the twenty-first century, the editor of the anthology and renowned historian of interracial sexuality, Martha Hodes, concluded with a rallying call: be inspired by the collected essays and take up the task of unveiling more stories that “transvers[e] and transgress” racial boundaries.⁵

Without a doubt Yone, who came to the California during a heightening of anti-Asian legislation throughout the state, exercised notable liberty in pursuing not just one, but at least three serious relationships with two white women and one white man. Not only did the Japanese face rampant racism from whites in the form of repressive legislation, pejorative depiction, and daily assaults, but the Japanese also embodied repulsive if not threatening masculinity along with Chinese in California.⁶ While daily newspapers presented in a positive light a handful of cases of Japanese men and white women marrying, the larger community hardly approved of these unions.⁷ Many states explicitly banned marriage between whites and nonwhites, and federal laws took citizenship away from American women who married specifically Asian immigrant men.⁸ Additionally, while the prevalence and acceptability of passionate same-sex friendships among more literary men such as Charlie likely facilitated Yone’s intimacy with him, explicit homosexuality was condemned.⁹ According to historian Nayan Shah, interracial sexual encounters between largely South Asian and white men appeared particularly “outrageous”—a threat to American normative masculinity in which “alien” or foreign men corrupted young white American “boys.”¹⁰ Indeed, in this context the forging of Yone’s interracial and same-sex loves seemed to align with prevailing arguments on cross-racial intimacies as pushing against mores of sexuality.

Yet this essay delves more deeply into the personal exchanges between Yone and his many loves to argue that his seemingly unconventional acts more provocatively shored up existing regimes of race, gender, and sexuality. First, the article traces Yone’s journey to the U.S. and the beginning of his correspondence with Charlie. Then it recounts how Yone develops relationships with Ethel and Léonie even as he traveled to the East Coast specifically to meet Charlie. The essay argues that racial difference charged their attraction to one another and that even in his more platonic friendships with whites, Western fantasies of exotic Japan inextricably motivated the

attraction. The essay highlights in particular how white women engaged in the cultural consumption of Asia and the Pacific Islands while having little to no respect toward the Asians and Pacific Islanders themselves. Then the article draws on the case of East Asian Studies expert Emma Fong Kuno and her writings on her two “Oriental” husbands to illustrate how even the best-intentioned whites who hoped to bridge East and West may have in fact rigidified divisions of difference. Finally, the essay closes by tracing the demise of both Ethel and Léonie’s relationship with Yone. Though both women would suffer emotionally from Yone’s deceptions, Léonie, who had a child with Yone, more severely felt the sting of a society that viewed women as a socially inferior class. The reality of limited employment opportunities for women writers, combined with social alienation as a single mother of a mixed heritage child born out of wedlock, prevented Léonie from rising above poverty. In her suffering we see the enduring complication of gender in a scenario that might seem driven largely by racial difference and imperial inequities. Indeed, Yone’s affairs serve as a useful departure point to consider intersecting and competing vectors of race, gender, sexuality, and nation.

AN IMMIGRANT IN AMERICA

Yone arrived in San Francisco in 1893 at the age of eighteen, determined to become an English-language poet. Like the vast majority of other Issei, or immigrant Japanese, in the late nineteenth century, Yone came as a “schoolboy.” These young Japanese men who wished to attend school did household chores for wealthier white families in exchange for free room and board. Many of these immigrants hailed from middling-class backgrounds, struggling to improve their position through education and opportunities in ways unavailable in Japan.¹¹ For the most part Yone, too, came from a family typical of other *heimin*, or commoners, migrating to the United States. His father worked as a merchant selling paper, umbrellas, and *geta*, or wooden slippers, and his family led a modest yet relatively stable life, neither luxuriously rich nor extremely impoverished.¹²

While Yone hoped to attend classes as he worked, the arrangement did not prove easy. Cultural and class differences set the stage for countless conflicts between employer and employed.¹³ Yone, like many others who found the work in private homes intolerable, took up jobs in the service sector at places such as hotels and restaurants. Those outside the schoolboy

circuit had to pay for their own lodging and board. As they put in additional hours, it became impossible to attend classes.¹⁴

Within four years of his arrival, Yone managed to escape the tedious work of laboring at a Palo Alto hotel and move into the essayist Joaquin Miller's Oakland home, affectionately called the "Hights." From here, Yone made inroads into the San Francisco bohemian community, a network of writers and artists who had a sincere interest in "foreign" cultures, while for the rest of the U.S., xenophobia and American exceptionalism reigned. Through Joaquin, Yone befriended established writers such as Charles Warren Stoddard. At Charlie's home, Yone met Ethel Armes, a journalist for the *Washington Post* who later became famous as Alabama's first historian. Within these networks Yone additionally learned about the possibility of hiring personal editorial assistants such as Léonie Gilmour to revise his writing for publication. By 1900 Yone had established himself as a rising poet in literary circles across the nation.¹⁵

LOVE AND SEX

When Yone put his pen to paper in a brief letter introducing himself, Charlie had long been waiting for him to write. He had been studying Yone's photograph in a magazine and had already called out to him in spirit. He wished that Yone could be with him now. He had so much to say and so longed to see him, understand him, and know him more.¹⁶ By the time Yone contacted Charlie, the latter was not just settled in his literary career, but also comfortable with his attraction to young men, particularly those of olive-tinted skin.¹⁷ As he responded to Yone's letters, he begged for Yone's photograph so that he could write both their names upon it, frame the image, and place it in his study.¹⁸

As the two wrote back and forth, Charlie—usually careful about publicly exposing his desire for men—unashamedly grew explicit about his attraction for Yone.¹⁹ He yearned to embrace Yone in person and keep him by his side forever.²⁰ He stood the "most beautiful picture" of his Yone on his desk to keep it constantly by his side. Yone's "sweet sad face," "too sensitive mouth," "delicate chin," and "the beautiful hands, . . . sensitive and artistic" all called to Charlie for care and love, and he would willingly oblige. Charlie craved to see more of Yone, in fact all of Yone as "God made him—naked and not ashamed." He longed to hold and caress Yone's hands as well as feel their caresses. To Charlie, Yone was "all beautiful" and "all worthy of

