

A LENS OF LIMINALITY: AN INTERPRETIVE BIOGRAPHY OF CHARLES
WARREN STODDARD, 1843-1909

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**To Poppo
(1910-2000)**

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The support of many friends and family members have helped to make this work possible. It has been a long haul.

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ABSTRACT

Charles Warren Stoddard (1843-1909) was an American writer who lived on several cultural fronts of the nineteenth century world. This thesis serves as an interpretive biography which utilizes an anthropological theoretical framework to shed light on Stoddard's life and times as an actor on the stage of nineteenth century American and Pacific Islands history. The lifecourse of Stoddard (especially as he came of age in the late nineteenth century) illustrates critical issues pertaining to the evolution of sexual identities, spiritualities, and politics in nineteenth century American and Pacific Islands history. The settings of Stoddard's most life-transformative experiences were in eastern Oceania, (most notably, the Kingdom of Hawai'i), where he experienced an alternative lifestyle which stood in stark juxtaposition to 19th century Euro-American lifeways and mores. Charles Warren Stoddard's *liminal* (i.e., marginal) *weltanschauung* serve as the clarifying elements of this interpretive biography, which builds upon the significant contributions of recent scholarship.

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List of Abbreviations

Primary sources and works by Charles Warren Stoddard and his associates frequently cited within the text can be identified here with the following abbreviations:

GP Roger Austen, John W. Crowley, ed., *Genteel Pagan: The Double Life of Charles Warren Stoddard* (Amherst: University of Massachusetts Press, 1991)

IFP Charles Warren Stoddard, *In the Footprints of the Padres* (A.M. Robertson, 1912)

ITD Charles Warren Stoddard, *Island of Tranquil Delights: A South Sea Idyl and Others* (Boston: Herbert B. Turner, 1904)

SSI Charles Warren Stoddard, *South Sea Idyls* (Boston: J.R. Osgood, 1873)

Stroven Carl Stroven "A Life of Charles Warren Stoddard", Ph.D. dissertation, Duke University, 1939

TH *A Troubled Heart and How It Was Comforted At Last* (Notre Dame, Indiana: Ave Maria Press, 1885)

PREFACE

Prior to enrolling in the graduate program in History at the University of Hawai'i at Manoa in the Fall Semester of 1997, I discovered a book titled *Asian American Sexualities: Dimensions of the Gay and Lesbian Experience*, edited by Russell Leong. One of the primary concerns of this text, which includes a collection of essays presented by Asian Americans and Pacific Islanders, is the ways in which gay, lesbian, and bisexual identities emerge out of the intersections of history, race, and sexuality.¹

Of particularly poignant interest to me during my early days as a graduate student at Mānoa was an article co-written by Lisa Kahaleole Chang Hall and J. Kehaulani Kauanui, (two scholars with roots in Hawai'i) entitled *Same-Sex Sexuality in Pacific Literature*. Hall and Kauanui challenge and deconstruct the frequently deployed Euro-American rubrics in which "Asians" and "Pacific Islanders" are subsumed. One of the main arguments articulated by both authors is that Pacific

¹ Russel Leong, ed., *Asian American Sexualities: Dimensions of the Gay and Lesbian Experience* (London: Routledge, 1996), Introduction, passim

peoples, from Aotearoa to the Hawaiian Islands, have shared a cosmology in which sexuality is an integral force of life – indeed the cause of the life of the universe – and not a separate category of behavior and existence. This viewpoint, the authors add, stands in contrast to the western analytical categories of “homosexuality”, and more fundamentally, “sexuality” itself, which has ultimately established a legacy of western control and commodification of Pacific sexualities still persisting to this day.²

During the Fall Semester of 1997, I walked into an alternative bookstore in Honolulu and found a slender volume titled *Summer Cruising in the South Seas*, the cover of which displayed a handsome man of either Asian or Pacific Islander heritage. The individual on the cover appears mostly nude, with luxuriant tropical foliage as a tantalizing backdrop. I was surprised to see that this small book was authored by a Euro-American by the name of Charles Warren Stoddard. I opened the book to take a cursory glance of its contents, and

² Lisa Kahaeole Chang Hall and J. Kehaulani Kauanui, “Same-Sex Sexuality in Pacific Literature”, in Russell Leong, ed., *Asian American Sexualities: Dimensions of the Gay and Lesbian Experience* (London: Routledge, 1996), 114-115

was further astonished by its openly homoerotic content. I checked the years during which the text was written, and was further amazed to learn of its late nineteenth century authorship. "*Who is or was Charles Warren Stoddard?*", I asked myself. And furthermore, "*How could such material be written in the late nineteenth century?*" And so began my search into learning more about this fascinating individual.

In the Spring Semester of 1998, I wrote a research paper for a graduate seminar offered by Professor Margaret Jolly of the Australian National University. The seminar provided invaluable insight into travel literature of the Pacific, gender issues in Pacific Islands anthropology, the study of cross-cultural encounters between Pacific Islanders and Euro-Americans from both anthropological and historical perspectives, and more. After completing a term paper on Stoddard, I realized that I had only scratched the surface of his significance as a travel writer who once described Oceania and Pacific Islanders, was a sojourner in the Pacific, and the complexities of his life as a gay, Catholic man

living in a frontier society with somewhat reified gender ideals.

This thesis would not be possible without the initiative, fortitude and exhaustive academic research of Dr. Carl Stroven and Roger Austen, two scholars who did momentous biographies of Stoddard: Stroven, in the year 1939, and Austen during the late 1980s.³ Stroven was one of the first scholars to study Stoddard from a biographical and literary historical perspective, and Austen followed suit some five decades later, including important evidence of Stoddard's sexual liminality; namely, his homosexuality. Although Stroven merely hints of Stoddard's homosexuality in the narrative of his Ph.D. dissertation (the word homosexuality is mentioned only on a few occasions within the approximately three hundred pages of Stroven's study), it is Austen who first unabashedly addresses the dynamic of homosexuality in Stoddard's life in *Genteel Pagan: The Double Life of Charles Warren Stoddard*. Carl Stroven's study explores a plethora of sources: Stoddard's voluminous diaries and

³ Roger Austen, John W. Crowley, ed., *GP* and Stroven, "A Life of Charles Warren Stoddard", Ph.D. diss., Duke University, 1939

personal correspondence kept in Hawai'i and during his tenure as a university professor, excerpts from his earliest literary efforts as a writer in San Francisco during the 1860s and 1870s, newspaper articles, local historical records from Rochester, New York, San Francisco and Honolulu, and other primary sources from the mid- to late- nineteenth century. Some forty to fifty years later, Roger Austen utilized many untapped sources directly related to Stoddard's homosocial and homosexual relationships, primary sources from Stoddard's days as a professor at both Notre Dame and the Catholic University of America, and draws poignant conclusions regarding Stoddard's homosexuality from the vantage point of the new, burgeoning field of queer studies, a field which delves into the evolution of gay and lesbian lifeways and identity before, during and after in the twentieth century.

Both Stroven and Austen, however, neglect mention of the unique, native Oceanian cosmos which influenced Stoddard, most notably the dynamic of indigenous Hawaiian and Polynesian same-sex relationships; notably, the *aikāne*

tradition. This thesis will demonstrate how Stoddard's *aikāne* relationships, as depicted in his Oceanic narrative *South Sea Idyls*, represented a significant alternative social arrangement for Stoddard at a time when he was coming into age, as a man of letters and as a sexual human being.

Thus, the approach taken with this interpretive biography of Charles Warren Stoddard is both anthropological and historical: a fresh perspective on the life and work of an important man who has received little attention. Charles Warren Stoddard was a person who lived on several cultural interstices which inform us not only of the genealogies of Euro-American perspectives on the Pacific and its inhabitants, but illustrate the relevance of socio-cultural issues (such as religion, sexuality, identity, social positions and representations of Otherness) pertinent to all people who presently question, challenge and/or rearticulate the ideological edifices of modernity.

In addition to the momentous and ground breaking research provided by Dr. Carl Stroven and Roger Austen (along with John W. Crowley's

editorial expertise), the writing of this thesis was greatly aided by the assistance of the library staff of the University of Hawai'i at Mānoa's Pacific Islands collection, and the librarians at the University of Hawai'i at Hilo. I would also like to thank the staff of the Hawai'i State Archives, and the staff of the Massachusetts Historical Society in Boston and the Notre Dame Archives, who kindly mailed helpful manuscripts of Stoddard's diaries to me while I was living and working in Japan.

INTRODUCTION

A little over one century ago, at the end of the Spanish-American war, the United States became a de facto imperial power, having acquired Cuba, Guam, the Philippines and Puerto Rico – the remaining “crown jewels” of the once formidable Spanish Empire. In the same year, the former kingdom of Hawai`i was annexed as a territory of the United States.

The United States had a significant presence in the Pacific well before the annexation of Hawai`i in 1898. During the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries, a vigorous, young United States was pushing its frontiers westward in pursuit of its “Manifest Destiny” to establish republicanism from the Atlantic to the Pacific and share in the lucrative trade of the Far East. After Spain was cleared out of California during the Mexican War, the port of San Francisco remained as a new American base from which to expand their China trade. Americans were not dependent upon the West Coast bases alone to exploit the China trade. Long before San Francisco became a base, Yankee traders were carrying China

silks, teas and porcelains around Africa or South America and back from Boston, New York and Philadelphia, and this trade had a decisive impact upon the Pacific Islands. When the Chinese began to demand more than “Yankee notions” for their wares, European and American traders had to scour the seas for items more to Asian tastes: furs, sweet-smelling sandalwood, pearl shell, and gourmet delicacies such as *bêche-de-mer*. These enterprises brought traders to the Pacific Islands, and several American fortunes were made by trading Yankee knickknacks to Islanders for sandalwood and other local products that were then carried to Canton and bartered for silks and tea, usually with a fine profit at each turnover. Surpassing all these enterprises, however, was whaling, which involved hundreds of vessels and thousands of men in the hazardous task of supplying European and American lamps with oil, in addition to Western fashions with properly corseted silhouettes.¹

Whalers began to hunt in Pacific waters as early as 1776, and within a few decades several

¹ Douglas L. Oliver, *The Pacific Islands*, third edition. (Honolulu: University of Hawai'i Press, 1989), 48-49

locales in the Pacific, and most notably Hawai'i, became their bonanza. During the peak years of whaling in the 1850s, many hundreds of whaling vessels roamed the Pacific, with the Americans leading in the field. Americans, mainly from Nantucket and New Bedford, far outdistanced their European rivals in numbers. The American Revolution drove American whalers off the Atlantic, but as soon as the war ended they were at it again, delivering their catches both to home ports and to Britain. British naval supremacy again drove the Americans from the Atlantic during the War of 1812, and this time the Yankees moved into the Pacific basin and they were soon predominant there. The whaling ship captains engaged in trading with indigenous Pacific Islanders at their ports of call, bartering knickknacks for the fresh food needed by their seamen. The silks, teas and porcelains of China, however, were highly treasured in the genteel houses of Europe and America, and the trade in these products soon vied with whaling in attracting maritime-minded financiers and adventurers. Many of the vessels of this trade were

accustomed to stopping in the Hawaiian Islands to rest and replenish supplies.² Throughout the nineteenth century, whalers, beachcombers and missionaries went beyond the limen to the Hawaiian beachfront to establish a strong economic presence in the archipelago.

The annexation of Hawai'i entrenched the United States' presence in the eastern Pacific. It was a time during which Americans became more intimately familiar with Pacific Islands' cultures (after initial European contact during the eighteenth century), and travel writing became an important medium through which an eager American public became more aware of the new geographic spaces and lifeways of Pacific Islanders. During the nineteenth century, California, and particularly the young city of San Francisco, became important new venues on the U.S.'s Pacific frontier from which Americans, situated at the furthest contiguous point of the continent, gazed into the wide expanse of the Pacific to assume a greater role in regional affairs in a world of aggressive, imperial nation states. As Benedict Anderson demonstrates in the Spanish

² Ibid, 50-51

American context in *Imagined Communities*, print culture in the United States became part and parcel of configuring the American nation³, and delineated the conceptual grids with which colonial domains could be classified, objectified, managed, and as Professor Margaret Jolly notes, eroticized as “sites of desire”.⁴

The literary representations of the Pacific and Pacific Islands such as Hawai`i were shaped by a small number of key texts which were produced during the late eighteenth century, a time during which an Oceanic travel literature tradition would establish itself in the metropolises of Europe and America. The voyages of Captain Cook were of great importance in the Anglophone world for formulating representations of Oceanic peoples for two reasons: First, contact was made with a wide range of native peoples, particularly those of Polynesia. Of the many explorers (such as Bougainville) who had earlier passed through the Pacific, most had made only fleeting contacts, but

³ Benedict Anderson, *Imagined Communities: Reflections on the Origin and Spread of Nationalism*, (London and New York: Verso, 1991)

⁴ Lenore Manderson and Margaret Jolly, eds. *Sites of Desire, Economies of Pleasure: Sexualities in Asia and the Pacific* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1997)

the participants in the Cook voyages, as we shall see in the following chapters, had protracted encounters with the peoples of places such as Tahiti, Tonga, Tanna, parts of New Zealand, and Hawai'i. Secondly, participants in the Cook voyages included scientists or natural historians who were disposed to describe and speculate about the "varieties of the human species" and other subjects of Euro-American interest. Their influential and widely read publications and well-illustrated official accounts from the voyages frequently conditioned the perceptions of subsequent Euro-American Oceanic travelers who read these texts during their own adventures and encounters throughout the late eighteenth century and well into the nineteenth century, when men such as Melville, Stevenson, and Charles Warren Stoddard made their first forays into Oceania.⁵ The aforementioned men were therefore heir to a relatively long-standing literary tradition of Pacific Islands travel writing.

Charles Warren Stoddard (1843-1909) was an influential travel writer, essayist, and journalist

⁵ Nicholas Thomas, *In Oceania: Visions, Artifacts, Histories* (Durham, NC: Duke University Press, 1997), 134-135

who lived on several cultural interstices during the period of mid-to late- nineteenth century American and European expansion in the Pacific. He was a widely traveled man of his era, who explored a variety of geographic spaces; a genuinely liminal figure whose sojourns in the Pacific Islands were to have a profound impact upon his personal life and the body of his professional literary work. In the cultural and spatial liminality of the Pacific Islands, via á vis a “settled” nineteenth century United States, Charles Warren Stoddard’s literary representations (as seen in essays, travel sketches, novels and journals) of the Pacific complemented a growing body of travel literature consumed by the American public. The corpus of Stoddard’s writing on Pacific Islanders, the Pacific Islands, and the United States’ projects in Oceania during the mid-to late-nineteenth century could be viewed as a *lens of liminality*.

One of the many definitions of the word *lens* is described as a “medium that focuses or clarifies”. *Liminality* is a concept initially used by anthropologist Arnold van Gennep (and later

elaborated upon by Victor Turner) to describe a particular phase in *rites of passage*, which accompany every change of state or social position, or certain points of age. Rites of passage are marked by three phases: *separation*, *marginality* (or liminality, derived from the Latin meaning “threshold”), and *reaggregation*. The first phase, separation, comprises symbolic behavior signifying the detachment of an individual or a group from either a fixed position in a given social structure, or from an established set of cultural conditions, or “state”. During the second stage, identified as the liminal period, an individual, group or “liminar” becomes ambiguous, and is relegated to a state betwixt and between socially fixed points of classification; he or she passes through a symbolic domain that has few or none of the attributes of an anticipated status in society. In the third and final *rite de passage*, the liminar, previously situated on the margins of an established social structure, is eventually integrated, or “reaggregated” into a given social structure with a new status basis.⁶

⁶ Victor W. Turner, *The Ritual Process: Structure and Anti-Structure*, (New York: Aldine de Gruyter, 1995), chapter 3, passim

Although a “transplanted” New Yorker to the fertile soil of mid-nineteenth century, Gold Rush California, Stoddard was frequently at odds with life and society on America’s Pacific frontier, and lived most often in liminal, “betwixt-and-between” geographic, social, and religious spaces throughout his life. As “passengers” witnessing socio-cultural and historical transitions, liminars, according to Victor Turner, are in an especially unique position to contemplate the mysteries that confront humanity, the difficulties and norms that particularly beset their own societies, elucidate their personal problems and challenges, and reflect and comment upon the ways in which their own social predecessors and contemporaries seek to order, explain (or explain away), or mask socio-cultural realities.⁷ The travel writing, essays, journals and novels of Charles Warren Stoddard reflect and inform these liminal perspectives.

In the late nineteenth century, the issues that Stoddard explored through the medium of writing were those of Pacific Islands peoples and cultures, the role of missionaries in Oceania, the tenuous

⁷ Ibid., chapter 3, passim

state of the Hawaiian monarchy, and American colonial projects in the Pacific. The personal challenges reflected in Stoddard's literary journeys illustrate his spiritual quests and gender liminality in *fin de siècle* America. Utilizing the van Gennep and Turner paradigms of rites de passage and liminality as a theoretical framework, the main goals of this thesis are to illustrate how the liminal passage of Charles Warren Stoddard's life and work serve as a lens which offers significant insight into 1) discrete historical and socio-cultural events and issues in late nineteenth century Pacific Islands and American history, 2) the United States' growing presence in the Pacific, 3) literary motifs in travel writing on the Pacific and Pacific Islanders, and 4) nineteenth century understandings and constructs of sexuality; and in particular, same-sex intimacies.

Later regaled by the California literary establishment as a "prodigal son" who eventually returned home to the comforts of American life, Stoddard had indeed lived, and continued to live until his passing, a predominantly liminal existence at home and abroad. Stoddard's sexual liminality

(i.e., homosexuality), however, remained an especially significant obstacle toward his fuller “reaggregation” into the social and literary circles of California and the rest of the United States at the turn of the twentieth century. Much of the posthumous literature on Stoddard reflects an estimate of Stoddard as a “minor writer”, illustrative of the reluctant acceptance of a relatively open homosexual man of letters living during the late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries. Stoddard’s homosexuality, as reflected in both his personal and professional life, is highly remarkable and deserves study, for in his day and age, the notion of a homosexual lifestyle was minimally understood and accepted in Euro-American societies. It would be several decades of later social struggle (particularly during the 1970s and beyond) when gays and lesbians would organize for a modicum of greater socio-political standing, legal protection, and recognition in the United States. Stoddard valued a mode of domesticity (a contemporary, Western ideation of a gay lifestyle) that was a struggle to attain during his own lifetime, for such a lifestyle in

his day and age was relatively new, if not completely ignored or shunned.

Most of the secondary literature on Charles Warren Stoddard delves into the merit and estimation of Stoddard's works via á vis his more successful nineteenth century Euro-American counterparts who were writing within the vein of Oceanic travel literature and the new literature of the western American frontier. These works view Stoddard in the context of adhering to the mainstream, genteel literary tradition, and count him as being "a minor writer" of negligible import. Mention of Stoddard in these works is limited to short treatments appearing mostly in literary compendia of famous nineteenth century Californian writers. When Stoddard converted to Catholicism in 1867, he then became known, mostly in Catholic circles, as a prominent nineteenth century Catholic writer, and a "psalmist of the South Seas"; particularly after his 1885 publication about the life and work of Father Damien, *The Lepers of Molokai*.

Although this very small body of secondary literature on the life and literary work of Stoddard steadily grew during the twentieth century (mostly in the field of literary histories of California and travelogue commentaries), very few of these works offer analysis on the issue of Stoddard's sexuality, and moreover, how his own sexuality shaped his literary representations of Pacific Islanders; especially those of the Pacific Islander men with whom he became intimate in *aikāne* relationships. Carl Stroven's seminal doctoral dissertation of 1939 is composed of a biography which offers a literary historical view of the life and work of Charles Warren Stoddard; the word homosexuality is mentioned only sparingly within the volume. Franklin Walker's literary history of San Francisco⁸ hints at the mild, macho epithets thrown Stoddard's way by men more adjusted to the masculine male ethos of Gold Rush California's society, and makes allusions to Stoddard's homosexuality without being entirely explicit. It was Roger Austen in the 1970s and 1980s, whose exhaustive work on Charles Warren Stoddard dared to unveil the true

⁸ Franklin Walker, *San Francisco's Literary Frontier* (Seattle: University of Washington Press, 1970)

nature of Stoddard's liminal sexual orientation in a volume which quite openly celebrates the author's sexual unconventionality during the nineteenth century. All of the above mentioned works, however, do not evaluate the uniquely Oceanic context in which Stoddard's intimate relationships took place. Stoddard's *aikāne* relationships with Pacific Islander men, and in particular, young Hawaiian men, were moments in which he stepped beyond the limen of Oceanic beaches, and into the world of Hawaiian time of custom and tradition. The native Pacific Islander communities in which Stoddard sojourned gave him a glimpse and significant immersion into lifeways very different from those of his mainland American upbringing, and provided him with an experience of homosociality (and sexuality) within a specific Hawaiian context. An analysis of Stoddard's *aikāne* relationships, the very particular indigenous cosmos of the *aikāne* tradition in Hawai'i, and his literary representations of Pacific Islanders will hopefully be a fruitful contribution to the study of Stoddard's life and work.

The Politics of Nineteenth Century Pacific Islands Travel Writing: Representations of Pacific Islanders in Stoddard's Literature

In the earliest travel writing produced by Euro-Americans in the Pacific, an eroticization of exotic places pervades the metropolitan imagination of the writers, who reached a larger audience than those able to actually be present in the Islands. This was especially true on America's late-nineteenth century Pacific coast, where economic prosperity, coupled with the United States' advent as an imperial power, gave shape to new depictions of peoples and lands beyond the contiguous borders of the continental United States. In mid- to late-nineteenth century America, the Pacific Islands, in a way similar to the "Orient" or Far East (as explored by Edward Said in *Orientalism*⁹) was a site of literary endeavor which influenced many aspects of popular culture. Charles Warren Stoddard's *South Sea Idyls*, published in 1873, blends metaphors and representations of Oceania and Pacific Islanders consonant with both orientalism and Rousseauian imagery. Stoddard's representations, however, as

⁹ Edward W. Said, *Orientalism* (New York: Vintage Books, 1994)

we shall examine below, were somewhat different in nature: he lauds “the strong-backed youths, human porpoises who drive their canoes through the mists of the storm”, instead of the archetypically alluring Polynesian women with “firm breasts, lithe limbs and generous impulses”.¹⁰ Stoddard’s representations were also different in one other significant way: although he is a consummate entertainer, writing for his mainland American and European audiences, he seems to depict Oceanic life as being somewhat better than that existing in mainstream, nineteenth century America.

In the 1830s and 1840s, Euro-American male writers seemed to have located their erotic fantasies in the South Seas, in a pattern that would find echoes in Stoddard’s writing, and the works of later authors such as Stevenson, Loti, Brooke, and Maugham, as well as artists such as Gauguin. The “noble savages” of these exotic lands provided both sexual excitement and cultural difference. Travel accounts both depended upon and undercut the colonial systems that provided the first encounters between peoples of northern and southern

¹⁰ Franklin Walker, *San Francisco’s Literary Frontier*, passim, section on Stoddard

landscapes such as North America and Oceania. These writers drew upon the earlier European stereotype of the appeal of the south, and its association with forbidden love. The Pacific thus assumed for many artists the role that had been played by Greece and Italy in earlier European literature.¹¹ Stoddard's (and earlier, Richard Henry Dana's and Melville's) love for the young men of the South Seas was thus not only personal affection, but a political response as well to a Euro-American and European culture increasingly put into question,¹² especially on the eve of the United States Civil War.

During America's ante-bellum period, California consisted of a highly mobile society in which print media, and travel literature in particular, articulated the very experience and aspirations of a frontier culture and realms beyond. The debate over slavery in the American west and the advent of the Civil War in the 1860s had a deep impact upon California's multicultural society, its confidence in

¹¹ Robert K. Martin, "Knights-Errant and Gothic Seducers: The Representation of Male Friendship in Nineteenth-Century America, in *Hidden From History: Reclaiming the Gay & Lesbian Past*, Martin B. Duberman, Martha Vicinius and George Chauncey, Jr., eds. (New York: NAL Books, 1989), 171

¹² *Ibid.*, 171

American egalitarian ideals, and the very future and stability of the burgeoning region. Walt Whitman, with whom Stoddard frequently corresponded during 1869-1871, frequently invoked visions of brotherhood to reconcile the socio-economic and moral fissures which bifurcated America during the Civil War. According to the author of *The Times of Whitman and Melville*, Whitman's most patriotic poems were produced in this age that drove so many people to despair; his optimism was high and his faith in democracy strong. The author writes that Whitman felt that America should welcome all: Chinese, Irish, German, the pauper and the criminal, favoring everything that broke down fences and brought together East and West, creeds, classes, races, customs, colors and tongues.¹³ In contrast to Whitman's optimistic vision of a unity of humanity, Stoddard's texts during this period reflect a homoeroticization of brotherhood in far-off contact zones.

There are two central literary agendas deployed by Stoddard in *South Sea Idyls*: one, an

¹³ Van Wyck Brooks, *The Times of Melville and Whitman* (New York: E.P. Dutton, 1947), passim, ch.ix et al on Walt Whitman

underscoring of literary motifs common in transcultural narratives of European and Euro-American travel writers during the late eighteenth and nineteenth centuries, and two, an effort to expand commercial prerogatives of Euro-Americans in the Pacific. Both of these themes, as we shall see below, had particular poignancy for the eclectic literary community living on America's Pacific frontier during and after the American Civil War (when the pressing issue of abolition was in question) and the eve of American imperialism (when foreign/non-European peoples were subjected to American colonial rule). Stoddard's homoerotic sentimentality which pervades *South Sea Idyls* is closely akin to allegorical narratives that invoke conjugal love as an alternative to enslavement and colonial domination, or as Mary Louise Pratt writes in *Imperial Eyes*, creating newly legitimated versions of them.¹⁴

The relationships and representations of otherness depicted in *South Sea Idyls* reflect antecedents in classical, American and European

¹⁴ Mary Louise Pratt, *Imperial Eyes: Travel Writing and Transculturation* (London: Routledge, 1992), Introduction, passim.

expansionist literature: the dynamics between the nurturing native and the beleaguered American/European traveler, and the patterns of loving and leaving. In the Stoddard narrative “Chumming with a Savage”, for example, there is a “cultural harmony through romance” motif, that connotes an economy of romantic love that mirrors Euro-American aspirations for commerce in the Pacific, condensed with the idealized egalitarian values of brotherhood in pre- and post-Civil War United States history. Stoddard’s transcultural literary representations, consistent with similar anti-conquest narratives, end in tragedy. This outcome imparts specific messages to reading audiences: transcultural lovers are separated, the westerner is reabsorbed into his or her respective metropole, and the non-westerner dies an early death. The vision of “cultural harmony through romance” is not fulfilled, and the promised allegory of an integrated, post-slavery or post-colonial society, never materializes.¹⁵ The unfulfilled resolutions inherent in the literary motifs in Stoddard’s *South Sea Idyls*, therefore, mirror the tensions, doubts and salient

¹⁵ Ibid., chapter 5, passim.

concerns of mid- to late-nineteenth century America: the uncertain destiny of a multiracial society in America's post-Civil War period, and the effects of western civilization upon both the colonizer and the colonized in the Pacific.

As mentioned above, Stoddard's Pacific Islands travel accounts both complimented and undercut the very colonial systems that provided the first encounters between Euro-Americans and indigenous Pacific Islanders. Complimenting the Euro-American interests which influenced the Pacific, Stoddard's writing, in some ways, mirrors the myths of racialism prevalent during his times. In "Chumming with a Savage", furthermore, Stoddard exerts a Crusoe-like mastery of Kana-ana, his beloved *aikāne*. Similar to Crusoe's classic story, Stoddard's sketch contains a nineteenth century Euro-American myth of race relations, in which the Pacific Islands and Pacific Islanders are projected to be the denizens of a classical Eden.¹⁶

In describing the people of Polynesia, such as Kana-ana, Stoddard wrote that "they were not

¹⁶Bill Pearson, *Rifled Sanctuaries: Some Views of the Pacific Islands in Western Literature* (Auckland: Auckland University Press, 1984), 25

black but they were beautiful; they were olive-tinted and this tint was of the tenderest olive; of the olive that has a shade of gold in it...”; an observation which posits Pacific Islanders as classical peoples of a bygone age.¹⁷ Like Crusoe’s Friday, Kana-ana seems to be a particular favorite for Stoddard among the “savages” he encounters, being comely in stature and handsome of countenance; both of which were reflections of European criteria of attractiveness.¹⁸ Essential to Stoddard’s attraction to Kana-ana is also the young native’s assiduous attention to the American’s physical pleasure: “over the sand we went, and through the river to his hut, where I was taken in, fed, and petted in every possible way, and finally put to bed, where Kana-ana monopolized me, growling in true savage fashion if any came near me.”¹⁹ Here, we also take note of Kana-ana’s linguistic otherness, which precludes the possibility of non-trivial conversation and an articulation of anything more than Kana-ana’s desire to please. Seemingly innocent of civilization and its call, Kana-ana is bewildered

¹⁷ Stoddard, *ITD*, 27

¹⁸ Pearson, *Rifled Sanctuaries*, 25

¹⁹ Stoddard, *SSI*, 31

when Stoddard, in the role of the young prodigal son, suddenly abandons him. In Stoddard's tale, the emphasis is upon the narrator's, and not the young native's, loss. The narrative silence, as Roger Austen notes, of Kana-ana's thoughts and feelings matches the persuasive silence of the enchanting Pacific Islands which Stoddard, like other nineteenth century explorers, "discover" or exploit; but Kana-ana is too docile to feel anger about being exploited, for he is Good Man Friday until the end.²⁰

Stoddard maintains a truly liminal stance vis á vis these racial prerogatives by alluding to his audience that life in the South Seas was much better than life in Euro-American metropolises. "I'd rather be a sea islander sitting naked in the sun before my grass hut", Stoddard wrote during his later years, "than be the Pope of Rome".²¹ Although this statement was made in his later years, it still reflects the antipodes and liminality which fluctuated off and on during Stoddard's life. When he was not dreaming of a return to the Pacific Islands, he

²⁰ Austen, Crowley, *GP*, xxx-xxxii

²¹ Charles Phillips, "Charles Warren Stoddard", *Overland Monthly*, n.s.51 (February 1908), 347) cited in Austen and Crowley, *GP*, p. xxxi,

alternately imagined himself in monastic habit.²² The Catholic Church, which Stoddard formally joined in 1867, afforded Stoddard another way, or an alternative to living in Oceania, of allying himself with the anti-modern business ethos of the Gilded Age. In describing the residents of Kanaana's native village, Stoddard writes: "They had once or twice been visited by the same sort of whitish-looking people, and they found those colorless faces uncivil, and the bleached-out skins by no means to be trusted with those whom they considered their inferiors. They didn't know that it is one of the Thirty-nine Articles of Civilization to bully one's way through the world".²³ In allying himself with the natives, and in taking refuge in the comfort of the church, Stoddard was maintaining a tenuous but comfortable distance from the predominant Anglo-Saxon Protestant ethic of the metropole from which he hailed.

This was a delicate balancing act for Stoddard as a travel writer, who longed for mainstream recognition back in Europe and

²² Austen and Crowley, *GP*, xxxi

²³ Stoddard, *SSI*, 63

America, but simultaneously yearned for inner stability and meaningful relationships at home and abroad. As we see, Stoddard's representations of Pacific Islanders and the Pacific Islands of the nineteenth century were part and parcel of a long pedigree of European and Euro-American travel writing. What made Stoddard's contributions so different, however, was the sensitivity with which he wrote of his *aikāne* relationships; most notably, in Hawai'i. Above and beyond Defoe, Melville, and Dana, Stoddard's *aikāne* intimacies were lauded in unveiled, homoerotic expression. Like Defoe and Melville, however, we realize that the narrator of Stoddard's tales never forgot that he was civilized at heart, and ultimately ends up returning to the land of his kin, in true prodigal fashion. There was tension, however, in Stoddard's tales, which reflect an ambivalent stance vis á vis life in the colonizer's metropole versus that in Oceania. The narratives of *South Sea Idyls* impart a tenor of spirituality and decency shared among the natives described by Stoddard that was not always the model of Euro-American dealings in the Islands.

The publication of *South Sea Idyls* in 1873 brought Stoddard on to the mainstage of Euro-American travel writers of the Pacific. His stories of his life and times spent in Oceania enchanted readers back in America and Europe, where Stoddard gained wide acclaim for the fruits of his literary efforts. Recognized by Bohemians back in San Francisco and businessmen there alike, Stoddard's talents as a travel writer were soon to be tested yet again, for during his next trip to the Islands, which was an extended one, he was very tentatively employed as an agent for Euro-American interests prevalent there.

Reviewers were generally pleased with *South Sea Idyls*, often comparing Stoddard with Hermann Melville as to subject matter, and with other western writers as to style. One particular reviewer in *The Nation*, however, was not overly pleased with the collection of stories, by warning that the tone of the book was not entirely wholesome: "We ought to say, however, that life in the Southern Seas is such a peculiarly non-moral life, that we cannot recommend 'South-Sea Idyls' as

a book of invigorating and purifying tone. The Southern Seas – as it used to be said of Paris – are not a good place for deacons.”²⁴ If the urbane tone of the last sentence is any clue, *The Nation’s* reviewer was not truly shocked by anything in *South Sea Idyls*. Moreover, that Stoddard could not be serious when he touched on same-sex love and demonstrativeness was entrenched in nineteenth century reviewers’ and readers minds. Stoddard’s stylistic sleight of hand, by appealing to the sensitivities of his audience without disclosing *too* much detail, also had to do with this, as we will see in chapter seven. Other contemporaneous commentators on *South Sea Idyls* – perhaps because they could not or preferred not to recognize the homoerotic undercurrents – chose to dwell on the safer and milder (that is, the genteel) qualities of the tales.²⁵

Chapter One explores the discourse of *rites de passage* and liminality as theoretical frameworks utilized in the discipline of history, anthropology

²⁴ *Nation* 17 (18 December 1873), cited in Austen and Crowley, *GP*, p.62

²⁵ Austen and Crowley, *GP*, 62-63

and literature. An emphasis will be placed upon the multi-faceted role of the liminar in society, and how the liminar's unique position and perspective serve as a lens through which to perceive socio-cultural events and trends. Stoddard's lifelong literary quests, sexuality and spiritual life serve as a major thematic triad which gave shape to both his life and letters. The succeeding chapters will then take on a Turnerian *rite de passage* progression, beginning with the young Stoddard's separation from his Protestant roots in the northeastern United States, and ending with his attempts at reaggregation back in the mainland United States.

Chapter Two will explore the social, historical and religious environment into which Charles Warren Stoddard was born. At the tender age of nine, Stoddard was abruptly taken from his family home in New York, and encountered a long shipboard journey from Manhattan to the vibrant, young city of San Francisco in 1851. The chapter will explore how Stoddard's formative experiences in New York came to shape his life-long liminal

passages on America's Pacific frontier and most significantly, in Oceania.

Chapter Three explores Stoddard's years in California, America's Pacific frontier of the mid-nineteenth century. During his pre-adolescent, adolescent and early adulthood years, Stoddard came of age as a young man of literary talent in the midst of one of America's newest metropolises. During these years, as is natural for humans, Stoddard became more aware of his sexuality, which, at this day and age, expressed itself in religious rather than sexual terms. It was during this time when Stoddard experienced his first sojourn in Hawai'i, and his first *aikāne* relationships, which would have an indelible impact upon his life. Also explored in this chapter is Stoddard's quest for *communitas* (i.e., significant and meaningful togetherness in the context of a cohesive community) within the Bohemian community of California and his conversion to Catholicism.

Chapters Four and Five comprise the centerpiece of this interpretive biography; it focuses on the long liminal passages of Stoddard's

adulthood as a man of letters sojourning chiefly in Oceania, while taking other intermittent sojourns in other parts of the world.

Chapter Six explores Stoddard's tentative reaggregation into American society after having lived a liminal mode of existence for most of his life. Stoddard's experiences of reaggregation culminated with his becoming a tenured professor at two Universities; the University of Notre Dame and the newly established Catholic University of America.

Finally, the thesis will conclude with Chapter Seven, which will revisit the main theme of liminality and how Stoddard's liminal perspective and life experience serve as a useful lens through which to understand the important social, religious, sexual and political issues of nineteenth century American and Oceanic history.

CHAPTER 1

Paradigms of Liminality

Charles Warren Stoddard's life and work has intermittently, but not often, been a field of inquiry; mostly for literary historians. While some of this work has involved biographies which take a look at Stoddard from the perspective of other prominent nineteenth century travel writers and literary giants of the period, very few have been comprehensive enough to study the processual events of Stoddard's life as a citizen of nineteenth century America who happened to be a man who loved other men. In an effort to understand the dynamics of Stoddard's life more comprehensively and holistically, the perspectives of anthropology will be of major aid in shedding light on Stoddard's work and course of life.

In a pioneering study which aims to provide a structuring scheme for the course of mankind's existence, Fred Spier describes the elements comprising cosmic, planetary and human history in terms of *regimes*.¹ In modern English usage, the

¹ Fred Spier, *The Structure of Big History* (Amsterdam: Amsterdam University Press, 1996), 2

meanings of *regime* and *regimen* include systems of government, such as the regime of Fidel Castro; a set of conditions under which a system occurs or is maintained; or a social system or order.² All human regimes, Spier cogently argues, are constellations of more or less institutionalized human behavior which appear to arise as responses to certain social, ecological and psychological problems. “Living together”, Spier asserts, “creates problems”. “People continually seek to solve them, and in doing so, they create new ones”.³ In reconciling the challenges of the human condition, ritual and rites of passage have emerged throughout the course of human history as time-honored and socially sanctioned behaviors which mark the transitions concomitant with the human experience on Earth.

The definitions of the words “rite” and “ritual” that will be central to this interpretive biography of Charles Warren Stoddard are “a customary or regular procedure” and “a ceremonial act, or series of such acts”, respectively.⁴ Although

² Ibid., 3

³ Ibid., 5

⁴ *American Heritage Dictionary*, 3rd ed., s.v. “rite”

the continued expansion of an industrial-urban civilization has produced extensive changes in modern social systems, resulting in increased secularization and a decline in the importance of sacred ceremonialism, rites of passage are often, but not necessarily, tied to supernatural sanctions and the activity of priestly intermediaries. Such rites focus on the individual, and are also occasions for group participation -- as in the initiation ceremonies of Aboriginal Australians, or burial and marriage rites in an agrarian community. There is no evidence, however, that an increasingly secularized and urban world has lessened the need for ritualized expression of an individual's transition from one status to another.⁵

The idea of rites of passage first emerged as a technical term in social anthropology early in the twentieth century, with Arnold van Gennep being its major theoretician. Behind van Gennep's idea of *rites de passage* lies the fact that the whole of life is marked by change. Babies are conceived, born, grow, mature, produce offspring and finally die, all

⁵ Arnold van Gennep, *The Rites of Passage* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1960), xvi-xvii

as part of the biological facts of life. This has been studied by biologists and anthropologists in theories of aging and changes in the “life-course”.⁶ As a concept, “rites of passage” was first developed in the study of preliterate and tribal societies but has subsequently come to be widely used in other social contexts, including those of modern complex societies.⁷ Over the past three decades, anthropologist Victor Turner has further advanced van Gennep’s original tripartite framework of *rites de passage* by giving special emphasis to the second, or middle, transitional phase of *liminality*.

The Course of Human Life and Rites de Passage: Liminality in the Field of Anthropology

In 1908, Belgian anthropologist Arnold van Gennep published a study titled *Les Rites de Passage*. Van Gennep belonged to a group of anthropologists including Emile Durkheim and Marcel Mauss, whose work on ritual and beliefs

⁶ Douglas Davies, “Introduction: Raising the Issues”, cited Spencer, P. (ed.) *Anthropology and the Riddle of the Sphinx* (London: Routledge, 1990) in Jean Holm and John Bowker, eds., *Rites of Passage* (London: Pinter Publishers, 1994), 1

⁷ *Ibid.*, 1-2

was of fundamental importance for the sociology and anthropology of religion. The theoretical background to his work lay in the desire to consider human action within a broad context of social life. Van Gennep thought of anthropology as a way of interpreting apparently diverse forms of behavior found the world over in a way that made sense of them and brought a modicum of order to what otherwise would be a confusing array of facts. In developing the idea of rites of passage, he believed he had discovered a key that would help unlock human behavior, at least in the area of changing status in social life.⁸

Although van Gennep was a scholar who worked from information provided by others, the ultimate goal of *Les Rites de Passage* was a systematic consideration of numerous rituals from preliterate societies in different parts of the world, to be set alongside material drawn from the sacred writings of the Hindu, Jewish and Christian religions. This was an example of the comparative method being used in anthropology as a first step

⁸ Ibid., 2

toward understanding human beings and their lifeways. In the simplest of analogies, van Gennep compared human societies with “houses” that would have been familiar to his European readers -- houses possessing numerous rooms, corridors, and doors in which people live an ordinary life, moving from room to room through passages and across thresholds. According to van Gennep, society was composed of particular social statuses with individuals passing from one status to another by passing over thresholds and moving through passages. *Rites de passage*, therefore, were organized events in which society “took individuals by the hand” and led them from one social status to another, conducting them across thresholds and holding them for a moment in a position when they were neither in one status or another.⁹ In accordance with his analogy between rites of passage and movement within a “house”, Van Gennep’s total schemata for his structure of *rites de passage* was tripartite in nature: the first separated people from their original status (*séparation*, separation), the

⁹ Ibid., 2-3

second involved a period apart from normal status (*marge*, liminality), and the third conferred a new status upon the individual (*agrégation*, aggregation).¹⁰

Van Gennep's tripartite framework did not achieve a place of academic prominence during his own lifetime. Not until the 1960s in the United States did the overarching systematic pattern of rites of passage come to be identified with van Gennep. In that decade, the work of a number of British social anthropologists, most notably Victor Turner, placed van Gennep in their intellectual geneologies. It remained Turner's task, based on van Gennep's recognition of the structural similarities of rites of elevation, initiation, healing, incorporation, and transience, to show how this system operated as a way of marking life process in the experience of the people among whom he had lived and worked.¹¹ In a series of studies, Turner explicated the place of ritual in one particular group, the Ndembu of Zambia. Where his predecessors sought to organize

¹⁰ Jean Holm and John Bowker, eds., *Rites of Passage*, 3, and van Gennep, *The Rites of Passage*, (London: Routledge and Kegan Paul, 1960), vii

¹¹ Foreword by Roger D. Abrahams in Victor Turner, *The Ritual Process: Structure and Anti-Structure* (New York: Aldine de Gruyter, 1995), x-xi

cultural processes based on received information, Turner argued from his extensive field data. His special significance as an anthropologist rests in his ability to lay open a sub-Saharan African system of belief and practice in terms that took the reader beyond the exotic features of the group among whom he carried out his fieldwork, and translate his findings into the context of contemporary Western perception and experience.¹²

According to Victor Turner's reading of van Gennep's three rites of passage, the stages of transition are the following: the first phase (of separation) comprises symbolic behavior signifying the detachment of the individual or group from an earlier fixed point in the social structure, from a set of cultural conditions (a "state"), or from both. During the intervening liminal period, the characteristics of the ritual subject (the "passenger") are ambiguous; he or she passes through a cultural realm that has few or none of the attributes of the past or coming state. In the third phase (reaggregation or reincorporation), the passage is

¹² Ibid., xi

consummated. The ritual subject, individual or corporate, is in a relatively stable state once more and, by virtue of this, has rights or obligations vis á vis others of a clearly defined and “structural” type; he or she is expected to behave in accordance with certain customary norms and ethical standards binding on incumbents of social position in a system of such positions.¹³ Victor Turner’s contribution to the discourse of rites of passage rests in his highly nuanced elucidation of the *liminal* stage of van Gennep’s original tripartite framework.

Turner’s discourse on the liminal phase of rites of passage aims to explore the relationships people have with each other during periods of change in social status.¹⁴ The attributes of liminality or of liminal *personae* (“threshold people”) are necessarily ambiguous, according to Turner, since this condition and these persons elude or slip through the network of classifications that normally locate states and positions in cultural space. Liminal entities are neither here nor there; they exist betwixt and between the positions

¹³ Victor Turner, *The Ritual Process*, 94-95

assigned and arrayed by law, custom, convention, and ceremonial. Frequent travel can also have this effect upon liminal persons. Symbolically, Turner argues, liminality is frequently linked to death, to being in the womb, to invisibility, to darkness, to bisexuality, to the wilderness, or to an eclipse of the sun or the moon.¹⁵ Furthermore, Turner suggested that during liminal periods, individuals experience what he called a sense of *communitas*, or intense awareness of being bound together in a community of shared transitional experience.¹⁶

As mentioned above, Turner developed his theory of liminality during his fieldwork among the Ndembu people of Zambia, by drawing upon the diverse variety of symbols and ritual behavior within that cultural group. Turner was very much aware that ideas applicable to those of tribal and preliterate peoples traditionally studied by anthropologists are not easily transferred to modern and urban societies, although in time he was successfully able to do so. With this caution in

¹⁴ Holm and Bowker, eds., *Rites of Passage*, 3

¹⁵ Victor Turner, *The Ritual Process*, 95

¹⁶ Holm and Bowker, eds. *Rites of Passage*, 4

mind, however, Turner still adamantly thought that there were salient aspects of preliterate and modern life that were similar and could, with some appropriate modification, be compared.¹⁷ The most significant modification came when he coined the word “liminoid” to describe periods in modern society when the ordinary system of organized activity is put aside to enable people to share in a sense of the common oneness of human existence (*communitas*).¹⁸

Communitas and the Religious Askecis of the Liminal

Turner’s thought works on the assumption that for much of the time, societies operate on a system of hierarchical and structured life where people exist with seniors above them and juniors below them, even with a degree of formal respect for their equals. But periodically, this life of hierarchy and formal structure is interspersed with non-hierarchical and informal interaction, as though the underlying nature of being human breaks

¹⁷ Victor Turner, *From Ritual to Theater: The Seriousness of Human Play* (New York: Performing Arts Journal Publications, 1982)

through to bring people together. Turner used the Latin word *communitas* to describe this feeling which people might have while in a liminal state. Just as hierarchy divides, so *communitas* unites in many different sorts of activity. With this in mind, Turner¹⁹ studied the place of pilgrimages, festivals, holidays and various celebrations in Christian cultures as examples of liminoid activity, as well as suggesting that monks, nuns and some others live a kind of permanently liminal existence in the quest of religious *askecis*, or spiritual life.²⁰ Stoddard's desire to achieve a place (and ultimately, balance) in both spiritual and secular communities was a source of tension throughout much of his adult life.

Victor Turner identified three different kinds of *communitas*: spontaneous, ideological and normative. Spontaneous *communitas* occurs when people suddenly find themselves caught up in a shared sense of oneness. This may be because of the joy in triumph in battle, for example, or in a sports or a major entertainment event. Such movements

¹⁸ Holm and Bowker, eds. *Rites of Passage*, 4

¹⁹ Victor Turner, *Dramas, Fields and Metaphors: Symbolic Action in Human Society* (Ithaca: Cornell University Press, 1974)

²⁰ Holm and Bowker, eds. *Rites of Passage*, 4

can become part of a tradition of a movement or group, so much so that it becomes an ideal. That is how Turner sees ideological *communitas*: as an ideal occurring when reflection on past events and the wisdom of hindsight bring a prized value to focus. Ideological and normative *communitas* may, however, overlap; for normative *communitas* refers to attempts at building the ideal of spontaneity into contemporary, everyday life. Societies and groups might, for example, seek to live according to that unity of purpose as outlined by a sacred text, such as the Bible.²¹

Many examples of spontaneous *communitas* can be illustrated in modern societies, especially in connection with sports and entertainment. One of the most interesting and extensive liminoid moments of world history came in London (and earlier in Los Angeles) in July 1985 with the Live-Aid Concert organized by pop musician Bob Geldoff as part of an attempt to raise money and express concern for poverty-stricken areas of the world. The concert was shared by literally millions

²¹ Holm and Bowker, eds. *Rites of Passage*, p.7

of people all over the world through the medium of satellite television. Geldoff's account of his experience at the Wembley Stadium concert on that night provides a direct description of a liminoid quality of relationships:²²

There was a tremendous feeling of oneness on that stage. There had been no bitching, no displays of temperament all day. Now everyone was singing. They had their arms around each other...everyone was crying. Not the easy tears of showbiz but genuine emotion...[On the way home]...people walked over to the car and hugged me. Some cried "Oh Bob, oh Bob", not sneering, not uncontrollable, just something shared and understood. "I know", was all I could say. I did know. I wasn't sure what had happened in England, or everywhere else, but "I knew". Cynicism and greed and selfishness had all been eliminated for a moment. It felt good. A lot of people had rediscovered something in themselves.²³

In Turner's terms, this was a moment when the underlying humanity of many individuals was shared, as distinctions of fame and celebrity faded into insignificance behind their common human nature. It was an example of spontaneous

²² Ibid.,4-5

communitas and shows that even when societies change and become very modern under the influence of extensive media coverage and management, the dynamics of human nature can still have a powerful effect.²⁴

In modern Western societies, the values of ideological communitas are present in the literature and behavior of what came to be known as the “beat generation” of the 1950s, who were succeeded by the hippies of the 1960s; two groups which have the nineteenth century “Bohemians” as their common ancestor. The beat generation and hippies were the “cool” members of the adolescent and young adult categories which did not have the advantage of national *rites de passage*. They opted out of the status-bound social order, and acquired the characteristics of the lowly, while dressing as “bums”. They were itinerant in their habits, “folk” in their musical tastes, and menial in the casual employment they undertook. These groups stressed personal relationships rather than social obligations, and regarded sexuality as a kind of instrument of

²³ cited from Bob Geldoff, *Is That It?* (1986), 310, cited in Holm and Bowker, eds., *Rites of Passage*, 5

immediate *communitas* rather than forming the basis for an enduring, structured social tie. The late poet Allen Ginsburg, for example, was a particularly eloquent spokesperson about the function of sexual freedom in spontaneous *communitas* inherent of the beat generation. The hippie emphasis on spontaneity and immediacy puts into perspective one of the senses in which *communitas* contrasts with structure. *Communitas* is of the now; structure is rooted in the past and extends into the future with language, law, and custom.²⁵ But like their Bohemian ancestors of the nineteenth century, however, some adherents to a once shared sense of ideological community can eventually return to the “Philistine world of prosperity and respectability”, (i.e., social structure).²⁶

One of the greatest classical instances of normative *communitas* may be found in the history of the Franciscan Order of the Catholic Church. M.D. Lambert’s book *Franciscan Poverty* (1961)

²⁴ Holm and Bowker, eds., *Rites of Passage*, 5

²⁵ Victor Turner, *The Ritual Process*, 112-113

²⁶ Albert Parry, *Garrets and Pretenders: A History of Bohemianism in America* (New York: Dover Publications, 1960), xxii

draws on the major primary and secondary sources of Franciscan history and doctrine, and makes a lucid reconstruction of the course of events that flowed from the attempt of St. Francis to live, and to encourage others to live, in terms of a certain view of poverty. For Francis, the ideal model of a life of poverty was that of the Biblical Christ. The Franciscan Rule of 1221 gives the impression that Francis wished that his followers cut entirely adrift from the commercial systems of the world. In admonishing them to do so, Francis appears quite deliberately to be compelling the friars to inhabit the fringes and interstices of the social structure of his time, and to keep them in a permanently idealistic and normative liminal state, where the optimal conditions inhere for the realization of *communitas*. As the Franciscan order endured, however, it eventually developed in the direction of becoming a structural system, and as it did so, the heartfelt simplicity of Francis' original formulations on property in the original Rule gave way to more legalistic codes for communal life. In normative *communitas*, we see one more aspect of its

dialectical relationship with social structure: the spontaneity and immediacy of *communitas* can seldom be maintained for very long if the material and organizational needs of human beings are to be adequately met. *Communitas* itself soon develops a structure, in which free relationships between individuals become converted into norm-governed relationships between social personae. Maximization of *communitas* provokes the maximization of structure, which in turn produces revolutionary strivings for renewed *communitas*.²⁷

The Liminar as Witness and Critic

As mentioned in the above Introduction, liminars are witnesses of socio-cultural and historical transitions by virtue of the unique position offered to them during rites of passage. According to Victor Tuner, liminars are especially equipped to contemplate the mysteries that confront humanity, the difficulties and norms that beset their own societies, elucidate their personal problems and challenges, and reflect upon the ways in which their

²⁷ Victor Turner, *The Ritual Process*, 129-132

own social predecessors and elders seek to order, explain (or explain away) or mask these issues. As “passengers” located in the centrally unifying phase of rites de passage, liminars thus experience social, psychological, religious and psycho-sexual transformations. For Charles Warren Stoddard, these transformations, by and large, took shape during a series of four sojourns in the Pacific Islands, and had profound consequences for him for the remainder of his life. The medium of writing was the manner in which he processed many of the internal and external changes he witnessed in the late nineteenth century world of events. Stoddard’s body of literature, therefore, posits him as an especially noteworthy witness and critic of nineteenth century Pacific Islands and American history. Let us briefly look at the theoretical basis upon which a liminal position afforded him this vantage point.

The ritual position (either voluntary or involuntary) of the liminar is antithetical to social structure in three basic ways. First, ritual relaxes some of the requirements of status differentiation

when in its transitional stage, while moving its participants from a former social identity or condition to a new one. Secondly, by suspending everyday social statuses and roles, relaxing the mediating structures through which participants encounter one another in everyday social life, ritual creates direct and egalitarian exchanges and invites experimentation with alternative, communitarian interaction. Finally, the experience of community can eventually validate the ideal of social structure - by serving the common good - and it infuses communitarian values into everyday social-structural life.²⁸

Historians and other academics from a wide range of disciplines have looked at the role of ritual, and how liminars bring about communitarian and alternative ideals into the matrix of social structure. Historian Peter Shaw makes the case that folk festivals in colonial America were an impetus to revolution. Shaw investigated folk rituals preceding the American Revolution that dramatize the

²⁸ Bobby C. Alexander, *Victor Turner Revisited: Ritual as Social Change* (Atlanta: Scholars Press, 1991), 2

rejection of the monarchy of King George III.²⁹ In a similar vein, historian Le Roy Ladurie finds concrete evidence in the folk festivals of medieval France that the reversal of roles acted out by peasants led to open rebellion against the Bourbon regime.³⁰ Scholars who thus appeal to Turner's theories represent a wide array of disciplines: anthropology, sociology, history and literature. Let us look at the role of literature and liminality, and how literature in this respect represented of the central thematic triad of Charles Warren Stoddard's life.

Liminality as a Genre in Literature

"Of late", author Gustav Pérez Firmat writes, "margins have been everywhere".³¹ Pérez' *Literature and Liminality* proposes to utilize insights derived from the discourse of liminality in order to shed new light on a sequence of Spanish

²⁹ Peter Shaw, *American Patriots and the Rituals of Revolution* (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 1981), cited in Bobby C. Alexander, *Victor Turner Revisited: Ritual as Social Change* (Atlanta: Scholars Press, 1991), 1

³⁰ Emmanuel Le Roy Ladurie, *Carnival in Romans*, Mary Feeney, trans. (New York: George Braziller, Inc., 1979), cited in Bobby C. Alexander, *Victor Turner Revisited*, 1

³¹ Gustavo Perez Firmat, *Literature and Liminality: Festive Readings in the Hispanic Tradition* (Durham, NC: Duke University Press, 1986), xiii

texts.³² Contemporary reflection in literary studies has been powerfully drawn to diverse manifestations of the liminal phenomena that, in Victor Turner's idiom, fall "betwixt and between the positions assigned and arrayed by law, custom, convention and ceremonial".³³ One of the most interesting and recent literary applications of Turner's paradigm of liminality which correlate closely to this interpretive biography of Charles Warren Stoddard, is a text written by author Wangari wa Nyatetu-Waigwa.

Nyatetu-Waigwa argues that the Turnerian liminal model offers profitable tools for analyzing novels authored by three post-colonial African writers. In the Western literary tradition, Nyatetu-Waigwa writes, the *Bildungsroman* or "novel of education", depicts the process by which a young person attains adulthood on the terms laid down by his or her society. In the conventional *Bildungsroman*, *Bildung* is the process by which the world plays the role of molder, marking and maturing the protagonist to the point where he can

³² Ibid., xiii

finally make a personal choice out of what is available to him, adopting an individual attitude towards life.³⁴ The *Bildungsroman* “portrays the *Bildung* of the hero in its beginnings [pre-liminal phase] and growth to a certain stage of completeness [aggregation]”.³⁵ Completeness of *Bildung* need not entail accommodation with society, but rather the moment when the protagonist is sufficiently equipped to choose an individual stance in life:

Education enables the protagonist to choose -- to accept or reject the values he or she is presented with. Indeed, *Bildungsromane* typically conclude with the protagonist making some choice, thereby confirming that the protagonist has achieved a coherent self. That decision need not lead to assimilation with the group and, if it does, the assimilation may be reluctant.³⁶

The deployment of the liminal model in analyzing novels, Nyatetu-Waigwa asserts, enables readers to achieve two important ends. Primarily, it allows each novel to be read on its own terms, and elucidate its artistic merits while avoiding the distortions created by normative and prescriptive

³³ Victor Turner, *The Ritual Process: Structure and Anti-Structure*, 95

³⁴ Wangari Nyatetu-Waigwa, *The Liminal Novel: Studies in the Francophone-African Novel as Bildungsroman* (New York: Peter Lang, 1996), 1

³⁵ Morgenstern, cited in Nyatetu-Waigwa, *The Liminal Novel*, 1

readings to which modern African novels have been subjected by various literary critics. Utilization of the liminal model, in Nyatetu-Waigwa's opinion, has the potential of bypassing the polemical biases of critics to yield richer meanings related to the literary quality of modern African novels. With the exception of Stoddard's South Seas tales, late nineteenth century (and contemporary) critics of Stoddard's work used prescriptive evaluations and comparisons with his literary contemporaries such as Mark Twain, Robert Louis Stevenson, and Herman Melville to measure the value of literature as marketable. Given the biographical reality of Stoddard's primarily liminal passage throughout life, we can see how the Turnerian model can be more readily deployed to interpret the literature of Stoddard, and better understand how that literature was perceived by a reading audience and literary establishment which used a more normative yardstick with which to gauge the merit of his work. In other words, a liminal reading may allow readers to enjoy and interpret Stoddard's work as it stands,

³⁶ David Mikelsen, cited in Nyatetu-Waigwa's *The Liminal Novel*, 1

by contextualizing it with the personal idiosyncrisies of the author himself. Much of this idiosyncratic contextualization of Stoddard's work has not been done, given the touchy subject of his gender liminality.

The second advantage of the liminal model advocated by Nyatetu-Waigwa, is that it helps to account for issues arising from the problem of the native African's coming of age under colonialism. The colonial situation in the Africa of the 1950s, Nyatetu-Waigwa points out, wrenches away the native individual's very cultural foundation from under him, since, having posited a relationship of superior to inferior between the colonizer and the colonized, the former's project then becomes that of erasing the cultural world of the colonized and substituting his in its place. This substitution, contextualized in two of the novels under Nyatetu-Waigwa's analysis, results in the interruption of the traditional rite of passage at the liminal stage and a diversion towards a second initiation, this time into the colonizer's world. This initiation remains incomplete at the end of the novel because

somewhere along the way the colonized individual is driven to attempt a redemption of his world and identity. A native protagonist's predicament is further complicated by the fact that the "project of retrieval" itself renders the desired end impossible, since the protagonist is unable to return to a world that he has never inhabited as a fully initiated member.³⁷ In contrast to the traditional model of Bildungsromane, where a person still manages to find a place for himself or herself in the context of a social setting, the liminal model, deployed as an interpretive tool in analyzing the modern African novel, demonstrates situations in which a modicum of reaggregation can remain incomplete. Liminality, therefore, serves Nyatetu-Waigwa as a structuring principle running threadlike through the modern African novels she explores, coloring each major image, each event, each place, and subverting, for example, the idyllic nature of the African setting and contemporary colonial metropolises.³⁸ The theme of incomplete reaggregation also runs concurrently through Stoddard's stories, most notably, those

³⁷ Nyatetu-Waigwa, *The Liminal Novel*, 7

which took place in Oceanic settings. Keeping the Turnerian model in mind, therefore, can be a means by which to measure a protagonist's passage into the final stage of reaggregation. Again, Nyatetu-Waigwa's utilization of the liminal model in literature serves well in analyzing the literature and life of Stoddard, given the fact that his reaggregation into fin de siècle American society remained tentative at best.

Liminality in the Discipline of History

One especially illuminating example of the role of liminars in history is Chappell's description of Pacific Islander voyagers aboard Euroamerican ships from the eighteenth to nineteenth centuries.³⁹ Chappell provides a compelling narrative of how Oceanians, deftly negotiating the encroaching Euroamerican presence between Pacific beaches and other economic and cultural frontiers within an ever increasing maritime world trade system, became liminars aboard the floating microcosms of Euroamerican ships. Having been separated from

³⁸ Ibid., p.8

their respective island worlds, Oceanic voyagers underwent significant rites of passage both aboard ship and in the new geographic spaces they encountered during their often long journeys. Pacific Islander voyagers sometimes made prodigious returns as fully, and sometimes marginally, reagggregated members of their communities of origin.

In a typically Turnerian tripartite progression, Pacific Islanders often experienced a rather violent separation from their home locales due to kidnapping aboard a Euroamerican ship. As of 1767, however, with the example of one "Joseph Freewill", there was a growing trend toward voluntarism in seafaring expeditions, which were a logical extension of Pacific Islanders' seafaring heritage.⁴⁰ Chappell argues that young men who went overseas were often acting out a rite of passage of their own gender and age group by venturing upon the waters. By the mid-1800s, the large numbers involved - 20 percent of young adult Hawaiian males, for example - suggest that even

³⁹ David A. Chappell, *Double Ghosts: Oceanian Voyagers on Euroamerican Ships* (Armonk, NY: M.E. Sharpe, 1997)

“mainstreamers” found the lure of adventure and profit too strong to reject.⁴¹ Oceanians who worked or traveled on foreign ships entered a “wooden world”, which despite resemblances to the Euroamerican societies that produced the vessels, had its own distinctive customs.⁴²

Seamen who crossed the equator for the first time, for example, went through the rite of Neptune, which inducted them into the Realm of the Deep. On the eve of that fateful passage over an invisible world demarcation, King Neptune might call from under the bow, “Ship ahoy!”. The great crossing could be celebrated, under the gaze of Neptune’s royally garbed retinue, by shaving the neophyte in a chair built to tip backwards and dunk its occupant into a water-filled canvas; a ceremony that would crush egos into collegial unity, or *communitas*.⁴³ Stoddard’s *South Sea Idyls* tale “In A Transport”, which recalls his 1870 voyage to Tahiti aboard a French ship, is replete with vignettes of *communitas*-forming experiences as the crew made

⁴⁰ Chappell, 157

⁴¹ Varigny, Moore cited in Chappell, 161

⁴² Rodger, 345-346 cited in Chappell, 41

its way past the equator, through the Marquesas, and finally, to the port of Pape`ete.

As in the case of Stoddard, who made so many shipboard journeys around the world during his own lifetime, reaggregation could be tenuous for Oceanic voyagers. Many Oceanian returnees made an effort to reaggregate into their home societies, while others ventured out even further into the limen. Those who stayed, like beachcombers, had new ideas and skills and could serve as war leaders, pilots, missionaries, or interpreters. If they had low rank before, they might well improve their status.⁴⁴ In 1788, Chief Ka`iana disembarked at Hawai`i with four swivel canons, six muskets, three barrels of gunpowder and five double canoes loaded with metal tools and iron bars. This arsenal added to King Kamehameha's prestige and war chest just as he was expanding his conquests of the Hawaiian Island chain in his bid for power.⁴⁵ Some *kanakas*, however, did not experience a successful reentry to their island homes. Both Atu and Opai, for example,

⁴³ Chappell, 44-45

⁴⁴ Chappell, 137

⁴⁵ *Ibid.*, 140

who had traveled to the Pacific Northwest as cabin boys and paraded through Boston, found it difficult to readjust to Hawai'i upon their return. Changes on the beachfront could also make homecoming a difficult proposition. In 1807, a chiefly Tongan couple returned home after several years in Fiji and Australia, only to find Tongatapu in civil war, so they went back to Sydney.⁴⁶ As we have seen in the case of Chappell's text, the diverse roles of Oceanic voyagers provide a fascinating highlight of Turner's application of rite de passage, and its centrally unifying phase of liminality. As the major mode of great trans-oceanic voyages, Stoddard, too, shared in the multi-faceted limen of shipboard life the world over.

Sexual Liminality: Homosocialities and Homosexualities

Charles Warren Stoddard was a lover of men at the historical moment when the terms "homosexuality" and "heterosexuality" were being

⁴⁶ Ibid., p.139

constructed by scientific and other discourses that have organized modern common sense about sexuality.⁴⁷ This makes Stoddard a sexually liminal figure for his time, when same sex relationships between men and women were “safer in the earlier days of tight-lipped equivocations than in the later days of clinical inquisitiveness”.⁴⁸ Stoddard’s sexual liminality during the nineteenth century formed yet another aspect of the major thematic triad of his life.

The word *homosexuality* did not exist prior to 1869, when it appeared in a pamphlet that took the form of an open letter to the German minister of justice. A new penal code for the North German Federation was being drafted, and a debate had arisen over whether to retain the section of the Prussian criminal code which made sexual contact between persons of the same gender a crime. The pamphlet’s author, Karl Maria Kertbeny (1824-1882), was one of several writers and jurists who were beginning to develop the concept of sexual

⁴⁷Roger Austen and John W. Crowley, ed., *Genteel Pagan: The Double Life of Charles Warren Stoddard* (Amherst, MA: University of Massachusetts Press, 1991), xxv

⁴⁸Peter Gay, *The Tender Passion: The Bourgeois Experience*, Volume 2 (New York: Oxford University Press, 1986), *passim*.

orientation. This idea – that some individuals' sexual attraction for persons of the same sex was an inherent and unchanging aspect of their personality – was radically new. In order to understand the concept of same-sexuality during the period in which Stoddard lived, it is important to take a departure into ideations of same-sex eroticism in the ancient western cultures to which nineteenth century Euro-Americans were heir: the Greeks and the Romans.⁴⁹

The ancient Greek and Latin languages have no word that can be translated as *homosexual*, largely because these societies did not have the same sexual categories as we do in the twenty-first century. Western concepts and categories of sexual expression are based on the genders of the two partners involved: heterosexuality when the partners are of the opposite sex, and homosexuality when the partners are of the same sex. In other times and among other peoples, this way of thinking simply does not apply – anthropologists, historians, and sociologists have described many cultures in which

⁴⁹ Francis Mark Mondimore, *A Natural History of Homosexuality* (Baltimore and London: The Johns Hopkins University Press, 1996), 3

same sex eroticism occupies a very different place than it does in Euro-American societies.⁵⁰ This is particularly true, as we will see, for the dynamic of indigenous Hawaiian *aikāne* relationships in which Stoddard found solace and a meaningful alternative to the budding Euro-American homosexual paradigm during the nineteenth century.

At the present time, the highest expression of sexuality is usually considered to be in the setting of a committed, caring relationship between two persons based on mutual respect and resulting from free choice. Romantic love is praised and treasured, seen as a prelude to a deeper bonding process, which leads to the “happily ever after” most of us might wish for. This paired relationship forms the foundation for procreation, child rearing, and family relationships in Euro-American cultures; romantic love leads to marriage, which leads to sexuality and procreation. Examination of ancient Greek society, however, reveals that sexuality and procreation were not linked in the same way. Sex was necessary, and marriage the only legitimate setting, for procreation, but sexual pleasure was available,

⁵⁰ Ibid., 3-4

for men at least, in a variety of forms outside marriage as well.⁵¹

Although sexual pleasure and marriage were not necessarily linked, sexuality and domination most certainly were. Far from being a mutual experience, sexual activity always had a directional quality for the Greeks. Sex was something one “did” to someone, and anatomic imperative dictated that it was the man (or more precisely, the penis) that did the doing. The Greeks had specific words to describe various sexual activities, often specifying a particular pairing of penis and orifice (such as *paedico*, which means “to penetrate anally”). In modern English the accepted words and phrases used to describe sexual contact convey the mutuality and reciprocity that modern Euro-American cultures expect of legitimate and respected kinds of sexuality: people “make love”, “have sex”, and “have intercourse”. More “directional” words, which convey domination, are

⁵¹ Francis Mark Mondimore, *A Natural History of Homosexuality* (Baltimore and London: The Johns Hopkins University Press, 1996), 7

still around but are considered obscene or crude: to “screw” or “fuck” someone, or to “get laid”.⁵²

Conceptualizing sexual acts exclusively in terms of domination and submission provided a basis for the practice of humiliating conquered enemies – male and female – by raping them. To be penetrated unwillingly was shameful and degrading. The social acceptability of a sexual act was not determined by the gender of the partners but rather the balance of power between them. Among the ancient Greeks, sexual contact between males of the same social group was scrupulously concerned with status and was played out according to rules that assured that neither party was degraded or open to accusations of licentiousness. The idealized sexual partnership between men consisted of an active older and a passive younger partner. While the older took pleasure in the sexual act, the younger partner was expected not to. The two roles were distinguished by having different labels; the older partner was called the *erastes* and the younger the *eromenos*.⁵³ These classifications are inextricably

⁵² Ibid., 7

⁵³ Ibid., 7-8

linked to the male domination of Greek society and to a domination/submission model for sexual relations; there was no criticism of a male who sexually dominated anyone, male or female.⁵⁴ Although it is not clear from the historical record which of Charles Warren Stoddard's several younger lovers were "active" or "passive" in the homoerotic dynamic of their relationships, this pattern of same-sex relationship appears to have functioned as a model for Stoddard, as we will see during his tentative reaggregation into American society. This is not surprising, given Stoddard's residence in California (and the prevailing classical, Mediterranean metaphor of "imperial" San Francisco) and later trips to Italy and Greece many years after his first *aikāne* relationship in Hawai'i.

The ancient Romans more or less adopted Greek attitudes toward homosexuality. It is believed that pre-Roman Europeans, such as the ancient Celts, had homosexual initiation practices, and they may also have had warrior cults in which homosexual intimacy was accepted. Among ancient Mediterranean peoples, the ancient Syrians, Hittites

⁵⁴ Ibid., 10

and Sumerians ritualized homosexual contact within religious contexts; intercourse with male temple prostitutes was part of the veneration of certain deities, comparable to the sacrifice of animals or offerings of incense. For many years in Papua New Guinea, homosexual acts have been transgenerationally ritualized in the community of the Sambia people. From this brief exploration of same-sex eroticism, it is indeed clear that the word homosexuality refers to many different things, times, and places.⁵⁵

This thesis (as do many recent works on the history of homosexuality) takes as its assumption that in the United States and Western Europe toward the end of the nineteenth century a modern sense of homosexual identity was just beginning to take shape.⁵⁶ At that historical moment, it became possible to conceive of oneself as defined by an attraction to people of the same sex – apart from any inversion of gender roles – and, later, to construct a community on that basis. In large part,

⁵⁵ Francis Mark Mondimore, *A Natural History of Homosexuality* (Baltimore and London: The Johns Hopkins University Press)

⁵⁶ Neil Miller, *Out of the Past: Gay and Lesbian History from 1869 to the Present* (New York: Vintage Books, 1995), xxi

this view connects with the two major camps of gay and lesbian historians: The “essentialists” and the “social constructionists”. The constructionist approach contends that sexual behavior is determined by (or “constructed” from) the culture in which a person lives. In this view, no particular type of sexual behavior is any more natural or unnatural than any other. Thus, many different forms of male-male, female-female, and male-female sexuality have been observed over time and across cultures because each culture constructs its forms of sexuality. According to this view, sexual roles and behaviors arise out of a culture’s religious, moral and ethical beliefs, its legal traditions, politics, aesthetics, whatever scientific or traditional views of biology and psychology it may have, even factors like geography and climate. The constructionist view holds that sexual roles vary from one civilization to another because there are no innately predetermined scripts for human sexuality. What is sexually “normal” differs between inhabitants of ancient Greece, pre-Columbian America, the New Guinea highlands and twentieth-century

industrialized countries because of inherent differences in these cultures. The constructionist argument is the familiar one that beauty and sexual desire are in the eye of the beholder – but adds that the eye is always peering out through the lens of one’s culture. Given Stoddard’s many travels to distant lands and cultures, this fact alone contributes to his multivalent lens as a liminar.

The “essentialists” propose that there is an innate quality in individuals, stable and unchanging over their lifetime, which drives their erotic life irresistibly toward the opposite or toward their own sex (and only rarely toward both) – whatever the cultural milieu. The essentialists argue that cultural factors may shape the expression of this personal essence but they do not *construct* it. Essentialists take the simultaneous existence of same-sex and opposite-sex eroticism across time and cultures as evidence for an essential human quality we have come to call sexual orientation.⁵⁷ In the life passage of Charles Warren Stoddard, there appears to have been an admixture of both paradigms at work, both

⁵⁷ Francis Mark Mondimore, *A Natural History of Homosexuality*, (Baltimore and London: The Johns Hopkins University Press, 1996), 19-20

essentialist and constructionist, which could be attributed to his sexual liminality. We will examine these dynamics in the forthcoming chapters.

During Stoddard's time, the nineteenth century was a period when romantic friendships between men – and women – flourished. In northern Euro-American societies, such as the society in which Stoddard was born and experienced his formative years, a fond male friendship in youth, for example, could later blossom into something more intimate and intense. Warmth turned into tender attachment, and closeness became romance. Although there is no statistical evidence to tell us precisely how many young middle-class men such as Stoddard experienced romantic friendship, we do know that these ardent relationships were common in the nineteenth century.

People of the nineteenth and twentieth centuries have understood same-sex romance in very different ways. The historical models which the nineteenth century bourgeoisie used to understand same-sex intimacy were predominantly relationships between men. Following the habit of

their era, these Victorians turned to classical antiquity, citing the devoted friendship of Damon and Pythias, and quoting the writings of Aristotle and Cicero, who praised pure, spiritual relationships between equal men. Advocates of homosocial love also invoked biblical models such as David and Jonathan, who declared that their love was “wonderful, passing the love of women”. Devout Protestants patterned their friendships after the ties that bound early Christian communities (which were indeed liminal in structure), where a kiss or clasped hands expressed intense religious feeling, and words of love between members of the same sex echoed the love they shared for God. These historical models provided sanction especially for romantic friendship between men, but they extended support to intimacy between women as well.⁵⁸

The nineteenth-century bourgeoisie had an understanding of *homoerotic* contact that was very different from that of the present. E. Anthony Rotundo writes that “our forbears did not make clear distinctions between what was homosexual

⁵⁸ E. Anthony Rotundo, *American Manhood*, (New York: BasicBooks, 1993), 83

and what was not.”⁵⁹ What nineteenth-century Americans referred to an act that we would now term homosexual, they often called it “the crime that cannot be named”. This apparent lack of a word for homosexuality is closely tied to the fact that there was no concept of it, no model for sexuality other than heterosexuality. When middle class Euro-Americans wrote about homosexual acts, they often did not treat them separately from other forms of carnality, such as bestiality, prostitution, or heterosexual buggery. The nineteenth-century term for the legal crime of homosexual intercourse was *sodomy*, but that term could also be used to indicate copulation with an animal, or “unnatural” (oral or anal) intercourse with a member of the opposite sex. It is thereby significant that sodomy and “crime without name” – the two imprecise labels for homosexual behavior – referred to *acts* and not to types of persons, social identities, or relationships.⁶⁰ It would take icons of such fame as Walt Whitman in the later nineteenth century to attach words to name people who formed an identity and

⁵⁹ Ibid., 83

⁶⁰ Ibid., 83-84

community composed of same-sex loving individuals.

There were other aspects of daily life in the nineteenth century which provided a context for the physical expressiveness of romantic friendship. One has to do with the meanings attached to the experience of two males (or two females) sharing a bed. At the present time, the phrase “sleeping together” has become a euphemism for sexual intimacy, but in the nineteenth century that phrase still carried its literal meaning. Many middle-class men grew up in large families where children, of necessity, shared a bed. Although the spread of affluence and of modern notions of privacy made the rule of single beds for single persons more common in the late nineteenth century, most middle-class men of the 1800s shared a bed with a brother regularly during childhood. This made the experience of sleeping with another man mundane. It also made the feeling of another male body against one’s own quite ordinary – there was no reason for that feeling to cause the tension it can cause in the twenty-first century. In an era before

central heating, the body warmth of a brother was probably a source of physical pleasure, too. And if the brother was also a beloved friend, the experience could provide emotional satisfaction.⁶¹

It was an ordinary experience, then, for men to sleep together. Affection was certainly not a requirement of this arrangement, but affection often did come with it. Physical contact was an incidental part of sharing a bed, but it happened – and, in the context of a very affectionate relationship, this contact could express warmth or intimacy. It could also express erotic desire, as we discern from the life of Charles Warren Stoddard. A wide spectrum of possible meanings – from casual accident to passion—could be felt in the touch of a bedmate. In the absence of a deep cultural anxiety about homosexuality, men did not have to worry about the meaning of those moments of contact.⁶²

Sodomy, although against the law, was rarely prosecuted and was viewed as so terrible and so “unnatural” that it was not considered to have any connection with tender, affectionate (and

⁶¹ Ibid., 84-85

⁶² Ibid., 85

sometimes erotic) relations between men. Students, clerks and professional apprentices during this period were often accustomed to sleeping in the same bed, and no one thought ill of it. Bachelor lawyer Abraham Lincoln and Illinois storekeeper Joshua Speed, close friends and bedmates for three years starting in 1839, are an example of such commonplace sleeping arrangements.

The boundaries, therefore, between romantic friendship and erotic love were blurry during the nineteenth century. As E. Anthony Rotundo explains in his book *American Manhood*:

A man who kissed or embraced an intimate male friend in bed did not worry about homosexual impulses because he did not assume that he had them. In the Victorian language of touch, a kiss or an embrace was a pure gesture of deep affection at least as much as it was an act of sexual expression⁶³

Regarding same-sex sleeping arrangements, Rotundo adds:

Physical contact was an incidental part of sharing a bed, but it happened – and, in the context of a very affectionate relationship, this contact could express warmth or intimacy. It could even express erotic desire. In the absence of a deep cultural anxiety about homosexuality, men did not have to worry about those meanings of contact.⁶⁴

⁶³ E. Anthony Rotundo, *American Manhood*, New York: Basic Books, 1993, p.?, cited in Neil Miller, *Out of the Past*, p.4

⁶⁴ *Ibid.*, 5

Rotundo also adds that these often intense – and occasionally sexual – relationships between men were restricted to one stage of life, that of youth. They were viewed as a “rehearsal for marriage”, at which time such friendships came to an end.⁶⁵ And how did Euro-American societies come to view men like Stoddard, whose most intimate and erotic relationships remained same-sex throughout their lives? In the rapidly growing cities of the early nineteenth century, people with an abiding erotic interest in others of their own sex had begun to find each other. Large cities, by their very size, were more likely to have a critical mass of residents who engaged in forbidden forms of behavior. With so many humans gathered in one place, those with a same-sex orientation enjoyed an anonymity that would have been impossible in small towns. Moreover, acts of same-sex love, although they were illegal, were rarely prosecuted in major urban areas before the Civil War. Then, in the decades after the war, when Stoddard had come of age, the situation changed. Homosexual

communities became more visible. By the 1880s, prosecution became more frequent in large cities, and medical and social scientists developed a great interest in same-sex eroticism. These scholars began to shift from acknowledging homosexual acts to the very inner lives of the people who engaged in them.⁶⁶ Only toward the end of the nineteenth century was such a mode of relationship considered deviant⁶⁷, a fact which troubled Stoddard until his death in 1909. It was during Stoddard's lifetime (the year 1869, to be exact), that the word homosexuality first appeared in a publication. It was during these years when Stoddard came of age on the frontier of the American west, and became more cognizant of his sexual marginality. One of the major goals of this thesis is to demonstrate how Stoddard, during his sojourns in Hawai'i, experienced a more open, alternative arrangement for same-sex intimacy in his *aikāne* relationships, most notably, on the island of Moloka'i. The cosmos of *aikāne* relationships in which Stoddard

⁶⁵ Neil Miller, *Out of the Past*, 5

⁶⁶ E. Anthony Rotundo, *American Manhood* (New York: BasicBooks, 1993), 274-275

⁶⁷ *Ibid.*, 5

found himself will be explored in more detail in chapter four.

Most non-western societies such as ancient Hawai'i, where Stoddard sojourned, did not share late nineteenth century Euro-American reductionist worldviews of gender and sexuality. In specific pre-modern and contemporary Pacific Islands cultures, there appears to be more diversity in the categorical range of sexual desire and identity. In a pioneering article which attempts to lay bare the sexual diversity inherent within approximately seven Polynesian cultures, Niko Besnier utilizes the term *gender liminality* to describe the "betwixt and between" gender categories present in these Islands. Besnier's use of the term *liminality* captures many of the attributes of intermediate gender status in Polynesia. The major characteristics of liminal events and persons that Turner identifies, namely, their "intermediate" locus between a two-sex gender identification system, their outsider status and social marginality, are shown to be relevant to Polynesian gender-liminal persons. Besnier's article purposefully avoids the western terms

“transvestite”, “transsexual”, “homosexual” and “gay”; contemporary terms which only capture perhaps one or more aspects of the category, and can often be miscontextualized in Polynesian cultural settings.⁶⁸ Given the fact that a socially evident gay identity (as is common today) did not exist during Stoddard’s day and age, the spectrum of Stoddard’s sexual experiences as reflected in his daily life and writings will be alternately described as either homoerotic, homosexual, or sexually liminal. Besnier’s article discussing the dynamics of same-sex relationships in modern Polynesia give scant attention to the phenomenon of same-sex relationship evident in pre-modern Hawai’i: *aikāne* relationships. As mentioned above, it was Stoddard’s meaningful *aikāne* relationships in old Hawai’i which provided an alternative model for him (as a liminar) for same-sex relationship which he would do his best to replicate during his reaggregation into American society.

When Stoddard experienced his first sojourn in the Hawaiian Islands, he visited the islands of

⁶⁸ Niko Besnier, cited in Herdt, ed. *Third Sex, Third Gender*, 287

O'ahu, Hawai'i and Moloka'i. During his trip to Moloka'i, an island which is reknown in Hawaiian lore for its mysticism and spiritual traditions, he entered into a cosmos which provided him not only with a unique experience of Hawaiian life, but provided him with a view of an alternative lifestyle (as a liminar) which he would come to emulate; for it was on the island of Moloka'i where Stoddard experienced his first significant *aikāne* relationship with a young native Hawaiian.

In 1863, Stoddard had just turned twenty years of age during his first sojourn in the Islands. His "beloved *aikāne*", named Kana-ana, is described by Stoddard as a young man, perhaps in his late teens. *Aikāne* relationships were quite common in pre-contact Hawai'i; they were most notably same-sex relationships which did and did not involve a sexual connection. The first recording of *aikāne* relationships was that written down by the crew members of Captain James Cook, most notably, Charles Clerke, Cook's successor of the Oceanic expeditions, and John Ledyard, an American who served as Corporal of Marines with

Cook⁶⁹ The recorded observations of these Euro-American men reflected the typically late eighteenth century estimates of same-sex relations. Clerke, discussing the “I’car’nies” (*aikāne*), noted that “[the Hawaiians] talk of this infernal practice with all the indifference in the world, nor do I suppose they imagine any degree of infamy in it.”⁷⁰ Ledyard’s summary of “sodomy” among the Hawaiians, “odious to the delicate mind”, referred to cohabitation...between the chiefs and the most beautiful males they can procure about 17 years old...These youths follow [the chiefs] wherever they go, and are as narrowly looked after as the women in those countries where jealousy is so predominant a passion; they are extremely fond of them, and by a shocking inversion of the laws of nature, they bestow all those affections upon them that were intended for the other sex.”⁷¹ These observations from the Cook journals reveal a homopolitical content to the word *aikāne*, suggesting that the term meant both a homosexual “role” as well as

⁶⁹ Curt Sanburn, “The Aikane Tradition: Homosexuality in Old Hawaii”, *Honolulu Weekly*, v.1 1990-1991, May 12, 1993:4).

⁷⁰ *Ibid.*, 4

⁷¹ *Ibid.*, p.4

a homosexual “person”. The bias of Clerke’s observations also reflect Euro-American jurisprudence of the late eighteenth century, for when British ships were in the vicinity of Hawai`i, the crews were read the *Articles of War*, which clearly condemned homosexual behavior in the Royal Navy and imposed severe criminal penalties on any sailor who was caught engaged in such behavior.⁷²

In the missionary era of Hawaiian history, the term *aikāne* was reconfigured to describe a platonic friendship. Robert J. Morris, however, a Honolulu attorney who wrote a scholarly article on Hawaii’s *aikāne* tradition in 1990, has reconstructed the canon of these commonplace same-sex relationships of Hawaii’s distant past. Morris breaks the word down into its component parts: *ai*, meaning “to have sex” and *kāne*, meaning “male”. “The reduction of this special word is a lamentable loss”, Morris writes in his article, which carefully distinguishes *aikāne* from *mahu*, meaning a man

⁷² Robert J. Morris, “*Aikane: Accounts of Hawaiian Same-Sex Relationships in the Journals of Captain Cook’s Third Voyage (1776-80)*”, *Journal of Homosexuality*, vol.19, number 4, 1990, 23-27

who has assumed the role of a female.⁷³ The world of *aikāne* relationships existing in pre-modern Hawaii, as we will see, was a meaningful mode of relationship for Stoddard, who did not feel at home with the masculine male ethos prevalent in post-Gold Rush California same-sex homosociality, which was based largely on the values of personal fortitude, and rugged individualism tempered by a firm sense of self-reliance. At least two of Stoddard's special *aikāne* relationships will be explored in chapter four of this thesis.

The Pacific Literary Frontier

Much of Stoddard's life as a liminar occurred on several distinct frontiers: first, the Old West frontier of rural New York State, next, on the shores and metropolises of Alta California, and finally, on the vast Pacific frontiers of Polynesia. The word *frontier*, which was the dominating word in the epic of American nationhood, has many shades of meaning: a geographic situation, an expansion entity, or a state of mind. In the United States, this concept came to be associated with

⁷³ Ibid., 4

westward movement. To Americans, therefore, the frontier as a geographic area has meant a territory situated beyond a line of settlement, which awaits the altering initiative of pioneers to exploit its resources. As a state of mind, the frontier has traditionally conjured up for Americans a place of opportunity, the promise of a fresh start, or the prospect of one's fortune, and has perhaps provided the means to escape the constraints of an increasingly complex "structural" lifestyle. The frontier, in the nineteenth century American context, presents a place "betwixt and between" a communal, fluid space (i.e., liminoid) and a settlement with its concomitant rules and structure.