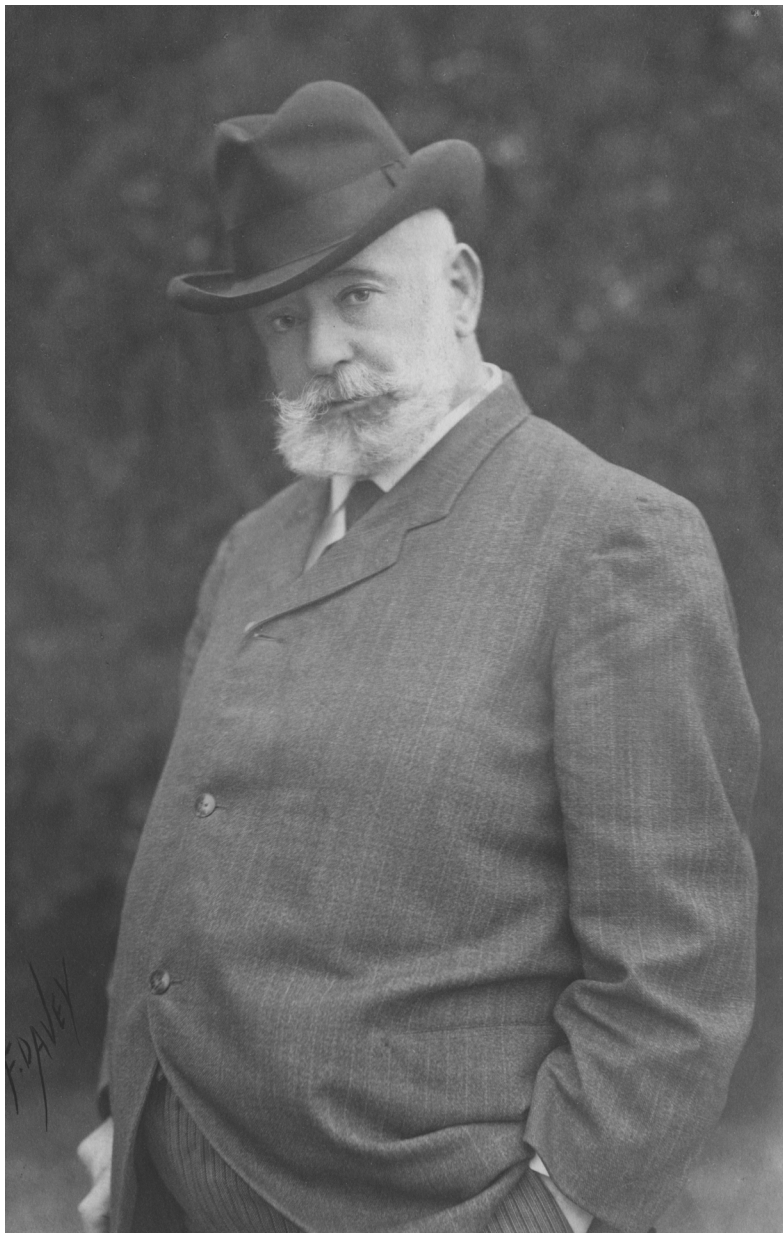


Figure 2. Charles Warren Stoddard, c. 1890s. Courtesy of Bancroft Library, University of California, Berkeley, Stoddard, Charles Warren POR 6.

love.” Charlie declared, “Once more a thousand embraces! I fold you to my heart with number of kisses.”²¹

To Yone, Charlie’s letters brought “great pleasure,” “certain sweet odor,” and “sweetest thoughts” that he wished he could have every day.²² Such joy would Charlie’s notes stir that Yone would kiss them upon arrival. Charlie’s words descended like “moonbeams” lighting Yone’s “lonely walks” at night. He more than simply enjoyed the notes. “I love them. That’s all I know!” The notes functioned as a life-giving salve, particularly in his moments of depression. He insisted to Charlie, “You don’t stop your writing for me as I wait [and] live to hear from you.”²³ Yone declared, “I like you, I love you, I like to be some day in your study sitting all day by you indeed.”²⁴

When the two finally met in 1900, Yone felt drawn in by Charlie’s “sweet magnetism.” He declared, “Your breath so soft and impressive like autumn rain! Your love—Thank God! So heavenly! Why shortest—how sad it was short!—, but loveliest visit to you was my dream realized, it cannot be forgotten. It was a great event in my life. . . . You are my ideal person.”²⁵ Yet Charlie would not be the only one Yone claimed to love.

At Charlie’s Washington, D.C., home, Yone met Ethel, with whom he reportedly fell in “love at first sight.”²⁶ Though Ethel was not “perfect,” she appeared “strangely wild” and held a certain hypnotic charm. Yone did not know why, but could not help but “love Ethel so.”²⁷ A charming woman with a long, slender face and defiant eyes, Ethel by her beauty, and later by her intelligence, drew in Yone. As the daughter of Lucy Hamilton Kerr and George Augustus Armes, Ethel came from a prominent southern family. U.S. senators and representatives sprinkled her mother’s side of the family; during the Civil War her father served as a colonel in the Union Army and an aide to General Ulysses S. Grant.²⁸ So intent would Yone become about marrying the young journalist that he would repeatedly insist to Charlie of his love for her.²⁹ Yet in the midst of declaring his love for Ethel, Yone had already begun living with Léonie as “man and wife.”³⁰

In 1901 Yone had hired Léonie after she responded to Yone’s advertisement in the *New York Herald* for an editorial assistant.³¹ Léonie, like Ethel, belonged to a cadre of white educated women who sought out careers as writers. Born in 1874, just a year before Yone, Léonie had always done well in school, winning scholarships to attend Bryn Mawr College and study French literature at the Sorbonne. Upon graduation, Léonie began teaching Latin and French at a Catholic girl’s school in Jersey City during the day while she wrote at night.³² As Yone planned his wedding with Ethel, a pregnant Léonie, who had begun to show, separated from Yone and moved

to Los Angeles to prepare for the birth of her baby. Without any knowledge of Ethel, Léonie had already resolved that Yone would never be able to love her because of his “temperament.”³³ As Yone increasingly entangled himself in a web of deceit as well as declarations of love, his affairs with Charlie, Ethel, and Léonie stand as a remarkable statement of how an immigrant continued to forge affection in anti-Asian and antihomosexual America.³⁴

RACIALIZED DESIRE

Yet as much as Yone's affairs appeared to be a rebellion against restrictive sociocultural norms, inequalities around race, gender, and sexuality fueled his relationships. While Charlie genuinely loved Yone, the impulses behind his desire could never be separated from Yone's race. From the outset, Charlie perceived Yone as his “sensual” “Orient[al]” friend, a poet filled with “primitive eloquence.”³⁵ In his personal notebook, Charlie wrote his impressions of Yone: “Dearest Yone Noguchi! Eyes? His eyes are the windows of a temple, filled with the shadow of mystery. What a pernicious little body his is! As of ivory, . . . as an idol that has wakened from a mystical dream. His soul—a, tis jewell in the lotus.”³⁶ The use of words such as “Orient,” “temple,” “mystery,” “ivory,” and “jewel in the lotus” could only point to Orientalist ideologies that Charlie painted upon Yone—fantasies founded in the West's exotic, trivializing, and prejudiced interpretations of the Eastern cultures and people.³⁷ At their first meeting, Yone sensed Charlie's disappointment. “It would have been more natural had I been barefooted and in a Japanese kimono,” he recalled. Charlie “condemned” Yone as “far too Americanized.” Yone remained fully aware if not annoyed at how Charlie imagined him as a mystical persona from the Pacific: “Did he expect me to be another Kana Ana—a little sea god of his South Sea, shaking the spray from his forehead like a porpoise? I am positive he prayed that I would come to him in some Japanese robe at the least.”³⁸