Frontier in the national-legacy sense is also a process – the means by which a region became Americanized. The saga of American nationhood recounts the movement of its people across the North American continent in less than a century. Restless, expansive frontiersmen, who can be called pioneers, occupied successive portions of the forward territory (each called a frontier), and Americanized it; that is, they transformed it from

wilderness to a functioning component in the nation's economic, social and political life.⁷⁴

Pioneer life on the frontier were liminal moments in which a land its populace were "betwixt and between" a more structured sphere, with its concomitant reaggregation with settled metropolises.

In 1893, historian Frederick Jackson Turner introduced the "frontier thesis". This theory deflected attention from the European origins of Anglo-American civilization to America's interior, the West. The Turner thesis, a multifaceted analytical scheme for interpreting the American heritage, cast the nation's history in a western context and designated the frontier as a process for Americanizing a region. In the progression of American domination from the Appalachians to the Pacific shore, Turner identified what he called the fur frontier, the mining frontier, the stock-raising frontier, and agrarian frontier as vanguard groups or expansion entities that Americanized the west. Some have long disputed the very idea of a frontier of "free land". Turner's formulation ignored the

⁷⁴ Arrell Morgan Gibson, *Yankees in Paradise: The Pacific Basin Frontier* (Albuquerque: University of New Mexico Press, 1993), 3-4

presence of the numerous native American peoples whose subjugation was required by the nation's westward march, and assumed that the bulk of newly acquired lands were actually democratically distributed to yeomen pioneers. The numerous native American and Euro-American wars provoked by American expansion belie Turner's argument that the American "free land" frontier was a sharp contrast with European nations' borders with other states. For many peoples, therefore, the West has not been the land of freedom and opportunity that both Turnerian history and popular mythology would have us believe. For many women, Asians, and Mexicans, for example, who suddenly found themselves residents of the United States, and of course native Americans, the west was no promised land. Still, the frontier thesis has maintained a powerful hold in the American imagination.⁷⁵

Another product of American expansion into the West and the Pacific, was the literary frontier, which was carried forth by writers, who were indeed pioneers. After the conquest of the continental west, the literary frontier was in many

⁷⁵ *New Perspectives on the West*, http://www.pbs.org/weta/thewest/people/s_z/turner.htm, 2

ways the most lasting and significant of all the frontiers in the Pacific Basin.

An informal American literary tradition proclaiming the “discovery of paradise” in Oceania began with the writings and letters of American sailors and explorers in the late eighteenth and early nineteenth centuries, blossoming with the writings of Herman Melville in the 1840s. Mark Twain advanced the tradition in the 1860s, and was joined in later decades by Charles Warren Stoddard. While America’s nationalizing interest in the Pacific waxed and waned in the nineteenth century, reaching a final climax in 1898, national imagination and passion for the Pacific as a literary frontier remained strong throughout that century and advanced vigorously into the twentieth century. In the nineteenth century, the lure of paradise in literature emerged as a constant foil and escape from the increasing commercialization and industrialization of America. While it served as an escape, this new frontier also functioned as an extension of the American mainland, reflecting the tensions and anxieties of American society.

The Pacific as literary frontier was not instigated by Yankees, for Americans blended and adapted the theme of paradise first proclaimed by European explorers and writers. One of the first anglophone literary embodiments of the Pacific appeared in 1719, with the publication of Daniel Defoe's *The Life and Strange Surprising Adventures of Robinson Crusoe*. Defoe's saga, as we will see in forthcoming chapters, did not proclaim the paradise that would make the Pacific famous. That image surfaced in the latter half of the eighteenth century, shortly after Jean Jacques Rousseau's vision of the noble savage sent Europeans questing for the land these indigenous peoples inhabited. Rousseau announced his vision in his 1754-55 "Discourse of Inequality". About a decade later, the longed-for paradise was found when the English captain Samuel Wallis landed upon the island of Tahiti in June 1767. Eight months later, French explorer Louis Antoine de Bougainville followed Wallis to Tahiti and proclaimed paradise to the world in his *Voyage Round the World*, published in 1772. Literary

depictions of Bougainville's paradise, followed by the widely-read journals of Captain Cook, reached a receptive audience in Europe, and later Euro-American metropolises. Even before the commercial opportunities of fur trading and whaling became evident, literature about the South Seas paradise was one of the most profitable products brought back from the Pacific.⁷⁶ The liminal lens of Charles Warren Stoddard was saturated by this tradition of literary frontier pioneers, to which he became heir apparent in the 1870s.

Summary: The Lens of Liminality

As explored above, the position of the liminar vis á vis any given social setting lends itself to a rather privileged vantage point and state of being which can be temporary, (as seen in the case of ideological *communitas*) or normative, (as in the case of St. Francis' religious order, which sought and continues to replicate the ideally prized communal life of Christ and his disciples). It can be said that a liminar possesses a unique lens (as a

⁷⁶ Ibid., 379-382

mechanism that focuses or clarifies) in his or her mind which helps to interpret events not only in the liminal state, but in the external social milieu around. This lens is none other than liminal consciousness itself. The task of this interpretive biography is to explore the unique lens of Charles Warren Stoddard, as revealed in his writings and life history.

In Hal Bennett's *The Lens of Perception*, one salient aspect of human consciousness is explored: that part of human consciousness which distinguishes one person from another and provides individuals with their unique identities. This, Bennett states, is the Lens of Perception -- the inner world of people and places that populates and gives shape to dreams and experiences. Because each person's life experience is shaped inside his or her unique Lens of Perception, each person's way of experiencing the world will be slightly different, necessitating a concerted effort in communication, which in and of itself is an art. For Charles Warren Stoddard, writing was the primary means of communication which both constituted his unique

identity and gave his life meaning as a man of letters.

The lens of liminality, similar to the Lens of Perception, is a mechanism that allows us to experience the surrounding world around us. It is a lens upon which are painted all our life experiences, and these images always impose themselves on the reality of the external world.⁷⁷ The reality of Stoddard's world was one of continual transition, in which he never quite left a liminal status. Borrowing from Bennett, I suggest that the liminal lens is shaped by three key sources: 1) the natural elements, including genetic influences such as skin color, eye color, physical size, and aptitudes, for example; 2) environmental elements, acquired very early in life, such as the parents we have or the siblings with whom one was raised, or early family blessings or crises, or the period of history into which one is born; elements over which most people cannot perceive themselves as having any choice; and finally 3) opportunities and experiences chosen by the individual himself, such as education, the ability to interact voluntarily with others in the

world, one's creative expressions, and so on.⁷⁸ As with a sophisticated camera, each lens of liminality has a specific field of vision or range of focus. Depending on the lens, some things in the picture will be in focus, while others are not; some things will appear within the frame, as it were, and some outside of it.⁷⁹ One of the major tasks of this interpretive biography will be to explore these factors in Stoddard's life, and how they shaped his vision of Oceania and the world beyond; for his unique vision reflected by his lens makes an important contribution to history.⁸⁰

⁷⁷ Hal Z. Bennett *The Lens of Perception* (Berkeley: Celestial Arts, 1987), 47

⁷⁸ *Ibid.*, 75

⁷⁹ *Ibid.*, 75

⁸⁰ Bennett, *The Lens of Perception*, 67

CHAPTER 2

Charles Warren Stoddard's Formative Years

Separation: Nativity in the "Water City" and the Journey to the West

Charles Warren Stoddard was a youth who witnessed the growth of at least two frontiers during the early years of his life: Rochester, New York of the colonial and post-colonial Old West period, and San Francisco, California, of America's New West. The Rochester, New York of Stoddard's earlier years was one of the great developing areas of the mid-nineteenth century American interior which had been colonized by New Englanders,¹ and later, San Francisco became a haven for seekers of wealth. The Stoddard family, however, hailed originally from the New England of America's colonial period, and Stoddard himself said of his maternal grandfather Freeman that "he was one in whose veins the blood had flowed coldly from the dark days of the Plymouth Puritans."² The Stoddard family's relocation to the boomtown of Rochester,

¹ Frederic Jackson Turner, *The Frontier in American History*, (Tuscon: University of Arizona), 83

² Charles Warren Stoddard, *TH*, 30

New York represented a displacement, or in Van Gennepe's terms a *separation* from the New England cultural environs of their ancestors. Their further trek to San Francisco during the 1850s represented an even further departure from the Puritan cultural milieu from which the Stoddard clan came. These geographical and cultural separations, we shall see, had a profound influence on Stoddard's formative years and in his later life as a man of letters in the professional arena.

Due to failings in business, Samuel Burr Stoddard, Charles' father, would seek out his fortune in the Gold Rush boom town of San Francisco. After spending a brief time in California establishing himself in a new business, Samuel Stoddard relocated his family to San Francisco in 1851. The oceanic journey to California was a difficult one during this period in history, but nevertheless made a deep impression upon Stoddard, who eventually grew to love the ocean and island spaces.

Rochester, New York: The “Water City” of America’s Nineteenth Century Frontier

“If ever a town’s site was prepared and its character largely determined by the varied actions of an ever-abundant water supply”, Blake McKelvey wrote, “it was the Rochester of more than a century and a half ago.”³ So well was this site designed for a milling and trading center that in 1812, when permanent settlers arrived in the wake of the first great wave of westward migration across New York state, few traces of earlier human habitation remained.⁴ As mentioned above, upper New York state functioned as a frontier of America’s “Old West”, in which both Native American and Euro-American settlement co-existed in a truly liminal fashion: the structural tenor of the more “settled” East coast had not predominated in this region until a later date. The indigenous inhabitants of the region were the Iroquois, who dominated central New York and surrounding regions for many centuries. This Native American

³ Blake McKelvey. *Rochester: The Water-Power City, 1812-1854*. (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 1945), 3

⁴ *Ibid.*, 3

group acted as intermediaries in the later colonial period between English settlers and other Native Americans and the French in Canada. During the American Revolution, however, the Iroquois sided with British interests in the region, and subsequently went into exile to Ontario. After the revolution, Iroquois lands were open for Euro-American speculators and settlers like the Stoddard family.

The moving force in the area throughout time had been its abundant water supply, and it was more than fitting that the chief dynamic force available upon the Euro-American arrival should be the waterpower of the several falls of the Genesee River, the locus of the first American settlement of what was later to become Rochester, New York.

The Genesee River region, previously known by local Native American groups as Genis-he-yo, or "beautiful valley", was conquered by European Americans without a great deal of bloodshed. Conflicting state claims, rival groups of speculators, and impatient settlers contended with one another and with the retreating Native

American tribes, yet a semblance of order as maintained in the area. Trade routes were opened; farms and village sites were cleared and occupied with such speed that within a short period, a stable and prosperous community emerged. Pioneering conditions were almost outgrown on the Genesee River frontier before permanent settlers appeared in sufficient numbers to develop the resources of the falls.⁵

During the first two decades of the nineteenth century, a group of variously trained professional men were attracted to the village of Rochester by the prospect of growing up with the community. A young medic from the East described early Rochester as “a delightful village...surrounded by woods, [containing] many elegant buildings...and rapidly increasing. There are eight physicians in the village, six more than it can support.”⁶ In 1810, a Colonel Rochester, a member of a group of three Maryland land speculators, had moved to the Genesee Valley region and established the village of Rochester.

⁶ Ibid., 16-20

To a great extent, Rochester was the creation of the vigorous youth of western New York. About one half of the merchants and artisans who located on the falls of the Genesee River between 1813 and 1818 came from earlier Genesee Country settlements. Of 60 persons associated with the village during these years, 23 had previous Genesee residences, 10 hailed from central or northern New York, 5 from the vicinity of Albany, 15 directly from New England, one each from Pennsylvania, Canada and Germany, while the previous location of others is not known.⁷

But if Rochester was a “child” of the Genesee Country, it was by the same token a child of New England. Of the 60 men considered above, at least 54 were born in that region of nineteenth century America. The contribution from the South – in the sizable Rochester families and the 27 African Americans, including nine slaves – just sufficed for the development of a diversified community. This community was a mill town by birthright, and the upsurge of its economic activity preceded the arrival of the Erie Canal. Already in 1821, the

⁷ Ibid., 69

village contained four flourmills and seven saw mills, while seventeen others operated in the nearby vicinity. Logs comprised one of the chief raw materials of the area,⁷ and it was here that Charles Warren Stoddard's father, Samuel Burr Stoddard, established a paper mill business with his in-laws, the Freeman family.

During the 1830s pivotal events changed the economic tenor of the burgeoning village. The panic of 1837 and the depression which followed were national and international in scope, and though Rochester experienced numerous hardships, its suffering was not as serious as that of Buffalo and many other cities in New York. Rochesterians, for the most part, had escaped the worst effects of the early years of the depression. The rapid succession of two protracted periods of economic hard times helped transform the fearless "Young Lion of the West" of the 1820s into the more cautious if more stable city of the late 1840s.⁸

A series of natural events added to the city's misfortunes during the early 1840s. More than a score of destructive fires broke out in 1840 and

⁸ Ibid., 213

again in 1842, while the number doubled in 1843, when the activity of an arsonist was suspected. With a considerable portion of the milling and other industrial equipment thus destroyed, residents began to question the wisdom of having a well established fire department. In the meantime, the long series of bumper crops in the Genesee region came to an end during the severe drought of 1841. The snowstorms of the next winter broke all previous records for the depths of their drifts and the duration of bad weather, but the following winter promptly established a new record.⁹ It was during Rochester's slow uphill economic recovery of the early 1840s when Charles Warren Stoddard entered the world.

The Early Youth of Charles Warren Stoddard

Charles Warren Stoddard was born during the early morning hours of August 7, 1843 in an upstairs front room of his father's paper warehouse at 74 State Street in Rochester, New York.¹⁰ Two or three years after the birth of Charles, the Stoddard

⁹ Ibid., 106-107

¹⁰ Stoddard, MS journal, "Monterey Diary", vol.ii, entry for August 7, 1905 (Monterey Customs House); Stoddard, MS notes, "Infancy", p.1 (Mrs. McKee Crawford), and *A Directory and Gazetteer of the City of Rochester for 1844*, Rochester, New York, 1844, cited in Carl Stroven "A Life of Charles Warren Stoddard", Ph.D. diss., Duke University, 1939, p.2

family and their (maternal) in-laws, the Freeman family, moved from their State Street home to a “large and commodious”, broad-fronted white house on Frank Street in Rochester.¹¹

Stoddard left few specific facts about his early childhood, and even fewer details concerning his family. The accounts of births and deaths in the family, however, can be obtained from the “Family Record”, carefully kept by his father.¹² Between 1846 and 1850, three other sons besides Charles Warren were born to the Stoddards: Samuel Burr, Jr., on January 31, 1846; an unnamed son, born August 3, 1848, who died shortly afterwards; and Frederic Church, the last of the children, born January 2, 1850.¹³ Sarah Freeman, Mrs. Stoddard’s mother, who had been an invalid for many years, died in September 1847.¹⁴

One of Stoddard’s earliest memories was of his father and grandfather’s paper mill situated at Lower Genesee Falls, a few miles away from

¹¹ Information in a letter dated July 25, 1938 from Mr. Blake McKelvey (then acting editor of publications of the Rochester Historical Society) to Carl Stroven, and Rossiter Johnson, “The Grandest Playground in the World”, *The Rochester Historical Society, Publications Fund Series*, Rochester, NY, 1928, vol.vii, p.79, cited in Carl Stroven “A Life”, 3

¹² Carl Stroven. “A Life”, p.7

¹³ Stoddard, S.B., MS. “Family Records” (Mrs. McKee Crawford), cited in Carl Stroven, “A Life”, 7

¹⁴ *Ibid.*, 3-7

Rochester. Stoddard also had another vivid memory: that of the large, gray stone Catholic church that stood on the corner opposite the Stoddard's house on Frank Street. The young Charles often listened to the music emanating from the church: especially the voices of the choir and the solemn swell of the organ. "Many a time did I listen to the music that was wafted from that beautiful church over the way", Stoddard wrote later during his senior years. "It was music unlike any that I had ever heard, -- music that soothed and comforted me, yet at the same time filled me with an indefinable yearning."¹⁵ This yearning, which Stoddard articulated many years later as an adult in his conversion narrative, *A Troubled Heart and How It Was Comforted At Last*, was most probably Stoddard's desire for an anchor of salvation or deliverance from the strict Presbyterian regimen under which he had been raised. In his later years, after his conversion to Catholicism (as we will see in the following chapters), the comfort of confession provided Stoddard with a spiritual haven from the psychological vicissitudes experienced

¹⁵ Charles Warren Stoddard, *TH*, 14

after his homosexual awakening; in particular, in Hawai'i. Charles was mesmerized by the light that streamed through the colored windows of the church.¹⁶ To the young boy, the church seemed to possess a mystery and a glory absent from the Presbyterian chapel where he was taken every Sunday by his parents.¹⁷ From this formative experience, we can conclude that the environs of the Catholic church offered Stoddard a set of imagery and solace which stimulated his increasingly fertile imagination and liminal consciousness.

The Stoddard family's maid was a Catholic woman whom Charles once persuaded to take him inside the Catholic church. They arrived early before a mass, and in the gloom, the small boy looked upon the surroundings with amazement: "I saw for the first time in my life a picturesque interior: tapering columns, pointed arches, rose-windows, pictures, statues, and frescoes. I saw an altar that inspired me with curious awe."¹⁸ During his youth, Stoddard was accustomed to attending services in a local Presbyterian church, where there

¹⁶ Carl Stroven. "A Life", 4

¹⁷ Stoddard, MS notes, "Infancy", p.5 (Mrs. McKee Crawford), cited in Carl Stroven, "A Life", 4

¹⁸ Charles Warren Stoddard, *TH*, 15

was “nothing in all that dreary building for the eye to fall on with a sense of rest; nothing to soothe or comfort the heart; nothing to touch the soul, or to lift it even for a moment above the commonplaces of life.”¹⁹ While visiting the Catholic church with the family maid, Charles saw a tall figure in a long dark robe, who began lighting candles on the altar. Right away, Charles recalled the pictures in a book he had often looked at in his father’s house – an illustrated account of the Spanish Inquisition – and he had to be carried away from the church in a sudden fit of terror. Having withstood many hours of Presbyterian church services, the young Stoddard came to the following conclusion about the God of his Puritan ancestry: “It was not the love of God that filled my heart then but rather the fear of Him who I had been taught was a jealous God, visiting his wrath upon the sinful.”²⁰

A much happier picture of Stoddard’s early days was that illustrated by his friend Rossiter Johnson, who, as a boy, lived on Frank Street two

¹⁹ Ibid., 20

²⁰ Ibid, 13-16

blocks away from the Stoddard family.²¹ Rossiter tells of going to play with Charles and his young friends in the large side yard of the Stoddard's house, where there was a tent with flags, a drum and fife, a cannon, and, in a shady corner, a bucket of lemonade. "With all this paraphernalia", Rossiter later wrote in his adult years, "those happy boys disported themselves every pleasant afternoon; so that a juvenile circus performed there unceasingly".²² Offsetting this picture of a normal boy's activities, however, are Stoddard's own words giving a contrary impression: "In those days [at the age of six] I was...very timid and sensitive. Life's dial was a shadow in the first quarter; minute hands spin in their early days. I hated most games, I liked better to lounge about, dream-building. I floated upon the unrippled flood of tedious and tranquil joys."²³ Concerning this same period in his life, he later wrote: "It was my custom, when my heart was light and my spirit gay, to steal apart from my companions, and throwing myself upon the lawn,

²¹ Carl Stroven, "A Life", 5-6

²² Johnson, Rossiter, "The Grandest Playground in the World", *Rochester Historical Society, Publication Fund Series*, vol.vii, pp.79-80, cited in Carl Stroven, "A Life", 6

²³ Stoddard, Charles Warren. "About Everything", *Golden Era*, vol.xvii, no.45, p.4 (October 3, 1869) cited in Carl Stroven "A Life", 6

look upon them in their sports as from a dim distance. Their joy to me was like a song, to which I listened with a kind of rapture, but in which I seldom or ever joined.”²⁴ The sense of isolation and difference which Stoddard felt at this early age were most likely due to two factors: one, the sense of individualism engendered by his Presbyterian upbringing at this time, which was common of “old west” communities of the nineteenth century, and two, his growing awareness of sexual and gender liminality from his male peers. Even as a youngster, Stoddard felt a keen sense of marginality from some of the more routine activities of his peers, although there is little salient evidence or detail about his sexual consciousness or activity at this stage of his development.

In the late 1840s, the firm of Stoddard & Freeman appeared to be expanding its business. In 1849, the partners built a new four-story building at 78 State Street, two doors away from the old warehouse. Here, their advertisement claimed, they kept on hand “the largest assortment of Paper to be

²⁴Charles Warren Stoddard, *TH*, 2nd edition. (Notre Dame, Indiana: University of Notre Dame Press, 1900), 11-12

found in any house west of New York or Boston". Plans for even further expansion were soon underway. Carl Stroven suggests, however, that the capital improvements of the Stoddard & Freeman enterprise must have cost a great deal more cash than the business partners actually possessed. In due time, Samuel Burr Stoddard's father, Dr. Abijah Stoddard, invested his savings in the business. In spite of this infusion of cash, however, the firm of Stoddard & Freeman began selling off its real estate to raise more money. First to be offered for sale was the large Frank Street house where the family lived. The next property advertised for sale was a farm at Ogden, New York, nine miles away from Rochester.²⁵ These events, no doubt, constituted yet another separation from Stoddard's original surroundings; which was indeed quite a big change and challenge for a child.

The family home on Frank Street was apparently sold or rented sometime in the spring of 1851, and the Stoddards moved into a small house on Fitzhugh Street. It was probably during the residence here that Stoddard, at the age of seven,

²⁵Carl Stroven, "A Life", 7-8

attended his first school. In manuscript notes on his early childhood, Stoddard mentioned having attended a private school – Miss Porter’s – in Rochester. Stoddard remembered little about it except that it had tall white columns in front and that the children believed the space under the building to be filled with graves. In all probability, biographer Stroven illustrates, this was the school held in the basement of the Unitarian Church on North Fitzhugh Street and presided over by Mrs. Isabella J. Porter and the Misses Mary Jane and Elmira Porter, who came to Rochester from Philadelphia in 1850.²⁶ Miss Elmira taught the smaller girls; Miss Mary Jane, the older ones; and Mrs. Porter, “who devoted herself exclusively to the instruction of little boys”, was probably Stoddard’s first teacher.²⁷

In the Fitzhugh Street house, the family lived only a little more than one year, for by the middle of 1851, the firm of Stoddard & Freeman, in spite of its seeming prosperity, had failed, and Samuel Burr Stoddard had left Rochester to explore

²⁶ *Ibid.*, 9

²⁷ Peck, William F. *History of Rochester and Monroe County*, 2 vols. Chicago, 1908, vol.i, p.243, cited in Carl Stroven, “A Life”, 9-10

new business prospects.²⁸ After the failure of the family business, young Charles lived in several different places for the next three and a half years. Following the firm's bankruptcy, the family moved to a former inn outside of Rochester.²⁹ Thinking it still an inn, travelers often called members of the family to the door to stop for food, drink or sleep.³⁰

Samuel Burr Stoddard went to Pennsylvania (to a place young Charles called "Smoky Hollow"), where he operated another paper mill. Stroven estimates that before the end of autumn 1851 the family joined Samuel Burr, for Charles remembered the joy of gathering chestnuts and acorns at this locale.³¹ Near the Pennsylvania home was the millpond, the mill race, and the great water wheel that drove the machinery of the paper mill. Charles remembered that in his walks with his brother and sister to the school he had to pass near a deserted limekiln, of which he had a strong fear and by which he dreaded to go alone (the nature of young

²⁸ Stoddard, Charles Warren, MS notes, "Infancy", p.7 (Mrs. McKee Crawford); and Rossiter Johnson, "The Grandest Playground in the World", *The Rochester Historical Society, Publications Fund Series*, vol.vii, p.80, cited in Carl Stroven, "A Life", 10

²⁹ Carl Stroven, "A Life", 10

³⁰ Charles Warren Stoddard, MS notes, "Infancy", (Mrs. McKee Crawford) cited in Carl Stroven, "A Life",

7

³¹ Carl Stroven, "A Life", 10-11

Charles' relationships with his siblings is not known). In the spring, Charles went boating on the pond and followed the paths that led into the woods. It was, Stoddard later recalled, "a picnic life", and he grew "sylvan and fawn-like".³² Several years later, Stoddard often reflected upon how natural environments such as forests and oceans stimulated his poetic sensibilities.

Suddenly, however, Charles was sent back to Rochester to stay with his grandfather Freeman, who by this time had remarried. Stoddard's days at his grandfather's house were sad and lonely. When letters came from the family in Pennsylvania (about the status of business and livelihood there), and the grandparents read the distressing news they contained (about lack of success in the field of business), Charles was sent to another room, though he knew not the reason why.³³ When his family did arrive to visit at Grandpa Freeman's, however, Samuel Burr Stoddard was not with them, for he had ventured off to seek his fortune in California.³⁴

³² Stoddard, Charles Warren, MS notes, "Infancy", pp.8-9 (Mrs. McKee Crawford) cited in Carl Stroven, "A Life", 11

³³ Carl Stroven, "A Life", 9-11

³⁴ *Ibid.*, 11

By late 1854, Mrs. Stoddard and her children left the East to join Samuel Burr Stoddard in a new life in San Francisco.

Writing, it seemed, and literature in particular, offered Stoddard a comfort and refuge from the turbulent days when he experienced one separation after another. Little did Stoddard know at this time, however, that he would experience yet a greater separation from his northeastern roots by venturing off with his family to the prosperous city of San Francisco.

Stoddard's Journey to the West, Part I

In early December 1854, the Stoddards were ready to begin the long journey to join Samuel Burr in San Francisco. Their belongings were packed and awaited shipment around Cape Horn. Mrs. Stoddard and her youngsters, however, were to travel to California by the shorter route by steamer to San Juan del Norte, then cross the Isthmus of Nicaragua to San Juan del Sur, from where another steamer would then bring them to the Golden Gate.³⁵ "California! A land of fable!", Stoddard wrote in an

³⁵ Ibid., 16

autobiographical narrative during his senior years: “We knew well enough that our father was there, and had been for two years or more; and that we were at last to go to him, and dwell there with the fabulous in a new home more or less fabulous, -- yet we felt that it must be altogether lovely.”³⁶ In San Francisco, Samuel Burr Stoddard was associated in business with the firm Wm. T. Coleman & Co., importing, shipping, and commission merchants at 56 California Street.³⁷

In Rochester, the Stoddards said their goodbyes to all in their “native city”: “We were very much hugged and very much kissed and not a little cried over”, Stoddard later wrote in *In the Footprints of the Padres*. “Then at last, in a half-dazed condition, we left Rochester, New York for New York city on our way to San Francisco.” While in New York City, Grandpa Freeman, a devout Presbyterian who did not approve of the theater, permitted his grandchildren to see “an alleged dramatic representation at Barnum’s Museum”, at that time a popular landmark in the City. After a

³⁶Charles Warren Stoddard. *In the Footprints of the Padres*. (San Francisco, CA: A. M. Robertson, 1911), 1

³⁷ *Grizzly Bear*, vol.ii, p.42 (March 1908) and The San Francisco Directory, 1852-52, cited in Carl Stroven, “A Life”, 14

few days of entertainment, the Stoddard family finally boarded the *Star of the West*, docked in Manhattan: “There is no change like a sea change”, Stoddard wrote in hindsight about his first oceanic voyage: “and one’s first sea voyage is a revelation. The mystery of it is usually not unmixed with misery.”³⁸

Stoddard colorfully described the scene at the Manhattan dock from which he and his family departed: “The dock and deck ran rivers of tears, it seemed to me”, he wrote. After hearing the many farewells at the port, the *Star of the West* “swung out into the stream, with great side-wheels fitfully revolving”, with “a shriek [that] rent the air” and gave the young Stoddard a shudder. Stoddard never forgot this vision of his departure from the land he once knew well: “I imagined my heart was about to break”, he wrote, “and when we put out to sea in a damp and dreary drizzle, and the shore-line dissolved away, while on board there was overcrowding, and confusion worse confounded in evidence everywhere, -- perhaps it did break, that overwrought heart of mine and has been a patched

³⁸ Ibid., 2-3

thing ever since.”³⁹ This was Stoddard’s first separation from the world he knew as a youngster. Little did he know that he was beginning the first of a series of lifelong adventures to distant lands and seas.

The Stoddard family’s first night aboard the *Star of the West* was quite a turbulent one, during which they were “pitched to and fro and rolled from side to side as if we were so much luggage.” Over the next twelve days, the bark “ploughed that restless sea”, in Stoddard’s words. There were several sunless days “when everybody and everything was sticky with salty distillations; when half the passengers were sea-sick and the other half sick of the sea.”⁴⁰ During these first restless days upon the Atlantic, young Charles occupied himself with reading: “I used to bury myself in my books and try to forget the world, now lost to sight, and, as I sometimes feared, never to be found again.” Stoddard’s library was complete in two volumes. There was *Rollo Crossing the Atlantic*, by Jacob

³⁹ Ibid., 4

⁴⁰ Ibid., 4-5

Abbot, and a pocket copy of *Robinson Crusoe*, given to him by a schoolmate.⁴¹

Stoddard credits his early reading of *Robinson Crusoe* to his life-long love of islands and tropical spaces: “Frequently I have thought that the reading of this charming book may have been the predominating influence in the development of my taste and temper”, he wrote.⁴² Stoddard’s early reading of this text made a deep impression upon him as a travel writer in his adult years: he imbibed of the myths present in this narrative of colonial tutelage, and would replicate these myths while describing a few of his *aikāne* relationships in *South Sea Idyls*, a book for which he would later become famous. Defoe’s depiction of distant savages, with the exception of Friday, would remain steadfast in Stoddard’s imagination for years to come. The only difference between Defoe’s narrative and Stoddard’s later South Sea’s narratives, is that Stoddard relates of a fondness for the natives and their lifeways, although he nevertheless makes a return to the structure of civilization. It was while

⁴¹ Ibid., 5

⁴² Ibid., 6

reading this literary classic that Stoddard spotted his first (Caribbean) tropical island, the name of which he did not identify. His enchantment was immediate and mesmerizing, and a fountain of words issued forth from his pen to describe the experience: "Thus was an island born to us of sea and sky, -- an island whose peak was sky kissed..."⁴³ The sight of a beautiful island was only a brief one for Stoddard: "For a few hours only we basked in its beauty, rejoiced in it, gloried in it; then we passed it by."⁴⁴ Stoddard's reading of Defoe also brought on moments of self-reflection: "*Robinson Crusoe* lived in very truth for me the moment I saw and comprehended that summer isle."⁴⁵ These timely images of the Caribbean islands and his reading germinated deeply within his literary consciousness.

When Stoddard's view of the islands was lost, moments of despondency began to fill his soul: "The sea seemed more lonesome than ever when we lost our island", he lamented; "the monotony of our life was almost unbroken."⁴⁶ While viewing the

⁴³ Ibid., 6-7

⁴⁴ Ibid., 7-8

⁴⁵ Ibid., 10

⁴⁶ Ibid., 10

Caribbean islands en route to California, Stoddard equated his perceptions of the isolation of island life with his own growing sense of marginality and separateness: "I felt its [the island's] unutterable loneliness, as I have felt it a thousand times since; the loneliness that starves the heart, tortures the brain, and leaves the mind diseased..."⁴⁷ "All this came to me as a child, when the first island 'swam into my ken'"⁴⁸ This was a significant event and realization during Stoddard's early life, and in his later years, he continued to muse about the dimensions of island life: "And even then I seemed to comprehend the singular life that all islanders are forced to live."⁴⁹ This was, of course, an inaccurate perception of island life which would soon be corrected when Stoddard later spent time in Oceania. It seems that in this instance, Stoddard was projecting a sense of loneliness, or liminal separation, upon the islands he viewed.

After almost two weeks aboard the *Star of the West*, Stoddard and his shipmates were in no doubt relieved to see the coast of Central America:

⁴⁷ Ibid., 9-10

⁴⁸ Ibid., 8

⁴⁹ Ibid., 8-9

“Oh how the hours lagged”, wrote Stoddard, “but deliverance was at hand. At last we gave a glad shout, for the land was ours again; we were to disembark in the course of a few hours, and all was bustle and confusion until we dropped anchor off the Mosquito Shore.”⁵⁰

The *Star of the West* dropped anchor in the mouth of the San Juan River, situated in the Spanish village of San Juan del Norte. Shortly after the ship docked, a flat-bottom boat backed up alongside the ship. The passenger list, Stoddard noted, was about 1400, most of whom were drawn by the “fever heat” of the gold boom in California.⁵¹ The flat-bottom riverboat which was to cross the isthmus accommodated 200 passengers, who crowded the deck with “hand-bags, camp-stools, bundles and rolls of rugs”.⁵² This smaller vessel then penetrated “the very heart” of the Central American forest.⁵³

There were many new sights for the young Stoddard to behold during the approximate two-day trek toward the Pacific coast. “Though the alligator

⁵⁰ Ibid., 10

⁵¹ Ibid., 12

⁵² Ibid., 11-12

⁵³ Ibid., 13

punctuated every adventurous hour of that memorable voyage in Nicaragua”, Stoddard wrote, “We children were more interested in our Darwinian friends, the monkeys.”⁵⁴ Before reaching central Nicaragua, the small passenger boat made a stop at the Rapids of Machuca, where provisions could be obtained.⁵⁵

After stopping at the rapids, the isthmus passengers then boarded a second transport, a riverboat, which brought them to the shores of Lake Nicaragua. During the journey down the river, young Charles had an opportunity to observe a group of indigenous Central Americans approaching nearby. His description of the inhabitants he saw is remarkably similar to some of his later literary representations of Pacific Islanders:

Once from the shore, a canoe shot out of the shadow and approached us. It was a log hollowed out – only the shell remained. Within it sat two Indians, -- not the dark creatures we had grown familiar with down the river; these were also nearly nude, but with the picturesque nudeness that served only to set off the ornaments with which they had adorned themselves – necklaces of shells, wristlets and armlets of bright metal, wreaths of gorgeous flowers... They drew near us for a moment, only to greet us and turn away; and very soon, with splash of dipping paddles, they vanished in the dusk.⁵⁶

⁵⁴ Ibid., 14

⁵⁵ Ibid., 17

⁵⁶ Ibid., 18-19

In this quotation, redolent with Euro-American images of Otherness in which natives appear with tawny skin colors attractive to Europeans, we see a convergence of Stoddard's liminal imagination in regard to his early reading of *Crusoe*. Stoddard does not make any mention here of the African-American population inhabiting these central American spaces; his focus is on the seemingly classical beauty of the Native Americans he claims to have witnessed in passing. Stoddard's omission of acknowledging the presence of the darker skinned, ex-slave African-American population of the Mosquito coast is reminiscent of later lacks of acknowledgement about specifically unvalorized physicality and lifeways of Melanesians peoples in Oceania.

Throughout the second night of transit toward the Pacific coast, the boat "tossed on the bosom of the lake between San Carlos, at the source of the San Juan River, and Virgin Bay, on the opposite shore."⁵⁷ The party finally landed at Virgin Bay, and began the next phase of the arduous journey

⁵⁷ *Ibid.*, 21

toward the Pacific, finding a means of ground transportation over the mountains and down to San Juan del Sur.⁵⁸ After traversing, bending and dipping through mountain passes, the passengers finally caught a bird's eye view of their destination: the Pacific coast. "From one of those heights", Stoddard mused years later, "looking westward over groves of breadfruit trees and fixed fountains of feathery bamboo, over palms that towered like plumes in space and made silhouettes against the sky, we saw a long, level line of blue – as blue and bluer than the sky itself, -- and we knew it was the Pacific!"⁵⁹ Stoddard and his fellow passengers felt a sense of relief: "We were little fellows in those days, we children; yet I fancy that we felt not unlike Balboa when we knelt upon that peak in Darien and thanked God that he had the glory of discovering a new and unnamed ocean."⁶⁰ "We had crossed the isthmus in safety", Stoddard wrote, as he remembered viewing the anchored ship which was to carry him and his fellow passengers to northern

⁵⁸ Ibid., 22

⁵⁹ Ibid., 23

⁶⁰ Ibid., 22-24

California.⁶¹ “And so we left the land of the lizard”, Stoddard concluded about his journey across the isthmus.⁶² In this portion of his conversion narrative, Stoddard is playing the role of the travel writer, by engaging his readers with exotic details of a difficult journey. In comparing his sighting of the Pacific to that of Balboa, he is affiliating himself with a prominent Catholic conquistador in expressing gratitude to a God of deliverance from an arduous path.

Upon arriving on the Pacific coast, Stoddard and his family boarded the *John L. Stevens*, which, en route to San Francisco, skirted the eastern Pacific coast where it entered the land-locked harbor of Acapulco, passed by the shore where one could view the Sierra Nevada range, and then Catalina Island. “Finally”, Stoddard recollected, “the coast grew bare and bleak. And then at last, after a journey of nearly five thousand miles, we slowed up in a fog so dense it dripped from the scuppers of the ship.”⁶³ The sound of surf was soon audible, in addition to the hoarse bark of a chorus of sea lions.

⁶¹ Ibid., 26

⁶² Ibid., 27

⁶³ Ibid., 29-30

Stoddard and his shipmates were then told that they were nearing their final destination:

At last the fog began to show signs of life and motion. Huge masses of opaque mist, that had shut us in like walls of alabaster, were rent asunder and noiselessly rolled away. The change was magical. In a few moments we found ourselves under a cloudless sky, upon a sparkling sea, flooded with sunshine, and the Golden gate wide open to give us welcome.⁶⁴

Stoddard described the happy scene at the dock where the *John L. Stevens* was berthed in San Francisco: "After a separation of perhaps years, husbands and wives and families were about to be reunited. Our joy was boundless; for we soon recognized our father in the waiting, welcoming throng. In the confusion of landing we nearly lost our wits, and did not fully recover them until we found ourselves in our new home in the then youngest State in the Union."⁶⁵ Samuel Burr Stoddard took his family to their dwelling on Union Street, located directly opposite a public school. The house itself was made of brick, "that was

⁶⁴ Ibid. p.41

⁶⁵ Ibid. p.44

probably shipped around Cape Horn”, Stoddard later recalled.⁶⁶

Charles’s arrival in San Francisco would be the beginning of a memorable adventure, which, as an adult, he recalled with great fondness. In due time, Stoddard was enrolled in a local school, where he was under the instruction of a Mrs. Clappe. Though she required strict conduct, Mrs. Clappe was careful to encourage any signs of originality in her students.⁶⁷ Stoddard said of her that it was she who gave him an interest in literature, and criticized and encouraged him in his first efforts at composition.⁶⁸ “It was this admirable lady who made literature my first love”, Stoddard wrote in his senior years, “and to her tender mercies I confided my maiden efforts in the art of composition.”⁶⁹

As a youth, Stoddard seemed intoxicated by the spirit of free enterprise in 1850s California. During the week, Stoddard and his school chums would collect empty tin cans, since the markets of

⁶⁶ Ibid. p.44

⁶⁷ Mary Tingley Lawrence, typescript, “The Latch-String of Memory’s House”, p.167 (California State Library), cited in Carl Stroven, “A Life”, 23

⁶⁸ Charles Warren Stoddard, “Social San Francisco”, *Ave Maria*, vol.xlix, p.716 (December 2, 1899), cited in Carl Stroven, “A Life”, 23

⁶⁹ Charles Warren Stoddard. *IFP*, 84

this period were stocked with them. "Everything eatable – I had almost said and drinkable", Stoddard wrote, "we had in cans; and these cans when emptied were cast into the rubbish heap and finally consigned to the dump-cart."⁷⁰ Charles and his friends became creative with these bits of refuse:

We boys all became smelters, and for a very good reason. There was a market for soft solder; we could dispose of it without difficulty; we could in this way put money in our purse and experience the glorious emotion awakened by the spirit of independence. With our own money, earned in the sweat of our brows – it was pretty hot melting the solder out of the old cans and moulding it in little pig-leads of our own invention, -- we could do as we pleased and no questions asked. Some of us became expert amateur metallists, and made what we looked upon as snug little fortunes; yet they did not go far or last us long. Money was made so easily and spent so carelessly in the early days the wonder is that any one ever grew rich.⁷¹

Early San Francisco was full of adventure and entrepreneurship, and these activities Charles engaged in with a sense of zeal and excitement. Stoddard had been in San Francisco for only a few days when "a new-found friend, scarcely my senior, but who was a comparatively old settler", took Charles by the hand and led him forth to view the town. "He was my neighbor", Stoddard wrote, "and a right good fellow, with the surprising composure

⁷⁰ Ibid., 48

⁷¹ Ibid., 48-49

– for one of his years – that is so early, so easily, and so naturally acquired by those living in camps and border-lands.”⁷² Everywhere the boys went, they heard “the mellifluous of languages”, the “lovely lingo”, as Stoddard later wrote of the polyglot San Franciscans of the Gold Rush period.⁷³

During those early days in San Francisco, there were at least four foreign quarters: Spanish, French, Italian and Chinese. “We knew the Spanish Quarter at the foot of the hill by the human types that inhabited it”, Stoddard wrote:

By the balconies like hanging gardens, clamorous with parrots; and the dark-eyed senorita, with lace mantillas drawn over their blue black hair; by the shop windows filled with Mexican pottery; the long strings of cardinal-red peppers that swung under the awnings over the doors of the sellers of spicy things; and also by the delicious odors that were wafted to us from the tables where Mexicans, Spaniards, Chilians [sic], Peruvians and Hispano-Americans were discussing the steaming *tamal*, the fragrant *frijol*, and other fiery dishes that might put to blush the ineffectual pepper-pot.⁷⁴

“Near the Spanish Quarter”, as Stoddard continued to describe his new environs, “ran the Barbary Coast. There were dives beneath the pavement, where it was not wise to enter; blood was on these thresholds, and within hovered the shadow

⁷² Ibid., 53

⁷³ Ibid., 54

⁷⁴ Ibid., 54

of death.”⁷⁵ Just beyond the infamous Barbary Coast was Chinatown; “a rare a bit of old China as is to be found without the great Wall itself”, Stoddard observed.⁷⁶ All in all, Stoddard recollects his first days in San Francisco as positive ones: “There never was a more cosmical commonwealth that sprang out of chaos on the Pacific coast; and there never was a city less given to following in the footsteps of its elder and more experienced sisters. Nor was there ever a more spontaneous outburst of happy-go-luckyness than that which made of young San Francisco a very Babel and a bouncing baby Babylon.”⁷⁷

One thing was certain for Stoddard: compared to Rochester, San Francisco was colorfully cosmopolitan, even if it lacked as yet the patina of urbane sophistication.⁷⁸ At school, Charles found himself sitting next to pupils who had been born in Europe, Australia, Russia, “Chili”, or the then Sandwich Islands – in addition to nearly every

⁷⁵ Ibid., 55

⁷⁶ Ibid., 55

⁷⁷ Ibid., 61

⁷⁸ Roger Austen and John W. Crowley, ed., *GP*, 9

state and territory in the Union.⁷⁹ Stoddard most probably saw native Hawaiians in early San Francisco, given their presence in the maritime industry there. In retrospect, Stoddard observed that there had been something “singularly bracing” about the very climate of San Francisco: “the middle-ages renewed their youth, and youth was wild with an exuberance of health and hope and happiness that seemed to give promise of immortality”.⁸⁰ In his boyhood, as in later life, Charles Warren Stoddard had always been more of an observer than a participant in the exuberant life of San Francisco, and in spite of the general holiday spirit prevailing in that city, still Stoddard was not happy. Beginning in January 1857, and for the next two years, Charles was to be even less happy.⁸¹

A Return to New York

On January 4, 1857, Charles and his seventeen-year-old brother Ned boarded the *Flying Cloud*, a clipper ship that would take them around

⁷⁹ *Ibid.*, 9

⁸⁰ Charles Warren Stoddard. *IFP*, 101

⁸¹ Roger Austen and John W. Crowley, ed., *GP*, 9

Cape Horn to New York City.⁸² It was thought that his brother Ned was dying of a chronic alimentary disease, and this sea voyage had been prescribed in the hope of prolonging his life. During the voyage, Charles read his Bible faithfully, as his mother had asked him to do,⁸³ although every day this reading made him “more and more perplexed”.⁸⁴ During the ninety-two days at sea, he also read *Uncle Tom’s Cabin*, spied some more “pretty” islands, kept a journal, and noticed that Ned was not getting much better.⁸⁵

Stoddard’s diary entries made during this trip reflect the experience of a sad and somewhat difficult journey. “What a lonely voyage was that across the vast and vacant sea!”, Charles wrote in his diary sometime in late January of 1857⁸⁶. “Now and then a distant sail glimmered on the horizon, but disappeared like a vanishing snowflake. The equator was crossed; the air grew colder; storm and calm followed each other; the daily entry now

⁸² *San Francisco Evening Bulletin*, January 5, 1857, cited in Carl Stroven, “A Life”, 25

⁸³ Charles Warren Stoddard, *TH*, 25-26

⁸⁴ Roger Austen and John W. Crowley, ed., *GP*, 9

⁸⁵ *Ibid.*, 9

⁸⁶ Stoddard, Charles Warren Stoddard, *IFP*, 120

becomes monotonous.”⁸⁷ The ship carried but four passengers: Mr. Cresey, the captain, his wife Mrs. Cresey, a Mr. Connor, a middle-aged gentleman traveling for his health, and “the small and sad boy”, Charles himself, aged thirteen.⁸⁸ In mid February, the *Flying Cloud* passed the Tierra del Fuego, which Charles described as “a beautiful sight”.⁸⁹ He continued: “We made the fatal Cape Horn at two o’clock, and passed it at four o’clock. Now we are in the Atlantic Ocean.”⁹⁰ The ship skirted the coast of Brazil, where Charles spotted “native fisherman mounted upon catamarans”.⁹¹ By early April, the *Flying Cloud* was within a short distance from landing in New York, finally arriving in Manhattan by April 5, 1857: “I was *awoke* this morning by the noise the pilot made in getting on board. At ten o’clock the steam-tug *Hercules* took us in tow. We had beautiful views of the shore.”⁹²

After arriving at the port, the young Stoddard boys spent a night in Manhattan, and journeyed to

⁸⁷ *Ibid.*, 120

⁸⁸ Stoddard, “The Survivor’s Story”, *Ave Maria*, vol.xlix, pp.811 and 814 (December 23, 1899), cited in Carl Stroven “A Life”, 25

⁸⁹ Stoddard, Charles Warren. *IFP*, 120

⁹⁰ *Ibid.*, 120

⁹¹ *Ibid.*, 121-122

⁹² *Ibid.*, 122

Little Valley, a village in western New York where their Grandpa Freeman had a farm. Ned and Charles shared a room in the farmhouse attic, and Charles soon found himself bored after the excitement of San Francisco. "What was there", Stoddard wrote years later, "beyond brook trout and maple sugar in their season for the refreshment of farmers' sons?" "Alas", he added, "Even the sons were scarce".⁹³

Charles kept himself busy decorating the attic with bric-a-brac from San Francisco: a Chinese kite adorned with a bird of paradise, little figurines in satin and silk with ivory faces, and other Asian mementos – all of which soon became a "scandal in a house that was famed for simplicity and prayer."⁹⁴ Again, in this recounting in Stoddard's conversion narrative, his estimate of his family's Presbyterian environs is anti-Puritanical. The clicking of chopsticks and the clangor of gongs created consternation downstairs, where the Freemans were probably muttering that these "heathen" trappings had turned their attic into a cross between a junk

⁹³ Stoddard, "Vacation Vagaries", *Ave Maria* 51 (24 November 1900), 617-21, cited in Roger Austen and John W. Crowley, ed. *GP*, 10

⁹⁴ Stoddard, "Little Valley", *Ave Maria* 51 (17 November 1900), 577, cited in Roger Austen and John W. Crowley, ed. *GP*, 10

shop and a joss house.⁹⁵ In general, Charles found the atmosphere of the Freeman home uncomfortable, and he particularly dreaded Sundays, when he often had to sit through morning, afternoon, and evening church services.⁹⁶

In Rochester the year before, the famous evangelist Charles G. Finney had preached a revival that, in addition to bringing the city to its knees, had produced a number of edifying side effects.⁹⁷ Throughout Monroe County, New York, renewed zeal was shown for Bible societies, the temperance movement, and religious education. Rochester had begun preening itself as a “banner city for Sunday schools.”⁹⁸ Without at first knowing why, Charles was abruptly removed one day from school. Heavy hearted at the loss of his school friends, he was further depressed by what was in store for him. Every night, Grandpa Freeman drove Charles to the Little Valley church, where the revival was ablaze with the holy fire of an illiterate disciple of Finney. Long after he had become a Catholic, Stoddard

⁹⁵Roger Austen and John W. Crowley, ed. *GP*, 10

⁹⁶*Ibid.*, 10

⁹⁷*Ibid.*, 12

⁹⁸Blake McKelvey, *Rochester: The Flower City*. (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 1949), p.44, cited in Roger Austen and John W. Crowley, ed. *GP*, 12

recalled the scene:⁹⁹ rather than advancing to the “anxious seat”, as his grandfather had hoped, Charles retreated to a rear pew, “stupefied with fear”.¹⁰⁰ Years later, Stoddard wrote: “I know not how long I could have withstood the shock which I daily experienced in that demoralized community.”¹⁰¹ This reflection could be indicated as one of the many occasional barbs which Stoddard made in his narrative against the mid-nineteenth century wave of revivalist Protestants.

Charles was soon delivered from the zealous revivals in Little Valley by an invitation to visit Dr. Abijah Stoddard, his more secular and worldly grandfather in Pembroke, New York.¹⁰² Unlike Grandpa Freeman, Dr. Stoddard had been a successful physician since 1810. Moreover, he was quite well to do – although he had lost a considerable amount of capital in his son’s Rochester paper mill. Most important, at least in his grandson’s eyes, however, was the fact that Dr. Stoddard was a gentleman, something that Charles

⁹⁹Roger Austen and John W. Crowley, ed., *GP*, 12-13

¹⁰⁰Charles Warren Stoddard, *TH*, 38

¹⁰¹*Ibid.*, 40

¹⁰²Roger Austen and John W. Crowley, ed. *GP*, 13

yearned to be when he grew up.¹⁰³ In comparison to the revivalist attitudes of the Freeman family members, Dr. Stoddard would serve as a type of role model of secular gentility for Charles Warren Stoddard; a role he would try to later emulate during his later reaggregation as a tenured professor in the United States.

In Pembroke, no one was forced to go to church on Sundays:

Sunday was not called the "Sabbath" in this house; I was now allowed to go to church or stop away [sic], as I thought best. In fact, Sunday was like a holiday, and I no longer looked at it with dread. I was as free as a bird; and I was made much of at the dinner table, where the jovial Sunday guests took their wine like old school gentlemen, and on several occasions even toasted me with a pretty compliment, which brought the blush of pride to my cheek, and a glance of genial patronage from the kind eye of my host.¹⁰⁴

Such was the type of genteel behavior which Stoddard experienced in his grandfather Stoddard's household. This very environment was one in which Stoddard recalled experiencing a freedom and lifestyle to which he would later aspire, and would somewhat successfully achieve during his reaggregation and while he found *communitas* as an

¹⁰³ Ibid., 13

¹⁰⁴ Charles Warren Stoddard, *TH*, 46-47

adult in Bohemian circles in San Francisco and elsewhere.

If Charles preferred, he could stay home on Sunday and play marbles or read anything he wished. Best of all, his grandfather took him to his first circus, where Charles, dazzled by the grace of the near-naked acrobats, concluded that they were “but lower than the angels”.¹⁰⁵ Circus performers, and male acrobats particularly, were to remain a lifelong fascination for Stoddard, who thirty years later in Honolulu frequented the tents of circus performers where young men changed their costumes.¹⁰⁶

Although a bookish boy by nature, Charles did not much care for school. Recitation frightened him; spelling bees mortified him; and small for his age, he stood target for the school bullies, one of whom pelted him with pebbles when he was not heralding his approach with sneering epithets. While living in New York at this time, Charles took some satisfaction at editing the school newspaper, for which he had worked up “personal items” in an

¹⁰⁵ Austen, Roger and John W. Crowley, ed., *GP*, 13-14; and Charles Warren Stoddard, *TH*, 46

¹⁰⁶ Roger Austen and John W. Crowley, ed., *GP*, 14

“impertinent style”. He also looked forward to performing in a class play.¹⁰⁷ Once again, however, Grandpa Freeman intervened: Charles was summoned home the week before final exercises, “with scarcely enough time to say farewell even to my bosom friends”.¹⁰⁸ The boy learned from his grandfather that he was soon to return to his family in San Francisco.

On the way back to San Francisco via the Panama route, fifteen-year-old Charles had time enough to ponder his young life and he came to at least two conclusions. First, he wanted nothing more to do with the religion of the Freemans; religious frenzy, Stoddard decided, simply weakened his faith in the frenzied. Second, he entertained thoughts of soon finishing with school. What should he do, then? He hardly knew, except to imagine staying home and becoming “The Boy Poet of San Francisco”.¹⁰⁹

Stoddard’s formative years in the surroundings of Rochester, New York and early Gold Rush San Francisco cultivated Stoddard’s

¹⁰⁷ *Ibid.*, 14

¹⁰⁸ Charles Warren Stoddard, *TH*, 53

¹⁰⁹ Roger Austen and John W. Crowley, ed., *GP*, 15

unique poetic sensitivities and liminal consciousness. Both frequent travel and a growing sense of marginalization seem to have doubly contributed to this experience. Although his childhood recollections appear many years later in his writings (1885), we learn many facts about Stoddard's early upbringing which inform us of the patterns that would later take root in his adult life as a man of letters. These issues would make up the thematic triad of Stoddard's life: literature, religion, and awareness of his sexuality.

Stoddard's early readings of *Robinson Crusoe* impinged upon his consciousness when he first viewed a tropical island, and colored, as it were, his later representations of the Pacific Islands and Pacific Islanders with whom he became familiar and intimate. These images were redolent of the Euro-American myth of colonial tutelage in addition to estimations of the attractiveness (or unattractiveness) of natives. As we will see, Stoddard's sense of loneliness and marginality, amplified by the fact that he took refuge in the

world of literature, was projected upon the island spaces he later encountered.

Before he would venture into Oceania, however, Stoddard would spend more time discovering family life and *communitas* on America's Pacific frontier, a world away from the Old West his birth.

CHAPTER 3

A Lens of Liminality, Part I: Stoddard's Youth on America's Pacific Frontier

Upon the discovery of gold in California during the 1840s, thousands of Americans made the arduous cross-continental trek to seek fortune and happiness in the rough and tumble outposts of the West. The small port town of San Francisco eventually became a thriving metropolis, lucrative economic center and "crown jewel" of America's burgeoning West. As a major urban center with good harbors, San Francisco also became a gateway to the far reaches of the Pacific and Asia, and hosted a vibrant, energetic multicultural community during the nineteenth century. It was in this environment that Charles Warren Stoddard spent his youth, and began the liminal phase of his growth as a young man.

Although America's geographical frontier had reached its farthest contiguous extent by the time Charles Warren Stoddard reached San Francisco in the year 1855 (and again in 1857), the

American literary frontier was boundless, and increasingly made its presence felt in the Pacific world beyond the reaches of the Golden Gate. The liminal “Bohemian” world views of Stoddard and contemporaries such as Walt Whitman, Mark Twain and Bret Harte (all three of whom had close connections to the Bohemian community of San Francisco during the nineteenth century) offered poignant commentary and a critical eye on nineteenth century American life that reflected the rugged individualism and frontier sensibilities of a society of people living, literally, on the farthest edge of the United States. While coming of age in California, Stoddard slowly emerged as a celebrated member of a literary establishment in San Francisco that entertained an audience of new western elites far removed from the cultural hearths of New York, Paris and London. Although Stoddard’s eventual profession of writing would carry him to distant shores, it was the frontier urbanity of mid- to late-nineteenth century San Francisco where he honed his literary skills, and to which he frequently returned until his death in 1909.

San Francisco: America's Nineteenth Century Pacific Frontier

Attracted by the glint of gold, mid-nineteenth century San Francisco became home to a cosmopolitan community. In addition to the small Spanish-American population that inhabited California before the U.S. conquest of Mexico in the 1840s, newcomers from Australia, France, Germany, England and Ireland settled in San Francisco; Pacific Islanders and Chinese crossed the wide expanse of Oceania, and Russians emigrated from the north. Many Anglo-Americans made their way across the Rockies from New England; the Stoddard family of Massachusetts and New York being among the many seeking new fortunes in America's city by the bay. Heterogeneous in cultures, social classes and ethnicity, the society of America's Pacific frontier was unique in gender and age: most of the immigrants were male and young, such as Charles Warren Stoddard himself.

During the California Gold Rush, there was a disproportionate relationship between men and

women on the Pacific frontier that actually continued for several decades after 1849. The proportion of women to men among the immigrants increased from 1:12 in 1850 to only 1:3 in 1880. Births within the state of California failed to balance the male/female ratio before the end of the century. As immigration continued, most of the men who ventured to California were young: more than half were between the ages of twenty and thirty. Even in 1860, two thirds of the population was still under fifty. In addition to the rush for precious metals during the 1850s and 1860s, the American Civil War created even more significant demographic changes. From the war-torn East and South, many men escaped over the mountains to the Pacific coast. Restless, disillusioned men, some of them deserters from the Union army, others from the southern Confederate forces, some transferring their families to peaceful soil, others leaving their families forever, either settled on uninhabited lands or drifted into cities such as San Francisco to find employment. Adventure and a desire for change were thus important ingredients to a unique

sensibility that developed among the inhabitants of the California frontier.¹ As the region became more wealthy and cosmopolitan after the Gold Rush, the society became more gentrified, with a good ability to afford the comforts their brethren enjoyed in the eastern U.S. and European metropolises. Shortly before the turn of the century, however, the frontier's wealth and confidence would soon set its sights on new areas beyond the shores of the Golden Gate and into the azure expanse of the Pacific basin.

The thousands of people attracted to the mineral wealth of California, traveling by sea, land, or a combination of both, underwent a grueling journey, which, juxtaposed to the back-breaking labor in the gold mines and other rugged settings, gave way to the development of a unique frontier character.² The weakest travelers did not survive the long trek and many returned home disillusioned. Those who did withstand the hardships of the journey and frontier life, however, became highly self-reliant, and would eventually become the

¹ Franklin Walker, *San Francisco's Literary Frontier* (Seattle: University of Washington Press, 1970), 7-11

founders and stylists of San Francisco's urban institutions, which were supported by the region's wealth and business acumen.

Before San Francisco's transcontinental railway linkage with the well-established economic centers of the Midwestern and eastern United States in 1869, many of the city's entrepreneurs had already focused their economic interests westward into Asia and Oceania. Several San Francisco-based magnates became involved in the series of events which tied Hawai'i and California together with the Reciprocity Treaty of 1876. When the United States acquired Guam, Puerto Rico, the Philippines and later, Hawai'i in the year 1898, new ventures of opportunity opened for the business leaders of America's Pacific coast. California's journalistic establishment, fueled by the ample fiscal resources of the region's magnates, became a medium of reconnaissance which discerned the shape and character of America's new territorial acquisitions of the late nineteenth century. Charles Warren Stoddard stood as a witness, and later (as we will

²Doris Muscatine, *Old San Francisco: The Biography of a City, From Early Days to the Earthquake* (New York: G.P. Putnam's Sons, 1975), 89-90

see), an unwitting collaborator for the new American imperium.

The proliferation of a wide variety of California newspapers and journals were key sources of information and entertainment for a hardworking populace out of touch with the pulse of New York, London, Paris or Beijing. In time, the young Charles Warren Stoddard could count himself among those whose literary talents and travel writing would have broad appeal to many audiences on the eve of America's growing influence in the Pacific. But first, Stoddard needed to develop his talents during a relatively short apprenticeship in San Francisco.

The Emergence of “Pip Pepperpod”: “The Boy Poet of San Francisco”

After a long three-month journey which took him around Cape Horn to the North Pacific, the fifteen-year-old Charles Warren Stoddard arrived in San Francisco. At the time, the Stoddard family was living at 1005 Powell Street, between Clay and

Washington Streets, where they continued to live for the next six years.³

Soon after arriving home, Stoddard informed his mother and father of his determination to end his schooling and begin making a living on his own.⁴ The first work that Stoddard found was in a clothing store, "where everything was ready made but nothing was ever sold."⁵The business folded after Stoddard worked in the store for only a week. Shortly thereafter, he found work in a toy shop, where he worked for a month during "the rush and confusion of the Christmas holidays". He was then transferred to the wholesale department, where he worked as a clerk. At the end of the second month at the toy store, however, young Charles became ill with typhoid fever, an illness which promptly ended his first experiences in the world of work.⁶

While recovering for what might have been a two to three month period, Stoddard had the opportunity to read and write verse. Although a

³ The San Francisco Directory, 1859, cited in Carl Stroven, "A Life of Charles Warren Stoddard", Ph.D. diss., Duke University, 1939, 42

⁴ Carl Stroven, "A Life", 42

⁵ Stoddard, typescript, "Confessions of a Reformed Poet", chap.I, p.3 (Finlay Cook), cited in Carl Stroven, "A Life", 43

⁶ Ibid., p.43

wide variety of books and periodicals was probably not found in the Stoddard household, the family did subscribe to the *Golden Era*, a popular weekly magazine published in San Francisco. First issued in newspaper format in 1852, the *Golden Era* was designed to appeal to the heterogeneous tastes of the Gold Rush California population. By the time the Stoddard family was reading this publication in the 1850s, the *Golden Era* had become a predominantly provincial literary periodical, devoting its eight large folio pages chiefly to fiction, poetry, theatrical reviews, and personal comments on the various aspects of San Francisco life, all written by local columnists. It was to this literary publication that Stoddard would eventually become a regular contributor.

After recovering from typhoid, Charles began to look for work again. One evening, a friend of the family informed young Charles that he could probably find employment as a clerk in a newly established bookstore. Stoddard took advantage of this lead and was eventually hired. The small bookstore's main stock was Bibles, religious books

and tracts published by the American Bible Society and the American Tract Society, for which the owner was the authorized agent. Located on 18 Montgomery Street, the store was owned by Chileon Beach, who had been in the draying business for two years before he changed his occupation to that of bookseller.⁷

Charles began his work at seven o'clock in the morning, when it was his responsibility to sweep the store. During his workday, he waited on customers, dusted the books, and swept the sidewalk several times a day. Sweeping the sidewalk was a task he deeply disliked because he was embarrassed if acquaintances observed him holding the broom.⁸ At Chileon Beach's store, Stoddard had some free time on his hands; for much of the day, the owner spent elsewhere. During his hours alone, Stoddard would sometimes lay his feather duster aside and practice writing verses.⁹

This enterprise was an early illustration of

⁷ Carl Stroven, "A Life", 43-46

⁸ Stoddard, typescript, "Confessions of a Reformed Poet", chap.I, p.9 (Finlay Cook), cited in Carl Stroven, "A Life", 46

⁹ Stoddard, typescript, "Confessions of a Reformed Poet", chap.II, pp.1-2 (Finlay Cook); and Stoddard, MS, autobiographical sketch, untitled and dated (Mrs. McKee Crawford), cited in Carl Stroven, "A Life", 49-50

Stoddard's dedication to literature coupled with the challenge of having to earn a solid living.

In manuscripts written during his adult years, Stoddard only mentions one friend from this time working at the bookstore: a youth about his own age who published a small magazine called the *Young Californian*, of which he was the "sole proprietor, editor, printer, contributor, news agent and carrier."¹⁰ One day, Charles's young friend asked him for some poetry for the magazine, and shortly afterward, in the issue for August 1, 1861, appeared Stoddard's first published poem. In the November issue, Charles's second contribution appeared. "Though far from good", as scholar Carl Stroven states, it "is of better quality than the first".

¹¹ It would be almost a year later that Stoddard would publish verse again. In the meantime, however, he remained "walled in by the backs of books" in Chileon Beach's store.¹² In time, however, business expanded and a greater variety of books was stocked. Soon, the number of customers

¹⁰ Stoddard, typescript, "Confessions of a Reformed Poet", chap.I, p.5, cited in Stroven, Carl, "A Life", 49

¹¹ Carl Stroven, "A Life", 50

¹² Stoddard, typescript, "Confessions of a Reformed Poet", chap.II, p.5 (Finlay Cook), cited in Carl Stroven, "A Life", 51

increased and Charles no longer had enough time to write poetry during his working hours.¹³

Despite the increased activity (and partly because of it), Stoddard slowly became weary of his work at the bookstore:¹⁴

I was seldom happy; the confinement and the routine wore upon me. I envied the gamins in the gutter. I hated the alarm clock that woke me to the same old round day after day, week after week, month after month. I hungered and thirsted for the day of rest that came but once in seven, and when it came it was so brief that a good half of it was wasted in regrets.¹⁵

Stoddard's spirits were most probably significantly lifted in September 1862 when he was to see his verse in print again after submitting a poem to the more widely circulating *Golden Era*. Not bold enough to deliver the poem to the editorial desk, young Charles dropped it in the large mailbox by the door of the offices, "and then ran for the fear of being caught in the act."¹⁶ In the following week's issue of the *Era*, Stoddard's second contribution appeared under the curious pen name of "Pip Pepperpod".¹⁷ The way by which he chose

¹³ Ibid., p.51

¹⁴ Carl Stroven, "A Life", 51

¹⁵ Stoddard, MS. autobiographical sketch, untitled and dated (Mrs. Mckee Crawford), cited in Carl Stroven, "A Life", 51-52

¹⁶ Stoddard, "Social San Francisco", in *Ave Maria*, vol. xlix, p.718 (December 2, 1899), cited in Carl Stroven, "A Life", 52

¹⁷ Carl Stroven, "A Life", 52

this name is revealed in the typescript work "The Confessions of a Reformed Poet": "I had been reveling in Dickens' novel, "Our Mutual Friend". The name "Pip" attracted me, I know not why...I picked all the P's in the garden of my fancy and spelled out Pepperpod."¹⁸

Under this *nom de plume*, Stoddard also wrote a letter (most likely done to elicit much needed encouragement and feedback) to accompany his second poem. In the "Answers to Correspondents" column, the *Era* provided the following reply: "Pip Pepperpod. - "Fanny" appeared upon our second page last week. You will discover "Twilight" in this issue. "A Serenade" and "Sea Song" are most acceptable - on file. Send more."¹⁹

Stoddard reveled in this acknowledgement of his literary calling, and was soon to experience even greater encouragement from a person who was a significant figure in San Francisco society. During the early 1860s, a Unitarian minister was a making a deep impression upon the cultural life of the San

¹⁸ Stoddard, typescript, "Confessions of a Reformed Poet", chap.I, p.8 (Finlay Cook), cited in Carl Stroven, "A Life", 53

Francisco community. In 1860, Reverend Thomas Starr King had left Boston to sail for San Francisco, where, by means of the eloquence of his wit, he soon gathered a very large congregation and became the most popular speaker in the city. His rousing oratory could be heard rebuking the Secessionists and rallying indifferent Californians to the cause of the Union armies of the Civil War. An author himself, King had a keen taste for literature. He was now to seek out Charles Warren Stoddard (despite his pseudonymity) and assist in the development of his literary efforts²⁰. Stoddard wrote the following excerpt about his first meeting with Reverend King:

One day...I was called from my retreat in the rear of the shop by the entrance of a gentleman; upon taking my place mechanically behind the counter, the gentleman drew from his pocket a scrap of news paper and pointing to a bit of verse printed upon it said with a look of curious inquiry: "Did you write this?" I confessed my guilt with unaffected confusion. Then he said many pleasant and encouraging words to me... and invited me to call upon him and to bring whatever I might have written or published.²¹

¹⁹ *Golden Era*, vol.x, no.43, p.4 (September 28, 1862), cited in Carl Stroven, "A Life", 53

²⁰ Carl Stroven, "A Life", 53-54

²¹ Stoddard, MS. autobiographical sketch, untitled and undated (Mrs. Makee Crawford), cited in Carl Stroven, "A Life", 54

This anonymous acknowledgement of Stoddard's literary gifts suggests the presence of a gossip circuit within the literary community of San Francisco during this time. Stoddard accepted Reverend King's invitation one day, carrying along his scrapbook of printed poems, including a dozen pieces from the *Golden Era* and a few others from the *Sunday Mercury* and the *North Pacific Review*. Next to each of the clippings King penciled in a just criticism. Furthermore, probably realizing Stoddard's need of discipline and cultured training, he strongly advised him to return to school.²²

Stoddard's Quest for Communitas: School Days and the Bohemians of San Francisco

After receiving words of advice and encouragement from Reverend King, Stoddard needed to consult his family about the possibility of returning to school. Before the family conference on the matter, however, Stoddard once more sought advice regarding his decision from the "Answers to

²²Carl Stroven, "A Life", 54-55

Correspondents” column of the *Golden Era*. Here is the response he received:

Pip Pepperpod - San Francisco. - Certainly, by all means. Gain all the information you can, no matter how hard you must struggle to obtain it. You are fortunate in having the opportunity. - We have but one of your productions on hand. They are always acceptable. Any advice we may be able to give is always at your service.²³

After a family meeting, Samuel Burr Stoddard decided that Charles should enter the City College, an academy in San Francisco. With the choice being made, Stoddard’s clerkship at Chileon Beach’s bookstore came to an end, and Charles enrolled as a student at the College probably in time to begin the second semester. As what appears to be typical of when he wrote about his school days, Stoddard recalled little concerning his early months at this academy.²⁴ “A single semester at City College”, Stoddard was to write many years later, “was enough to convince me that city life in combination with the City College was not

²³ *Golden Era*, vol.xi, no.5, p.4 (January 4, 1864), cited in Carl Stroven, “A Life”, 55

²⁴ Carl Stroven, “A Life”, 55

calculated to especially benefit one of my temperament”²⁵.

During Stoddard’s first days at City College, writing verse interested him much more than his studies. The City College Journal was published monthly at the academy, and this paper soon became a haven for one or more poems by “Pip Pepperpod”. Contributions of “Pip Pepperpod” also continued to appear in the *Golden Era* at this time.²⁶ Stoddard’s one semester at City College ended on May 28, 1863, when his poem “Night Pictures” was read at the commencement ceremonies.²⁷ For the following year, however, a change of plans was soon in the works, for his family decided that if he really desired to prepare for college, he should attend the College School, commonly called Brayton Academy at that time, situated across the bay in Oakland.²⁸ If he completed the preparatory course there, he could enter the College of California, which operated in conjunction with the

²⁵ Stoddard, typescript, “Confessions of a Reformed Poet”, chap.II, p.8 (Finlay Cook), cited in Carl Stroven, “A Life”, 55

²⁶ Carl Stroven, “A Life”, 56

²⁷ *City College Journal*, vol.ii, no.1, pp.41-42 (July 15, 1863), cited in Carl Stroven, “A Life”, 59-60

²⁸ Stoddard, typescript, “Confessions of a Reformed Poet”, chap.II, p.8 (Finlay Cook), cited in Carl Stroven, “A Life”, 60

academy.²⁹ In the meantime, however, Stoddard was meeting more and more writers, artists and San Francisco Bohemians, all of whom had been more exciting than his City College literature assignments during the 1862-63 academic year.³⁰

The “Bohemians” of San Francisco were part of an artistic and literary community that made great contributions to the cultural life of nineteenth century San Francisco. In a frontier society endowed with material wealth, yet removed from the entrenched cultural metropolises of the eastern United States and Europe, newspapers and journals became important media of current events and entertainment. As early as 1850, there were fifty printers working at their trade in the fast growing city of San Francisco. By the mid-1850s, the city boasted that it published more newspapers than London, and that in its first decade it published more books than did all of the rest of the United States west of the Mississippi. Whatever voice America’s Pacific frontier might develop was sure of expression in much of its print media; the

²⁹ William Warren Ferrier, *Origin and Development of the University of California*, Berkeley, California, 1930, p.143, cited in Carl Stroven, “A Life”, 60

financial resources to produce them, education and leisure time to read the vast array of literature made this possible.³¹ This unique situation allowed writers to cultivate their literary talents, and the creative Bohemians of San Francisco flourished in this fertile milieu. In an increasingly gentrified San Francisco, writers such as Charles Warren Stoddard found their calling and practiced their craft, which was called upon in service to the growing community. The roots of the Bohemian community, however, extended to Europe: namely, France.

Albert Parry writes that Bohemianism is pre-eminently a socio-literary phenomenon, leading to the urban center of Paris. A bohemian is a “gypsy”, by the very origin of that multivalent name. The medieval French believed that gypsies came from the central European fields of Bohemia. They called these gypsies bohemians, and when the age of romanticism touched French literature, this name was used to denote the penniless and carefree writers, poets, journalists, artists, actors, sculptors and other members of that group which the later

³⁰Roger Austen, and John W. Crowley, ed. *GP*, 31

French and Russians labeled the “intellectual proletariat”. Bohemianism thereafter became a widespread social phenomenon characteristic of Europe and America of the nineteenth and twentieth centuries.

France remained the classical country of Bohemianism (and later America), because here, in the first half of the nineteenth century, the process of factory production, the pushing out of the crafts, was much slower than in places like America, and the readjustment of the sons (and daughters) of the craftsmen and small shopkeepers to the new condition was more painfully dragged out. The crafts and petty trades did not pay as well as before, and the sons tried to gain a foothold in the industrial scheme of the larger cities. But French industrialism had not developed and prospered sufficiently to need all these bright young men as managers, engineers, clerks, salesmen, or entertainers in the arts. So, the bright sons of desolate craftsmen and shopkeepers flocked to Paris and other big cities only to find very little demand for their services or

³¹Franklin Walker, *San Francisco's Literary Frontier* (Seattle: University of Washington Press, 1970), 14

talents. They came to starve and to rebel against their fate and society. Some of them lapsed into hard luck or laziness and beggary for the rest of their lives, or ended in suicide, but others, as the Bohemian community of San Francisco evolved, finally returned to the Philistine world of prosperity and respectability,³² i.e., social “structure”, in the idiom of Victor Turner. The social position of Bohemians, like those found in San Francisco during Stoddard’s day and age, is characterized as a temporary fixed group; a truly liminal entity. Very seldom are bohemians the sons and daughters of bohemians and begetters of bohemians in their turn. Artists’ cafes and attics are the meeting ground for many of these classes, with the middle-class scions, such as Charles Warren Stoddard, predominating. Some bohemians, such as Charles Warren Stoddard would never return to any social class, while other bohemians do. “These others” as Parry writes, “graduate from their cheery or skulking unconventionality into petit-bourgeois, big-bourgeois, and even the plutocratic classes – as

³² Albert Parry, *Garrets and Pretenders: A History of Bohemianism in America* (New York: Dover Publications, Inc., 1960), xxi-xxiii

soon as their spirit of revolt evaporates sufficiently, and the right opportunity for a career presents itself”³³, as it did for many in the San Francisco bohemian community once San Francisco became gentrified as an American metropole in the later nineteenth century.

The literary life of the city which was formative of Stoddard’s career during the 1860s may be described as an unstable mixture of “Eastern elevation” and “frontier earthiness”. The two traditions clashed: first in northern California and later throughout the United States.³⁴ According to Philip Rahv, these two traditions produced a dichotomy in American literary history which can roughly be described as “paleface” versus “redskin”.³⁵ Since Rahv’s estimation of these two dialectal positions is somewhat anachronistic, a better characterization describing these trends could be described as the “genteel” literary tradition and the “nativist” literary tradition. The two traditions could be seen most readily in the styles of two nineteenth century authors: the urbane Henry James

³³ Ibid, xxiii

³⁴ Roger Austen and John W. Crowley, ed., *GP*, 17

and the earthy Walt Whitman; the former, celebrating and writing of the nuances and complexities of middle and upper class American life, and the second, celebrating the natural, unencumbered spirit of “pungent and gritty” American life. The literary men and women who succeeded in San Francisco in the 1860s were generally those with a little of the “nativist” tradition in their makeup. But as Charles Warren Stoddard grew to manhood in this decade, it was clear to everyone that, at least in literary terms, he was aspiring to the genteel tradition of English letters.³⁵ Stoddard’s literary and professional orientation toward the genteel tradition made him a marginal yet welcome member of the San Francisco community of Bohemians with which he associated. This literary orientation would make Stoddard a liminal figure in the Californian and American literary scene until the publications of his *Pacific Islands* travel literature nearly a decade later.

The Bohemians of northern California were keen observers and critics of nineteenth century San

³⁵ Philip Rahv, *Image and Idea: Twenty Essays on Literary Themes* (Norfolk, CT: J. Laughlin, 1957)

³⁶ Roger Austen and John W. Crowley, ed., *GP*, 17

Francisco society. The demand for news and current events from the world beyond the Rockies and the Pacific coast during the 1850s generated a literature that reflected humor, spiritualism and the macabre, tall tales and hoaxes, and conversely, strict realism and critical attacks. One of the most lionized figures of San Francisco's literary circles, Ambrose Bierce, for example, who had witnessed the horrors of the Civil War, launched invectives against the war effort's "silver-tongued oratory" which was politically persuasive into pushing California's citizenry toward Union sympathies.

The Bohemian community of San Francisco was predominantly male, reflecting the gender ratio of the community during the 1850s and 1860s. Notable women Bohemian female writers, however, distinguished themselves. Writers such as Adah Isaacs Menken and Ada Clare, for example, combined careers in theater and literature and wrote prolifically for the *Golden Era*.³⁷ Such was the composition of the *communitas* which Stoddard

³⁷ Doris Muscatine, *Old San Francisco: The Biography of a City, From the Early Days to the Earthquake* (New York: G.P. Putnam's Sons, 1975), 158-168; 170-172

found during his association with the Bohemian literati of San Francisco.

Shortly before his twentieth birthday, Stoddard took the ferry across San Francisco Bay to Oakland and enrolled in the academic department of the College School. Stoddard continued to spend his weekends across the bay in San Francisco, though, where, at the offices of the Golden Era or at the Mercantile Library, he could meet local poets and journalists and share in their lively conversation.³⁸

His weekdays in Oakland, however, were more challenging and apparently less to his liking. The records that Stoddard has left us indicate that he was having a difficult time during the 1863-64 school year at Brayton: "I coned my text-book by the hour", he wrote some years later in hindsight, "and endeavored to make its contents all my own forever, yet in the end I seemed to have accomplished little and that little left me when the class was called."³⁹

³⁸Carl Stroven, "A Life", 63

“A Matter of Temperament”: Stoddard’s Sexual Liminality

Outside the classroom, Stoddard’s emotional attachments appeared to be a variation of the pattern begun as an adolescent back on the East coast.⁴⁰ Stoddard continued to be leading an existence along the liminal margins of his peers. Instead of living with the other young men of Brayton Academy in a school dormitory, Stoddard chose to live apart in a vine-covered cottage down by the water. Charles wanted very much to belong. In the evening hours, he would stroll past the dormitory and “look up at the long rows of lighted windows and wish myself a happy habitant - they always seemed to be happy - for I was more like a parlor boarder than a member of the fraternity”, he wrote.⁴¹ As an outsider, it was easier for Stoddard to fantasize about the glamorous, self-assured young men, who as insiders, were the school’s leaders and heroes.⁴² Stoddard recalled that boarding school had always

³⁹ Stoddard, typescript, “Confessions of a Reformed Poet”, cited in Roger Austen and John W. Crowley, ed. *Genteel Pagan*. (Amherst, MA: University of Massachusetts Press, 1991), 21

⁴⁰ Roger Austen and John W. Crowley, ed., *GP*, 21-22

⁴¹ Stoddard, typescript, “Confessions of a Reformed Poet”, cited in Roger Austen and John W. Crowley, ed., *GP*, 21-22

⁴² Roger Austen and John W. Crowley, ed., *GP*, 21-22

seemed like an “enchanted realm”, where “the manlier boys were the natural rulers and all the others their willing votaries”.⁴³ On this occasion, it appears that Stoddard seemed to at least distantly admire relationships of domination, which may have been a reflection of the classical Greek model of homosexual/social relationships he came to experience in his later adult years. It was during Stoddard’s time at Brayton Academy that his gender liminality, namely his homosexuality, came more noticeably to the fore. When Stoddard spoke of his “temperament”, he was giving strong reference to the psychosexual implications of that word which was used so often during the nineteenth century.⁴⁴

Until the day he died, Stoddard was almost constantly in the state of being in love; and if there were no agreeable homosexual males nearby, which was often the case, Stoddard would almost invariably be attracted to heterosexual males. Time after time, falling in love had so conditioned Stoddard to expect rejection and suffering; so much

⁴³ Stoddard, typescript, “Confessions of a Reformed Poet”, cited in Roger Austen and John W. Crowley, ed., *GP*, 21-22

so that he eventually and probably accepted the proposition that a correlation existed between the two. At least subconsciously, Stoddard felt he did not deserve to be loved by the “godlike” idols he worshipped; had they stepped down from their “pedestals” and loved him in return, his reaction might have been more consternation than joy. This reaction in and of itself is evident of the lack of esteem Stoddard must have felt as a man living during a time when the construct of homosexual identity was in large part rejected or at least invalidated by nineteenth century American societies. It would take the gay rights movement in Europe (which later spread to the United States around the turn of the century) for homosexuals to have a firmer sense of identity in Euro-American societies. This fact alone makes Stoddard an interesting figure who lived at a crucial, liminal juncture when a socially constructed gay identity was just beginning to take root in the west.

We may now ask ourselves the following questions, posed so poignantly by author Roger

⁴⁴Roger Austen and John W. Crowley, ed., *GP*, 23

Austen: how did Stoddard and others of his time define this kind of love that often brought with it such exquisite pain and so little pleasure? Many people of prominence and of various religious beliefs accepted rather than rejected Stoddard in spite of what must have been a general, liminal awareness of his homosexuality. To some extent, this acceptance is explained by the fact that Stoddard was a Bohemian at a time when people indulged the “sins” and eccentricities of Bohemians with the understanding that they were more affectations than signs of depravity, especially when it is noted that to be a bohemian was a temporary, liminal state.⁴⁵

Americans in the nineteenth century lacked the terms with which to define people like Stoddard. Various slang terms implying “sissiness” (e.g., “Miss Nancy”, “Charlotte-Ann”, “Aunt Fancy”) were in use, but none was necessarily synonymous with “pederast” or “sodomite”, let alone “homosexual” -- words that were unspeakable and almost unthinkable in the polite society in which

⁴⁵ Ibid., 23-24

Stoddard generally moved.⁴⁶ The modern terms homosexuality and heterosexuality do not apply to an era that had not yet articulated these distinctions. Only in the late nineteenth century did European and American writers apply these categories and stigmatize some same-sex relationships as a form of sexual perversion. Until the 1880s, most romantic friendships, with its ideal of a “pure” kind of spiritual love, were thought to be devoid of sexual content. Thus a woman or man could write of affectionate desire for a loved one of the same gender without causing an eyebrow to be raised.⁴⁷ If heterosexuals had a hard time defining the homosexual, it can be imagined how baffling it must have been for homosexuals, like Stoddard, to try to define themselves. In the mid-nineteenth century, there was almost no literature on this subject for the layman to read, especially in America. The very life and work of Walt Whitman, however, did much to herald the advent of clearly articulated homosexual desire in American literature during the mid- to late-nineteenth century.

⁴⁶ *Ibid.*, 24

Before that time, young American homosexuals like Stoddard often felt that they were the only ones in the universe so “afflicted”, and, quite understandably, a great number of their self-definitions were idiosyncratic.⁴⁸

In terms of Stoddard’s self-perception regarding the manner in which he became increasingly aware of his homosexuality, some significant records in his “Thought-Book”, kept from 1865-1867 are especially insightful. In one entry, the young Stoddard thinks of sketching a “romance of how my soul got into [Ada] Clare’s body and was at rest”, with the idea that the “physique” would thus be “made whole”.⁴⁹ This concept of a woman’s soul trapped in a man’s body was the basis of Karl Heinrich Ulrichs’s (1825-1895) theories (to account for homosexual orientation) in Germany at the time, and the quote from Stoddard above provides evidence of how common this theory might have been with lay and scientific peoples before it was posed by a pioneer

⁴⁷ John D’Emilio and Estelle B. Freedman, *Intimate Matters: A History of Sexuality in America*, Second Edition. (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1997), 121

⁴⁸ Roger Austen and John W. Crowley, ed. *GP*, 24

of the gay rights movement in Germany during the nineteenth century. This was quite a popular theory circulating among many across the Atlantic before Ulrichs made it public and academic.

Ulrichs put forth several significant theories about the origins of homosexuality which would eventually be circulated in the United States. One of his important theories was a declaration that homosexuals were a distinct class of individuals, innately different from heterosexual people. Ulrichs coined the term *urning* (meaning follower or descendant of Uranus) to describe such people. The name is in reference to a passage in Plato's *Symposium*, in which Pausanias calls same-sex love the offspring of the "heavenly Aphrodite", daughter of Uranus. Ulrichs later added the feminine form *uringin* to define women we now refer to as lesbians. Heterosexuals, in Ulrichs's parlance, became *dionings* -- descendants of the "common Aphrodite", daughter of Zeus by the mortal woman Dione.⁵⁰

⁴⁹ Stoddard, "Island Heights", section 39, December 1866 (Bancroft Library), cited in Roger Austen and John W. Crowley, ed., *GP*, 24-25

⁵⁰ Simon LeVay. *Queer Science: The Use and Abuse of Research into Homosexuality* (Cambridge, MA: MIT Press, 1996)12

Most significantly at this time, however, was Ulrichs's theory put forward to account for sexual orientation. In his earliest conception of this theory, propounded in 1864, the human embryo was viewed as having the potential for bodily development in either the female or male direction. In most people, the sexual development of the body and the mind was concordant: either both were male or both were female. In fetuses destined to become *urnings*, however, the sex of bodily development was male, while the sex of mental development was female. These individuals, being neither totally male nor totally female, constituted a "third sex".⁵¹ By the end of the century in England, Ulrichs's *urning* had been translated into Edward Carpenter's concept of "Uranian", a member of an "intermediate" sex that, high on the evolutionary ladder, combined in one body the most noble aspects of the female and male.⁵²

During the same years when Ulrichs was developing his theories of homosexual identity and development, a parallel trend in defining same-

⁵¹ Ibid., 12-13

sexuality was beginning to take shape in the United States. Men and women whose sexual desires focused on their own sex began to think of themselves as separate social groups. Those who lived in large cities formed communities within the whole, an experience that fostered a sense of “us” and “them”. The notion that a person’s sexual nature determined the person’s social and personal identity was part of a larger current of thought. This idea leads to the following questions: if one’s sexuality defined one’s identity and one’s true inner self, what was the true nature of homosexuality in the context of nineteenth century thought? How did observers and homosexuals like Stoddard interpret the meaning of this new identity? The answer is that both groups equated male homosexuality with womanhood. E. Anthony Rotundo views this development as an assumption in an era when men were preoccupied with the concept of “the woman inside of the man”; reflecting the nineteenth century preoccupation with gender.⁵² During the 1860s and 1870s, Charles Warren Stoddard, who was then in

⁵² See Edward Carpenter, *Intermediate Types among Primitive Folk*, as cited in Roger Austen and John W. Crowley, ed., *GP*, 25

his early twenties and entering into fuller mental and sexual maturity as a young man, was clearly in touch with these theories then circulating at the time, which accounts for his ideation of assimilating himself into the body of a close female friend.