Yet even if Yone insisted on wearing Western clothes, Charlie remained hypnotized by the “boy” from the “Orient.” His race gave him an animal-in-the-wilderness-like innocence untouched by civilization. Yone, an “unconventional child of nature,” bore his heart and soul “naked and bare” through his writings. Charlie described the “sensuous imagination of the Oriental” as filled with “fire and splendor.” Using the most literal English ever uttered, Yone's lines were charged with “primitive eloquence . . . a spontaneous song of heart . . . over flowing with melody. . . .” As an “unspoiled poet” from the Far East, Yone appeared appealingly exotic and primal.³⁹

At the turn of the century, their affection for one another took on greater significance than just their individual selves. Their romance mirrored a larger affair between Japan and America as the two nations sought to satisfy their deepest desires through each other. A modernizing Japan that had long feared foreign imperialism sought to create ties with the West as it realized it could no longer maintain its isolationism. Many Japanese, intent on moving toward “progress” as defined by the West, adopted American technology, styles, and values. Conversely for Americans, Japan offered a cure to a cultural malaise brought on by industrialization. Despite “progress” or economic growth, Victorian intellectuals felt that the quality of life had somehow declined. The U.S. turned to Japan to regain a more spiritual and pure civilization. The arts and literary community in particular took up Japonisme, an appreciation of Japan as holding high aesthetic value that Americans could appropriate for their own leisure. Despite widespread disdain for actual Japanese people, imaginings of Japan held great ideological value. Yone and Charlie thus forged their affair in this very crucible in which Japan sought to emulate and be embraced by the West, while the West hoped to be saved from itself through Japan. Art historian William Hosley noted, “Like lovers, Japan and the West were eventually drawn to one another by a yearning for wholeness and fulfillment.”⁴⁰

Few Americans who prided themselves on being “cultured” would be immune to Western ideologies of Japanese aestheticism propagated by Japonisme. Ethel, like Charlie, articulated Yone’s racial difference as a site of attraction. Yone appeared “small, slender, brown” with “wonderful eyes.” His nontraditional masculinity in his gentility and sensitivity initially delighted Ethel even as it later infuriated her.⁴¹ In late June of 1904, Ethel expressed to her confidante, Alice Wiggins, her frustration with Yone: “Oh he is not big as I dream nor strong nor bravehearted nor practical nor—how could I say—protecting—if one could [use] that word. I feel so much that it is I who would have to be the husband—that is it—when I want to be the little one—and the wife.” Ethel confronted Yone with her concerns that he “bends like a reed, like a blade of grass and in the wind.” She noted, “He is nearly all that my heart desires—but is not all because he is not what I think men ought to be.”⁴² While Ethel’s description of Yone’s shortcomings eerily echo late-twentieth-century stereotypes of the emasculated Asian male in America, her observations in fact diverged sharply from increasingly martial depictions of Japanese men in U.S. print at the time.⁴³ Still, her description of Yone mirrored assumptions of a select population of Americans who embraced Japan as the land of Buddhism, bamboo, and beautifully simple objets d’art.

Prevailing ideas about race and gender played a crucial role in articulating Ethel's romantic attractions to not just Yone but another lover as well. Even as Ethel made a commitment to marry Yone, she preferred to have long-term commitments with women rather than men. In 1899 Ethel saw marrying a "girl" as one of her future goals.⁴⁴ In 1902 Ethel declared that she could never imagine herself in a long-term relationship with an individual of the opposite sex. To Yone's dismay, she explained, "I could not possibly agree to marry for more than a year—any man." Ethel may have found the most comfort in Alice in particular. As she wrote of her devotion to Alice, she declared their relationship in racialized heterosexual terms: "My man. Dear man. Aye—I'll be your Indian bride. When are you coming to court me? Come—woo me—for just sweet wooing's sake. Love me—adore me." Ethel pushed Alice to confess her love for her: "I will bet one thing. Of all the girls you ever met in your life, you liked me best—didn't you Alice?" Ethel closed her letter, "tell me over again you like me for always. Your friend—bride—I should say, Ethel."⁴⁵ Her relationship with Alice proved more intense than a mere friendship. It would hold as much significance as the holiest of heterosexual unions.

Moreover, Ethel's use of the term "Indian bride" to frame her relationship with Alice infused their love with romance and innocence as well as passion and taboo. In the late 1800s, images and ideas about Native American women had been in circulation for at least two hundred years in Western art and literary works. In these portrayals, American Indian women frequently embodied contradictory characteristics—innocence as well as savagery, sexual purity as well as availability. In marriage to white men, particularly fur traders in North America, the beautiful "Indian bride" came to symbolize a shy, submissive woman about to embark on a purer marital union of mutual love. Having escaped the tyranny of the Native American husband in which she would be reduced to a "slave," the pensive, dreamy beauty could now enjoy romance, more civilized as well as passionate. Even as she appeared as an exotic "other" through clearly articulated racial markers, the "Indian bride" became a part of America, appropriated and then packaged with an Anglo man to symbolize Jeffersonian ideals of racial harmony through intermarriage. The couple would come to represent America. As romantic as this endeavor appeared, most of the nation, however, perceived these unions as problematic for their cross-racial nature. Yet the Indian bride became an icon of harmony even in her transgression of racial order.⁴⁶ By calling herself Alice's "Indian bride," Ethel painted herself as the object of lust and infused distinct meaning into their passionate affair—a pure romance

built on companionate love, but also illicit in perhaps its unconventional same-sex pairing. Articulations of race served not only as a crucial vehicle to further desire, but also as a reflection of imperial inequalities in how the “conquerer” appropriated constructed meanings of the “conquered” for their own purposes.

For Léonie as well, though less preposterously so than for Charlie or Ethel, Japonisme figured explicitly in how she imagined her and her son’s life when she chose to give in to Yone’s pleadings to join him in Japan. As she boarded the steamship to cross the Pacific Ocean, she did so not to renew a relationship with Yone, but rather in hopes of making a “Japanese boy” out of her son Isamu.⁴⁷ She determined to cultivate the artistic within him. Raising him in Japan would be critical to the process. In 1906 she additionally used what she presumed to be Japanese culture to tickle her friend Catherine Burnell. She closed her letter, “Your faithful friend and admirer, Léonichi Gilmourmiki Noguchi” in a move to reshape comically her name into what she believed were common Japanese name endings.⁴⁸

Broader interracial interactions among Yone’s friendships as well became sites of connection that underscored racial difference. In April 1904 writer Helen Bridyman invited herself and her husband to Yone’s home for a Japanese dinner. To Helen, “all things Japanese” were “so intensely interesting.” She intended to bring another woman “wild to see [Yone’s] place.” She detailed the exact items she wanted served, including tea and bean paste “as before,” pickled and spiced raw fish “in square[s],” a steamed custard, raw oysters, and salad. Writer Zona Gale evidently had previously visited Yone’s home for a similar dinner and Helen insisted that Yone have several of the exact same dishes. She additionally requested “saki” to accompany the “more substantial courses” and inquired if Yone might be able to drum up a “Japanese sweet” when closing the meal with a second serving of tea. She even dictated the placement of his appliances. “The gas stove by your elbow,” she noted. Helen advised Yone in the postscript to “keep this letter on account of the menu” and added, “I want spoons served with that steamed bowl” since it “was far too good to lose between the chopsticks.” To Helen’s credit she admitted that the demands appeared condescending—a to-do list from the mistress of the house to her servant. Still, it did not inhibit her from commanding Yone to host dinner along her specific guidelines. “This is a veritable housekeeper’s letter, but some things must be attended to, and you will forgive me I know,” concluded Helen. To add insult to injury, one week later, Helen took the liberty to invite two other guests to dinner and merely informed Yone about it after the fact.⁴⁹