By the end of the 1863-64 academic year at Brayton Academy Stoddard came close to suffering a nervous breakdown. What led to this condition we do not know for sure, but aside from his aversion to his studies, author Roger Austen speculates that his case of nerves might have had to do with an especially devastating emotional entanglement. The family doctor prescribed that nineteenth century panacea for any sort of mental or physical indisposition: a lengthy sea voyage. In order to recover his health, Stoddard left San Francisco in August 1864 for a six-month stay in the Hawaiian Islands.⁵⁴ It would be the first of four very recuperative sojourns in Hawai'i for Stoddard, destined, as he intoned, "to influence the whole current of my life".⁵⁵

⁵³ E. Anthony Rotundo, *American Manhood*, (New York: BasicBooks, 1993), 274-276

⁵⁴ Roger Austen, and John W. Crowley, ed. *GP*, 26

⁵⁵ Stoddard, typescript, "Confessions of a Reformed Poet", cited in Roger Austen and John W. Crowley, *GP*, 27

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CHAPTER 4

A Lens of Liminality, Part II: The Journeys of Charles Warren Stoddard in Oceania

Stoddard's first year at Brayton Academy from 1863-64 was a pivotal time for him in several respects. First, he began to discover the difficulties involved in the rigors of academic study. Secondly, as an individual just coming of age as an adult, he became increasingly aware of his sexual liminality, namely his homosexuality, which led to an increased marginality from his peers at university, both perceived and experienced. The formative patterns of marginality, which had come to the fore during Stoddard's early years as a youth in New York, had developed into more fixed patterns of behavior as he entered the early years of adulthood. In addition to these psycho-social factors in his development, Stoddard was also concerned with finding his own professional calling in the world, as is relatively normal for a person entering this phase during a typical life's passage. Stoddard's continuous writing of verse (in spite of the lack of execution of his assignments at Brayton) and his

social time spent with the literary bohemian community of San Francisco across the Bay from Oakland were evidence of this preoccupation during this phase of his life. All of these factors contributed to a significant moment of life crisis for Stoddard, as is normal for a liminar in *rites de passage*, and Stoddard's first trip into Oceania on the eve of his 21st birthday in August 1864 was indeed the beginning of an indelibly significant phase of his professional and personal life.

Stoddard made a total of five trips into Oceania between the years 1864 and 1882; four trips to the Kingdom of Hawai'i and one to Tahiti. In between these trips into the Pacific, Stoddard also travelled to Europe and the Middle East. It was during his trips into the Pacific, however, where Stoddard honed his skills as a travel writer of wide acclaim during the late nineteenth century.

The Hawaiian kingdom of the 1860s, when Stoddard made his first voyage there, was a polity in transition. By the time gold was discovered in California during the late 1840s, The British Consul General Miller at Honolulu, predicted immediately

that trouble would follow for the fragile Hawaiian kingdom. Migrants were moving westward across the American continent, and Miller was sure that some of the flow would spill over into the Pacific. In the late 1840s, rumors were coming out of San Francisco that shadowy groups there were plotting the overthrow of the Hawaiian kingdom. In October 1851, San Francisco newspapers published reports that more than one hundred and fifty “restless young bloods” were about to set sail for the islands with the purpose of “revolutionizing the government of his Kanaka Majesty”, who, at this time, was Kamehameha III, Kauikeaouli. By the 1850s, the air of Honolulu was filled with the whispers of an impending American filibuster, but these plans were not successful due to the American preoccupation with the Civil War and the subsequent decline of whaling in the Pacific. During the Civil War, sugar production became the focal point of business in the islands, with American planters taking a decided lead in the industry.¹ The San Francisco of Stoddard’s day and age was one of

¹ Gavan Daws, *Shoal of Time: A History of the Hawaiian Islands* (Honolulu: University of Hawaii Press, 1974), 137-172, *passim*

the launching grounds from which American expansion into the Pacific frontier took place; Hawaii of the 1860s represented an in-flux locale on the limen of American manifest destiny. It was during the midst of the American North and South regional conflict that Charles Warren Stoddard eventually debarked in the port of Honolulu in the fall of 1863.

As a nineteenth century travel writer, Stoddard stood in the company of several prominent travel writers of the Pacific; notably, Melville, Twain, Stevenson, and Grimshaw, to name only a few. Pacific Island travel writers, Stoddard included, had specific agendas and purviews of the places and peoples they witnessed, and became especially adept at keeping the attention of the European and Euro-American audiences for whom they wrote. During a day and age when industry and business were often scorned and at other times lauded, Pacific Islands travel writing provided a glimpse into the lives of a new world for western readers to behold, sometimes described as a neo-classical garden of Eden, and at other times

described as dark and forboding locales of excitement and adventure. As a man of letters, Stoddard was heir to a relatively lengthy legacy of Pacific Islands travel writing. In comparison to his contemporaries and predecessors, however, Stoddard's work demonstrated a particularly poignant, homoeroticized view of Pacific Islander men which his predecessors seldom, if ever, expressed so openly. Much has been written about the beauty of the women of Tahiti and Hawai'i, for example, but relatively little of the literature gives such open valorizations of the beauty of Pacific Islander men as Stoddard's work does. These valorizations, however, were quite "betwixt and between" in nature, for while they openly celebrate the humanity and beauty of Pacific Islanders, they simultaneously caricature Pacific Islander natives in ways which were thematically common among western writers of the region during Stoddard's day. In this fashion, Stoddard was playing the role of travelogue entertainer, although in his intimate *aikāne* sketches and private correspondence, he appears to be at one with his native companions.

These writings, therefore, stand as kind liminal, or ambivalent representations of Pacific Islanders, when compared to some other notable representations of nineteenth century Pacific Islands travel writers. Stoddard, therefore, was intimately caught up in the politics of Pacific Islands travel writing, yet took a very “betwixt and between” stance vis á vis Pacific Islander men in his private, intimate relations and in his private correspondence.

During his sojourns in the Pacific, Stoddard more fully and consciously embraced his homosexuality, to a degree which made him (at these times and later in life) desire a more domestic, “gay” lifestyle which he tried to achieve during a difficult day and age when the construct of a socially accepted gay identity and lifestyle were at the very cusp of existence in western societies. Stoddard’s intimate *aikāne* relationships experienced with the young men of Hawai’i and Tahiti gave him an example of a lifestyle which he tried to achieve once he returned to the United States to settle permanently until his death in 1909.

A South Sea Idyl: Stoddard's First Sojourn in the Hawaiian Islands, 1864

On the eve of his twenty-first birthday, Charles Warren Stoddard sailed for the Kingdom of Hawaii in early August of 1864. Under normal weather conditions, sailing to the islands would have taken about two weeks. Upon arriving in Honolulu, Stoddard was "completely domiciled in the home of dear old friends", located in Nu'uauu Valley. The residence was next door to the current minister of foreign relations for the Kingdom, Robert Crichton Wiley.² After Stoddard settled in Honolulu, he decided to take a trip to visit the neighbor islands, accompanied by an artist named Enoch Perry, who served as chaperone for the younger Stoddard.³

The first stop Stoddard and Perry made was on the Big Island of Hawai'i, where the pair debarked at Kealakekua. Stoddard spent two or three days in the Kealakekua Bay area, where Perry made pictorial sketches of the scenery and Stoddard drew up literary sketches related to the scene where

² Stoddard, "Ada Clare, Queen of Bohemia", *National Magazine*, vol.xxii, p.639 (September, 1905), cited in Carl Stroven, "A Life", 79

³ Stroven, "A Life", 81

Captain James Cook met his death some one century earlier. Stoddard's and Perry's sightseeing at Kealakekua included visits to locales significant to the final hours of Cook's life: a visit to "the tree where Cook was struck", "the rock where Cook fell", and finally, "a specimen sepulchre in the cliff" where Cook's bones were said to be interred.⁴ Stoddard's record of this visit, as related in the narrative, evokes a decidedly Sahlinsesque consideration of Cook's ill-fated, 1778 visit to the Big Island: "The approach of Cook was mystical. For generations the islanders had been looking with calm eyes of faith for the promised return of a certain god. So the white wings of the *Resolution* swept down upon the life-long quietude of Hawaii like a messenger from heaven..."⁵ Stoddard's reminiscences and reflections of Kealakekua Bay and the life of Captain Cook were submitted to California's *Overland Monthly* journal in 1868 and were later published in 1873 in *South Sea Idyls* in the chapter titled "The Last of the Great Navigator".

⁴ SSI, 175-176

⁵ SSI, 173 and Marshall Sahlins, *How "Natives" Think, About Captain Cook, For Example* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1996)

At the conclusion of their visit to leeward Hawai'i Island, Stoddard and Perry bought horses and arrived in the sleepy village of Hilo after a journey which would have taken three or four days. Given the fact that there were no hotels in Hilo at this time, Stoddard and Perry took up residence at the home of a local Protestant missionary.⁶ They were both guests at this residence for about one week. During the afternoons, Stoddard took trips up to what might have been Rainbow Falls, located just north of the village, and watched the native Hawaiians swimming in the pools of water flowing down from the precipitous falls. These visits to Rainbow Falls were momentous for Stoddard, who soon became entranced by one of the native Hawaiian boys he met there. Stoddard began a friendship with this youth, whom he called "Kane-Aloha". "I had first seen this Kane-Aloha in the swimming pool above Hilo", Stoddard wrote; "That was my haunt every afternoon so long as I tarried in Hilo. Every day, at a certain hour of the day, I went thither, rain or shine."⁷ This friendship, however,

⁶ *Ibid.*, 81

⁷ *ITD*, 256-257

was experienced under the watchful eyes of the guardian of the Hilo mission house, whose lips “pursed with the prunes and prisms of propriety”; a sarcastic if not baleful characterization which Stoddard seems to have reserved for many of the Protestant missionaries he witnessed in Hawai‘i during his sojourns there. Catholic missionaries in the Islands, however, (as will be examined below), were looked upon with more respect and admiration by Stoddard. “Friendship ripens quickly in the tropical sunshine”, Stoddard wrote of the early phases of his relationship with the native Hawaiian youth, “and it was not many days before the young native and I were inseparable.”⁸ This remarkably close relationship, one of the first that Stoddard experienced during his first sojourn in Hawai‘i, deserves brief exploration.

During Stoddard’s visits to Rainbow Falls, his friendship with Kane-Aloha blossomed: “He was profoundly interested in my career”, Stoddard writes, “and had suggested that we unite our fortunes and brave the world together”,⁹ a

⁸ *ITD*, 261

⁹ *ITD*, 261

conclusion which gives his audience a suggestion of Stoddard's almost matrimonial estimation of the bond. In time, Enoch Perry, "growing weary of Hilo and all its hallowed haunts",¹⁰ recommended that he and Stoddard continue on their journey around the Big Island. Soon, Perry and Stoddard purchased horses and took to a trail. Who would guide them during their journey? None but Kane-Aloha, and later, Kane-Aloha's father. After several hours of travel, however, Kane-Aloha and Stoddard became separated from Perry and Kane-Aloha's father, but Stoddard and his native Hawaiian friend "were not in the least alarmed", and found themselves alone:

There were no sign posts on that road pointing the way to Crater or Creature-comforts; no notices to "Keep off the Lava" or, "Beware of the Missionary". No Town Criers ran after us filling the vales with the clang of their dreadful bell. We had nothing to do but to get as lost as possible and hug ourselves and chuckle in sheer delight at the thought of our delicious predicament. Sometimes upon the breezy hill-tops with the azure sea curled up at the horizon brim like a wine cup, we paused to laugh aloud, or shout, for the very joy of living, and our hearts were ready to burst with the love and lust of it all.¹¹

Stoddard and Kane-Aloha, in their separation from their elders, were living a Crusoe-like lifestyle, although Stoddard's relationship with Kane-Aloha appears to have been of a more

¹⁰*ITD*, 261

¹¹ *ITD*, 265-266

intimate nature than that depicted between Defoe's Crusoe and Friday. During their journey, however, Stoddard and his partner find notes from Perry, who is ardently trying to find the wayward Stoddard and Kane-Aloha. Stoddard juxtaposes this writing of messages by alluding to Biblical scripture, and by way of this allusion indicates the truer nature of his intimate relations with Kane-Aloha: "It is written the way of the transgressor is hard. We had certainly transgressed the unwritten law but we were not in the least sorry for it."¹² After a night together, Stoddard and his native Hawaiian friend had "slept the sleep of the just made perfect by the realization of our wildest dream", while "at the Mission House, far beyond the border of our private horizon, the chaperone [Enoch Perry] was joining in the prayer of the Family Circle, that we, the unregenerated, might be delivered from evil."¹³ After a short time, Stoddard and Kane-Aloha eventually meet up with the guides Enoch Perry and Kane-Aloha's father. Stoddard, giving his horse to Kane-Aloha as a farewell gift, intones these words

¹² *ITD*, 271

¹³ *ITD*, 269

about his departure from his native Hawaiian friend: “Take him O, Beloved! O, comerade by flood and field! Keep him forever in memory of the past! He is thine, all thine, aikane! Bosom-friend! Take him and wear him next to thy heart, until we meet again!”¹⁴ Stoddard and Perry were engaged as passengers to take a boat back to Honolulu, “and that was the end of it all”, Stoddard writes; “The end of the story of Kane-Aloha, well named the Loving Man”.¹⁵

Stoddard later wrote of his relationship with this young native Hawaiian in a chapter titled “Kane-Aloha”, which was published in *The Island of Tranquil Delights* in England and the United States some forty years after his first visit to Hilo. Stoddard’s evocation of the word *aikāne* in this passage of Kane-Aloha is significant. It demonstrates the fact that Stoddard was well aware of the Hawaiian tradition of intimate same-sex relationships which were so prevalent in Hawaii before, during and after contact with Europeans in the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries. Stoddard’s

¹⁴ *ITD*, 275

¹⁵ *ITD*, 275

intimate relationship with Kane-Aloha can indeed be classified as an *aikāne* bonding, and Stoddard's experience of this form of relationship was deeply meaningful for him; it gave him a glimpse into a possibility of same-sex intimacy which he would later try to replicate and experience in his life back in the United States during his tentative reaggregation into society as a professional man of letters.

The Cosmos of Aikāne Relationships: The Native Hawaiian Context

According to Greg Dening, beaches are beginnings and endings. They are the frontiers and boundaries of islands. For some life forms, the division between land and sea is not abrupt, but for human beings, like Charles Warren Stoddard, beaches divide the world between here and there, us and them, good and bad, familiar and strange. On land behind the beach, life is filled with some fullness and with some establishment.¹⁶ The island of Hawai'i and later, the island of Moloka'i, where

¹⁶ Greg Dening, *Islands and Beaches: Discourse on a Silent Land, Marquesas 1774-1880* (Chicago: The Dorsey Press, 1980), 32

Stoddard encountered and briefly sojourned in a native Hawaiian community, was a land replete with multiple indigenous meanings and its own sense of time. These brief communal immersions for Stoddard were instructive for him, and posited a meaningful alternative to the “structural” industrial setting he had left behind in California. It was on these islands where Stoddard experienced *aikāne* relationships. The most sustaining *aikāne* relationship, albeit brief, that Stoddard experienced was on the island of Moloka`i.

When Stoddard met his *aikāne* Kana-ana on the island of Moloka`i, he was unwittingly entering into a uniquely Hawaiian sense of time and place beyond the frontier of the beach which separated him from his Euro-American counterparts. Known by native Hawaiians throughout the island chain as “Moloka`i Ka Hula Piko”, the island represents the center of the movement of life itself, represented by the hula. In pre-contact times and even until today, Moloka`i has always been respected by native Hawaiians as the spiritual center of the archipelago. It was a safe haven during wars, and was home to

some of the greatest spiritual leaders in Hawaiian history, such as the greatly esteemed prophet Lanikaula. The prophet Lanikaula lived during the sixteenth century and was one of the most revered in Hawai'i's history. Pilgrims ventured from all the islands to seek out his advice. For this, among other reasons, Moloka'i was sanctioned from war and considered a place of retreat. Although the Cook expedition made contact in Hawai'i in 1778, Moloka'i itself was, for the most part, passed over, and was in fact not even visited by Europeans until 1786.¹⁷ Given this historical background, Moloka'i has remained, even at the time of Stoddard's first visit there in the 1860s, deeply steeped in Hawaiian culture and tradition. By sojourning in and near Halawa Valley, Stoddard was in the midst of one of the oldest known settlements in all of the kingdom.

The time and space that Stoddard entered during his 1860s trips to Moloka'i were a continuous unfolding of an endless happening. The Hawaiian word for time, *manawa*, does not convey the ticking, fleeting intervals measured out by a western clock, but the lingering, gentle ebb of water

¹⁷ Sprinza Katz, http://www.wguides.com/city/594/city_history.cfm, 1

across a tranquil bay.¹⁸ When Stoddard met his *aikāne* Kana-ana and Kane-aloha, he was entering into a unique cultural time frame which, coincidentally, was at the very cusp of the Hawaiian *makahiki* season in the islands. These were times when native Hawaiians celebrated the return of the *Akua* Lono to the islands. Lono, an *Akua* of Kahiki (probably Tahiti but also meaning “foreign lands”), came to Hawai‘i annually, bringing fertility and peace to the *‘Aina*. In the four months that Lono was in possession of the *‘Aina*, war and hard labor were *kapu*, or forbidden. After an official *ho‘okupu* (tribute) to Lono, peace, feasting, games and hula ensued. Human life was never sacrificed to Lono; his was the sacrifice of pigs, foodstuffs, *kapa* cloth, and feathers – that is, of material wealth. In this context, Lono was an *Akua* of material wealth, and giving in his name was a way in which to acquire *mana*. Lono was also the patron of the arts that celebrated human sexuality and these were included in a path to *mana*,¹⁹ which also governed *aikāne*

¹⁸ George Hu‘eu Sanford Kanahale, *Kū Kanaka: Stand Tall, A Search for Hawaiian Values* (Honolulu: University of Hawaii Press, 1986), 166

¹⁹ Lilikalā Kame‘eleihiwa, *Native Land and Foreign Desires* (Honolulu: Bishop Museum Press, 1992) 29-47, *passim*

relationships. Considering this realm of action and events, Stoddard's relationships with his Hawaiian *aikāne* represented more than a fleeting, passing, or fanciful involvement, for both parties in the context of their intimacies, were searching for *mana*: for Stoddard, by integrating his sexuality into his life as a young man, and for his native Hawaiian paramours, who were perhaps seeking *mana* by celebrating Stoddard's presence in their midst during the *makahiki* season. Stoddard's brief engagements, therefore, were more than just temporary flings; they could be viewed as the partners' mutual search for *mana*, by engaging in *'imihaku*, a personal quest for guidance and spiritual power.

By the time Stoddard had visited Moloka'i and the Big Island in the 1860s, a new *Akua*, in the appearance of the Christian God Jehovah, was gradually taking a spiritual hold over the old deities of the indigenous Hawaiian pantheon; but *aikāne* relationships, however, still stood as a way to achieve personal and spiritual power especially in the native Hawaiian cultural center of Moloka'i. In

pre-contact Hawaii, if a male was of low rank, and gifted in such activities as sport, hula or chanting, he could be brought to court to entertain the *Ali'i nui* (who were the earthly representatives of the native Hawaiian *Akua*) and perhaps gain an introduction. Alternatively, if a man were handsome and somewhat talented in dance and poetry, he could be kept as an *aikāne*, or male lover, of an *Ali'i nui*, as they were often bisexual, as demonstrated in the observation of those on the Cook expeditions. The Protestant missionaries who came and established the reign of the new *Akua* Jehovah, however, deeply deplored known *aikāne* relationships.²⁰ This cultural abhorrence on the part of the missionaries, however, might have taken a longer time to reach such rural locales as Halawa Valley, where Stoddard met his beloved *aikāne*.

Robert J. Morris writes that a thoroughgoing ethnology of *aikāne* relationships is needed in order to know how such young men like Kane-aloha and Kana-ana fit into the mix of Hawaiian court and family. What we do know from the historical record, however, is that *aikāne* relationships were

²⁰ Lilikalā Kame'eleihiwa, *Native Land, Foreign Desires* (Honolulu: Bishop Museum Press, 1992), 161

indeed communal and familial, reflecting Stoddard's experience of being briefly assimilated into Kana-ana's family matrix, for example. These experiences proved formative for Stoddard, who later had relationships with men in America who were significantly younger than himself. Were *aikāne* merely attendants of the chiefs, or were they "in school", as is seen by Stoddard's semi-tutelage relationship with Joe of Lahaina? If so, were *aikāne* relationships a school of politics, of the erotic or both? The mentor-student relationships (as seen by the classical western history of Greece and Rome) is rife for opportunity for intimacy, and in a culture which did not repress it, it would likely flow out of the immediate focus of the mentoring, and not constitute the focus itself.²¹

Thus, the Moloka'i and Big Island in which Stoddard sojourned was a kind of limen in which there was an admixture of two unique structures: the ancient cosmos of native Hawaiian time, culture and mores, and the Christian paths of faith as advocated and enforced by Protestant and Catholic

²¹ Robert J. Morris, "Aikane: Accounts of Hawaiian Same-Sex Relationships in the Journals of Captain Cook's Third Voyage (1776-80)", vol.19, no.4, 1990, 43

missionaries. After his conversion to Catholicism, Stoddard had an antagonistic stance toward the mission of the Protestants in Hawai'i (especially in Hilo, as seen from the quote above regarding one missionary's "pruning face of propriety"), and seemed to enjoy his formative immersions in native Hawaiian community. Many years after his trip to the Hawaiian Islands, Stoddard would ruminate on his relationship with Kane-aloha, intoning:

It may be that sometime, somewhere, the tale-tellers will tell the tales of two horses and their boys and that our harmless life and adventures will become historical, as has many another incident of little moment...I cannot forget it nor refrain from recounting it since it once touched me to the quick.²²

In Stoddard's long memory, his *aikāne* relationships as experienced in the Hawaiian Islands were transformative for him as man who loved men.

Out of the Limen and Back to Honolulu

Back in Honolulu, Stoddard passed the days by leisurely, and would visit town to browse around Whitney's bookstore, in those times a kind of Hawaiian forum, with a post office on one side of the room and a semaphore on the roof that signaled

²² Stoddard, *ITD*, 276

the approach of the infrequent ships which brought the mail.²³ In spite of his significant experiences in Hawai'i among native Hawaiians and Euro-Americans living in the Kingdom, Stoddard remembered his friends in California and, as he described, wrote them "a bagful of sentimental letters".²⁴ In one of these letters, Stoddard relates his thoughts concerning his absence from school:

I have thought often of certain words of yours saying - to the effect that I might get entangled in the pleasures and fascinations of this total freedom, and so perhaps never return to the confines of school duty - Believe me, I do not fear it in the least - I dread the effort which must accompany my first getting quieted down to the proper composure and the decent resignation of a student, but I have never for a moment ceased to regret [*sic*] the necessity - that urged me to these Islands glorious as all adventure is to one of my temperament.²⁵

This correspondence was prescient for Stoddard, who soon received a letter from his parents bidding him to return to California, and, to school.

²³ Stroven, "A Life", 82-83

²⁴ Stoddard, typescript, "Confessions of a Reformed Poet", chap.III, p.9 (Finlay Cook), cited in Stroven, "A Life", 84

²⁵ Stoddard, MS. "Thought-Book", section xvii (Finlay Cook), cited in Stroven, "A Life", 85

**“Betwixt and Between” School and Publication:
1865-1867**

Stoddard made his return voyage back to San Francisco probably in late December of 1864.²⁶ He returned in time for the beginning of the second semester at the Oakland College School in January of 1865. Although Carl Stroven notes that there is little specific information on Stoddard’s second experience at the College School, it was presumably a repetition of Stoddard’s first trying experiences there. Stoddard devoted more time to poetry and to lounging with acquaintances than he did to his studies. “I know”, he later wrote, “that so long as I was at Brayton Hall (Oakland College) I profited but little”. Once he overheard one instructor say to another, “He may be a poet, but he will never be a student”, and, realizing the truth of this remark, he felt his heart sink within him. Still, however, Stoddard remained at the school for another year, throughout 1865. Although there is no specific reference as to when Stoddard ended his studies in Oakland, he later wrote: “At the end of my second year at Brayton Hall I closed my text books never to

²⁶ Stroven, “A Life”, 85

open them again until I found myself...at Notre Dame...twenty years later.”²⁷

While struggling with his studies at Brayton, Stoddard continued his efforts as the “Boy Poet of San Francisco”, albeit somewhat older and wizened after his experiences in Hawai`i. Stoddard made his poetic debut in book form with the release of *Outcroppings*, the first anthology of California verse. The book was edited by Bret Harte and published in December 1865 in time for the Christmas trade. Of the 42 poems in the text, four were Stoddard’s, and these received very mixed reviews in the local press. The Sacramento *Union* praised Stoddard’s “Keats-like” quality, while, contrarily, the Virginia City *Territorial Enterprise* found that his verses were “frequently constructed without skill”. A controversy soon erupted over the book as a whole, along the lines that divided the California “nativists” from the “genteel” literati who dominated the anthology. The Gold Hill *Daily News*, according to George Stewart’s *Bret Harte*, “called the whole collection “effeminate [and]

²⁷ Stoddard, typescript, “Confessions of a Reformed Poet”, chap.III, in Stroven, “A Life”, 8-9

unworthy of the virile West”.²⁸ Franklin Walker noted that the “he-men among Pacific Coast poets were outraged: where, they might have asked, was John Swett’s ‘In the Mines’? And they ridiculed the inclusion of Stoddard, “who was so much like a girl that he blushed when the fellows told dirty stories in his company”. Other “nativist” reviewers charged that the book was a “feeble collection of drivel” and hogwash ladled from the slop-bucket.²⁹ These epithets reflect not only the gender inversion implied in labeling an effete young man of letters; it also reflects the macho male ethos of self-assured men in post-Gold Rush California.

Apparently undaunted by the epithets hurled his way, Stoddard persisted in doing all he could do advance the only career he had, and he was bent on getting the attention of respectable writers back on the East Coast and in England. After the publication of *Outcroppings*, Stoddard sent out proof sheets of seven of his poems, along with a cover letter, to all the famous people he could imagine might be

²⁸ George R. Stewart, Jr., *Bret Harte: Argonaut and Exile* (Boston: Houghton Mifflin, 1931), p.135, cited in Austen and Crowley, *GP*, 31

²⁹ Franklin Walker, *San Francisco’s Literary Frontier* (New York: Knopf, 1939) pp.214, 216, cited in Austen and Crowley, *GP*, 31-32

sympathetic in providing support and feedback.³⁰

This self-promotion illustrates real personal growth on the part of Stoddard. "I was eager to know what the opinion of those whose reputations were established beyond question might be concerning my efforts", Stoddard wrote later, "and it was not long before I was pretty thoroughly informed."³¹

Most of the recipients to whom Stoddard had sent poems replied. Some of them were non-committal and wrote very briefly; others were only mild in their condemnation; but a few were clearly encouraging, among them Ralph Waldo Emerson:³²

I have preserved your poems in a book, in which I mean to put only good and interesting verses. Indeed, I am much touched with them, and I think so well of their superior skill and tone that I would hear with pain that you had discontinued writing. I do not think that one who can write so well will find it easy to leave off, even in the deafest community. He will sing to himself, and unaware find happy listeners.

With great regard,

Ralph Waldo Emerson.³³

³⁰ Austen and Crowley, *GP*, 32

³¹ Stoddard, "Confessions of a Reformed Poet", cited in Austen and Crowley, *GP*, 32

³² Stroven, "A Life", 93

³³ Copy of letter in Stoddard, typescript, "Confessions of a Reformed Poet", chap. V (cont) pp.7-8 (Finlay Cook); and in [Stoddard] "Notable Autographs. II", by "Pourquoi", *Californian*, vol.i, p.533 (June, 1880), cited in Stroven, "A Life", 93

Oliver Wendell Holmes sent a long letter that carefully avoided over-encouragement and offered wise counsel.³⁴

I shall not criticize your poems, which are evidently dictated by a true poetic feeling. They have more freshness in them than most of those which are sent me by young persons. I have no particular advice to give you. You have formed your style in good measure, and the rest must depend on your taste, genius, study of good models, and the time and labor you devote to poetical composition. You must remember, however, that the pursuit of poetry is not like to give you a living, and not like to forward you in any other calling. Think well of it, therefore, before you relinquish any useful occupation which will afford you steady employment and support, for the life of an artist is verse. As an incidental accomplishment it is an ornament; but in some cases it is used as an apology for neglecting humbler and more steadily industrious pursuits. If you happen to have a portion which is sufficient for your present and future, then I have no doubt you will find that your talent will well repay the time given to its cultivation. Otherwise, I should be jealous of allowing poetry more than the spare hours of my life, which it may solace and embellish or be at the same time a pleasure to others.

Oliver Wendell Holmes³⁵

Like most young writers, Stoddard desired hearty encouragement, not disheartening caution such as Holmes's frank advice given above. But the simple fact of the matter at hand was that Stoddard had no useful occupation at this point in his life, and being a poet seemed the only vocation open to one of his "temperament". Encouraged by some of the more favorable comments and by the willingness of

³⁴ Stroven, "A Life", 94

³⁵ Copy of letter in Stoddard, typescript, "Confessions of a Reformed Poet", chap.IV, p.4 (Finlay Cook); and in [Stoddard], "Notable Autographs.II", by "Pourquoi", *Californian*, vol.i, p.532 (June, 1880)

his collaborator Bret Harte to help him, Stoddard decided in 1866 to have a book of his own poems published in San Francisco.

The slim volume of forty-five poems, underwritten by subscriptions and published by Anton Roman, appeared in the fall of 1867. The poems were grouped under six headings: "Of Nature", "Idyllic and Legendary", "Of the Heart", "Of Fancy and Imagination", "Of Meditation", and "Of Aspiration and Desire". Two poems of the last group are of particular significance. In "Unrest", Stoddard alludes to "My heavy woe I may not name", and in "The Awakening", set in Hawai'i, Stoddard suggests that his experiences there were significant for spiritual as opposed to sexual reasons.³⁶ Stoddard's poetry publication begins with a resounding anthem to the world of poetry and literature. In the opening poem, cited in full below, we have an indication of how important writing was to Stoddard at this stage of his development:

Invocation

Oh, Poesy! Exquisite gift,
Thou art a magnet that shall lift
My gold from out of drossy rift.

³⁶ Austen and Crowley, *GP*, 34

Thou art my soul's refulgent beam
My guiding star to ever gleam
A flaming pillar in my dream.

Thou art my drifting-cloud by day
Whose bright pavilion-courts always
Allure me with their fair display.

Thou art a Hebe that presents
A chalice to my lips, and thence
I drain the charmed, rich contents.

Delicious bubbling nectars twine
Their trickling tendrils as a vine
Through all my being; steep in wine

And numb to any thought of earth
I wrestle with my spirit's mirth
I travail with a poem's birth.

When chasing cares are wearying
With all my life to thee I cling—
Believing I was born to sing.

Lo! Thou hast taught me where to fly
Escaping every ill; for I,
Transfigured by thy witchery,

As Daphne in the laurel park
Seem wholly shut in leafy ark,
I feel beneath my rugged bark

A nerved pulse that never cowers;
The turgid stream of sap hath powers
That shall beget a thousand flowers.

I quiver from my very root,
I strive to doff my leafy suit
And load my boughs with perfect fruit—

And lift my gnarled limbs to thee—
I writhe and struggle to be free
Endowed with thy divinity.

Thou art my fast and feast; and true
Thou art my sweetest twilight-dew
That grants me purer life anew.

And as the flower unto the moon
Returns its hoarded sweets full soon,
I yield thee all, in verse and tune.³⁷

³⁷Charles Warren Stoddard, *Poems*, (San Francisco: A. Roman and Company, 1867), 9-11, from PACC Collection, University of Hawai'i at Manoa

One of the pressing issues which concerned Stoddard at this time, as we see from above, was his being able to make a meaningful living as a writer. It seems that Stoddard had a somewhat ambivalent, “betwixt and between” relationship with the very fame and recognition he ardently desired, as revealed in the following poem:

Fame

She charmed him with her charming eye;
To know its luster was to die,
Or feed forever on its light.
She bore him to her mountain height,
With wine-sweet lips she kissed to rest
The thousand longings in his breast.

She ringed him with her glittering coils;
Her flattering words were soft as oils,
All swam before his drunken sight;
He felt his beauty and his might,
And cursed the darkness as he hurled
Defiance at the crouching world.

He did not know her treachery;
But thought her tightened grasp to be
The clasp of love—O! heavy fate!
She thrust him in the face of hate
With all the venom in her born,
And slew him with her tongue of scorn.³⁸

In this poem, Stoddard appears to personify fame as a kind of dire *femme fatale*, bent on steering him astray from his direction and vocation.

³⁸Charles Warren Stoddard, *Poems*, (San Francisco: A. Roman and Company, 1867), 92, from PACC Collection, University of Hawai'i at Manoa

When *Poems* was about to be released, publisher Anton Roman sent the nervous young Stoddard into the mountains “on the pretext of wishing me to set Yosemite to song.” Stoddard must have been somewhat relieved to have a place to go to outside the immediate environs of San Francisco, especially considering the critical salvos which had come his way after the publication of *Outcroppings*. Stoddard planned to stay at Yosemite until “the agony was over”, hoping that he could return to San Francisco “with peace in my heart and my brow bound with victorious wreaths.” Evidence of Stoddard’s delicate state during the year after the publication of *Outcroppings* can be gleaned from a letter written by mentor Bret Harte, who made every effort to solicit wider mainstream interest in Stoddard’s poetry. In a letter to a Reverend Dr. Bellows of New York, Harte wrote that Stoddard “is full of poetic sensibility - a good deal like Keats in disposition as well as fancy. Perhaps as much out of place in this very material country as Pegasus in a quartz mill. How can he gather ‘epithetic honey’ on the scrubby sand hills of S.F. or keep the full

edge and delicate temper of his fancies in this community excites my wonder as well as my imagination.”³⁹ A brief sojourn for Stoddard in Yosemite was, therefore, a welcome balm to his delicate artistic sensibilities.

The prophetic “wreaths” which Stoddard had hoped for following the publication of *Poems* were ripe with thorns. Although a few local reviewers praised Stoddard, many others “made sport” of Stoddard and his publication, often in the wild-west spirit that was conventional among San Francisco critics at this time. In the *Californian*, for example, James Bowman (known by Stoddard at the time) praised the poems highly and then lampooned this review and Stoddard in an anonymous piece in the *Dramatic Chronicle*. The reviews from the East coast of the United States were not encouraging either. The *Nation's* critic wrote only of “imitation spasms”, and a reviewer in the *New York Round Table* opted that Stoddard had done “well what Tennyson has done so infinitely better.” As more hostile reviews of *Poems* came in,

³⁹ Bret Harte, correspondence to Rev. Dr. H.W. Bellows of New York, September 15, 1866 (Stoddard Collection, Massachusetts Historical Society)

Stoddard felt hurt and depressed. He had done his best, and this had fallen short of his ambitions as a writer. More than ever before, Stoddard needed a source of comfort; a refuge that would protect him in a way that his friends and family could not. He found that refuge in the Roman Catholic church, into which he was baptized at Saint Mary's Cathedral in San Francisco on November 2, 1867.⁴⁰

“A Troubled Heart”: Stoddard's Religious Askecis, 1867

During his childhood, Stoddard had visited a local Roman Catholic church with the family maid in order to witness a spiritual setting more inspiring and captivating than the rather austere surroundings of his family's Presbyterian parish in Rochester. These experiences for Stoddard proved to be formative for him. In spite of his Protestant heritage and upbringing, he was inspired by a visit to a Catholic bookstore, and purchased a crucifix which he kept hidden from his family until he could summon the courage to tell them. “Oh, how happy was I with it, when the whole truth was out a

⁴⁰ Austen and Crowley, *GP*, 34-35

last!”⁴¹ , he later wrote about the experience. As a youth growing up in San Francisco, Stoddard often visited Catholic churches in order to hear the beautiful music there: “The love of music was with me a passion”, he wrote in 1885. “Melody soothed me in excitement, and aroused me from periods of lethargy to healthful spiritual and mental activity.”⁴² During these visits to enjoy the balm of music, Stoddard became more familiar with the intimate community of worshippers, and the rites of mass itself: “I did go again and again, and yet again. A seat was always reserved for me in the organ loft, and from that serene and curtained seclusion I witnessed the Holy Sacrafice [sic] of the Mass, until I began to grow familiar with its forms, at least, and to long earnestly to comprehend their signification.”⁴³ Given these early influences and experiences, coupled with Stoddard’s quest for viable *communitas* during his young adulthood, we can better understand the reasons which prompted him to become a member of the Catholic church.

⁴¹ Ibid., 91

⁴² Stoddard, *A Troubled Heart and How It Was Comforted At Last* (Notre Dame, Indiana: Ave Maria Press, 1885), 79

⁴³ Ibid., 85

The day of Stoddard's baptism is recounted dramatically in his conversion narrative, titled *A Troubled Heart and How It Was Comforted At Last*:

A little before two o'clock on the appointed day I entered the cathedral. Sunshine was flooding the nave with a rich, mellow light. Without the sombre walls was the rumble of the great city; within was a holy and unutterable peace; but my heart beat wildly and would not be quieted. ...[Kneeling] between...spiritual and temporal advisers, I laid my heart in absolute surrender. From the steps of that altar I seemed to rise a new being. I had shattered the chrysalis, and the wings of my soul expanded in the everlasting light that radiates from the Throne of Grace. They left me there. I was glad to be alone; a great calm had fallen upon me, and I feared lest even the most friendly of voices might trouble or dispel it. When I passed into the street, I kept saying to myself: I am a Catholic! I am a Catholic at last!" And it seemed to me then as if my eyes were just opening upon another and a better world.⁴⁴

Stoddard's description of his day of baptism is redolent with the symbolism of liminality. In this remarkable moment of transition from one status to another, Stoddard is at one moment with two advisers guiding him through his transition; but at the end of this transition, however, Stoddard is left alone; first within the separate, sacred space of the cathedral, but finally, in the anonymous milieu of a commercial, post-Gold Rush San Francisco street, where he could count himself as an accepted member of the *communitas* of the faithful. Stoddard's conversion was, therefore, an act of a

⁴⁴ Ibid., 118-121

liminar; an entry into *communitas* and an election of religious *askecis* which was deeper and more meaningful to him than his other tenuous, “structural” (in the idiom of Victor Turner) affiliations: his family, the Bohemian community of San Francisco, school, and the literary establishment by which he so ardently desired to be recognized and accepted.

Austen and Crowley observe that several literary historians have written about what may have led Stoddard to become Catholic. Kevin Starr, in *Americans and the California Dream*, attributes the conversion to Stoddard’s aesthetic as well as emotional need for “an altar before which he could prostrate himself in adoration.” The symbols of Catholicism “met the needs of his imagination and the hungers of his heart. Romanism was part of a total *mise en scène*. The Latin liturgy, the Italian Jesuits of Saint Ignatius Church where he went for instructions, his developing interest in the civilizations of Southern Europe, the very Mediterranean metaphor of California itself, all massed themselves on the borders of his

imagination, moving him to an assent that was an act of religion, the election of a culture - and a vision of beauty.”⁴⁵ Several years after his conversion, and during his first trip to Greece, Stoddard wrote: “It is not likely that in the flight of the gods mankind lost his reverence for the purely beautiful; they took with them that finer faculty - the sentiment is called feminine to-day, it may be considered infantile tomorrow - for the want of which the world is now suffering sorely.”⁴⁶ This linkage of religion, beauty and the “feminine” and/or “infantile” was commonplace in Stoddard’s time. The gendering of aestheticism, which accompanied the refashioning of Victorian gender codes during the 1860s, effected the redefinition, as Jackson Lears states, of “the ‘feminine’ ideal of dependence”. Lears further asserts that “the premodern unconscious generated androgynous alternatives to bourgeois masculinity. Those options especially appealed to the men and women who were most restive under the bourgeois definitions of

⁴⁵ Kevin Starr, *Americans and the California Dream, 1850-1915* (New York: Oxford University Press, 1973), 377, cited in Austen and Crowley, *GP*, 36

⁴⁶ Stoddard, *Mashallah! A Flight into Egypt*, (New York: Appleton, 1881), 254, cited in Austen and Crowley, *GP*, xxxii

gender identity.”⁴⁷ For Stoddard, who had never fit the wild-west mold of masculinity, the androgynous elements of Catholicism could be embraced without the ambivalence felt by perhaps other men of Stoddard’s day and age who had closer commitments to the contemporaneous male ego-ideals and masculine mode of individual autonomy which were highly esteemed in the California (and United States) of Stoddard’s day.⁴⁸ Stoddard’s membership in the *communitas* of the Catholic church, placed him even more deeply into a liminal, anti-structural stance to the business ethos of the Gilded Age, providing a meaningful alternative to that mode of life.⁴⁹ Stoddard’s election of religious conversion, moreover, deepened his position as a liminar, given the reality of anti-Catholicism during the nineteenth century.

At the time of Stoddard’s conversion to Catholicism, anti-Catholic sentiment ran deeply within the United States, culminating in the nativist Know-Nothing movement of the 1850s. In the two

⁴⁷ T.J. Jackson Lears, *No Place of Grace: Antimodernism and the Transformation of American Culture 1880-1920* (New York: Pantheon, 1981), 184, cited in Austen and Crowley, GP, xxxii

⁴⁸ *Ibid.*, 32

⁴⁹ Austen and Crowley, GP, xxxi-xxxii

decades before the Civil War, anti-Catholicism was a staple in shaping the political actions of many Protestants in the North as well as the South⁵⁰, but with California's multicultural population (especially in such places as San Francisco), the strength of nativism within the United States increased in significant dimensions. "For those who regarded the nation's destiny as virtually synonymous with the Anglo-Saxon race", states historical geographer Gray Brechin, the recently acquired peoples and territories of Mexico "came with unwelcome gristle".⁵¹ The proponents of the Know-Nothing movement claimed that the increasing wave of immigrants to the United States after 1846, most notably Irish and German Catholics, were threatening to destroy the fabric of American society by means of their allegiance to the Pope and the Roman Catholic church. The Roman Catholic Church, they charged, was a growing power that could potentially exert political control over a large group of people. Although such

⁵⁰ Mark Noll, "The History of an Encounter: Roman Catholics and Protestant Evangelicals", in Charles Colson and Richard John Neuhaus, editors: *Evangelicals and Catholics: Toward a Common Mission*, (Dallas: Word Publishing, 1995), 91 from <http://ic.net/~RAZ222.HTM>, 5

⁵¹ Gray Brechin, *Imperial San Francisco: Urban Power, Earthly Ruin* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1999), 205

nativist sentiments had long existed among many Americans, they had never before been expressed so vociferously. Initially operating through a number of secret societies, claiming that they “knew nothing” about such activities, the intentions of the Know-Nothings and the nativist cause came fully into light during local and national elections of the 1850s.⁵²

Briefly after his conversion to Catholicism, Stoddard asked his spiritual mentor, Father Accalti, the Jesuit who had been in charge of his religious instruction, for assistance in finding employment. In his comments on Stoddard’s conversion, Franklin Walker suggests that “if Stoddard could not find a place in lay society, he would become a monk.”⁵³ Finding a suitable place for himself in a monastic setting, however, was difficult for Stoddard given his increasing awareness of his sexuality and fondness for secular life. Throughout his life, Stoddard’s desires for either monasticism and a satisfying secular life, however, remained a

⁵² Joel H. Silbey, “Know-Nothing Movement”, from <http://gi.grolier.com/presidents/ea/side/knownot.html>

⁵³ Franklin Walker, *San Francisco’s Literary Frontier*, 233

challenge for him to attain, and he wavered, in true liminal fashion, between both polarities.

Stoddard explained to his spiritual advisor that although he was not quite ready for the monastery, he needed some secular employment that would be comparably contemplative.⁵⁴ Carl Stroven writes that there was little work that Stoddard might have been actually fit to do at this time in his life. Although nearly every newspaper and magazine in San Francisco had printed his poetry, and although he had a wide acquaintance among editors, none was willing to offer him a position.⁴⁹ Father Accalti promised to look out for a suitable position, but the businessmen to whom the priest applied could offer nothing, “for they would not have a poet in their counting rooms”, writes Stroven.⁵⁵ One of the social factors overlooked by Stroven, however, was the reality of anti-Catholic discrimination in the American workplace during this period. In some parts of the United States, for example, anti-Catholic secret

⁵⁴ Austen and Crowley, *GP*, 36-37

⁵⁵ *Ibid.*, 109

societies promoted campaigns to remove Catholics from private employment and public office.⁵⁶

Stroven writes about another friend interested in finding Stoddard a suitable occupation: Harry Edwards, actor and manager of the Metropolitan Theater. Edwards offered to launch Stoddard as an actor at any time he might have decided to follow acting as a career. In desperation, after failing to find other work, Stoddard took advantage of the offer, although he doubted whether he had the ability to succeed. Edwards had a company he was sending soon to play in Sacramento, and Stoddard, after a short period of rehearsals, went along to make his first appearance there.⁵⁷ Stoddard experienced a modicum of success as an actor during this period. Though he was helped and befriended by the other actors in the company and though he enjoyed the deference the people of Sacramento paid him as an actor, Stoddard found his work difficult and discouraging.⁵⁸

⁵⁶ Page Smith, *The Rise of Industrial America* (New York: McGraw-Hill Book Company, 1984), 583-585, from <http://ic.net/~erasmus/RAZ222.HTM> p.3

⁵⁷ Stoddard, *For the Pleasure of His Company*, 52-58, cited in Stroven, "A Life", 109-110

⁵⁸ Stroven, "A Life", 112

It was hard study that discouraged me: I ever had a cue in my throat, and tasted it at breakfast, lunch and dinner, and even at late supper after the play...Few who have not attempted to commit to memory page after page of dialogue can realize the tediousness of such a task.⁵⁹

At midnight, after the performance, with a wet towel about his head to keep him awake, Stoddard would attempt to memorize his part for the next play. Eventually, he lost sleep, and worried about his parts.⁶⁰

One morning after a long walk, during which he divided his attention between memorizing lines and enjoying the landscape, Stoddard came to a little river-side saloon, where “there was such a comely woman sitting behind such a clean bar” that he could not resist stopping to refresh himself. Seated at a table under the willow trees, drinking his glass of beer, Stoddard reviewed the hardships and vicissitudes of an actor’s life. He tried to study his part; “but somehow the birds or the bees or the boats on the river wooed my mind away, and I forgot my lines and did nothing but enjoy myself - which is perhaps what God wished me to do all the while.” When he returned to the theater for

⁵⁹ Stoddard, “Over the Footlights”, *Atlantic Monthly*, vol. xxxiv, p.170 (August, 1874), cited in Stroven, “A Life”, 112

⁶⁰ *Ibid.*, 170-171, cited in Stroven, “A Life”, 112

rehearsal, he had resolved to leave the stage as soon as he could find another way of earning a living.⁶¹

During a brief trip back to San Francisco, Stoddard met a friend who told him that a man was needed at the offices of the *Californian* publication. Stoddard informed himself quickly about the position, and soon learned that it involved bookkeeping; but since little knowledge was required and since it was thought that he might contribute to the paper without compensation, he was given the job at “an insignificant salary”. Stoddard had already decided that “a crust of bread in an attic with four walls between him and the world he loathed was preferable to sock and buskin at any price”,⁶² and decided to take the position.

Stoddard began work for the *Californian* in early April of 1868.⁶³ At the publication’s offices, Stoddard found that only one of his duties was to keep the books; a light task, for, he said, he entered only monies that were paid out and “kept an unsullied page for the moneys [sic] that were expected to come in.” The rest of his time he

⁶¹ *Ibid.*, 172-173, cited in Stroven, “A Life”, 112-113

⁶² Stoddard, *For the Pleasure of His Company*, 84-86, cited in Stroven, “A Life”, 113

⁶³ Stroven, “A Life”, 113

divided between meeting creditors and addressing back numbers of the *Californian* to prospective subscribers. Stoddard intensely disliked this work. His friends offered him but little sympathy, concluding that "it were vain to imagine anything could be done for, or with, such a dreamer as he." In the meantime, however, Stoddard learned to execute his tasks mechanically, while his thoughts wandered "thousands of miles away".⁶⁴ Stoddard's deliverance from this position was soon at hand, for he had received an invitation to visit the Hawaiian Islands in the fall of 1868.

**"In the Islands of Tranquil Delights":
Stoddard's Second Sojourn in the Hawaiian
Islands, 1868**

On July 16, 1868, Stoddard's sister Sarah was married in San Francisco to Parker Norton Makee, the son of Captain James Makee, a wealthy plantation owner on Maui.⁶⁵ Sarah Makee's marriage was significant in Stoddard's life, for it was through her and her husband's invitation that he

⁶⁴ Stoddard, *For the Pleasure of His Company*, 87-89, cited in Stroven, "A Life", 114-115

⁶⁵ S.B. Stoddard, MS. "Family Records" (Mrs. Makee-Crawford), quoted in Stroven, "A Life", 118

ventured forth on his second sojourn in the Hawaiian Islands in the fall of 1868; a sojourn that would last eight months. Before departing for the Islands, Stoddard had received a commission to write a series of letters called "Hawaiian Island Notes" for the San Francisco *Evening Bulletin*.⁶⁶ It was during this sojourn that Stoddard gathered much of the material for the book by which he is chiefly known today: *South Sea Idyls*. This journey was also significant for Stoddard for two other very important reasons: he had the opportunity to experience at least two more significant *aikāne* relationships, and he had the opportunity to temporarily witness the self-sacrificing life and service of a Catholic priest he later began to emulate and celebrate in writing: Father Damien. It was through Stoddard's writing of his relationships and experiences in Oceania with Pacific Islanders and his literary output as a Catholic writer which would contribute to his growing fame as a man of letters, leading to his future, tentative reaggregation into American society some twenty years later. These three major factors, therefore, created the

⁶⁶ Stroven, "A Life", 120

three formidable apexes of the major thematic triad of Stoddard's life.

After having spent the fall of 1868 on the island of O'ahu, Stoddard set out from Honolulu in a schooner bound for Hawai'i Island in late December. A storm soon blew up, however, and the captain put into the port of Lahaina, Maui, to wait for calmer weather. There, Stoddard decided to give up on his trip to Hawai'i altogether, hired a horse, and rode over to Ulupalakua, where he spent most of the New Year season and most probably, the early weeks of the year 1869. At Ulupalakua was situated the plantation of Stoddard's brother-in-law's father, Captain James Makee.⁶⁷

Captain James Makee, originally of Woburn, Massachusetts, came to Hawai'i in 1843 aboard the whaling ship *Maine*, and because of a serious accident became a pioneer in the sugar industry of the Islands. While the *Maine* lay in the roadstead off Lahaina, Captain Makee was attacked by the ship's cook, who cut him with a cleaver and then escaped, leaving the captain for dead. Medical assistance was given to Makee on an American

⁶⁷ Ibid., 120-121

warship anchored nearby, and during a long convalescence, he became interested in Hawai'i. Makee eventually established a ship chandlery business in Honolulu and later purchased "Torbett's Plantation" at Ulupalakua, Maui, which he later called Rose Ranch.⁶⁸ Rose Ranch consisted of about fifteen thousand acres extending from an anchorage at Makena Bay to about halfway up the slope of Mount Haleakala. On the usable portions of this estate he cultivated sugar cane and grazed numerous herds of cattle. At an elevation of some fifteen hundred feet was the large family house and the sugar mills, around which clustered a village of plantation workers. Near the house, the Captain planted thousands of fruit trees, evergreens, and roses that flourished in the cool climate of the mountain.⁶⁹ Stoddard wrote of his first arrival at Rose Ranch in the *Island of Tranquil Delights*: "The hearty and homelike welcome at the gate was followed by a substantial breakfast, as soon as I had been given time to shake off the dust of travel; and then by easy stages was I suffered to drift on from

⁶⁸ *Pacific Commercial Advertiser*, Sept. 6, 1925, c.3, from the Hawai'i State Archives, Honolulu, Hawai'i

⁶⁹ Stroven, "A Life", 121

one tranquil delight to another; those delights, somehow, growing more and more tranquil, but none the less delightful as they multiplied.”⁷⁰ After experiencing the luxurious environs and warm hospitality of the Makee family, Stoddard then moved to Lahaina by early April, where he rented a semi-datched cottage in the then slumberous village.⁷¹ Away from the watchful eyes of his sister and in-laws, Stoddard was able to experience two meaningful *aikāne* relationships; one with Joe, in Lahaina, and later, one with Kana-ana, on the island of Molokaʻi.

**“In the Islands of Tranquil Delights”:
Publication and Stoddard’s Second Sojourn in
the Hawaiian Islands, 1868**

“I was stormed in at Lahaina”,⁷² Stoddard begins the narrative of his spring of 1869 trip to Maui which culminated in his keeping house with the young Hawaiian, “Joe of Lahaina”. It was Holy Week, Stoddard wrote, and he “concluded to go to housekeeping, because it would be so nice to have

⁷⁰ Stoddard, *ITD*, 168

⁷¹ Stroven, “A Life”, 122

⁷² *SSI*, p.112

my frugal meals in private, to go to mass and vespers daily, and then to come back and feel quite at home". Unlike his previous experience in California, Stoddard was able to experience, even if for a little while, the three elements which made up the thematic triadic of his life: domestic comfort, spiritual sanctuary, and *aikāne* relationship. Stoddard first encountered Joe "one night when there was a riotous festival off in a retired valley".⁷³ In the large gathering which Stoddard witnessed, he saw "a young face that seemed to embody a whole tropical romance... a figure so fresh and joyous that I began to realize how the old Greeks could worship mere physical beauty and forget its higher forms".⁷⁴ Stoddard's relationship with Joe commences as an ambiguous contract bordering on both marriage and guardianship: "when I got stormed in", he writes, "and resolved on housekeeping for a season, I took Joe, bribing his uncle to keep the peace, which he promised to do, provided I give bonds for Joe's irreproachable conduct while with me...I willingly

⁷³ Ibid., 114

⁷⁴ Ibid., 114

gave bonds – verbal ones...”⁷⁵ In time, Stoddard and Joe “soon got settled, and began to enjoy life”.⁷⁶ The season of housekeeping turned idyllic for Stoddard, who attended church in Lahaina and spent peaceful moments with his *aikāne*: “I would say to Joe”, wrote Stoddard, housekeeping *is* good fun, isn’t it?” Whereupon Joe would utter a sort of unanimous Yes, with his whole body and soul. Noticeably absent from Stoddard’s narrative is the discursive voice of Joe; Joe’s communication seems to be more physical than verbal. Nevertheless, Stoddard and Joe would relapse into “comfortable silences... then we would take a drink of cocoa-milk and finish our bananas, and go to bed, because we had nothing else to do”.⁷⁷

During Stoddard’s second Hawaiian sojourn of 1868-1869, he also visited the island of Moloka`i, where he experienced the comforts of yet another *aikāne* relationship. The highlight of this first trip to Moloka`i was a respite spent with a young Hawaiian named Kana-ana. As during his trip to Hilo in 1864, Stoddard was again escorted by

⁷⁵ Ibid., 114

⁷⁶ Ibid., 114

⁷⁷ Ibid., 113-114

a fellow westerner, an unnamed “Doctor”. Stoddard recounts his brief life and times with Kana-ana in the three-part narrative “Chumming with a Savage”, published in *South Sea Idyls* in 1873. According to the narrative, the Doctor with whom Stoddard was traveling was quite a vigilant man whose behavior did not appeal to Stoddard. In an ingenious deployment of the word “savage”, Stoddard’s second paragraph of the narrative begins thus, connoting the mechanical, (read: “industrial”) behavior of the doctor with the world of industry Stoddard scorned so much during his day and age: “The Doctor looked savage. Whenever he slung those saddle-bags over his left shoulder, and swung his right arm clean out from his body, like the regulator of a steam engine, you might know that his steam was pretty well up.”⁷⁸ In spite of this tenuous relationship with the Doctor, “fate” brought Stoddard to the “loveliest of valleys, so shut out from everything but itself that there were no temptations which might not be satisfied”.⁷⁹ Stoddard’s assessment was correct, for over the

⁷⁸ *Ibid.*, 25

⁷⁹ *Ibid.*, 27

course of a delightful period of time, he was in the presence of yet another beloved *aikāne*.

According to the narrative, Stoddard spotted Kana-ana in dense tropical greenery, and the meeting seemed to Stoddard providential: "I knew I was to have an experience with this young scion of a race of chiefs."⁸⁰ Stoddard beheld Kana-ana in wonder and waxes poetically and quite openly about the young Hawaiian's beauty: I saw a round, full, rather girlish face; lips ripe and expressive...; eyes perfectly glorious, - regular almonds, - with the mythical lashes[.] The smile which presently transfigured his face was of the nature that flatters you into submission against your will."⁸¹ Stoddard's feminization of Kana-ana's features figured prominently in eighteenth and nineteenth century Pacific Islands travel writing about the women of Oceania (with perhaps the exception of women from Melanesia). Stoddard's valorization of Kana-ana is different, however, given its explicitly homoerotic subtext. During a brief time, however, the two instantly feel a mutual attraction to each

⁸⁰ *Ibid.*, 28

⁸¹ *Ibid.*, 28

other which Stoddard recounted with affection: “His eye was so earnest and so honest, I could return his look...Having weighed me in his balance, - he placed his two hands on my two knees, and declared ‘I was his best friend, as he was mine; I must come at once to his house, and there always live with him’. What could I do but go? He pointed me to his lodge across the river, saying, ‘There was his home and mine.’”⁸² Due to Stoddard and the Doctor’s travel itinerary, however, Kana-ana and Stoddard were not able to meet until the following week, which passed slowly and longingly for Stoddard.

After a week, Stoddard and the “grave” Doctor returned to the secluded valley, which might have been the area of Halawa on the island of Moloka`i. Stoddard confessed his plan to stay in Halawa to the Doctor, who “tried to talk” Stoddard “over to the paths of virtue and propriety”; but Stoddard wouldn’t be talked over.⁸³ That night, it can be gleaned from the prose in the narrative, the sexual dimension of *aikāne* affection between Stoddard and Kana-ana was consummated, quite as

⁸² Ibid., 28

⁸³ Ibid., 31

if it were their wedding night: "...Kana-ana brought up his horse, got me on it, and mounted behind me to pilot the animal and sustain me in my first bareback act. Over the sand we went, and through the river to his hut, where I was taken in, fed, and petted in every possible way, and finally put to bed, where Kana-ana monopolized me..."⁸⁴ "I didn't sleep much at all" Stoddard adds about the experience; "I think I must have been excited".⁸⁵ This *aikāne* bonding was the beginning of an unforgettable time for Stoddard. He spent leisurely, languid days with Kana-ana, his family and friends in the valley itself and on the seashore. A good deal of time was spent lounging upon the large bed in Kana-ana's home, spending mornings lying beside Kana-ana and beholding him: "He lay close by me" wrote Stoddard of his *aikāne*; "His sleek figure, supple and graceful in repose, was the embodiment of free, untrammled youth."⁸⁶ In time, Stoddard was "...growing to feel more at home".⁸⁷

⁸⁴ *Ibid.*, 31

⁸⁵ *Ibid.*, 31

⁸⁶ *SSI*, 33

⁸⁷ *SSI*, 35

RECEIVED
AS
FOLLOWS

CHAPTER 5

Success as a Writer

An Appeal to the Bard

By early July 1869, Stoddard had completed a sizable tour of the Islands. Tanned, fit, and feeling well loved, he was now ready to write.¹ When Stoddard returned to San Francisco, he submitted his island sketches to the Californian *Overland Monthly*. Upon reading the story of Kana-ana, Stoddard's literary mentor and friend Bret Harte was enthusiastic about the narrative: "Now you have struck it", he told the aspiring author. "Keep on in this vein and presently you will have enough to fill a volume and you can call it *South Sea Bubbles!*"² Roger Austen postulates that after this second trip to Hawai'i, Stoddard was "taking sides" with the native Hawaiians he encountered in a way that the mainstream-oriented "Pip Pepperpod" could not several years earlier.³ In addition to contributing sketches to the *Overland Monthly*, Stoddard began writing a weekly column for the *Golden Era* in

¹ Austen and Crowley, *GP*, 44

² Harte quoted in Stoddard's "Confessions of a Reformed Poet", cited in Austen and Crowley, *GP*, 44

³ Austen and Crowley, *GP*, 44

September 1869.⁴ By the spring of 1870, however, Stoddard began to make new plans to venture into the Pacific; this time to the islands of Tahiti. Before Stoddard departed for Tahiti, however, he yearned to gain the approval and recognition of another author who championed love between men.

By the latter years of the nineteenth century, Walt Whitman became a major site for the self-formation of many members of a new Victorian group: the “bourgeois homosexual”, as Eve Kosofsky Sedgwick writes in *Between Men: English Literature and Male Homosocial Desire*. Photographs of Whitman, gifts of his books, scraps of his handwriting, gossip about him, admiring references in print – all seem to have functioned as badges of homosexual recognition, and were the currency of a new community which saw itself as being created in Whitman’s image.⁵ At this time in Stoddard’s development, during which he was able to integrate his sexuality into other aspects of his life, his identity revolved around being recognized by Whitman. Stoddard wrote to Horace Traubel,

⁴ Ibid., 44

⁵ Eve Kosofsky Sedgwick, *Between Men: English Literature and Male Homosocial Desire* (New York: Columbia University Press, 1985), 28, 206 passim., cited in Austen and Crowley, GP, xxviii

Whitman's friend, the following words: Do you know what life means to me? It means everything that Walt Whitman has ever said or sung...he breathed the breath of life into me".⁶Whitman had been familiar with Stoddard's reputation from literary friends in California such as Joachim Miller. Before venturing out into French Polynesia, Stoddard wrote to Whitman. "You have come to Stoddard's letter?", the bard said to his friend Traubel upon finding it. "Let me hear it: I'd like to: read it to me."⁷

Honolulu, Hawaiian Islands
March 2, 1869

To Walt Whitman:

May I quote you a couplet from your *Leaves of Grass*? "Stranger! If you, passing, meet me, and desire to speak to me, why should you not speak to me? And why should I not speak to you?"

I am the stranger who, passing, desires to speak to you. Once before I have done so offering you a few feeble verses. I don't wonder you did not reply to them. Now my voice is stronger. I ask - why will you not speak to me?

So fortunate as to be traveling in these very interesting Islands I have done wonders in my intercourse with these natives. For the first time I act as my nature prompts me. It would not answer in America, as a general principle, - not even in California, where men are tolerably bold. This is my mode of life.

At dusk I reach some village - a few grass huts by the sea or in some valley. The native villagers gather about me...

I mark one, a lad of eighteen or twenty years, who is regarding me. I call him to me, ask his name, giving mine in

⁶ Letter in the Stoddard Papers (Bancroft Library), cited in Austen and Crowley, GP, xxviii

⁷ Horace Traubel, *With Walt Whitman in Camden, January 21- April 7, 1889* (Southern Illinois University Press, 1959) 267

return. He speaks it over and over, manipulating my body unconsciously as it were, with bountiful and unconstrained love. I go to his grass house, eat with him his simple food, sleep with him upon his mats, and at night sometimes waken to find him watching me with earnest, patient looks, his arm over my breast and around me..."

You will easily imagine, my dear sir, how delightful I find this life. I read your Poems with a new spirit, to understand them as few may be able to. And I wish more than ever that I might possess a few lines from your pen...Do write me a few lines for they will be of immense value to me.

I wish it were possible to get your photograph...

My address is San Francisco, Calif., Box 1005, P.O. I shall immediately return there. In all places I am the same to you.

Chas.

Warren Stoddard⁸

In reading Stoddard's plaintive note, which touched the aging poet, Whitman commented to Traubel: "He is right: occidental people, for the most part, would not only not understand but would likewise condemn the sort of thing about which Stoddard centers his letter."⁹ Stoddard's hopes and prayers were answered by this response from Whitman some three months later:

June 12, 1869

Charles Warren Stoddard.

Dear Sir:

Your letters have reached me. I cordially accept your appreciation and reciprocate your friendship. I do not write many letters, but like to meet people. Those tender and primitive personal relations away off there in the Pacific islands (as described by you) touched me deeply.

⁸ Horace Traubel, *With Walt Whitman in Camden, January 21- April 7, 1889* (Southern Illinois University Press, 1959), 267-268

⁹ *Ibid.*, 269

I send you my picture, taken three months since. Also a newspaper. Farewell, my dear friend. I sincerely thank you and hope some day to meet you.

Walt Whitman¹⁰

Shortly after writing this encouraging note to his young admirer, Whitman commented to Traubel: "It's wonderful how true it is that a man can't go anywhere without taking himself along and without finding love meeting him more than half way. It gives you a new intimation of the providences to become the subject of such an ingratiating hospitality: it makes the big world littler – it knits all the fragments together: it makes the little world bigger – it expands the arc of comradery."¹¹

Unlike any other man during his day and age, Walt Whitman felt it imperative to give words and description for ardent intimacies between men, as expressed by his deployment of the word "comrade" throughout his famous *Leaves of Grass* publications during the 1860s. A pioneering and resistant man, Walt Whitman spoke, in his *Leaves of Grass* publications, eloquently and lyrically to

¹⁰ Ibid., 269

¹¹ Ibid., 269

portray nineteenth century affections between men. In the nineteenth century (as we will see below in the discussion of the politics of Pacific islands travel writing), a pure and non-erotic love was upheld as an ideal in romantic literature, most frequently depicting the intimate relations between men and women. As the term for the period's dominant romantic ideal, the concept of love was also sometimes appropriated from mainstream rhetoric to define and defend men's sexual and other affectionate desires between men and men, and men and youths. Whitman's poetry of the period struggled against the constrictions of the nineteenth century sentimental romance, trying to say more about the erotic dimension of men's relationships than that form allowed.¹² In his role as "Pip Pepperpod", Stoddard had adhered to the genteel ideal of romantic love in his earliest literary efforts; now that he had ventured out into the Pacific and had the opportunity to experience the native Hawaiian, alternative of *aikāne* relationships,

¹² Jonathan Ned Katz, *Love Stories: Sex Between Men Before Homosexuality* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 2001), chapters 3 and 7, passim.

he grew to love the life and work of Whitman more than ever.

Before Stoddard set out for Tahiti in 1870, he sent yet another revealing letter to Whitman. Stoddard's letter commenced with this greeting, which was undoubtedly not lost upon the savant Whitman: "In the name of CALAMUS listen to me!" Historian Jonathan Ned Katz observes that the capitalized "Calamus" emphatically established Stoddard's interest in men-loving-men as the particular link between them.¹³ Explaining that he needed to "get in amongst people who are not afraid of instincts and scorn hypocrisy [sic]", he went on to further explain that his experiences with his Hawaiian *aikāne* had given him "the fullest joy of my life", and he requested the bard's blessing upon his departure for Pape'ete: "I could then return to the South Seas feeling sure of your friendship and I should try to live the real life there for your sake as well as my own".¹⁴ "As to you" Whitman replied, I do not of course object to your emotional and adhesive nature, & outlet thereof, but warmly

¹³ *Ibid.*, 183

¹⁴ Horace Traubel, *With Walt Whitman in Camden*, vol.3 (Philadelphia: University of Pennsylvania Press, 1961), 444-45, cited in Austen and Crowley, GP, xxviii

approve of them. The elder Whitman, however, looked somewhat askance at Stoddard's looking unnecessarily far afield for that outlet: "But do you know (perhaps you do) how the hard, pungent, gritty, worldly experiences & qualities of American practical life, also serve? How they prevent extravagant sentimentalism? & how they are without their own great value & even joy?"¹⁵

Whitman understood Stoddard's plea clearly and heartily. Historian Jonathan Ned Katz writes that this letter was, in fact, one of the most explicit private statements supporting the active sexual expression of male-male eros written in the nineteenth century United States.¹⁶ Whitman's use of the term "adhesiveness", which had been expressed in his *Leaves of Grass* poems for the first time, was borrowed from the phrenologists (the pop psychologists of Whitman's day) who measured areas of people's heads to adduce the quantities of the various emotions they contained. In Whitman's statement to Stoddard, he reconstructed the term "adhesiveness" as a word for what he also called

¹⁵ *Walt Whitman: The Correspondence*, ed. Edwin Haviland Miller (New York: New York University Press, 1961-69), 2:97, cited in Austen and Crowley, GP, xxviii

¹⁶ Jonathan Ned Katz, *Love Stories*, 184

“manly love” – the love of men for men.¹⁷ In admonishing his young admirer about the value of Stateside sensual pleasures, Whitman was suggesting an equally satisfying alternative to Stoddard’s need to travel half way around the world to find the “real life”.¹⁸ After receiving this encouraging letter from Whitman, Stoddard apparently felt that he had received the blessing of the bard from New York, feeling more certain of his friendship, and most importantly, Stoddard’s own emerging homosexual and literary identities.

“A Prodigal in Tahiti”: 1870

Having received hearty encouragement from Walt Whitman, Stoddard boarded the French bark *Chevert* on July 7, 1870, en route to Pape`ete. Literary historian Roger Austen postulates that Stoddard had two reasons for embarking on this trip to French Polynesia; one, he needed new material for more stories which could make his prospective “South Sea Bubbles” complete, and secondly, his mind had become “saturated with romance” after feeding “on the nectar and ambrosia that drop from

¹⁷ Jonathan Ned Katz, *Love Stories*, 108

¹⁸ *Ibid.*, 184

the pens of Herman Melville, Jules Verne, Mayne Reid and the rest”.¹⁹ All in all, Stoddard spent a total of about three months in Tahiti, a sojourn which began with quite a memorable seaboard journey, as recounted in “In A Transport”, published in Stoddard’s *South Sea Idyls* in 1873.

Clutching desperately to his “French in six easy lessons” text book, Stoddard boarded the transport at anchor at San Francisco. He was embraced by the little French *aspirant de marine (cadet)*, Thanaron, “like a long-lost brother”. Stoddard remarks about this fortuitous display of Thanaron’s affection by stating that “heaven had thrown me into the arms of the exceptional foreigner who would, to a certain extent, console me for the loss of my whole family.” After leaving port, Stoddard “brushed the fog from my eyes with the sleeve of my monkey-jacket, and exclaimed..., ‘My native land, good night.’”²⁰

Like Hawai`i, Tahiti was also a group of islands in transition during the mid- to late-nineteenth century. Nineteenth century whalers

¹⁹ Austen and Crowley, *GP*, 48 & Stoddard, *ITD*, 13

²⁰ Stoddard, *SSI*, 300-305

during the earlier part of the century put ashore in French Polynesia to repair and resupply their vessels and sought rest and recreation. Nineteenth century seafarers, such as those on the bark *Chevert*, demanded relief from the rigors of the sea – fresh food, new faces, alcohol, and sex. Pape`ete was an especially popular port of call in Polynesia.²¹ During the mid-nineteenth century, France had the most pressing claims for Pape`ete and the other islands in the region due to the fact that there was a proposal to build a Panama Canal. It appeared that Tahiti and the Marquesas might become valuable ports of call on a route between Panama and Australia or New Zealand, and France made its move in 1842 by declaring sovereignty over the Marquesas and a protectorate over Tahiti. With control of these territories, in addition to New Caledonia, France had established itself as a major power in the Pacific.²²

As the ship neared the Marquesas, Stoddard states that “there was something in the delicious atmosphere, growing warmer every day, and

²¹ K.R. Howe, Robert C. Kiste, et al., *Tides of History*, p.20

²² *Tides of History*, p.25

something in the delicious sea...that unmanned us; so we [Thanaron and Stoddard] rushed to our own little cabin and hugged one another, lest we should forget how when we were restored to our sisters and our sweethearts, and everything was forgiven and forgotten in one intense moment of French remorse”²³ Stoddard’s observance of being “unmanned” by the tropical climate he encountered as he sailed was a common descriptor for westerners reaching the luxuriant climes, isles and indigenous peoples of the South Pacific; for the bounty and the beauty of the islands were often connected with the beauty and sexuality of the bodies of Pacific Islanders.²⁴ Stoddard also wrote of the same-sex intimacies between the first officer of the ship, who was “the happy possessor of a tight little African, known as Nero...as handsome a specimen of tangible darkness as you will sight in a summer’s cruise”.²⁵ Stoddard’s estimation of Nero’s “possession” is reflective of French colonial projects and colonization of Africans during the

²³ Ibid.,308-309

²⁴ Lenore Manderson and Margaret Jolly, eds., *Sites of Desire, Economies of Pleasure: Sexualities in Asia and the Pacific* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1997), 100

²⁵ Ibid., 315

nineteenth century. Stoddard passed the approximately month-long voyage at sea dining in the mess with the French sailors, abiding with his friend Thanaron, and watching mock sea-battles between the crew members. Finally, after viewing “long, low coral reefs”, Stoddard beheld “rocks towering out of the sea, palm-crowned, foam-fringed...and beyond them all, gorgeous and glorious Tahiti.”²⁶

Shortly after taking up residence in a “chamber at the corner of a palm-tree and a jungle of vanilla beans”, Stoddard formally presented himself to the American consul of Pape`ete, entering the consulate offices with “an air of one who reposes confidence in the representative of his country and is proud to meet him under alien skies”. Stoddard offered the consul, sitting adroitly “in white flannel behind the official desk” with letters of introduction, “among them one from the poet who had sung my praises and blown me to sea with his inspiring breath”. In this statement, the young Stoddard was referring to the illustrious Walt Whitman, who had just given him hearty

²⁶ Ibid., 320

encouragement months before his arrival in Pape`ete. The consul, however, was most probably more leery of Stoddard than impressed, and “waved” him “to a chair in the corner of the room”. While continuing to officially leaf through Stoddard’s letters of introduction, the consul at last gazed upon Stoddard “with a business-like severity that was not in keeping with the perpetual repose of the island of tranquil delights”, all the while striving “to make due allowance for what seemed to me at the time a discourteous reception”. Continuing to gaze upon Stoddard with “his bland blue eyes”, the consul said “What brings you here?”. Then, Stoddard reveals to his reading audience a little bit of the ulterior motives behind his trip to Tahiti: “I hoped to find something in which to hide myself until I might satiate my soul and get money enough to secure my passage home. I was assured that the case was hopeless; that there were men enough in that latitude; and of young men, too many.” This might have suited the young Stoddard well enough, especially if it meant being involved in another *aikāne* relationship; the young adventurer, however,

did not reveal this to the suspicious American consul, who warned Stoddard that he must conduct himself “in a path extremely straight and uncomfortably narrow; I must keep myself aloof from the native population.”²⁷ This warning indicates that the American consul in Tahiti may have frequently met young men like Stoddard who were as equally “seduced” by all that French Polynesia may have offered in terms of pleasures forbidden and otherwise. Undaunted by this warning from diplomatic officialdom, Stoddard proceeded to do just the opposite, intoning this euphemistic phrase to the *cognescenti* of his reading audience: “What if the gentleman in white flannel should discover me yielding for a moment to the seductions of the climate? The climate of the Spice Islands is seductive!”²⁸ “Then”, Stoddard recounts, “a voice said unto me, ‘Let us go hence’”.²⁹ Thus began Stoddard’s adventures in Tahiti.

After his departure from the consul’s offices, Stoddard waxes poetic about his discovery of Pape`ete and its surroundings: “blinded, heart-

²⁷ Stoddard, *ITD*, 15-17

²⁸ *Ibid.*, 18-19

²⁹ *Ibid.*, 21

sick, foot sore, I went out into the green gardens of that summer island like a new Adam whose sins had been forgiven him and who once more found himself alone in Eden”.³⁰ As Stoddard encountered the native inhabitants of the island, he writes on the theme of one wounded from the barbs of civilization: “I was a stranger in their midst; they pitied me for the sorrows I had known, the effects of which I could not laugh away; they pitied me again for the sufferings I had endured among the enlightened of the earth and for the indelible scars I bore in form and feature, these the unmistakable evidences of civilization”.³¹ Although it is not readily evident from Stoddard’s textual account of this trip to Tahiti that he successfully embarked upon other *aikāne* relationships, he was nevertheless enchanted with the native Islanders he met: “As they drew me to shore their beautiful eyes glowed with the love-light that is kindled at their birth... There were those who would restore my soul with gentle dalliance; who with deft fingers manipulated my body while they passed

³⁰ Ibid., 21

³¹ Ibid., 26

pleasantries from lip to lip...”³² These statements indicate that Stoddard enjoyed some degree of physical pleasure with the native men of Tahiti to a certain degree, “until there was neither nook nor corner in the kingdom but I had not threaded;...until we seem to have exhausted the tranquil delights of the island...”³³

Stoddard’s experience in Tahiti, from the historical record and the literature of trip he left behind, demonstrated that he encountered a difficult time in French Polynesia. “The few whites who monopolized the business of the island”, Stoddard recounted in his narrative *Island of Tranquil Delights*, “seemed to recognize me at once as an intruder”, wrote the new arrival.³⁴ “My landlord requested all payments in advance; other letters of introduction were presented with diffidence and received with strictly polite disinterest”.³⁵ When his money began to run out, Stoddard appealed to the local Catholic church, to which he was always to

³² Ibid., 26-27

³³ Ibid., 33

³⁴ Ibid., 18

³⁵ Ibid., 18

turn in times of extremity.³⁶ Stoddard turned to the “good, old bishop” for consolation, but was only granted “a blessing, an autograph and a ‘God speed’ to some other part of creation.”³⁷ While visiting the bishop at the mission house, Stoddard mused about integrating the spiritual, monastic antipode of his existence into a possible future life in Tahiti: “approaching the Mission House through sunlit cloisters of palms”, writes Stoddard, “I was greeted most tenderly. I would have gladly taken any amount of holy orders for the privilege of ending my troublesome days in the sweet seclusion of the Mission House.”³⁸ Little did Stoddard know about the difficulties and hostilities encountered by Catholic missions in Tahiti in opposition to the long-established Protestant presence in the region, in addition to general resistance to French rule during this period of the 1870s.³⁹ In desperation, Stoddard took up a menial job with a French merchant, in whose chicken coop he was allowed to sleep. Not feeling up to the task of hauling sacks of

³⁶ Austen and Crowley, *GP*, 51

³⁷ Stoddard, *SSI*, 348

³⁸ *Ibid.*, 348

³⁹ *Tides of History*, p.125

potatoes, he soon quit. Eventually, his clothes were in rags.⁴⁰

One day, Stoddard was approached by the American consul in Pape`ete who said to him: “Don’t you think you had better go home?”. Stoddard replied tersely “that I thought I had”.⁴¹ The consul then informed Stoddard that he would soon be taking sail for San Francisco, and that if the young adventurer could guarantee his ship fare upon arriving in the Golden Gate, that he was welcome to make the journey. Stoddard accepted the consul’s offer. Stoddard arrived back in San Francisco in early November 1870.⁴²

An Aborted Journey to Sāmoa with a Hawaiian Terminus: 1872

When Stoddard returned to San Francisco in late fall of 1870, San Francisco had changed dramatically from the liminal, coastal outpost on America’s westernmost frontier to a bustling metropolis. One of the most significant events

⁴⁰ Austen and Crowley, *GP*, 51

⁴¹ Stoddard, *ITD*, 33-34

⁴² Austen and Crowley, *GP*, 53

which clinched San Francisco's status as a new, thriving American urban center was the completion of the transcontinental railroad in the year 1869. Seemingly undaunted by these changes, Stoddard returned with fresh new material to include in the "South Sea Bubbles" text proposed by literary mentor Bret Harte. Stoddard's Bohemian literary circle, however, had also changed significantly, aspiring to more mainstream, "structural" (in the expression of Victor Turner) employment in the public arena. The bohemian community of Stoddard's earlier years had found a modicum of respectability among the greater literati community of the United States, emerging out of the limen of just marginal writers of a small community on a frontier. This signified, as literary historian Roger Austen has noted, the end of San Francisco's "Golden Era" of frontier literature. By the end of 1870, many of Stoddard's literary friends had either moved to the East coast of the United States or to England, or were planning trips there. Bret Harte was invited to Boston, where he was offered a \$10,000 contract. Mark Twain, who had contributed

vastly to frontier literature, had married and settled in Buffalo, New York, where he was editing a newspaper and making a name for himself as a humorist and lecturer.⁴³ Still concerned with making his own place in the literary world and still feeling the call to the South Seas, Stoddard decided to go to Sāmoa to hopefully find more material for filling out his “South Seas Bubbles”.

Stoddard’s plan was to take passage aboard the schooner *Witch Queen*, bound for Sāmoa, where he could find sufficient material to fill out the volume of South Sea sketches he was eager to publish.⁴⁴ On Saturday, February 10, 1872, the *Witch Queen*, with Captain Bannister in command, cleared from San Francisco harbor.⁴⁵ Bound for Sāmoa via Honolulu, the oceanic voyage would have normally taken twelve to fifteen days from San Francisco to Honolulu. Due to extremely inclement weather, however, which made the trip a harrowing one for the sea-worthy Stoddard, the trip took a little over one month; the longest passage, wrote

⁴³ Austen and Crowley, *GP*, 53

⁴⁴ MS. Letter, Harry Edwards to Stoddard, April 4, 1872 (Huntington Library), cited in Carl Stroven, “A Life”, 158

⁴⁵ *San Francisco Evening Bulletin*, February 12, 1872, cited in Stroven, “A Life”, 158

Stoddard, from San Francisco on record.⁴⁶ After finally arriving in Honolulu, Stoddard entertained no wish to continue his journey to Sāmoa, relying instead on experiences in the Hawaiian Islands to complete the wished for volume. During this third sojourn in Hawai'i, Stoddard spent time on the islands of O'ahu and Maui. Three sketches in *South Sea Idyls*, which was the fruit of Stoddard's South Sea's adventures published in 1873, are the result of this journey: "The House of the Sun", "The Chapel of the Palms", and "Kahele". Of them, he wrote, "There is enough truth in these chapters to flood a well".⁴⁷

During his third trip to Hawai'i, Stoddard spent a few weeks in Honolulu, where he was the guest of Prince William and then King Lunalilo in Waikīkī.⁴⁸ After time spent on O'ahu, Stoddard then ventured off to Maui, where he found his own "Man Friday" in the young native Hawaiian named Kahele. According to his narrative about his

⁴⁶ "Letter from Honolulu", San Francisco *Alta California*, March 29, 1872; and Stoddard, "Swallow Flights", San Francisco *Alta California*, March 31, 1872, cited in Stroven, "A Life", 158

⁴⁷ Stroven, "A Life", pp.159-160; and Stoddard, "Kahele's Foreordination", *South Sea Idyls*, 2nd ed., p.261, cited in Stroven, "A Life", p.160

⁴⁸ Stoddard, "Swallow Flights", *Golden Era*, vol. xxi, no.11, p.4 (February 9, 1873), cited in Stroven, "A Life", 159

adventures with Kahele, written in a short story of the same name published in *South Sea Idyls*, the relationship Stoddard appears to have had with Kahele seems to have had minimal *aikāne* characteristics to it, compared to his previous, noteworthy experiences with Kana-ana (Stoddard's companion in "Chumming with a Savage") and Joe (of "Joe of Lahaina"). Kahele, aptly named "The Goer" in Hawaiian, was Stoddard's *aide de camp* during his sojourn in Maui. Stoddard and Kahele met in the somber valley of Meha of Maui, where Stoddard was introduced to the indigenous people of the area. On one beautiful day in the valley, however, Stoddard issued the clarion cry of "To the beach!", and off he and a group of native Maui islanders with "cast-off raiment" gathered at the shore.⁴⁹ "With a freedom that was amusing as well as a little embarrassing [sic]", Stoddard wrote, "I was deliberately fingered, fondled, and fussed with by nearly every dusky soul in turn". He mused at yet another instance of untrammelled joyousness in the Islands: "'At last', thought I, 'fate has led me

⁴⁹ Stoddard, SSI, 261

beyond the pale of civilization; for this begins to look like the genuine article”⁵⁰.

Stoddard’s accounts of this trip to Maui have a somewhat more serious tone to them than his earlier narratives of his trips into the Pacific, which probably accounts for the fact that Stoddard was earnestly making an effort to balance out his earlier, lighter travel prose with more serious reflections to include in his up-coming publication of *South Sea Idyls* in 1873. This more serious tone is reflected in his narratives “The House of the Sun” and “In the Chapel of the Palms”.

“The charm of travel is to break new paths”, intoned the prescient Stoddard on the eve of his trip through Haleakalā.⁵¹ Fueled with fresh brewed coffee and an ample breakfast, Stoddard and Kahele hiked up the slopes of the volcano, and then down into the crater, where they camped after the end of a long ride with a group of men from California visiting the island. Stoddard’s account of his voyage up and through Haleakala ends with he and Kahele arriving on saddleback at the sleepy village of

⁵⁰ Stoddard, *SSI*, 261

⁵¹ *Ibid.*, 223

Kaupo, where they were greeted by the relatives of Kahele. On the spurs of Hoke the mule, Stoddard, accompanied by his friend Kahele, visited the gentle, French Catholic priests Père Fidelis and Père Amabilis in the “Chapel of the Palms”. Upon meeting the compassionate priests serving the native community, Stoddard wondered (as he always did, fluctuating between the antipodes of secular and monastic existence): “I could have sat there at his feet contented; I could have put off my worldly cares, resigned ambition, forgotten the past, and, in the blessed tranquility of that hour, have dwelt joyfully under the palms with him, seeking only to follow in his patient footsteps until the end should come.”⁵² From Stoddard’s perspective, there were two kinds of missionaries in Hawai’i and throughout the world: the austere and conservative Protestants, who were admonishing indigenous peoples to adopt clothes and abjure the hula, and the Catholics, such as the priests from Maui as depicted in the “The Chapel of the Palms” who were well-educated, tolerant, and selfless, and who impressed Stoddard as being uncanonized saints. Their

⁵² Ibid., 244

example made Stoddard wonder if serving the church might not be the answer for him after all.⁵³ After several tranquil days at the priests' mission quarters on Maui, Stoddard and Kahele concluded their tour of the island, thus bringing Stoddard's third trip to Hawai'i to a close.