"Thank you so much for making it possible for me to have another glimpse into Japan," Helen declared.⁵⁰

More pointedly, interracial intimacies signaled how white women even during virulently racist times hoped to engage intimately with nonwhite bodies.⁵¹ Writer Isobel Osbourne Field, the stepdaughter of Robert Louis Stevenson, also wrote of growing sexually intimate with men of color. A close friend of Charlie's, she wrote to him of her adventures in Vailima, Samoa, where she was becoming more and more "Samoanized." Isobel, along with Annie, another white American woman friend, had "gone over" to the Samoans. She wrote of one young chief Tupua as her "special property." Yet her apparent fondness for Samoa and its people did not necessarily translate into a mutual respect. Even as she and Annie pursued sexual relationships with Samoans whom Isobel alleged to be Samoan royalty, she held little regard for the "natives" and did not see them as equals. When she wrote of Annie's stunning beauty, she described it as remarkable, "enough to turn wiser heads than those belonging to Samoans."⁵²

In fact, a Christmas party of Isobel may have most aptly demonstrated exactly how Samoans fit into her own life. On December 25 she had a "jolly" party with roast turkey and punch—"a house party of white folk." Things and people Samoan only appeared as accessories to the event. "Native dancers" arrived to entertain guests in a house adorned with "native ornaments" and the "strong scent of cocoanut oil."⁵³ Interestingly, in the early 1890s Isobel once wrote to Charlie, complaining of one friend as a "bigot."⁵⁴ A woman who adorned her house in Samoan decoration and perhaps even slept with a Samoan chief, Isobel believed she had the moral high ground to condemn the narrow-mindedness of others, even though she imagined herself to be superior to the very Samoans she supposedly appreciated.⁵⁵ Isobel boasted to Charlie that through her and Annie's connection with two chiefs, they commanded nearly a hundred men who danced and wrote songs for the two.

Additional interracial intimacies between well-meaning whites and Asians and Pacific Islanders further illustrate how these relationships just as often reified race-based differences that supported racist ideologies even as they horrified racists afraid of racial mixing. Native Hawaiians proved crucial in the development of Charlie's fetish for brown men.⁵⁶ The Pacific profoundly signified a refuge from the sexual "hypocrisy" of civilization and the "frigid manners of Christians" for Charlie. Pacific Islanders, unafraid of "instincts," provided a haven for his same-sex affections. In a letter to poet Walt Whitman, Charlie wrote of his motivation to return to the "South Seas": "Barbarism has given me the fullest joy of my life and I long to return to it and

be satisfied.”⁵⁷ The islands and their young men served as a sexual utopia that not even “California where men are tolerably bold” could provide.⁵⁸ Charlie was hardly alone in his imperial same-sex predilections. In the late 1800s many European “explorers” who sought same-sex sexual fulfillment found refuge in colonial outposts in Africa and Southeast Asia as well as the Pacific and Caribbean Islands.⁵⁹ Social theorist Jonathan Dollimore wrote of how French Nobel Prize Laureate Andre Gide in his travels to Algiers would remain complicit in acts of racism against Algerian men even as he loved them.⁶⁰ Ambrose Bierce once twitted Charlie for going to the Pacific Islands to have interracial love affairs: “Tell me all about everybody . . . and about your last voyage. Did you fall in love with another nigger boy?”⁶¹ Even as these affairs crossed racial boundaries and disturbed many racists, they hardly broke these very same barriers in a movement toward racial equality. Both white supremacy and a desire to forge same-sex connections informed these intimacies.

RACIALIZED DIFFERENCE

As Yone cultivated love with Charlie in spring 1897, a couple at nearby Stanford University busied themselves in preparation for their spring wedding. Walter Fong, lawyer, minister, and teacher of Chinese had met Emma Ellen House while she was a student. The two married in Denver to avoid restrictive California codes that prohibited unions between whites and “Mongoloids.” When Walter died prematurely, Emma fortuitously remarried Yoshi S. Kuno, a colleague of Walter’s at the University of California, Berkeley.⁶²

Emma later published her observations of her “Oriental husbands” in the *San Francisco Bulletin*, attributing differences of masculinity and romance in Walter and Yoshi to their “race.”⁶³ Armed with an undergraduate degree from Stanford and a master’s degree from the University of California at Berkeley with a thesis comparing political and intellectual life in China, Japan, and Korea, Emma was a credentialed expert on East Asian culture.⁶⁴ She hoped to spread understanding and tolerance of Asians in her essay on her husbands. Although she cautioned readers not to take her observations as applying to *all* Chinese and Japanese men, her publications definitively claimed immutable differences between Chinese and Japanese that likely served to solidify categories of race or ethnicity as determining gendered interactions.⁶⁵

For Emma, Japanese men proved more domineering than Chinese men, while Japanese wives remained much meeker and more subservient than

Chinese. While Japanese husbands expected their wives to contribute her part in financially supporting the family in addition to raising children, Chinese husbands did not want their wives to work outside of the home. In the household, the Japanese husband “rule[d] everything,” while the Chinese wife held the preponderance of authority, controlling the family purse. The Chinese husband consulted his wife with regard to the management of the household, the family guests, the children’s education, and his business affairs. At the dinner table, the Chinese husband generally helped with both preparing meals and serving dishes when time permitted. With guests, he never let his wife serve alone. In strong contrast, the Japanese husband usually expected his wife to both cook and serve. Even in households with domestic help, the Japanese wife supervised the work in the kitchen and rarely came to the table to sit. Emma explained, “The Chinese husband values his wife so highly because it costs so much to get her. It is human nature to prize that for which we pay most.”⁶⁶

Chinese mothers additionally exercised “amazing” authority over even her “grown sons,” whereas Japanese mothers did not: “It is remarkable how well even the young Chinese men here in America obey the old tyrants back there in China.” Japanese women “meekly” tolerated much impudence from their growing sons because they belonged to the male sex. She continued, “Even when they are little she kisses and pets them when they are obstreperous instead of dealing with them as a Chinese or an American mother would.”⁶⁷

Furthermore, Japanese wives frequently martyred themselves for their husbands in marriage. Emma recounted the sacrifices of one “cultured, Christian wife,” “an unassuming graduate of a Japanese university.” Every Sunday morning she prepared special meals for her husband whenever he chose to get up, even though she would have liked to accompany her daughter to Sunday school or attend church service: “Thus her day of Sabbath, which had been so precious to her before marriage, generally meant a day in the kitchen. She bore it uncomplainingly and with a patience and stoicism foreign to the average American wife.” The Japanese wife “as a rule” considered it her “bound duty” to both “obey her husband and satisfy his whims.” Though the “modern” Japanese wife had increasing freedom for self-expression, there remained no doubt as to who, in fact, ruled the family and household, even if the woman had the courage to stand up for her rights.⁶⁸

As her essay came to an end, she concluded that the best pairing in an “Occidental-Oriental marriage” would be for the Chinese man to marry an Occidental woman and the Occidental man to marry a Japanese woman.

Even in China, where a Chinese wife would be ideal for the Occidental man, the Japanese wife proved more “docile, active, and ready to adopt . . . foreign customs” of both China and the West.⁶⁹ Moreover, Emma confessed that she found her first husband, a Chinese man, more companionable due to a shared religion and possibly also the differences in “national inheritance” between Yoshi and Walter. She noted that her “Chinese husband always accorded me the major part of the say,” while her Japanese husband remained “absolutely unbossable.”⁷⁰

Even as Emma hoped to educate Americans about Asians, her detailed classification of Chinese and Japanese husbands may have just as powerfully signaled a more “progressive” form of racial injustice, where educated individuals who believed they well understood cultures different from their own, proceeded to construct scaffolds of gendered ethnic or racial difference. These categories perhaps proved more convincing, and thus indisputable, than those of the xenophobes she fought against given their backing in socially scientific “truth” rather than fear.

GENDERED INDIFFERENCE

As much as interracial intimacies in the life of not just Emma Fong Kuno, but also Helen Bridyman, Isobel Osbourne Fields, Charles Warren Stoddard, and many others, would clarify imperial power and white privilege, Yone’s heterosexual affairs also poignantly pointed to the male privilege that he carelessly wielded as he caused turmoil for the white women with whom he grew the closest. Ethel would ultimately break off her engagement and not follow Yone to Japan as planned when she found out about Léonie and her baby. She lived the rest of her life unmarried. A journalist and friend of Ethel, Anne Kendrick Walker, stated that Ethel never recovered from her irreparably broken heart.⁷¹ Though she clearly did move through the loss of Yone, evidenced by her intense connections with her female friends if not lovers, the breakup would still cause serious emotional strain. In 1905, shortly after the breakup, Ethel reassured her Alice, “After the first wrenching out and everything I breathe—freer—I believe.”⁷²

Léonie suffered more severely at the hands of Yone’s duplicitous affections. As a single mother of a mixed heritage child, she struggled to find work and feed her family as well as shield her son from both xenophobic Japan and America. She abandoned her budding American writing career to join Yone in Japan. Upon her return to the U.S. many years later, she could only find work selling Japanese trinkets that had long fallen out of fashion.

Living much of her life in poverty with no support from Yone, Léonie lived a difficult hand-to-mouth existence on the margins of both Japanese and U.S. society.⁷³ Whiteness and Western imperialism would not always trump the complications that gender would bring in a world where men experienced more freedom and power than women.

Interestingly, recent scholarship by historian Eiichiro Azuma reveals how Issei in part believed themselves to be expanding the Japanese empire by settling in the United States.⁷⁴ From this perspective, colonial entitlement may have emboldened Yone to develop multiple relationships with whites even as he felt frustrated by their racism. He held great pride in being Japanese and would become a vocal proponent of *nihonshugi*, or Japanese nationalism, in the government's imperial endeavors.⁷⁵ Therefore Western imperialism would not be the only type of aggression that informed Yone's affairs. Japan's masculinist imperial impulses at the very least set the unconscious stage for Yone's forays into American love.

CONCLUSION

Bringing light to Yone's affairs provokes thought on how interracial intimacies have relied historically on ethnic or racial difference to charge their attraction.⁷⁶ Despite sociologist Milton Gordon's prediction that interracial commitments would lead to assimilation in America and erase ethnicity, interracial relationships could in fact underline ethnic differences and re-inscribe existing racial hierarchies.⁷⁷ Moreover, Yone's affairs highlighted how even the "racially castrated" in fact held great phallic power.⁷⁸ As a growing circle of whites raced to grow close to Yone in both friendship and love, it inevitably would be an attraction with racialized and gendered meanings. Yone embodied Japonisme as he appeared artistic, genteel, and desirably feminine. Within this web of cultural commodification in which Japan apparently stood as the object to be consumed, white women perhaps unexpectedly also became casualties burned by the very thing that they had assumed safe to covet. Without a doubt, a refusal to see the real dilemmas bred by inequalities based on race or sexuality, as well as imperialism or gender, results in a wide array of victims. Racism and homophobia set the stage for Ethel's and Leonie's tragic affairs with Yone, just as much as unequal power differentials between U.S. and Japan. Disillusionment with Americans' openly anti-Asian practices and policies pushed Yone to return to Japan, where he would no longer be a "dime museum spectacle," to the dismay of Léonie as well as Charlie, who were disappointed with

Yone's departure from the U.S. Increasing social condemnation of same-sex sexuality led Yone to downplay his intimacy with Charlie in countless ways, even as Charlie remained the only one to whom Yone consistently declared his love.⁷⁹ This is not to conclude that Yone's relationships with Ethel and Léonie served merely as beards to his more meaningful same-sex intimacies, but rather for us to consider how societal norms deeply inform our decisions around intimacy. If she could, Ethel herself would have likely married Alice Wiggins or even Annie Briggs months before meeting Yone at Charlie's home. Indeed, no act of sexuality could ever be purely about realizing an essential desire deep within one's core.

Yone's single life, as idiosyncratic as it might have been, suggests broad implications. Individuals even in the pursuit of more scandalous desires are rarely free agents, enacting relationships that may more powerfully be predictable rather than provocative.⁸⁰ More importantly, Yone's affairs point to the existence of full sexualities, particularly romantic same-sex "friendship" if not more, within struggling communities of color. Men who washed dishes for more than ten hours a day until their hands became swollen purple, others who slept under the stars without money to pay for a room, and many more who found themselves relegated to the most menial forms of labor also may have written passionate letters of love to one another.⁸¹ Yone's life reminds us of how people continue to thrive even under structural duress. His affairs, albeit unheroic in their deception, challenge not only assumed heteronormativity but also resistive homosexualization. Heterosexuality does not simply exist everywhere unless explicitly renounced. Nor are those who resist compulsory heterosexuality necessarily exclusively "gay." In Yone's case, sexual resistance came in the "straightest" package possible as he insistently declared his heterosexuality after his return to Japan.⁸² Yone's sordid intimacies, as unique as they may appear, may more accurately represent the usual ways in which contradictory implications of race, sexuality, nation, and power play out in people's everyday lives.

NOTES

Thanks to Horacio N. Roque Ramírez for his careful reading, detailed comments, and unfailing support of this essay.

1. Yone Noguchi, "In the Bungalow with Charles Warren Stoddard: A Protest against Modernism," *National Magazine*, December 1904, 304–7. I refer to the historical players by first name throughout to draw readers more intimately into the multiple strands of love and tragedy that comprise the evidence of this essay.