A Claim to Fame and a European Interstice

In the fall of 1873, J.R. Osgood & Company of Boston published Stoddard's Pacific Islands tales under the title that the editors proposed: *South Sea Idyls*. While Stoddard remained in San Francisco during the publication of this book which propelled him to a degree of fame, his literary acquaintances from the Bohemian circles of San Francisco found themselves "reaggregated", in the terms of van Genep, into wider recognition by the mainstream literary world of North America and Europe. In spite of this modicum of success, Roger Austen writes that Stoddard was growing restless at this time, especially when he learned that his literary colleagues Ambrose Bierce and Joaquin Miller had

⁵³ Austen and Crowley, *GP*, 56

gone off to England to further their careers.⁵⁴ Both of these friends urged Stoddard to come to England: “If you will only wake up, use some snap and nerve”, Joaquin Miller wrote to Stoddard. “Sell your autographs if you can get anything for them and come over here. No magazine article will bring less than \$25. And there are 20 a man can write for. You can get here cheap—“⁵⁵ In addition to the recognition received from his publication of *South Sea Idyls*, one more event ensured Stoddard’s impending trip to Europe: Stoddard’s old school friend, Charles de Young, then owner of the *San Francisco Chronicle*, agreed to hire him for a year as the paper’s roving reporter in England and on the continent.⁵⁶

Stoddard’s sojourn in Europe was to last four years. During a stay in London in 1873, Chatto and Windus publishers released *South Sea Idyls* under the title *Summer Cruising in the South Seas* in a handsome addition that seemed to please Stoddard

⁵⁴ Austen and Crowley, *GP*, 57-58

⁵⁵ Joaquin Miller to Charles Warren Stoddard, 24 March 1873 (The Huntington Library), in Stroven, “A Life”, 167, cited in Austen and Crowley, *GP*, 57-58

⁵⁶ Austen and Crowley, *GP*, 58

at the time.⁵⁷ Stoddard spent a good deal of time in Italy, where he resided in Venice with the young American artist Frank Millet; During this trip in the year 1874, he engaged in a same-sex relationship with this man of approximately the same age. Why was this relationship an unsuccessful one for Stoddard?

Stoddard's new-found friend during this year was the American artist Francis Davis Millet. The two had heard of each other, but had never met. Stoddard was thirty-one in the year 1874, and Millet was twenty-eight. At the opera in Venice one evening, as Stoddard recalled, Millet asked "Where are you going to spend the winter?" Millet then invited Stoddard to live in his eight-room rented house, and the two lived together during the winter of 1874-75. As historian Jonathan Ned Katz has studied, Millet's romantic letters to Stoddard indicate that the men shared a bed in an attic room overlooking the Lagoon, Grand Canal and Public Garden. A lack of space did not explain this bed sharing, and Stoddard's earlier and later sexual liaisons with men, his written essays and memoirs,

⁵⁷ Austen and Crowley, *GP*, 68

and Millett's letters to Stoddard, all strongly suggest that their intimacy found active affectionate and erotic expression. As Katz explains, "Stoddard's erotic interests seem to have focused exclusively on men, [while] Millett's were more fluid. In the last quarter of the nineteenth century, Millett's psychic configuration was probably the more common, Stoddard's exclusive interest in men the less usual".⁵⁸

In February 1875, Stoddard, seeking new cities to write about for the San Francisco Chronicle, made a three-week tour of northern Italy, revising these memoirs twelve years later for the magazine *Ave Maria*. Stoddard wrote that his unnamed painter friend accompanied him as guide and "companion-in-arms", which was a punning term for his bedmate. The definitely intended pun allowed Stoddard to imply more about this companionship than he could possibly say directly at that time.⁵⁹ The ever traveling Stoddard, however, was hard for Millett to pin down during this time. At one point, Millett admonished the

⁵⁸ Jonathan Ned Katz, *Love Stories* (Chicago and London: The University of Chicago Press, 2001), 203

⁵⁹ *Ibid.*, 205

flighty Stoddard: “I see indications of butterflying...”. “Butterflying” was slang during this period for “fickleness”, “inconstancy in love”, or “sexual unfaithfulness”.⁶⁰ Moreover, Frank Millett’s use of the word butterfly was an apt metaphor for describing Stoddard at this time: Charles Warren Stoddard was not able to successfully anchor himself, as it were, to the structural engagements of United States society as a relatively open gay man of letters who desired a modicum of same-sex domesticity that had not quite yet existed within that structure.

The very Catholic metaphor of Italy was probably one of the reasons why Stoddard had his first significant same-age and same-sex relationship with Frank Millett. This very metaphor, however, most probably contained the germs which led to the relationship’s failure, for Stoddard exhibited little capability of forming the more permanent bonds he longed for most. In a way, Stoddard’s time in Italy with Frank Millett was closely linked to his first *aikāne* relationship in Hawai‘i: in Venice with Frank Millett, Stoddard was in the midst of a

⁶⁰ Ibid., 213

domestic, same-sex relationship far from the Victorian social structure of the United States. Stoddard enjoyed his time in Venice with Frank Millett, but similar to his time spent with Kana-ana on the island of Moloka'i, his structural commitments to the San Francisco metropole in which he lived and worked drew him away from the idyl of his dreams.

As a Catholic, Stoddard felt it was his duty to engage in a pilgrimage to Rome, where he cultivated the friendship of priests who would later play an influential role in Stoddard's own reaggregation into American society some ten years later. From January to July of 1876, Stoddard made a semi-circular tour of the countries bordering the eastern Mediterranean, where he gathered materials for sketches which would be published later in his career. Stoddard found himself at a stand-still in the spring of 1877, when he wrote to a friend about a sense of rootlessness:

As for myself, I have torn up my roots so often that they do not strike into any soil with much vigor. The warmer and softer it be, the better my chance—but I was ever an airplant...

You will find me changed, I fear, and most likely not for the better. My enthusiasm has boiled down; man delights me not, nor woman either...

But there is more grit in me than of old and I feel my ribs bracing themselves against the day when I shall come breast to breast with the world.⁶¹

By the spring of 1877, Stoddard decided to return to the United States. In July of that year, he made a farewell tour of Europe: first to Venice and northern Italy, then to Naples and Marseilles, and finally to Paris, by way of Lourdes. After that, Stoddard boarded a steamship for Liverpool, arriving back on the U.S. East Coast on August 26, 1877.⁶²

By the end of 1878, Stoddard returned to San Francisco, where he resumed writing for the *Chronicle*, an occasional piece in the *Atlantic*, *Scribner's*, or the *Ave Maria*, whose editor, Father Daniel Hudson of Notre Dame University, he had been introduced to through Father Dan Paul, a priest Stoddard met in Rome. In the winter of 1879-1880, Roger Austen writes that Stoddard first became acquainted with Robert Louis Stevenson, who recalled some time later that it was then in

⁶¹George Wharton James, "Charles Warren Stoddard", *National Magazine* 54 (August 1911), 661, quoted from Austen and Crowley, *GP*, 83

⁶²Austen and Crowley, *GP*, 81-84

conversation with Stoddard that he “first fell under the spell” of the Pacific Islands.⁶³

From 1880 to 1882, however, Roger Austen writes that Stoddard grew increasingly “depressed, frightened and helpless”.⁶⁴ Stoddard was often subject to paranoia and neurasthenia, as it was then known, and complained to his friend and confidant Father Hudson that “the times are out of joint” and that “I am out of my element and shall ever be so.”⁶⁵ Here, it is important to take a brief departure into the nineteenth century state of science and the medical diagnoses offered for those of same-sex orientation and temperament, for the impact of the book *Psychopathia Sexualis*, written by the German psychiatrist Richard von Krafft-Ebing, had an important influence upon the doctors who diagnosed Stoddard on multiple occasions during his adult life with *neurasthenia*.

Psychopathia Sexualis is a compendium of more than two hundred case histories of individuals who illustrated various and sundry manifestations of

⁶³ “The Wrecker”, in *The Complete Works of Robert Louis Stevenson* (New York: Scribner’s, 1919), 10:144-45, cited from Austen and Crowley, GP, 91

⁶⁴ GP, 92-93

⁶⁵ Stoddard to Daniel Hudson, 31 October 1879 and 1 November 1880 (CHUD, University of Notre Dame Archives), in Stroven, “A Life”, pg.213, cited from Austen and Crowley, GP, 92-93

sexual life, with most of the cases being quite bizarre and pathological. Although Krafft-Ebing's original goal was to record the varieties of human sexual expression, several of the cases of individuals in the text would be considered by a modern psychiatrist to have severe mental illness but who also happen to be homosexual or are deluded in some way about their sexuality. The most lengthy case study, stretching to almost thirteen pages, is an account of a man who gradually becomes convinced that his body is changing from that of a male into that of a female, such as on the occasion when Stoddard imagined himself being converted into the body of his good friend Ada Clare. Krafft-Ebing recites such examples of mental states as being functional signs of *degeneration*, which resulted in a whole complex of later theories on degeneracy. The words *neurasthenia* and *neuropathic* recur again and again throughout Krafft-Ebing's case studies, words that were used at the turn of the twentieth century to describe the decrepit state of the nervous system of individuals thought to be constitutionally inferior.⁶⁶

⁶⁶ Francis Mark Mondimore, *A Natural History of Homosexuality* (Baltimore and London: Johns Hopkins

These diagnoses were given to Stoddard time and time again, especially during his later years during his tentative reaggregation as a professor in Washington, D.C. during the turn of the twentieth century. Such a diagnosis suggests that mid- to late-nineteenth century doctors in the United States (especially on the East Coast) were familiar with Krafft-Ebing's work, not to mention the fragile psychosexual nature and state of Stoddard's being during a time which he tried, successfully and unsuccessfully, to integrate his homosexuality into other aspects of his life.

By the end of 1879, Stoddard's work with the *San Francisco Chronicle* came to an end, and during 1880 and 1881, he had no source of regular income. Stoddard's 67-year-old father, Samuel Burr Stoddard, lost his job at the customs house, and soon his parents left for Hawai'i, hoping to gain a fresh start with the assistance of their daughter and son-in-law, the Makees. Stoddard was deeply despondent and tried to commit suicide in February of 1880. "I have been ill", he wrote to Daniel Hudson, with whom his friendship was to deepen

over time. "I wanted to die and tried to, but failed. I have no wish to live and struggle on as it seems must ever be my fate".⁶⁷ However much a child of New England he might have been, he had no wish to go East. "I'm afraid of the East", Stoddard wrote friend John Hay in 1881, "where you all are such fighters".⁶⁸ Since the rest of his family was in Hawai'i, Stoddard seriously considered yet another sojourn in Honolulu with the hope of finding a writing job. These hopes were unexpectedly answered when Stoddard was offered the chance to come to the Kingdom, on yet another "roving commission", to write editorials for the Honolulu *Saturday Press*.

"A Roving Commission" in the Kingdom of Hawai'i: 1882-1884

On Sunday, October 29, 1881, Stoddard arrived by steamer at Honolulu.⁶⁹ When the *Australia* sailed into Honolulu harbor, all the bells in town were ringing, a cannonade was set off, and

⁶⁷ Stoddard to Daniel Hudson, 10 February 1880 (CHUD, University of Notre Dame Archives), cited in Stroven, "A Life", 214

⁶⁸ Stoddard to John Hay, 15 September 1881 (Brown University Library), cited in Austen and Crowley, *GP*, 93

⁶⁹ Stoddard, MS. Journal, "Bungalow Series", vol.ii, entry for October 29, 1882 (PACC, University of Hawai'i at Manoa), cited in Stroven, "A Life"

people ashore began cheering as the ship entered its berth. Colored lamps were hanging from the towers of the fire department and the Catholic cathedral, and amid the canopies and flags, local Chinese residents had built a little kiosk that proclaimed “Welcome by the Children of the Flowery Land”. This grand display, however, was not intended for Stoddard, as much as he may have enjoyed it. The town was giving a royal welcome to King David Kalākaua, who was completing a goodwill tour of the world.⁷⁰ King David Kalākaua embarked on the tour to learn more about the various contemporaneous powers who were especially influential in the Pacific and to promote his native kingdom to the world, with the hope of perhaps creating a Polynesian confederacy to unite in the face of foreign entrenched interests and encroachment in the region. What was highly coincidental was the fact that Stoddard and Kalākaua happened to be aboard the same steamship from San Francisco, and he wrote about the experience of the sailing as the boat approached the Islands:

⁷⁰ Austen and Crowley, *GP*, 94

I chanced to be on the same ship with his Majesty during the voyage between San Francisco and Honolulu; and, as we were old acquaintances, we were naturally more or less familiar...

The captain [of the *Australia*] managed to run us into port about thirty-six hours before the several Committees on the Royal Reception were ready to receive his Majesty. This we knew nothing of. Consequently when we sighted the blue peaks of Maui, ran under the lone shadows of Molokai, whither the unhappy lepers are banished for life, and then made for Koko Head and Oahu, beyond which lay our harbor, we clicked glasses with the King, and the congratulations were mutual and profuse.⁷¹

This experience of socializing with the King must have been somewhat awkward for Stoddard, for in a way, during this sojourn at least, his literary talents would be deployed by those, in the words of Roger Austen, in the “enemy camp” of Kalākaua and his regime.⁷² Before arriving in Honolulu in 1882, Stoddard had been hired to write scathing editorials that would attack King Kalākaua by directly attacking Walter Murray Gibson, the ex-Mormon missionary who was regarded by the *Saturday Press* as a “wicked influence on Kalākaua”.⁷³ In 1882, Thomas G. Thrum, a long-time publisher of the *Hawaiian Annual*, published a political tract, *The Shepherd Saint of Lanai*, in which he attacked Gibson. Although Gibson and

⁷¹ (Charles Warren Stoddard, “How the King Came Home”, in *Ave Maria*, July 1, 1893 (Notre Dame, Indiana) 5-6

⁷² Austen and Crowley, *GP*, 94

⁷³ *Ibid.*, 94

Thrum had been on good terms the previous decade, Thrum objected to Gibson's alliance with the Kamehameha regime after Gibson, the so-called "shepherd of Lanai", became prominent in politics. By aligning himself with the Euro-American oligarchy in the Islands, Thrum railed against Gibson, who was slated out to become premier of the kingdom, and published his *Shepherd Saint* with the intention of exposing Gibson as an opportunist and discrediting the Kalākaua government.⁷⁴ Historical evidence suggests that Thrum's media coverage and influence reached far and wide within the Kingdom, where Stoddard's talents were then called upon for service to oligarchic interests there.

Stoddard's commission, however, was not met with success, and King Kalākaua nevertheless appointed Gibson premier of the Kingdom the following May of 1883. Stoddard's editorials, ostensibly written from data supplied by others, included exposés of Gibson's life before and after he came to Hawai'i, an article suggesting that Gibson's acts proved insane; one ridiculing his

⁷⁴Gwynn Barrett, "Walter Murray Gibson: The Shepherd Saint of Lanai Revisited", in *Utah Historical Quarterly*, Spring 1972, Volume 40, Number 2, 144

“Ministerial Tour” of the Islands, articles attacking the King’s proposed coronation ceremonies and his recent trip around the world, and one urging Gibson’s enforced retirement from public life. Stoddard’s method in these works was to attack through sarcasm and innuendo, implying that both Gibson and the King were mentally unbalanced. As Stoddard biographer Carl Stroven writes, however, Stoddard was not suited to work in the field of political journalism, and the editors of the *Saturday Press* realized that Stoddard’s talents were not well deployed for the task at hand.⁷⁵ Stoddard still continued to enjoy this last of his four sojourns in Hawai`i, where his responsibilities at the *Saturday Press* did not require his presence at the Honolulu offices.⁷⁶

Shortly after arriving in Honolulu, Stoddard took up residence at the Royal Hawaiian Hotel, located at that time on Beretania Street. In the summer of 1882, he moved into a large house in Nu`uanu, owned by a widow of the name of Mrs. Harris. Stoddard lived in the Harris home for ten

⁷⁵ Stroven, “A Life”, 222-223

⁷⁶ *Ibid.*, 223

months, before moving into another house in Nu`uanu, where there was a commanding view of harbor and city. The house was occupied by three young, fairly well to do bachelors who were looking for a fourth housemate with whom to share household expenses. Since all of the young men worked in downtown Honolulu during the weekdays, Stoddard was left in relative peace to do all of the writing and reading he desired. Life at “Bachelor’s Bungalow” (or “Stag-Racket Bungalow”, as Stoddard called it) was in many ways a relief for Stoddard, during these early days in Honolulu, at least: he had found that his financial worries could be largely forgotten. Austin Whiting, the wealthy young lawyer who acted as head of household, was willing to support Stoddard from month to month, as an advance on his next book. In addition to Whiting, there was William Sproull, who worked at MacFarlane’s shipping office, and Charles Deering, who worked at the Bishop Bank, predecessor of today’s First Hawaiian Bank. It was they and their friends who became the namesakes of Stoddard’s new residence: “stag-racket” poker

parties, which usually included a great deal of yelling, drinking and swearing.⁷⁷

For Stoddard, living in the Bungalow provided yet another need: the need for meaningful *communitas*. Sometimes Stoddard would sit at the piano with his drink, playing a popular tune for his housemates and guests, in the effort to get in the mood of things. During more quiet moments, he would go out to the veranda, where he would smoke, relax, and watch the merriment from afar, replicating his childhood pattern of separateness and detachment. When it got very late, he would go into his bedroom, write in his diary, say his rosary, and then try to go to sleep. If Stoddard found that he was never really “one of the boys”, he was at least an honorary member of a group that was very much in demand in 1880s Honolulu society. When his housemates were invited somewhere for an evening or weekend, it appears that they were often urged to bring “Charley” along. Shortly after moving into the house, Stoddard began to feel a strong attraction toward the handsome banker of the group, Charles Deering. Before long, Stoddard began to call

⁷⁷ Austen and Crowley, *GP*, 95-96

Deering by an affectionate name which he was to reserve for many of his youthful paramours: "The Kid".⁷⁸

On September 21, 1882, Stoddard described his new environment to his friend, Father Daniel Hudson of Notre Dame:

...I am keeping house with three young men. We have the whole house; a room for each of us, with a common reception room, dinning [sic] etc. A Chinaman cooks for us and tidies the house – I do most of the latter myself—and we share the expenses between us....Of course these boys are more or less wild – but they have toned down much since my arrival and will before long be very fine fellows. They are all protestants – or nothing – and my room with Crucifixes etc. etc. is their constant wonderment.⁷⁹

A few days later, Stoddard wrote a more revealing letter to a young actor friend in New York, differing quite dramatically in tone and substance from the letter previously written to his ecclesiastical friend in Indiana:

I've betaken myself to a Bachelor Bungalow, on a hill, commanding the sea from here to Madagascar, and with the youth and beauty of Kalakaua's Capitol in the foreground. Four of us play house...

Many guests, young fellows, naval officers etc. drop in the evening to take pot-luck, or a hand at cards. There is lots of guitar playing and singing and no end of smoking. We go about naked a good part of the time for women are forbidden the premises.

⁷⁸ Ibid., 97

⁷⁹ Stoddard, MS. Letter, Stoddard to Daniel Hudson, September 21, 1882 (University of Notre Dame Archives), cited in Stroven, "A Life", 225

All my solitude is condensed [sic] and intensified by contrast; from 8 am to 4:20 pm I am stark alone and it is then that I do my work.⁸⁰

In time, Stoddard's attraction to Deering, "The Kid", intensified; a preoccupation which figures strongly in his diary entries from this period. "Deering came home early to sleep for he dances tonight", Stoddard wrote in his diary on Wednesday, September 13, 1882. "We went into his room...and there he lay with his hand under the pillow and his very pretty body as naked as the day on which he was born."⁸¹ The next day's entry reveals a picture not only of the languid and casual atmosphere in which these men lived in Nu'uano, but was redolent with Stoddard's unrequited desire for Deering: "Irving and Mr. Sproull are smoking and talking in bed—I am soon to repair to my couch whither I would it were possible to spirit the Kid this moment!"⁸² Stoddard further proved his affections for Deering by decorating his room.⁸³ "O this yearning", he wrote one day in his diary in

⁸⁰MS. Letter, Stoddard to Will Stuart, September 23, 1882 (Stroven's collection), cited from Stroven, "A Life", 226

⁸¹ Stoddard, Original Bungalow Letters, PACC Collection, entry for September 13, 1882, University of Hawai'i

⁸² Stoddard, Original Bungalow Letters, PACC Collection, entry for Thursday, September 14, 1882, University of Hawai'i Library

⁸³ Austen and Crowley, *GP*, 97-98

early 1883. "I thank God for it."⁸⁴ Deering was apparently pleased and flattered by the thoughtfulness of Stoddard, at this time a prematurely balding and gray middle-aged man. Storm clouds in the affectional relations, however, appeared to be on the horizon: "The Kid very silent, almost gloom", Stoddard wrote one day. "...funny boy that Kid".⁸⁵

On October 23, 1882, Stoddard's artist friends, Joe and Isobel Strong (the step-daughter of Robert Louis Stevenson) arrived in Honolulu and subsequently spent a great deal of time at the Bachelor's Bungalow.⁸⁶ Much to Stoddard's chagrin, the young Deering appears to have fallen in love with Isobel Strong, and the two began a love affair which was to last during the Strongs' sojourn in Honolulu, where they had set up a studio in Nu'uauu. Stoddard became intensely jealous of Strong, who took it upon herself to tear down the decorations which Stoddard had lovingly arranged in the Kid's room and while doing so, requested that

⁸⁴Stoddard, Bungalow Series Diary, entry for March 12, 1883, PACC Collection, University of Hawai'i

⁸⁵Stoddard, Bungalow Series entry for September 24, 1882, PACC Collection, University of Hawai'i Library

⁸⁶Stroven, "A Life", 227-228

Stoddard entertain her all the while at the piano.⁸⁷ One night, when he had drunk too much, Stoddard told off this “heartless” and “stupid” woman to her “bulbous” face.⁸⁸ Writing gave Stoddard a modicum of consolation while living in Honolulu, although he kept trying different strategies to win back Deering’s affection. By the end of 1883, however, their friendship was more or less over. Stoddard entered a deep depression. A local priest prescribed a change of scene, and Stoddard obtained a pass from the steamship company for a brief, three month recuperative stay in San Francisco.⁸⁹

When Stoddard returned to Honolulu, he took up residence at the Bungalow again, but had pressing temporal matters at hand with which to cope. His work at the *Saturday Press* had been over for quite some time, and he was forced again with the vexing problem of how to make a living. During the previous year, Stoddard had wondered about what it would be like to have regular employment, in addition to a contemplative lifestyle. In September of 1882, he wrote in his diary:

⁸⁷ *GP*, 98

⁸⁸ CWS Bungalow Series, entries for January 13, and April-September 1883, cited in *GP*, 98

⁸⁹ *GP*, 101

A new thought has struck me and it grows upon me more and more. It came while I was writing to Father Chas. tonight – it is this; -- that I am sent for by him: that I go to Santa Clara College to live: that I have some kind of class there and am provided for and have a small but regular sallry [sic]. That my hours are my own, out of school -- ...that I am permitted to go to Frisco on Friday night and stay till Monday morning – when I please – once or twice a month for instance.... That my home is with the Fathers and that I live a good, wholesome and regular life with them in this delightful atmosphere. I can think of nothing more suitable to me than this and I long for it more and more and I pray I may have it!⁹⁰

What Stoddard yearned for at this time was *communitas* and a degree of reaggregation into American society which would give him promise of the security and livelihood he desired. Little did he know was that the literary work he was engaged in during this period, stimulated mostly by the influence of Father Hudson at Notre Dame, was beginning to pave the way for the reaggregation which Stoddard had wished for. Father Daniel Hudson was one of the only persons at this time who gave Stoddard the comfort and encouragement he needed. In addition to mailing him books, pictures, the *Ave Maria*, and a steady supply of religious objects, Father Hudson was also taking an interest in Stoddard's writing career. For quite some time, Hudson had been urging Stoddard to write the story of his conversion to Catholicism, with the idea

⁹⁰Stoddard, Bungalow Series, entry for September 24, 1882, PACC Collection, University of Hawai'i.

that it could run serially in the *Ave Maria*, and then be published as a book. Stoddard was now in the mood to embark upon this project, which proved to be a welcome distraction from “The Kid”, Charles Deering. What Stoddard wrote during the summer of 1883 appeared as articles in the *Ave Maria* during the fall of 1884: *A Troubled Heart and How It Was Comforted at Last*. The book version was issued by Notre Dame press the following year.⁹¹

When Stoddard published *A Troubled Heart*, he felt that the subject matter was “controversial” and that he was “baring his soul”. There was a large degree of truth behind this, for the text should be read in the context of the virulently anti-Catholic literature of the nineteenth century: anti-papal novels (*The Female Jesuit*; or, *The Spy in the Family*); plays (*The Jesuit: A National Melodrama in Three Acts*); tracts (*Thoughts on Popery*); “exposes” (*Open Convents*; or, *Nunneries and Popish Seminaries Dangerous to the Morals and Degrading to the Character of a Republican Community*). Literary historian Roger Austen writes that there were even anti-Catholic almanacs and gift

⁹¹ Austen and Crowley, *GP*, 103

books.⁹² “Coming out”, so to speak, as a Catholic was a bit risky for Stoddard in his day and age, and he had no desire to become a fiery champion of the church, although in liminal fashion, he took a critical stance to Protestant denominations in the book. Taking an occasional swipe at Unitarians, Episcopalians and especially evangelical Methodists, Stoddard sometimes halts his attack in the text to attack the “childish and stupid” arguments of Protestant partisans: “the empty, vulgar, and worthless” tirades of “infidels and fanatical writers”, as he wrote.⁹³ When the statements made in *A Troubled Heart* are placed beside Stoddard’s diary entries from this time, however, some discrepancies appear. The Catholic church was a bulwark that gave Stoddard’s life (as a liminar) dignity, structure, and purpose. But at the time that Stoddard wrote this text, he was also desiring meaningful, loving relationship. The last few lines of *A Troubled Heart* might have revealed the truer state of Stoddard’s mind at the time of its publication: “Remember me who am still this side

⁹² Ibid., 103-104

⁹³ Stoddard, *TH*, 111

of the valley of the shadow”, he intoned, “and in the midst of trials and tribulations. And you who have read these pages, written from the heart, after much sorrow and long suffering...I beseech you PRAY FOR ME!”⁹⁴

As Stoddard was finishing his work on *A Troubled Heart* in 1884, he received a letter from Father Daniel Hudson of Notre Dame that the University wished to begin a course of “Belles Lettres”, devoted to the study of English and American authors. The course was scheduled to begin in February of 1885, and Hudson asked Stoddard if he would be interested in joining the faculty at Notre Dame.⁹⁵ Stoddard was elated by the prospect. In the meantime, however, Stoddard busied himself with more secular literary work which was closer to his heart as a travel writer of Oceania. During two separate trips to Maui, Stoddard produced a series of eight, local-color sketches of island villages for the Honolulu *Daily Hawaiian*. Through his connections at the Oceanic Steamship Company, Stoddard was commissioned

⁹⁴ Ibid., 192

⁹⁵ Austen and Crowley, *GP*, 106

to complete a travel text for the Islands, which was subsequently published in 1885 as *A Trip to Hawaii*. In the late fall of 1884, Stoddard paid a visit to the leper colonies of Moloka'i. On October 6, accompanied by two physicians, he left for Kalawao. Stoddard was deeply touched by all that he saw during his stay there; not only by the plight of the lepers, but also by the quiet heroism of the priests who cared for them. When Stoddard later learned that Father Damien had contracted leprosy, he was awed all the more by the willingness of this priest to become a modern-day martyr; and as a result, it is Father Damien who dominates Stoddard's small book, *The Lepers of Molokai*, which was written and published the following year.⁹⁶ Stoddard returned to Honolulu on October 11, hoping that word from Notre Dame would be delivered by the next boat from the United States.⁹⁷

⁹⁶ Austen and Crowley, *GP*, 106-107

⁹⁷ *Ibid.*, 107

Towards Reaggregation: The Call to Notre Dame

After receiving Father Hudson's invitation to come to Notre Dame, Stoddard replied to Hudson, in a sixteen page letter, with several questions that he had in mind about his responsibilities and prospective life at the Catholic institution of higher learning. Literary historian and Stoddard biographer Roger Austen writes that now, Stoddard had to grapple with a familiar dilemma for which he had never found a satisfactory solution. While he was drawn to the otherworldly atmosphere of Catholic institutions, Stoddard knew that he was so incorrigibly worldly that he could not easily make the renunciations that institutional life required.⁹⁸ It is with this keen awareness that Stoddard presented a lengthy letter addressed to Father Hudson and Father Walsh, president of the University.

The letter is divided into three sections, the titles of which are the following: Concerning my going to Notre Dame, Something to show President Walsh, and the final section concerning his little

⁹⁸ Ibid., 106

sketch for the *Ave Maria*. The first two sections of the letter are of significance here. “I like the idea of going to Notre Dame and making it my home”, Stoddard began the missive. “If I had an independent income I would travel and write from and about the countries I was traveling in”. Stoddard then goes on to describe how he would like to travel to Japan, China, India and New Zealand, among other locales, and how he would like to end his days “in some picturesque monastery in Italy”. The most significant discussion in this section, however, has to do with Stoddard’s concern about his impending responsibilities: “If I were to come to you at Notre Dame I would like to come knowing exactly what would be expected of me: Will you please answer me each and all of these questions – though some of them may seem foolish to you -- ?”. Stoddard then goes on to list about nine questions concerning the number of classes he would be expected to teach, university regulations, living conditions, etc.⁹⁹

⁹⁹MS. Letter, Stoddard to Daniel Hudson, September 12, 1884 (University of Notre Dame Archives), cited in Stroven, “A Life”, 234-236

In the second section of the letter, Stoddard described to Hudson and Walsh about how he had been a “free liver”, and wondered if the school would allow him to drink, smoke, write, and receive letters without their being inspected. He also asked whether he could visit his “literary and artistic friends” from time to time, and have a private room that he could transform into a “pretty and cozy retreat”. In presenting his qualifications, Stoddard regarded his extraordinary interest in young men as an asset rather than a liability. “I am fond of the society of young men and lads”, he wrote. “I can say, from long experience, that I nearly always win their confidence and attract them to a rather unusual degree”.¹⁰⁰ This was as close an admission to his sexual orientation that Stoddard could make in late nineteenth century American society.

During the time he spent at the Bungalow, Stoddard would often take to gazing at the ships which came into the harbor at Honolulu:

When the boys go into town I watch a ship come out of the horizon and enter port. It was a pretty and soothing and

¹⁰⁰from Stroven, “A Life”, p.234; MS. Letter, Stoddard to Daniel Hudson, September 12, 1884, (University of Notre Dame Archives), cited in Austen and Crowley, GP, 106

suggestive picture – the peaceful and happy termination of a long voyage: blown into port by friendly winds!¹⁰¹

On October 22, 1884, Stoddard received welcome news from one of the many ships entering the horizon of the island of O`ahu: he had finally received word that Notre Dame would gladly accept him on his own terms, and that he was wanted there as soon as he could arrange to do so.¹⁰²

As we have seen in the last chapter, the nexus of travel writing, and coming to terms with his homosexuality created a constellation of difficulties for Stoddard, who, by the year 1885, decided to take on professional responsibilities in the world of work. Entering the world of work as an adult is a significant rite of passage for anyone in just about any culture the world over, and Stoddard's quest for reaggregation into American society of the late nineteenth century was no exception to this mode of existence in world societies. Although Stoddard had spent a good deal of his early adulthood doing his best to escape the ethos of his time, he deeply looked forward to

¹⁰¹Stoddard, Bungalow Series, entry for Friday, September 26, 1882, PACC Collection, University of Hawai'i at Manoa

¹⁰²Stoddard, MS. Journal, "Stag-Racket Bungalow", entry for October 22, 1884; PACC Collection, University of Hawai'i), cited in Stroven, "A Life", 236

taking on the role of a professional at the University. In the Spring of 1885, Stoddard arrived on the campus of Notre Dame University in Indiana full of hope.

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CHAPTER 6

A Tentative *Reaggregation*: Professor Charles Warren Stoddard at the University

Professor Charles Warren Stoddard of the University of Notre Dame: 1885-1886

Charles Warren Stoddard arrived at South Bend, Indiana, home of Notre Dame University, on January 28, 1885, shortly before the beginning of the second semester of the academic year.¹ Notre Dame was founded by seven French members of the Congregation of the Holy Cross in 1842. By 1885, the school had a student body of about five hundred, and five faculties (arts, science, commerce, law, and civil engineering) composed of about twenty five members. The five story Main Building in which Stoddard lived was the focal point of the campus, containing the junior and senior dormitories, refectories, armory, reception parlors, study halls, classrooms, school offices, library, museum, society rooms, and living quarters for other lay faculty. Stoddard, who lived in this structure, occupied a

¹Stoddard, MS. Journal, "Stag-Racket Bungalow", entry for February 1, 1885 (University of Notre Dame Archives); cited in Stroven, p.238, "A Life", 238

room which faced south, affording him a view of the gym and the music hall, where plays and concerts were presented.²

At Notre Dame, Stoddard taught two classes: one in literature and composition (with nineteen students) and the other in literary criticism (with eight students). Stoddard's diaries kept during this period indicate that he was nervous about embarking in his new career as professor, and he often had difficulty getting through an hour of instruction:

In fifteen minutes I had exhausted the text of the day and then was on my beam ends. I talked against time and at last was driven to telling stories of the Islands, which seemed to interest them and fetch a laugh now and again. But it was a little trying.³

In due time, however, Stoddard became accustomed to his work: "Classes growing more familiar", he wrote; "I more at ease with them; the worry of preparation – the little pang that used to come with the class bell – all are gone. This may or

² Austen and Crowley, *GP*, 109

³Stoddard, MS. Journal, "Stag-Racket Bungalow", entry for February 2, 1885 (University of Notre Dame Archives); cited in Stroven, "A Life", 239

may not argue well, for it may be indifference...”.⁴ Stoddard made every effort to make his classes interesting. The text books, which he found uninspired and bigoted, he soon “threw to the winds”; and substituting materials and assignments of his own, he sought to teach his own views and set of values. Stoddard biographer Carl Stroven writes that Stoddard’s courses probably lacked order and were at times thin in content; but that it is equally probable that, infused with humor and lively anecdote, his lessons were entertaining, and to some students, stimulating.⁵ The students liked and admired him. Father Walsh, the president of the University, repeatedly said that, despite Stoddard’s laxity in discipline, he was a good teacher.⁶

Stoddard’s living quarters in the Main Hall at Notre Dame became infamous for their exoticness. Having decorated his rooms with curios and mementos from his many travels in Oceania, Europe and the Middle East, the young men, staff and faculty of the university would love to knock on

⁴ Stoddard, MS. Journal, “Stag-Racket Bungalow”, entry for February 16, 1885 (University of Notre Dame Archives); cited in Stroven, “A Life”, 239.

⁵ Stroven, “A Life”, 239

Stoddard's door many times simply to see the array of artifacts displayed in his room, which became a stage from which he recounted many of his tales, especially those of his journeys into the Pacific. Roger Austen writes that the staff and faculty went out of their way to make Stoddard feel at home during his first few months at Notre Dame, where he was showered with many acts of kindness.⁷ President Walsh brought Stoddard stationery, ordered a sofa for his room, and frequently stopped by for friendly visits. It seemed as if Stoddard had at last found a suitable home. Father Hudson, who helped pave the way for Stoddard to work at the University, was the most solicitous and comforting. Almost every evening, Hudson would rap lightly on Stoddard's door, entering his rooms with arms full of things to read or eat, and then sit down for an hour's chat about books, people, and writers. "I have almost in one sitting converted him into a Walt Whitmanite", Stoddard wrote in his diary. "He is

⁶Oral information from the Reverend Thomas McAvoy, C.S.C., University of Notre Dame; cited in Stroven, "A Life", 239

⁷Austen and Crowley, *GP*, 109

certainly a liberal man in his views of literature.”⁸ Stoddard was using any discussion of Walt Whitman as a litmus test; if a new acquaintance warmed to Whitman, Stoddard was confident that a friendship would more smoothly develop.⁹ Through ten years of hard work, Father Hudson had made the *Ave Maria* the most widely circulated of American Catholic magazines.¹⁰ At Father Hudson’s request, Stoddard wrote frequently for the *Ave Maria*, notably a series of articles on Father Damien and the lepers of Moloka’i, which ran during the summer of 1885 under the title “The Martyrs of Molokai”.¹¹

Stoddard’s first academic year at Notre Dame was a successful one, although he had a great deal of difficulty adjusting to the cold winter climate of northern Indiana, and longed for intimate male-male companionship. On one weekday in late February of 1885, Stoddard wrote in his diary:

The cry of the birds attracted me; I saw three jays sporting among the lace-like twigs, and thought it a herald of Spring – but I learn that the jays winter at Notre Dame along with the

⁸Stoddard, MS. Journal, “Stag-Racket Bungalow”, entry for February 3, 1885 (University of Notre Dame Archives), cited in Austen and Crowley, *GP*, p.109

⁹Austen and Crowley, *GP*, 110

¹⁰Stroven, “A Life”, 240

¹¹*Ibid.*, 240

plump snow-birds, and that I must wait for the robins before I look for fairer weather.¹²

The next day, Stoddard wrote plaintively:

Am weary. The world is hollow tonight; there is a moon in the Islands, and an icy one here. I long for a chum upon whose bosom I may throw myself and rest from the emptiness of things, for there is no life without love for me.¹³

While visiting Father Hudson as he recuperated in the university's infirmary, Stoddard set his eyes upon an attractive student, a junior from Kentucky by the name of Tom Cleary. For both Stoddard and the younger Cleary, the attraction was apparently mutual, with the youth taking a strong interest and liking to this dandified professor who had become something of an exotic curio on campus. Upon their first meeting, Stoddard wrote in his diary:

The boy...has impressed me more strongly than any other at Notre Dame – and this at first sight. He is refinement itself, and next term, God willing, he will come into my hands. Left the infirmary in a good mood; we were all smiling and fond of one another.¹⁴

Upon the second meeting between Cleary and Stoddard, it is evident that the attraction between the two grew: "He greeted me most cordially", he

¹²Charles Warren Stoddard, "School Days at Notre Dame", typescript diary entry for Vol. I, Monday, February 23, 1885 (University of Notre Dame Archives).

¹³ *Ibid.*, entry for February 24, 1885

wrote, "Half the time his eyes were on me, and when ever I caught them they said something to me – wonderful youngster. He is now my delight and leaves in every sense the pleasantest impression. He stayed [at the infirmary] till his dinner bell rang; I stayed because he stayed; he seemed to have dropped in there half in the hope of meeting me – almost said as much. What is he saying with his eyes -- ? "I love you – I love to love you".¹⁵

Having found intimate friendship in the person of Tom Cleary, and feeling more comfortable and competent at his duties as a professor of letters, Stoddard began to settle in to life nicely at Notre Dame by the spring of 1885. "...the atmosphere of good fellowship, the cosiness [sic], the genuine candor of everybody!" Stoddard wrote in mid-March of 1885, "Sweet days of Notre Dame! May I live to know many of them, and enjoy all of them and love them more and more till my last day", he mused.¹⁶ By the late spring of that year, Stoddard realized that he was in love with the

¹⁴Charles Warren Stoddard, "School Days at Notre Dame", typescript diary entry for Vol.I, Thursday, March 26, 1885 (University of Notre Dame Archives).

¹⁵ Ibid., entry for Vol.I, Saturday, March 28, 1885, (University of Notre Dame Archives)

¹⁶ Ibid., entry for Vol.I, Monday, March 16, 1885 (University of Notre Dame Archives).

young Cleary, whom Stoddard took to calling “The Cub” in his diaries kept during this period. Stoddard soon began to look forward to Cleary’s visits, which soon became too frequent to be overlooked. Notre Dame had a Prefect of Discipline, Father Regan, and then Holy Cross Brothers who served as Assistant Prefects. Perhaps Brother Lawson, who was assigned to Cleary’s class, said something to Father Regan, who then took Stoddard’s confidant Father Hudson aside. Father Hudson cautioned Stoddard on May 3, 1885, about Cleary’s visits to Stoddard’s rooms. “Our intimacy is being noticed”, Stoddard wrote in his diary that night, “and there will shortly be talk about it.”¹⁷ Stoddard soon began to feel distressed over these developments, and by the middle of May 1885, his diary entries show the Prefects metamorphosing into adversaries by conspiring to deny Cleary the first-class honors he had been expected to receive that semester.¹⁸ The Prefects based the denial of first-class honors to Cleary on the fact that Cleary had supposedly been involved in prank-like activity that year; but the real

¹⁷Ibid., “School Days at Notre Dame” diary entry for May 3, 1885 (University of Notre Dame Archives).

¹⁸Austen and Crowley, *GP*, 111

reason, as seen below from historical evidence, might have been the open display of affection and relationship he was cultivating with Stoddard.

In spite of Stoddard's worries of the situation between Tom Cleary and the University authorities, there was a good deal of work that he accomplished during his first semester at Notre Dame: his sketches for the *Ave Maria* about his trip to Moloka'i, which was to run serially in the summer of 1885. There was proof to read on *A Troubled Heart*, and when the book was published that spring, Father Hudson sent copies to dozens of his and Stoddard's friends all over the world.¹⁹

On June 25, 1885, Stoddard began his summer vacation after his first semester at Notre Dame by taking a trip through the Rocky Mountains to Alaska. Having visited Denver, Salt Lake City, and Portland, he arrived at Port Townsend, Washington Territory, where he took a steamer for a three-weeks' cruise along the islands of Puget Sound and the Inland Sea of Alaska, going as far north as Glacier Bay. All during the trip, Stoddard worried about Tom Cleary's situation the previous

semester at Notre Dame, most notably the decision to deny him first-class honors. Stoddard wrote to Father Hudson on August 1: "I have been thinking much of Notre Dame...wondering if ever again I shall love it as I have loved it! Can one love without trust, is the question? Tom's treatment shook my faith in the justice of the powers that be to the foundations thereof...I no longer hope anything in particular and I have lost faith in the impartial justice that should be there, and more than all and worse than all – I have lost faith in the Beads!"²⁰ By early August, Stoddard returned from the cruise and resided briefly in Portland, and returned to Notre Dame on August 30. Stoddard was so low on funds by this time that he had to borrow a dollar from Father Walsh just to pay the cabman who drove him back to the University.²¹

During Stoddard's second year at Notre Dame, Stoddard continued in his duties as professor, and the intensity of his relationship with Tom Cleary increased to the point where Stoddard

¹⁹ *Ibid.*, 111

²⁰ Stoddard to Daniel Hudson, August 1, 1885 (CHUD, University of Notre Dame Archives), cited in Austen and Crowley, GP, 112).