2. Members of the Noguchi family contest how exactly Matsuko Takeda came to know Yone. Some historians have noted that she may have in fact worked for Yone and his friends as a nude model. Masayo Duus, *The Life of Isamu Noguchi: Journey without Borders*, tr. Peter Duus (Princeton, NJ, 2004), 54.

3. After his return to Japan several years later Yone would become professor of English and American literature at prestigious Keio University. Today, Yone might be more famously remembered as the father of acclaimed Asian American sculptor Isamu Noguchi. Edward Marx, "'A Different Mode of Speech': Yone Noguchi in Meiji America," *Recollecting Early Asian America: Essays in Cultural History*, ed. Josephine Lee, Imogene L. Lim, and Yuko Matsukawa (Philadelphia, 2002), 288–306.

4. For how sexuality is marginalized in history, see Susan L. Johnson, "'My Own Private Life': Toward a History of Desire in Gold Rush California," *California History* 79, no. 2 (Summer 2000): 316–46.

5. Martha Hodes, ed., *Sex, Love, Race: Crossing Boundaries in North American History* (New York, 1999), 2–3, 7.

6. For discrimination against the Japanese, see Yuji Ichioka, *Issei: The World of First Generation Japanese Immigrants, 1885–1924* (New York, 1988); Roger Daniels, *Politics of Prejudice: The Anti-Japanese Movement and the Struggle for Japanese Exclusion* (Berkeley, CA, 1962); and Bill Ong Hing, *Making and Remaking Asian America through Immigration Policy: 1850–1990* (Stanford, CA, 1993). For works on the denigration of Japanese and Chinese masculinity at the turn of the century, see Nayan Shah, *Contagious Divides: Epidemics and Race in San Francisco's Chinatown* (Berkeley, CA, 2001); and Robert G. Lee, *Orientalists: Asian Americans in Popular Culture* (Philadelphia, 1999). Though the Japanese and the Chinese in America underwent different racialization processes, the two distinct ethnicities often became conflated into one, as many white Americans would discriminate against all who appeared singularly "Oriental" to them. Mary Ting Yi Lui, *The Chinatown Trunk Mystery: Murder, Miscegenation, and Other Dangerous Encounters in Turn-of-the-Century New York City* (Princeton, NJ, 2005), 143.

7. Paul R. Spickard, *Mixed Blood: Intermarriage and Ethnic Identity in Twentieth Century America* (Madison, WI, 1989); Henry Yu, "Mixing Bodies and Cultures: The Meaning of American's Fascination with Sex between 'Orientals' and 'Whites,'" in *Sex, Love, Race: Crossing Boundaries in North American History*, ed. Martha Hodes (New York, 1999), 444–63; Lui, *Chinatown Trunk Mystery*.

8. Peggy Pascoe, "Race, Gender, and Intercultural Relations: The Case of Interracial Marriage," *Frontiers* 12, no. 1 (1991): 5–19; Rachel F. Moran, *Interracial Intimacy: The Regulation of Race and Romance* (Chicago, 2001), 31; Candice Lewis Bredbenner, *A Nationality of Her Own: Women, Marriage, and the Law of Citizenship* (Berkeley, CA, 1998); Megumi Dick Osumi, "Asians and California's Anti-Miscegenation Laws," in *Asian and Pacific American Experiences: Women's Perspectives*, ed. Nobuya Tsuchida (Minneapolis, 1982), 1–37.

9. John D'Emilio and Estelle Freedman, *Intimate Matters: A History of Sexuality in America* (Chicago, 1997); Elizabeth Wilson, *Bohemians: The Glamorous Outcasts* (New Brunswick, NJ, 2000); Christine Stansell, *American Moderns: Bohemian New York and the Creation of a New Century* (New York, 2000).

10. Nayan Shah, "Between 'Oriental Depravity' and 'Natural Degenerates': Spatial Borderlands and the Making of Ordinary Americans," *American Quarterly* 57, no. 3 (2005): 703–25.

11. Ichioka, *Issei*.

12. Yone's family differed a bit from other small merchant families who just seven years previously in the early 1880s had occupied the lower rungs of Japan's four-tiered social structure. His maternal uncle was the famous Buddhist scholar Shaku Taishun, and his paternal grandfather at one point owned a small plot of land. Ian Neary, "Burakumin at the End of History—History of Social Class in Japan," *Social Research: An International Quarterly of the Social Sciences* 70, no. 1 (Spring 2003): 269–96; Kamei Shunsuke, *Nationalism no Bungaku* (Tokyo, 1988), 210–11; Hiroaki Sato, "Yone Noguchi: Accomplishments & Roles," *Journal of American and Canadian Studies* 13 (1995), <http://www.info.sophia.ac.jp/amecana/Journal/13–5.htm>.

13. Henry Kiyama, *Four Immigrants Manga: A Japanese Experience in San Francisco, 1904–1924*, trans. Fredrick L. Schodt (Berkeley, CA, 1999). For more details from Yone's perspective, see Yone Noguchi, *The Story of Yone Noguchi Told by Himself* (Philadelphia, 1915), 35–36.

14. For more on the experience of Japanese immigrant schoolboys, see Ichioka, *Nissei*, 198.

15. Ikuko Atsumi, ed., *Yone Noguchi: Collected English Letters* (Tokyo, 1975).

16. Charles Warren Stoddard, Washington, DC, to Yone Noguchi, April 1897, in Atsumi, ed., *Yone Noguchi*, no. 4.

17. He had already established himself as a notable Western writer through his travel memoirs on the Pacific Islands. Later, in 1903 Charlie published *For the Pleasure of His Company*, a semiautobiographical fictional work that would bring him acclaim in the late twentieth century as San Francisco's earliest gay writer. Roger Austen, *Genteel Pagan: The Double Life of Charles Warren Stoddard*, ed. John W. Crowley (Amherst, MA, 1991).

18. Charles Warren Stoddard, Washington, DC, to Yone Noguchi, April 1897, in Atsumi, ed., *Yone Noguchi*, no. 4.

19. Literary scholar Roger Austen wrote of Charlie as leading a "double life," hiding his same-sex sexuality from public view while living his private life as he personally saw fit. Austen, *Genteel Pagan*, 54.

20. Charles Warren Stoddard, Washington, DC, to Yone Noguchi, London, January 31, 1903, in Atsumi, ed., *Yone Noguchi*, no. 154.

21. *Ibid.*

22. Yone Noguchi, Oakland, CA, to Charles Warren Stoddard, March 19, 1900, Special Collections, Bancroft Library, University of California at Berkeley, (hereafter the BSC); Yone Noguchi, Oakland, CA, to Charles Warren Stoddard, July 26, 1901, *ibid.*; Yone Noguchi, Oakland, CA, to Charles Warren Stoddard, November 26, 1901, *ibid.*

23. Yone Noguchi, San Francisco, to Charles Warren Stoddard, July 27, 1897, HM37887, Huntington Manuscripts, Huntington Library, San Marino, CA (hereafter the Huntington MSS).

24. Yone Noguchi, Oakland, CA, to Charles Warren Stoddard, April 16, 1897, HM37874, *ibid.*

25. Yone Noguchi, Oakland, CA, to Charles Warren Stoddard, September 24, 1900, BSC.

26. Atsumi, ed., *Yone Noguchi*, 12.

27. Yone Noguchi, Oakland, CA, to Charles Warren Stoddard, August 1904, BSC.

28. Duus, *Life of Isamu Noguchi*, 28.

29. Yone Noguchi, Japan, to Charles Warren Stoddard, October 10, 1904, HM37953,

Huntington MSS; Yone Noguchi, Tokyo, to Charles Warren Stoddard, January 27, 1905, in Atsumi, ed., *Yone Noguchi*, no. 365.

30. Elizabeth to Ethel Armes, n.d., BSC. No last name appeared in any letters from Elizabeth.

31. Yone Noguchi, New York City, to Léonie Gilmour, February 4, 1901, in Atsumi, ed., *Yone Noguchi*, no. 62.

32. Ibid., 12; Elizabeth to Ethel Armes, n.d., Charles Warren Stoddard, BSC. Though always reported as Irish and cited here as similar to “white educated women,” Léonie was in fact Native American as well. Her great grandmother was the daughter of a French fur trader and a Cherokee woman. Duus, *Life of Isamu Noguchi*, 21–23.

33. Elizabeth to Ethel Armes, n.d., BSC; Duus, *Life of Isamu Noguchi*, 39.

34. John D’Emilio and Estelle Freedman described this period as a turning point when same-sex relationships faced sharper scrutiny. By the end of the 1800s, scientific literature on sexuality described same-sex relationships as a sign of mental and physical degeneration. John D’Emilio and Estelle Freedman, *Intimate Affairs: A History of Sexuality in America*, 2nd ed. (Chicago, 1997), 193.

35. Charles Warren Stoddard, Washington, DC, to Yone Noguchi, April 1897, in Atsumi, ed., *Yone Noguchi*, no. 4; Yone Noguchi, *Voice of the Valley* (San Francisco, 1897), 10–11.

36. “Island Heights Notebook, May 17, 1904,” Stoddard Collection, BSC.

37. For more on Orientalism see Edward Said, *Orientalism* (New York, 1978).

38. Noguchi, “In the Bungalow with Charles Warren Stoddard,” 306.

39. Noguchi, *Voice of the Valley*, 10–11.

40. William Hosley additionally argued that the particular yearning between the United States and Japan intensified with their similar status as developing nations in a global field previously dominated by Europeans. William Hosley, *The Japan Idea: Art and Life in Victorian America* (Hartford, CT, 1990), 29.

41. Ethel’s friend and colleague Anne Kendrick Walker conveyed Ethel’s first impression of Yone in an article in the *Birmingham Age-Herald* in June 1905. C.M. Stanley, “An Alabama romance and Its Painful End,” *Montgomery Advertiser*, July 2, 1950.

42. Ethel Armes, Birmingham, AL, to Alice Wiggins, Franklin, MA, June 28, 1904, Private Collection of Gary Dobbs (hereafter Dobbs Collection).

43. For martial depictions of Japanese men in the early twentieth century, see Daniels, *Politics of Prejudice*. For the late-twentieth-century ideology of the Asian male as emasculated, see David L. Eng, *Racial Castration: Managing Masculinity in Asian America* (Durham, NC, 2001); Amy Sueyoshi, “InnovAsian in Pornography? Asian American Masculinity and the Porno Revolution,” in *21st Century Sexualities: Contemporary Issues in Health, Education, and Rights*, ed. Gilbert Herdt and Cymene Howe (New York, 2007), 78–80.

44. Ethel Armes, Franklin, MA, to Alice Wiggins, Cambridge, MA, January 25, 1899, Dobbs Collection.

45. Ethel Armes, Birmingham, AL, to Alice Wiggins, Franklin, MA, November 6, 1902, Dobbs Collection.

46. Ann McGrath, “White Brides: Images of Marriage across Colonizing Boundaries,” *Frontiers* 23, no. 3 (2002): 76–108; Rayna Green, “The Pocahontas Perplex: The Image of Indian Women in American Culture,” *Massachusetts Review* 16, no. 4 (1975): 698–714; Robert S. Tilton, *Pocahontas: The Evolution of an American Narrative* (New York, 1994); Elias Boudinot, *An Address to Whites* (Philadelphia, 1926). See also Ann McClintock, *Impe-*

rial Leather: Race, Gender, and Sexuality in the Colonial Contest (New York, 1995); Ann Laura Stoler, "Sexual Affronts and Racial Frontiers: European Identities and the Cultural Politics of Exclusion in Colonial Southeast Asia," in *Tensions of Empire: Colonial Cultures in a Bourgeois World*, ed. Frederick Cooper and Ann Laura Stoler (Berkeley, CA, 1997); Albert L. Hurtado, *Intimate Frontiers: Sex, Gender, and Culture in Old California* (Albuquerque, NM, 1999).

47. Léonie Glimour Noguchi to Charles Warren Stoddard, December 6, 1906, BSC; Duus, *Life of Isamu Noguchi*, 11.

48. Léonie Gilmour, Los Angeles, to Catherine Burnell, January 20, 1906, Special Collections, Isamu Noguchi Museum, Long Island City, NY.

49. Helen Bridyman to Yone Noguchi, New York, April 18, 1904, in Atsumi, ed., *Yone Noguchi*, no. 314; Helen Bridyman, Brooklyn, NY, to Yone Noguchi, New York, April 25, 1904, in *ibid.*, no. 318; Helen Bridyman, Brooklyn, NY, to Yone Noguchi, New York, April 26, 1904, in *ibid.*, no. 319.

50. Helen Bridyman, Brooklyn, NY, to Yone Noguchi, New York, April 26, 1904, in *ibid.*, no. 319. Helen, a devout lover of Japan, enjoyed reading Yone's poetry in her backyard, with its two chestnut and cherry trees, where she felt as though she were in "miniature Japan." Helen Bridyman, Brooklyn, NY, to Yone Noguchi, New York, May 8, 1904, in *ibid.*, no. 325.

51. In 1892 African American activist Ida Wells-Barnett proposed similarly in an editorial that white women in fact might be seeking out sex with black men. Printed during a time when whites justified the lynching of African Americans to protect white women's chastity from the allegedly rapacious sexuality of black men, her editorial evoked white outrage that would banish Wells-Barnett from the South. Paula Giddings, "Ida Wells Barnett," in *Portraits of American Women: From Settlement to the Present*, ed. G. J. Barker-Benfield and Catherine Clinton (New York, 1991), 378. For more on Wells-Barnett's life and activism see Paula Giddings, *Ida, A Sword among Lions: Ida B. Wells and the Campaign against Lynching* (New York, 2008).

52. Isobel Osbourne Field, Vailima, Samoa, to Charles Warren Stoddard, December 1896, HM38001, Huntington MSS. For more on Belle's exotification of Samoa and its people, see Isobel Osbourne Field, Vailima, Samoa, to Charles Warren Stoddard, February 24 1897, HM38002, *ibid.*; Isobel Osbourne Field, Vailima, Samoa, to Charles Warren Stoddard, March 1897, HM38003, *ibid.*; Isobel Strong and Lloyd Osbourne, *Memories of Vailima* (New York, 1902).

53. Isobel Osbourne Field, Vailima, Samoa, to Charles Warren Stoddard, December 1896, HM38001, Huntington MSS.

54. Isobel (Osbourne) Field, Sydney, Australia, to Charles Warren Stoddard, June 1891? HM37993, *ibid.*

55. Sociologist Ruth Frankenberg reveals how some white women who married men of color in the late twentieth century also dealt with beliefs of white superiority nurtured from childhood even as they loved their husbands of color. Ruth Frankenberg, *White Women, Race Matters: The Social Construction of Whiteness* (Minneapolis, 1999).

56. Austen, *Genteel Pagan*, 75.

57. Austen explained Stoddard's sentiments frankly when he wrote, "to love other males freely, he felt he had to go to 'barbaric' countries." *Ibid.*, 46.

58. *Ibid.*, xxviii.

59. Robert Aldrich, *Colonialism and Homosexuality* (New York, 2003). I thank Keith Camacho for pointing me to Aldrich's work.

60. Jonathan Dollimore, *Sexual Dissidence: Augustine to Wilde, Freud to Foucault* (New York, 1991).

61. Ambrose Gwinnett Bierce, Bristol, UK, to Charles Warren Stoddard, December 29, 1872, HM10102, Huntington MSS.

62. "A Stanford Girl Weds a Chinese," *San Francisco Chronicle*, June 20, 1897, 20; "Chinese Reform Association," *San Francisco Chronicle*, August 7, 1898, 9; Emma Kuno, "My Oriental Husbands," Survey on Race Relations, Special Collections, Hoover Library, Stanford University, Stanford, CA; Spickard, *Mixed Blood*, 85; Yu, "Mixing Bodies and Cultures," 444–45; University of California (System) Academic Senate at Berkeley, "Yoshi Saburo Kuno, Oriental Languages: In Memorium" (1941), <http://content.cdlib.org/xtf/view?docId=hb3199n7tr&doc.view=frames&chunk.id=div00005&toc.depth=1&toc.id=> (accessed June 5, 2009).

63. Kuno, "My Oriental Husbands," n.p. I use "race" here to point to what would be more broadly understood as ethnicity in the contemporary period. In the early twentieth century, cultural commentators frequently referred to the "Chinese race" or the "Japanese race," even though today Chinese and Japanese may be more accurately considered ethnicities within the larger racial grouping of Asian.

64. For her thesis, see Emma Ellen S. Kuno, "Political and Intellectual Relations of China, Japan, and Korea," (master's thesis, University of California at Berkeley, 1914).

65. Emma noted at the outset the problematic nature of comparing "American" with "Oriental" husbands, not just because of the "cultural legacies" between the "ethnicities," but also because of the "individual factor." If presented with the question, "Would it be more desirable for an American to take a Chinese or a Japanese helpmeet," she noted that she would answer, "Neither, unless the marriage is entered into because of love and desire for companionship and both parties are of unimpeachable moral character." Emma explained that lack of character lay at the root of all failed marriages, regardless of race. She asserted that a common religious faith often created a stronger bond than even nationality itself. Yet her qualifications only consisted of several short paragraphs that amounted to at most one page in a thirty-one-page document dedicated to differences between Chinese and Japanese. Kuno, "My Oriental Husbands," n.p.

66. Ibid.

67. Ibid.

68. Ibid.

69. She adds that in the future, "perhaps most of the occidental and oriental marriages in America will be between Americans of the white and yellow race who have been born, reared and educated under the grand old stars and stripes." Ibid.

70. Emma noted that she had no reason to regret her marriage of more than a decade. Her husband enabled her to raise two children without becoming a wage earner and additionally helped her get two degrees in "Oriental" history. Ibid.

71. C. M. Stanley, "An Alabama Romance and Its Painful End," *Montgomery Advertiser*, July 2, 1950.

72. Ethel Armes, Birmingham, AL, to Alice Wiggins, Franklin, MA, July 16, 1905, Dobbs Collection.

73. Duus, *Life of Isamu Noguchi*.

74. Eiichiro Azuma, *Between Two Empires: Race, History, and Transnationalism in Japanese America* (New York, 2005).

75. For more on Yone's *nihonshugi*, see Fuitsu Hazumi, *Rondon no Kirikaki: Makino Yoshio to Noguchi Yonejiro ni Miru Ushinawareta Nihon no Geijutsu Seishin* (Kasugai-shi, Japan, 1992).

76. Film critic B. Ruby Rich asserts that racial difference substitutes for gender difference to construct attraction in lesbian relationships in the contemporary period. B. Ruby Rich, "When Difference Is (More Than) Skin Deep," in *Queer Looks: Perspectives on Lesbian and Gay Film and Video*, ed. Martha Gever, Pratibha Parmar, and John Greyson (Toronto, 1993), 318–39.

77. Milton M. Gordon, *Assimilation in American Life: The Role of Race, Religion, and National Origins* (New York, 1971).

78. I use the term "racially castrated" from David Eng's *Racial Castration*. For more on other Asian Americanists declaring castration as a site of power, see Joon Oluchi Lee, "The Joy of the Castrated Boy," *Social Text* 23, nos. 3–4 (Fall–Winter 2005): 35–56.

79. The source of the words "dime museum" is Miss Morning Glory (Yone Noguchi), *American Letters of a Japanese Parlor-maid* (Tokyo, 1905), 116. For Yone downplaying his intimacy with Charlie, see Yone Noguchi, Bayonne, NJ, to Léonie Gilmour, October 22, 1901, in Atsumi, ed., *Yone Noguchi*, no. 99.

80. David Eng noted that seemingly voluntary or self-willed agendas inextricably consist of ideas from elsewhere, often from "overlapping" and even "opposing communities." Eng, *Racial Castration*, 26.

81. Yone, like many other Japanese immigrants, faced all of these fates. Noguchi, *Story of Yone Noguchi*. Asian Americanist Madeline Hsu has questioned the heteronormative narrative of sexual deprivation among Chinese immigrants and suggested that these men may have found fulfillment in early homosocial communities. Madeline Y. Hsu, "Unwrapping Orientalism, Unwrapping Orientalist Constraints: Restoring Homosocial Normativity to Chinese American History," *Amerasia Journal* 29, no. 2 (2003): 230–53.

82. For declarations of his heterosexuality, see Yonejiro Noguchi, "Jyūrokunen ato no Kyōri," *Yomiuri Shimbun*, October 30, 1904, 1; Yonejiro Noguchi, *Kichōno Ki* (Tokyo, 1904); and Joaquin Miller and Yone Noguchi, *Japan of Sword and Love* (Tokyo, 1905).