²¹ Stroven, "A Life", 241-242

seemed to care for not much else but Cleary's love and affection. In addition to the longing for fusion with Cleary that Stoddard felt at this time, he was suffering from a recurring bout with malaria, undoubtedly the legacy of his several trips abroad over two decades of transoceanic travel. In December of 1885, Stoddard was invited by the Cleary family to spend the holiday season at their home in Covington, Kentucky. Stoddard had looked forward to this vacation all during the fall semester, as if expecting his honeymoon with Cleary, and from the evidence contained in Stoddard's diary, it seems that Mrs. Cleary approved of the warm relationship between Stoddard and her son: "...[had] a chat – during which Mrs. C. said, 'When I get home and think of you boys at night, I shall cry at your happiness', and she will envy. We are bracing up for it. Only six weeks, and then three of absolute freedom, away from here, away from all prying eyes and no questions asked. We are both looking forward to this hour, God bless it!'"²² Stoddard's days at his "Old Kentucky Home"

²²Stoddard, "School Days at Notre Dame" diary, entry for Wednesday, November 11, 1885 (University of Notre Dame Archives).

during the holiday season were idyllic and familial, just as his sojourns in the Hawaiian communities of Moloka'i during the previous decade. Upon arriving back at Notre Dame in January of 1886, Stoddard wrote (on his one year anniversary at Notre Dame) the following revealing and reminiscent entry in his diary:

One year ago today I arrived at Notre Dame. What trials [sic] and triumphs [sic] have been mine in this little town; what a range of experiences – mostly new to me! What hordes of friends have I made – how few of them are lost – and one at least is today more than anyone else living. I know the loss of the Cub would shatter me as seriously if not more seriously than the loss of anyone I know in the flesh. Twice today he has tried to see me alone and on each occasion someone has been present. This is a real grief to me – no one knows how deep a grief save ourselves...

All I want is to be left alone with him – for I am far from well. It has seemed to me that my heart is seriously affected. I am sadly depressed. I am disappointed in this place, have lost interest in it – in almost everything in the world and in life. I want money and then I want to drift about with it and have with me such a loving and loveable companion as this Bambino.²³

Stoddard's diary entries for the remaining months of his second year in academia show him becoming ever increasingly bitter at the Prefects, who he believed were continuing to discriminate unfairly toward Tom Cleary, his "Cub". On June 20, at the end of his final semester at Notre Dame, Stoddard wrote:

²³Ibid., Vol.IV, entry for Wednesday, January 27, 1886 (University of Notre Dame Archives).

Have no heart to record here the oft repeated complaints which are uppermost in my mind. This place and these people have become detestable.

At last I am packed up and can at hours notice quit the place forever. I hope to see the place go down and down until the reformation takes place...²⁴

Stoddard soon decided for himself that he would resign his position from Notre Dame, mainly because of the denial of first class honors due to Tom Cleary upon his graduation. Officially, Stoddard said that he resigned from Notre Dame, giving as his reason "the malaria in which I steeped for a year and a half and which caused physicians to order my immediate removal from the state."²⁵ To a friend, Stoddard wrote : "...last June I was ordered out of Indiana by the Physicians of Notre Dame. I was suffering from nervous prostration, ague, and a complication of affairs that made it folly for me to stay longer. So I left, full of disgust and malaria."²⁶

Literary historian Roger Austen notes, however, that the main issue at hand behind Stoddard's decision to leave was the orthodox Catholic position on homosexuality. On the one hand, Stoddard was operating under these premises:

²⁴ Stoddard, MS. Journal, "School Days at Notre Dame", Vol.V, June 20, 1886 (owner unknown)

²⁵ Stoddard, MS. Autobiographical sketch, untitled and undated (from Mrs. Makee-Crawford); cited in Stroven, "A Life", 243).

1) that God-given instincts must by their very nature be right; 2) that the expression of his affectionate feelings for other males, since they were the only ones he had, was therefore not wrong; and 3) that the Catholic church made allowances for those of his temperament in a way that the Protestant denominations did not. On the other hand, the Brothers of the Holy Cross viewed the physical expression of homosexual love as a sin, and they did not hesitate to say so.²⁷ “There can be no intimate [male-male] friendships”, one of the Brothers warned Tom Cleary the year before, “without sin.” Tom Cleary then retorted “Then I will live in sin.”²⁸

At the end of the 1885-86 academic year, when Cleary graduated without the honors due to him, Stoddard was invited by Cleary to his Kentucky home in the summer. It would be the first of several months during which Stoddard boarded with the Cleary family. Here was an unusual living situation: a forty-two year old professor living with

²⁶MS. Letter, Stoddard to Arthur Stedman, December 23, 1886 (Huntington Library), cited in Stroven, “A Life”, 243.

²⁷Austen and Crowley, *GP*, 113-114

his former pupil. Although it is difficult from the sources at hand to discern the exact nature of CWS' relationship with Cleary (and moreover, how this all played out in the midst of the Cleary family), we can surmise that the relationship was close and intimate. The question of why Stoddard had taken the professional risk of being involved with a student is most probably going beyond the scope of this paper. Mentorship relationships can often become intimately physical, although it is hard to see Stoddard would risk a stable professional situation in order to do so. One of the main reasons why Stoddard probably lost his position at Notre Dame by engaging in an openly male-male relationship is that the relationship gave him the same-sex satisfaction he had always craved in his life, but never was able to attain, due to the mores of his time. This point in and of itself makes Stoddard's life a particularly interesting study of a man whose wishes for a gay lifestyle were not yet accepted in the society of which he was part; study of what might be called a "pre-modern" gay man.

²⁸Stoddard, "School Days at Notre Dame" diary, entry for May 30, 1885 (University of Notre Dame Archives)

“For the Pleasure of His Company”: An East Coast and European Interstice, 1886-1896

Stoddard left Notre Dame in the early summer of 1886 to reside as a guest at the home of W.W. Cleary, Tom Cleary’s successful father who was a lawyer in Covington, Kentucky.²⁹ A few days after his arrival at the Cleary’s, Stoddard wrote the following letter to Father Hudson:

...Tom and I are feasting and sleeping “to all hours” of the morning, and resting and recruiting to our heart’s content. We were both sorely in need of the change that has come to us. It will take him some time to recover his spirits. It was a very great mistake his ever having gone to that institution and a still greater one that he did not quit it a year ago. They all realize it here, now that the circumstances of the case are thoroughly understood – but the past must ever be a regret with them, with him, and with me.

There are just two in all the mob at N.D. in whom I trust --, and whom I will be glad to see again; -- yourself and Prof. Lyons. I have lost all respect for Fr. Walsh – like never to see him again, never to hear of him. A man may make a blunder and his friends may regret it – but when he stubbornly and spitefully repeats it he is no longer of any man’s respect. – Farewell my friend – I cannot think of the place without disgust!³⁰

Just before Stoddard left for the Cleary’s in Covington, *The Lepers of Molokai* had been published by *Ave Maria Press*. The publication of this book was timely, for soon afterwards news

²⁹Stroven, “A Life”, 243

³⁰MS. Letter, Stoddard to Daniel Hudson, June 25, 1886 (University of Notre Dame Archives), cited in Stroven, “A Life”, 244

traveled around the world that Father Damien had contracted leprosy. Interest in the “martyr priest” was soon widespread, and as a consequence, sales of Stoddard’s book were large, even outside Catholic circles.³¹ Stoddard received royalties of the book plentiful enough to cover his personal expenses while living in Kentucky, where he resided for approximately two years.

During the year 1887, Stoddard was quite ill while residing in Kentucky, and did little writing. When he recouped his health late in the year, he was very much in demand as a guest for writers and artists back on the East Coast. In October, Robert Louis Stevenson’s wife visited him, spending time at the Cleary home. Mrs. Stevenson wanted Stoddard to accompany her to the Adirondacks, where her husband was then staying. Stoddard stayed in Covington, however, where a bad relapse of malaria sent him to bed for three months. He felt much better by the turn of the new year in 1888. In the spring of that year, Stoddard went to visit friends in the Boston Highlands, as the pampered guest of the Vail family. Mrs. Vail and her young,

³¹Stroven, “A Life”, 244

eighteen year old son were planning a trip to Europe, and Mr. Vail prevailed upon Stoddard to accompany his family for an all expense-paid trip. On the twelfth of August, Stoddard wrote to Father Hudson that on the next day, he, Mrs. Vail and her son Davis would leave for New York, and from there, take a steamer to England.³² His next letter, written at sea on August 23, 1888, one day away from Southampton, shows Stoddard looking forward to a speedy return to the United States:

I find I cannot become interested in the immediate future. Bremen, Berlin, Dresden, Munich, Paris – what are these to me who have known them in good old bohemian fashion when I was younger and more susceptible [sic]. I am hoping that I may not lose all interest; if I find such the case I shall return to N.Y. with Mr. Vail when he comes over for a few days in October....Such heaps of friends offer me hospitality in N.Y. I must try it – for a time at least.³³

After touring England and central Europe during the winter of 1889, Stoddard and the Vails reached Italy in late February and early March, where they stayed for three weeks. In Rome, Stoddard met the Right Reverend John J. Keane, the Bishop of Richmond and the rector of the newly established

³²Stroven, "A Life", 248-252

³³MS. Letter, Stoddard to Daniel Hudson, August 23, 1888 (University of Notre Dame Archives), cited in Stroven, "A Life", 253

Catholic University of America.³⁴ Stoddard had become well known in Catholic circles for his contributions to the *Ave Maria*, and *A Troubled Heart* and the *Lepers of Molokai* had been praised by Catholics across the country.³⁵ Stoddard's growing reputation as a Catholic man of letters was not lost upon Keane, who was under pressure to secure American faculty members for the newly established institution in Washington. In regard to this meeting, which was a fortuitous one for Stoddard, he wrote to Father Hudson:

...he proposed my going to the Catholic University in Washington; taking rooms there – he even picked them out for me – parlor and bed-room in the sunny south-west corner of the building looking down upon Washington, -- and then delivering three lectures per week on English Literature. There will be no text book; no essays to correct; the students will listen to my talk, take what notes they can, and then – at suitable intervals – I can call upon one or another to relate what he may remember of the past two or three dissertations and we will discuss the subject familiarly and try to arrange and fix it in our minds.³⁶

A few weeks after Stoddard had returned to Germany, Bishop Keane visited him there and renewed the proposal. Stoddard accepted the offer, and it was arranged that he should begin his duties at the Catholic University when it opened in the fall

³⁴Stroven, "A Life", 255

³⁵Austen and Crowley, *GP*, 118-119

of 1889.³⁷ From April to July of 1889, Stoddard and the Vails spent a great deal of time in Germany, Austria, France and the Netherlands, then returning to England for the trip home to America. In London, Stoddard spent a good deal of time with close friend and former roommate Frank Millet, and other artists in the city. On his birthday in 1889, Stoddard and the Vails left Liverpool, and upon arrival in New York, Stoddard immediately went to the Cleary's in Covington, where, after a few days' rest, he began to read and prepare lectures for his courses at the Catholic University of America in Washington, D.C. Having received from Father Hudson a large collection of books for use in his work, he remained in Covington, studying until the first week of November. At that time, Stoddard then departed Kentucky for Washington, to begin this next new adventure with reaggregation in academia.³⁸

³⁶MS. Letter, Stoddard to Daniel Hudson, March 25, 1888 (University of Notre Dame Archives), cited in Stroven, "A Life", 256

³⁷Ibid., 256

³⁸Stroven, "A Life", 256-257

Establishing a Domestic Idyl: Stoddard's Tenure at the Catholic University of America, 1889-1902

Given Stoddard's difficulties reagggregating at Notre Dame, it may seem puzzling why he would want to recommence formal professional duties at an institution such as the newly established Catholic University of America. Stoddard's central difficulty at Notre Dame was adjusting to the rigor of academic life required of a tenured university professor. In time, as we see from earlier sections of this chapter, Stoddard overcame these initial difficulties and ended up executing his responsibilities well. Before accepting new duties at the Catholic University, however, Stoddard was assured by rector Bishop Keane that his academic responsibilities in Washington would be lighter than those he shouldered in South Bend. The second difficulty Stoddard encountered at Notre Dame, which was not so easy to overcome, were the complications involved in his relationship with Tom Cleary, and the manner in which Stoddard's colleagues reacted to this relationship by more or less denying Cleary the academic honors he

deserved at graduation. Stoddard's growing relationship with Cleary was a clear indication that he desired close companionship during his days at Notre Dame. During his fourth year at the Catholic University of America, Stoddard's desire for a domestic idyl with a same-sex partner would only briefly be realized.

When Stoddard arrived at the Catholic University in Washington, D.C. on the morning of November 13, 1889, the school was holding dedication exercises to celebrate its formal opening.³⁹ The faculty of the new university consisted of four members, including Stoddard, whose position was that of lecturer in English literature. When Stoddard arrived, he was cordially welcomed by Bishop Keane, the rector, who took him to the rooms he was to occupy in the dormitory named Caldwell Hall. In the conversation that ensued on this day, Bishop Keane agreed with Stoddard's proposal to lecture but once a week, and then hold class discussions during the other two meetings of his three-hour course. His course was to deal with the chief English writers of the nineteenth

century, and his salary was to be one hundred and fifty dollars a month.⁴⁰

After Stoddard met his students for the first time, he wrote to Father Daniel Hudson:

I could not write you until that event was over. They received me with cordial hand-clasps and when I had talked to them for about twenty minutes in the most informal manner (it was my introduction and no lecture was expected) they gave me such a hearty round of applause that I could not help feeling that we may yet be friends...⁴¹

During these early days at the Catholic University, Stoddard felt slightly intimidated by his students, many of whom were serious, young priests who had more formal education than Stoddard himself. On November 25, 1889, Stoddard wrote to Father Hudson:

...Will it distress you when I tell you that I feel like creeping into a corner tonight and hiding myself forever? I don't know why. I read my first lecture at 4:30. The day was dark: I had to send for a lamp; I had to read all I had to say....I got through all right – but I don't know if I did well or ill or if the students – about forty priests understood or liked what I had to say.

I feel so mean and very wretched that I would leap with joy if I thought; if I knew that I would be found dead in my bed tomorrow.

Perhaps tomorrow I will feel better. All this is a very great strain upon me – not the preparing of the lectures...but the new life, the new methods, and all the doubts of the future.

Now listen; I am going to do my best. But I have no confidence in my self....If I were not here I think I would be

³⁹Stroven, "A Life", 258

⁴⁰Stoddard, MS. Journal, "Catholic University", entry for November 13, 1889 (Monterey Customhouse Museum), cited in Stroven, "A Life", 259

⁴¹ MS. Letter, Stoddard to Daniel Hudson, undated [ca. November 23, 1889], University of Notre Dame Archives, cited in Stroven, "A Life", 259-260

quite content to hide myself in obscurity and try to scribble enough matter to give me a bit of bread and wine. Ah me, how unutterly unfit I am for this world, and I'm growing worse every day of my life.⁴²

A few days later, on Thanksgiving Day, Stoddard seems to have recovered his composure:

I have had some little chat with one and another concerning that first effort of mine and I have concluded to quite change my plan of operation. I shall talk not preach hereafter. I do not hope for the responsiveness I found in the young hearts at Notre Dame!...Here I must work alone and for a company of priests who have already been in the pulpit and who have no doubt been looked up to as instructors by their several flocks. I think they will ever remain on guard lest I, the only layman in the house that shelters more than fifty priests, should make a slip in doctrine or judgment or something else – though I shall steer as clear of all that ticklish ground as it is possible for me to do so.

...Bishop Keane is a glorious fellow. He floods the house with sunshine – yet somehow I begin to fear that he is disappointed in me, or is a little afraid of me.⁴³

In due time, however, most of Stoddard's doubts about his performance as a lecturer were soon to subside, for as he became better acquainted with his students and more accustomed to lecturing, his self-confidence increased. Letters sent to Father Hudson at this time indicate that Stoddard made great strides in his work, which pleased both him and his students.⁴⁴ "I spoke for an hour", Stoddard once wrote to Daniel Hudson, "...and was

⁴²MS. Letter, Stoddard to Daniel Hudson, entry for November 25, 1889 (University of Notre Dame Archives), cited in Stroven, "A Life", 260

⁴³MS. Letter, Stoddard to Daniel Hudson, entry for November 28, 1889 (University of Notre Dame Archives), cited in Stroven, "A Life", 260-261

⁴⁴Stroven, "A Life", 261

applauded by the boys who seemed quite in a sympathetic mood.”⁴⁵ Later, he wrote, “I am getting on nicely here now; better and better every day. I begin to like it; to feel more at ease; I hope to be quite happy and content in the course of time.”⁴⁶ Former students have reported that Stoddard’s lectures during his tenure at the Catholic University were “beautiful and distinguished.”⁴⁷ Stoddard’s first year at the Catholic University of America was therefore a success.

Stoddard’s living quarters at the Catholic University of America became legendary, reflecting not only his eccentricity, but the artifacts of his liminal adventures in the Pacific, Middle East and Europe. The curtains at his double east window were Turkish, those at the south window were of Madras cloth, and those in his bedroom were “Damascene” – all overhung by several large Indian fans, some of them perfumed. In addition to this exotic array of decorations were Stoddard’s hundreds of books, his piano, his statuette of St.

⁴⁵MS. Letter, Stoddard to Daniel Hudson, entry for December 3, [1889?], University of Notre Dame Archives, cited in Stroven, “A Life”, 261

⁴⁶MS. Letter, Stoddard to Daniel Hudson, entry for December 20, 1889, University of Notre Dame Archives, cited in Stroven, “A Life”, 261

Anthony, his rocking chair, and lots of ferns, palms, and Japanese lily bulbs, along with fresh flowers in season. Autographed pictures of actors and writers, friends and relations were strategically placed, with special prominence given to one of Tom Cleary. Guests who toured Caldwell Hall would often knock on the door for a peek of these curios mentioned above. They also wanted to have a glimpse at this unusual professor, who, as the only lay person on the faculty, had become somewhat of a curio himself with his dandified wardrobe and neatly trimmed beard and moustache.⁴⁸

During his first few years at the university, Stoddard spent several summers and vacations visiting friends in the northeast, most notably his old San Francisco friend Theodore Dwight, who had introduced Stoddard to social circles in Washington as well as Boston. In 1892, Dwight was chosen as the head of the Boston Public Library. Dwight's private library, however, was well stocked with pictures of male nudes; those he had taken

⁴⁷Margaret A. Bier, typescript, "Charles Warren Stoddard", Master of Arts thesis, Department of English, Columbia University, 1936, 18, cited in Stroven, "A Life", 261

⁴⁸Austen and Crowley, *GP*, 122

himself and those which he had smuggled from abroad. In 1890, Dwight told Stoddard of his adventures in claiming some Neopolitan photographs he had ordered from Pluschow, the notorious purveyor of erotica. Dwight had been taking pictures of naked men in Boston, and if possible, had sex with them. Sometimes his models were Irish, but more often they were Italians who had been contacted through his barber. After he began earning five thousand dollars a year from the Boston Public Library, Dwight usually had one of these young models living with him as his "valet". Thus when Stoddard stayed with Dwight in Boston, as he did nearly every summer, he found himself, as Stoddard biographer Roger Austen writes, "in a homosexual milieu well beyond anything he knew in Washington."⁴⁹

In addition to the success he experienced in teaching his classes, Stoddard got along fairly well with his colleagues during his first several years at the Catholic University of America. In 1892, Stoddard was given an \$800 raise, bringing his yearly salary to well over two thousand dollars. The

⁴⁹Ibid., 126

small faculty was united in the face of all the troubles and challenges that were threatening this new educational enterprise, for it soon became apparent that not all Catholics wished this university well.⁵⁰

The Jesuit faculty members of Georgetown University were troubled and suspicious about the growth and development of the Catholic University, for they heard rumors that rector Bishop Keane wanted to appropriate Georgetown's medical and law schools. More significantly, however, the new university was caught in the crossfire between the opposing camps of American Catholicism during this era. On the one side were the "liberals", many of them Irish, who believed in Americanizing the church, in cooperating to a certain extent with Protestants, and in abstaining totally from drink. Rector Bishop Keane was in the "liberal" camp. On the other side of this debate were the "conservatives", many of them German, who, under the banner of Cahensylism, argued vociferously that the German-American parishes should remain Germanic and that abstention from alcohol was

⁵⁰Ibid., 122

unfeasible. The conservatives opposed Keane and his initiatives at the University and a split developed when two members of the already small faculty sided with the Cahensylists.⁵¹ Stoddard did not take sides in the controversy, and could be viewed as a marginal “liberal”, given the fact that he was loyal to Bishop Keane. On October 6, 1892, he noted in his diary that the “German element” was being forced out of the house, commenting, “This would have scandalized me once; now, thank God, it has little or no effect upon me”.⁵²

During Stoddard’s first four years at Notre Dame, he seems to have experienced professional success outside of the classroom. During the summer of 1892, Stoddard finally completed an autobiographical novel which he had tentatively begun in Hawai’i in 1884. It took him only seven weeks to write most of its seventy thousand words. The best literary news of these years was that *Scribner’s* was issuing a new edition of *South Sea Idyls*.⁵³ Although it is not clear who arranged for the publication, the release of the book at this time is

⁵¹ Austen and Crowley, *GP*, 122-123

⁵² Stoddard, MS. Diary entry for October 6, 1892 cited in Austen and Crowley, *GP*, 123

significant, given the fact that the Hawaiian monarchy was to be overthrown just months before its release. Although this new edition appears to have little to no political commentary about the political state of the Islands during that era, it remains a question as to whether Stoddard's rich literary representations of the Hawaiian Islands and native Hawaiians relayed a literary imagination as a message for the Islands being "available" for acquisition and exploration. Additional milestones for Stoddard during this period was his being written up in local newspapers. A group of Catholic ladies in Salem, Massachusetts called themselves "The Charles Warren Stoddard Reading Circle".⁵⁴ But alone in his rooms at Caldwell Hall, however, Stoddard seemed to feel that praise alone was no substitute for the close companionship he desired. There was no Tom Cleary for Stoddard to become close to at this time.

On one fall Saturday afternoon in 1892, while he was reading the playbills in downtown Washington, D.C., Stoddard heard someone say,

⁵³Austen and Crowley, *GP*, 130

⁵⁴*Ibid.*, 130-131

“How do you do, Mr. Stoddard?”⁵⁵ Stoddard turned around and recognized a dark-haired youth who used to come to the University to visit. The boy’s name was Kenneth O’Connor, who hailed from a local Irish family on 9th Street, Washington, D.C. O’Connor walked Stoddard to the streetcar, and back at Caldwell Hall that night, Stoddard prayed: “O, if only such a Kid were to fall to my lot!”⁵⁶

When Stoddard met O’Connor in 1892, he was a man of forty nine, and O’Connor was a youth of about thirteen. Although Tom Cleary, who Stoddard had been involved with at Notre Dame, may have been of a legal age of consent when he met Stoddard in 1885, his relationship with Kenneth O’Connor was, however, clearly of a pedophilic nature. Stoddard justified his close relationship with O’Connor on the pretext of “saving” the boy from his then “dismal” life circumstances.⁵⁷

Abandoned some years before by her husband, Mrs. O’Connor, Kenneth’s mother, had raised her six children as well as she could. Being the youngest child, Kenneth had been picked on at

⁵⁵Stoddard, MS. Diary entry for October 15, 1892, cited in Austen and Crowley, GP, 131

⁵⁶Ibid, 131

home, but in many ways was able to find his own way through the world, albeit a difficult journey. Kenneth dropped out of school at an early age, and was turning into a “street person” who smoked cigarettes, drank whiskey and “knew the score”. While he sometimes dated girls, he also had sexual relationships with other boys. In spite of these characteristics of the young O’Connor, Stoddard himself and his friends on campus approved of this relationship, seeking to assuage any fears of the unsavory and unspeakable to the fact that Stoddard appeared to be O’Connor’s “savior” from his inhumane treatment at home and on the streets of Washington.⁵⁸ During the middle decades of the nineteenth century, there was a deep concern about the state of America’s children “bent on earning or cadging small sums of money”⁵⁹ and surviving on the urban streets of places like Washington, D.C. and New York. The plight of poor, urban youngsters, (especially male) was taken up by chroniclers of the period, clergymen, and others,

⁵⁷ Austen and Crowley, *GP*, 133-134

⁵⁸ Austen and Crowley, *GP*, 132-134

⁵⁹ Michael Moon, “‘The Gentle Boy from the Dangerous Classes’: Pederasty, Domesticity, and Capitalism in Horatio Alger”, *Representations* 19, Summer 1987, 87

most notably Horatio Alger, who developed a whole discourse revolving around how best to help such people by uplifting them from unfavorable life conditions. It seems that Stoddard's inordinate interest in O'Connor was framed in these terms, and it is therefore not surprising why his friends and colleagues, most of whom occupied the upper echelons of the establishment at this time, would not approve of the loving bond, resembling, on the surface at least, that between father and son.

Falling in love with Kenneth O'Connor was to be one of the most significant events during Stoddard's life in the mid-1890s.⁶⁰ The second most significant event, occurring in 1895, was Stoddard's decision to move out of his rooms in Caldwell Hall and take up residence in a new home, a two-story brick house located on 300 M Street, Washington, D.C.⁶¹ Hiring a janitor at Caldwell Hall as his housekeeper, Stoddard moved into the house six years to the day after he came to Washington, and called his new domestic idyl "Saint Anthony's

⁶⁰ Austen and Crowley, *GP*, 132

⁶¹ Stroven, "A Life", 282

Rest” or the “Bungalow”.⁶² Quite worried about this new enterprise, Stoddard wrote to his ever faithful friend, Father Daniel Hudson:

O, but these expenses are frightening me! Of course I must run behind a little at first; so many little things must be purchased. My Jules is a treasure. A very pious, industrious, amiable French [sic] man of fifty – who was when a youth in the grand seminary in France. He has found his vocation here; he is so happy that I hear him trying to sing. He...cleans the house; helps me to dress; sews, darns stockings, and is in every possible way useful! I do not know what to do without him.

...It is all huge fun. For years I have not slept as I am now sleeping. Only the money is needed!⁶³

Although Stoddard had occasionally slept at the O’Connor house since 1892, 1895 was the time when Stoddard and young Kenneth took up residence together. Regarding O’Connor, Stoddard wrote to Father Hudson:

Have I told you much about this Kid? He is, or was a kind of waif. Ken is the youngest of ten – six are living. He was a very handsome child – but much neglected; when he grew into the awkward age his mother, brothers and sisters began to nag and ill-treat him.

I met him when I first came to Washington – a kind of Fontleroy [sic] and very picturesque. As I saw more of him I became interested and at last loved and pittied him and championed his cause in defiance of his whole family.

His mother gave him to me “Body and Bones” as she said. I have taken him to the Bungalow, where his manners and his morals are improving daily.

He will be 16 next Feb....Was long an altar boy at St. Patricks. Is very clever, but not studious. Goes daily to Georgetown, where I have gotten him a scholarship. He loves me and I hope to save him from the dismal fate that threatened him. Pray for us.⁶⁴

⁶²Ibid., 282-283

⁶³ MS. letter, Stoddard to Daniel Hudson, November 16, 1895 (University of Notre Dame Archives), quoted in Stroven, “A Life”, 282-283

⁶⁴ Ibid., 283

The internal surroundings of the “Bungalow”, the first true home that Stoddard could call his own since leaving San Francisco so many years before, reflected Stoddard’s personality, which expressed itself in all of the exotic trappings he had been carrying around for many years.⁶⁵ Many friends helped with the furnishings. Mrs. O’Connor herself went with Stoddard to pick out kitchen items. Washington friends gave velvet chairs, Persian pillows, and Father Daniel Hudson mailed surprise packages. The “Charles Warren Stoddard Reading Circle” of Massachusetts gave a cut-class punch bowl.⁶⁶ Stoddard wrote the following positive note to Father Hudson in the winter of 1895-96: “We are happier here than I can tell you. Our life is almost ideal... This is a rare house – a house of love. We all love each other here...”⁶⁷ Stoddard had found real peace in the domestic idyl he was finally able to establish. Outside of “Saint Anthony’s Rest”, however, were brewing concerns.

⁶⁵Austen and Crowley, *GP*, 134-135

⁶⁶*Ibid.*, 134-135

⁶⁷MS. Letter from Stoddard to Daniel Hudson, entry for December 9, 1895 (University of Notre Dame Archives), cited in Austen and Crowley, *GP*, 135

On September 15, 1896, the Pope dismissed rector Bishop Keane in a move which was generally hailed as a victory for the conservative Cahensylist element at the Catholic University of America. Bishop Keane had been Stoddard's staunchest ally and supporter, and he began to worry about his future at the institution. "This University scandal is killing me", he wrote in November 1896. "It is killing the institution".⁶⁸ About a year later he commented, "All is chaos at the Catholic University of America; never was there anything more disheartening".⁶⁹ The new, papally appointed rector was Dr. Thomas Conaty, a nominally "conservative" priest from Massachusetts with whom the liberal party was not happy. Adding to Stoddard's insecurity at this time was the appearance of a formidable academic rival: Maurice Francis Egan, the new professor of English. Even though Stoddard had tried to ignore Egan's presence during his first year on campus, Stoddard himself could not boast of Egan's many accomplishments: degrees from four universities, a

⁶⁸MS. Letter from Stoddard to Daniel Hudson, entry for November 12, 1896 (University of Notre Dame Archives), quoted in Austen and Crowley, *GP*, 135-136.

number of published works, a wife and three children, and a growing acquaintance with the cream of Washington society.⁷⁰ More pressing however, was the fact that the University was facing a financial crisis that made it likely that one or the other would be asked to resign.⁷¹

In the meantime, however, Stoddard's literary work continued. The *Ave Maria* continued to publish Stoddard's articles, and Father Hudson managed to get two of his books in print: a new edition of *The Lepers of Molokai* in 1893, and three years later, Stoddard's biography about his patron saint (St. Anthony) titled *The Wonder Worker of Padua*. Stoddard gained neither money nor national attention from these works. They were advertised only in Catholic periodicals and available only in Catholic bookstores.⁷² Stoddard's additional books (published at a later date), based primarily on old material from the magazines in which he published, reinforced a public impression that Stoddard was merely a chronicler of bygone days. *A Cruise Under*

⁶⁹ *Ibid.*, entry for October 7, 1897

⁷⁰ Austen and Crowley, *GP*, 136

⁷¹ *Ibid.*, 136

⁷² *Ibid.*, 139

the Crescent (1898) recalled his trip to Egypt and the Holy Land. *Over the Rocky Mountains to Alaska* (1899) was based on the summer he spent in the northwest during his Notre Dame summer. *In the Footprints of the Padres* (1902) contained youthful memories of colorful spots in northern California. *Exits and Entrances* (1903) interwove personality sketches of Bret Harte, Mark Twain, and Robert Lois Stevenson with picturesque travelogue. *A Troubled Heart and How It Was Comforted At Last* was republished in 1900, with Stoddard's name finally printed on the front page. None of these books sold very well, but publication did give Stoddard a modicum of personal satisfaction.⁷³

Although Stoddard's literary endeavors might not have brought all the recognition he wanted, he continued to be circulating in some of the highest social circles of Washington, D. C. throughout the 1890s. Queen Lili'uokalani, who was traveling with a delegation to Washington in the late 1890s, corresponded with Stoddard during this time. This correspondence shows Stoddard acting as a liminar witness and critic, as he sympathized with the

⁷³ Ibid., 139

deposed queen about the overthrow and later annexation of Hawai'i in 1898 (although he took no political steps to rally for her or on the beleaguered kingdom's behalf):

Your Majesty,

The beautiful photograph with the autograph and the ever welcoming letter came to gladden me some days ago. A thousand thanks for the honor Your Majesty has done me. With all my heart I appreciate.

I have finished "Hawaii's Story" and am more than convinced that if the public will only read this most eloquent and pathetic story – one of the most eloquent and pathetic that I have ever read – it will be to judge of the Hawaiian question and to at last realize what a cruel wrong has been done. I hope and pray that this may be the case and that the annexationist may be laughed to scorn.⁷⁴

In the year 1898, Stoddard's relationship with Kenneth O'Connor changed significantly, especially when the twenty-one year old decided to enlist in the armed forces during the Spanish-American War. Stoddard's reaction to O'Connor's enlistment illustrates how essential "the Kid" had become to him during their time together in the 1890s.⁷⁵ "Ken is begging leave to enlist" Stoddard wrote Father Hudson in April 1898. "I would not object did I not fear that the worry would drive me

⁷⁴MS Letter from Charles Warren Stoddard to Queen Lili'uokalani, dated February 15, 1898, UH-Manoa PACC Collection Manuscripts

⁷⁵Austen and Crowley, *GP*, 142-143

mad.”⁷⁶ The short war was over by August of 1898, and in September, Kenneth returned to Stoddard, who spent a few weeks with him relaxing in Atlantic City. The war had made “wrecks” of them both, Stoddard wrote Father Hudson, but in the healthy sunshine and salt air “they were picking up together.”⁷⁷ Back in the Bungalow, however, Stoddard’s and O’Connor’s relationship began to fall apart. Kenneth drank excessively, and squandered a good deal of Stoddard’s money.⁷⁸ Soon, all of Kenneth’s shortcomings of character, as Stoddard biographer Carl Stroven has noted, were blamed on the boy’s experiences in the army.⁷⁹

Stoddard’s final years at the Catholic University of America and his time in Washington in general were additionally complicated by the fact that he believed that Professor Egan, his colleague in the English department, was conspiring against him.⁸⁰ While professing to be his friend, Egan may well have maneuvered to have Stoddard’s classes

⁷⁶MS. Letter, Stoddard to Daniel Hudson, entry for April 23, 1898 (University of Notre Dame Archives), cited in Austen and Crowley, *GP*, 142

⁷⁷ Austen and Crowley, *GP*, 143

⁷⁸ *Ibid.*, 143

⁷⁹Stroven, “A Life”, 293, cited in Austen and Crowley, *GP*, 143

⁸⁰Austen and Crowley, *GP*, 144

declared elective after 1897, while his own remained compulsory. In time, enrollment in Stoddard's courses dwindled, sometimes leaving him with only two or three students to lecture. Furthermore, Stoddard was often unable to attend classes due to illness. During these years, he was in and out of Providence Hospital, suffering from symptoms of malaria or the grippe. Finally, the University, troubled by declining enrollments and shaky finances, decided to fire Stoddard. Stoddard wrote about the incident on November 13, 1901; thirteen years to the day that he arrived at the Catholic University:

Today having lectured on Hazlitt to a class of one – Rector Conaty met me in the Corridor of McMahan Hall and asked me to his room. He did not invite me to be seated. He said bluntly: -- “Are you aware that the Faculty of Philosophy and the Senate have decided that your services are no longer required in this University?” A strange little flutter of joy quickened my heart. I said without change of countenance, I was not. He continued that “such was the case. You have been ill and absent so often. Have not attended the faculty meetings regularly, etc. No one has spoken unkindly of you; all spoke warmly and even affectionately, etc.”

Well, I went home and was glad. My day of deliverance is at hand! Thank God!!⁸¹

Stoddard's sense of deliverance was soon followed, however, by acute apprehensions about the future. On New Year's Day of 1902, he wrote to

Father Hudson: "Now we begin to dismantle the Bungalow. It is heartbreaking. Perhaps when I settle in new quarters I shall feel more at ease."⁸²

Stoddard's apprehensions of the future were the signal of yet another crisis for him, this time appearing at the end of his reaggregation at the Catholic University of America. The "new quarters" which he found, happened to be the home of the O'Connor's, who sympathized with Stoddard during his time of need. While staying at the O'Connors, Stoddard would take trips north to New England to visit old friends, but often fell ill and needed to recuperate in the care of loving friends such as the O'Connors, and later, his old friend William Woodworth, a professor at Harvard and resident of Cambridge, Massachusetts. For much of the winter of 1902-03, Stoddard was stricken with inflammatory rheumatism, and he had to enter Georgetown University Hospital for treatment. After his release, Stoddard decided to leave

⁸¹ Stoddard, "A Life's Labyrinth", entry for November 13, 1901 (Bancroft Library), cited in Stroven, "A Life", 291-92 and Austen and Crowley, *GP*, 145

⁸² MS. Letter, Stoddard to Daniel Hudson, January 1, 1902, (University of Notre Dame Archives), cited in Austen and Crowley, *GP*, 145

Washington permanently.⁸³ The day on which Stoddard departed Washington following his tenure at the Catholic University of America was an emotional one for him:

At noon my long-time bosom kid – Kenneth O’Connor Stoddard – and his chum Billie Combs, went with me to the Penn Station at Washington, D.C. and saw me off from the train – the train that was to separate Ken and myself perhaps forever.

We took the 9th St. trolley – Ken carrying my dress-suit case and Billie a handbag that was heavy with books and manuscripts....

I caught a glimpse of them as they stood on the platform under the car window – my heart flew into my throat, my eyes grew misty – I felt myself breaking down – with a gesture I waved them away and they vanished on the instant!

So ends the experience of my life, when for fourteen years I have been the champion, protector, lover of one who needed me and all I could do for him. I could no longer restrain my tears. Not until we had reached Baltimore, an hour later, had I begun to recover my self-controll [sic].⁸⁴

The Return of the Prodigal

On his sixtieth birthday in 1903, Stoddard wrote, “How I need a guide, philosopher, and friend — in fact a Kid – to care for me in these sad times”.⁸⁵ That “Kid” who cared for Stoddard in his later years was William Woodworth, who helped Stoddard to convalesce after a life threatening illness in the winter of that year. After living at

⁸³Ibid., 151

⁸⁴Stoddard, MS. Journal, recorded in a publisher’s “dummy” bearing the stamped title “A Royal Son and Mother”, entry for April 6, 1903 (Finlay Cook). The journal contains entries from April 6 to April 24, 1903. After the last entry he summarized his life for the following year. On the first page of the journal he wrote “The Resurrection and the Life of Charles Warren Stoddard who descended into the Limbo of the Catholic University of Washington, D.C., but rose again from the dead after fourteen greivous years on Monday of Passion Week, 1903.”, cited in Stroven, “A Life”, 296-297

Woodworth's residence and regaining his strength, Stoddard was accompanied by Woodward on a long trek back to the haunts of his youth in northern California. The prodigal son had returned to the place he once called home.

Stoddard arrived back in San Francisco on April 3, 1905, and stayed with his family – father, brother and sister – at his sister's house on 616 Baker Street.⁸⁶ San Francisco no longer pleased Stoddard: he missed his old companions, many of whom had either died or moved away; he was “constantly meeting new faces, and hearing voices pitched in an unfamiliar key”; and he was alien to the “restless, strenuous life” that characterized the city at the time. Life in San Francisco, he said, moved at a “pace that kills one of my temperament”.⁸⁷ Moreover, the climate no longer agreed with him. With his “first mouthful of fog” he was “struck dumb with bronchitis”; he was crippled with inflammatory rheumatism; and he could not sleep.⁸⁸

⁸⁵Stoddard Diary, entry for August 7, 1903, cited in Austen and Crowley, GP, 152

⁸⁶Stroven, “A Life”, 301-302

⁸⁷Stoddard, “Summer Rest”, *Ave Maria*, vol.lxv, 1-6 (July 6, 1907), cited in Stroven, “A Life”, 302

⁸⁸MS. Letter, Stoddard to Daniel Hudson, May 6, 1905, (University of Notre Dame Archives); and MS. Letter, Stoddard to Dewitt Miller, May 5, 1905 (Huntington Library), cited in Stroven, “A Life”, 302

After a quiet family reunion in early April, Stoddard went to enjoy the "Welcome Home" dinner in his honor that the old timers at the Bohemian Club of San Francisco (this time more structurally organized than before) had planned for him on April 13.⁸⁹ During this affair, the Golden Age of California literature was recalled, placing Stoddard in the pantheon beside Bret Harte and Joaquin Miller. "We have killed the fatted calf", intoned the poet Lucius Harwood Foote, a former ambassador to Korea, "and are glad to welcome the prodigal son to the haunts of his youth." He continued:

The famous trio, Bret Harte, Joaquin Miller and Charles Warren Stoddard, who sat with us by the early campfires, are talismanic names. Here where the Orient and the Occident meet they caught and crystallized their inspiration. They emphasized in letters the strenuous life of the Gringo and the decadence of the Hidalgo...they voiced the idylls of the South Seas and sang the song of the Sierras...the printed page will continue to tell the tale, and the art of the master is eternal.⁹⁰

These words intoned by Foote must have seemed somewhat ironic to Stoddard, who was chafing at the very "strenuous" nature of the San Francisco environs in which he found himself upon

⁸⁹Austen and Crowley, *GP*, 155

⁹⁰Charles M. Shortridge, author, "Welcome Home to the Author of the South Sea Idylls", printed in *The San Francisco Call*, April 14, 1905

his return to the only home he knew. This quotation is interesting in that it also reflects the racialism of Californians like Foote, who appears to discriminate against Hispanic-Americans as “decadent Hidalgos” and posits Anglo-Americans as hardworking men with a better work ethic than others. Stoddard and Foote both clearly knew that the same racist arguments would be used by those interested in divesting Pacific Island groups from the lands in which adventurous Euro-Americans, like Stoddard, had at one time found “idyllic”.

Final Respite in Monterey

Stoddard left San Francisco in early June of 1905, rested for a month at the San Jose Sanitorium, and then went on to Monterey, where he hoped to write a series of travel articles, “Old Mission Idyls”, for the *Sunset Magazine*. The literary kudos which Stoddard received just a few months before at the Bohemian Club dinner in his honor fell short of meeting Stoddard’s deepest felt needs. Most of all he wanted to find a cozy bungalow by the sea and a “Kid” with whom to share it. During Stoddard’s

final years, he was on the lookout for both.⁹¹ Stoddard had not been to Monterey for about twenty seven years; like San Francisco, this small sea side town had changed significantly. Stoddard appreciated the weather in Monterey, and people were friendly to him there. Stoddard felt as if he had been transported back to Italy. He rented a bright apartment, in a house near the water he called “Casa Verde”, and began to write his travel articles.⁹²

After spending most of the winter of 1905-06 in Monterey, Stoddard decided to travel northeast again, this time to visit the old missions of San Juan Bautista, San Jose, and Santa Clara. He needed to become better acquainted with these places for the *Sunset* articles he needed to write. The mission articles began appearing in the *Sunset* in June of 1906. Some personality sketches he had written for the *National* were bringing him a modicum of popularity, and away from the coastal fog, Stoddard seemed to be “at peace with all the world”.⁹³ Even the great San Francisco earthquake of April 18 did

⁹¹ Austen and Crowley, *GP*, 156-157

⁹² Austen and Crowley, *GP*, 157-158

⁹³ MS. Letter, Stoddard to Daniel Hudson, May 13, 1906 (University of Notre Dame Archives), cited in Austen and Crowley, *GP*, 162

not appear to disturb him greatly. When Stoddard moved back to Monterey in the fall of 1906, he had to accept the likelihood that there would be no “Kid” to comfort him during his final days.⁹⁴

From 1906 to 1909, the year of his passing, the pace of Stoddard’s life slowed down significantly. Much of Stoddard’s “visiting” was done by correspondence, to which he devoted many hours a day. Magazine articles came first in his writing schedule, but after 1907, there were fewer and fewer of these to be written. During an average month he wrote about one hundred letters, nearly all of them in the purple ink that had become his trademark. To Horace Traubel, Walt Whitman’s secretary, Stoddard wrote that he was becoming to grow dull and sad because he lacked the rejuvenating companionship of young men. About Walt Whitman, Stoddard added: “Do you know what life means to me? It means everything that Walt Whitman has ever said or sung...He breathed the breath of life into me.”⁹⁵ From Washington, Corinne O’Connor reported that her brother

⁹⁴Austen and Crowley, *GP*, 163

Kenneth was sliding downhill. He was now an unemployed vaudeville actor, using the stage name of "Kenneth Stoddard".⁹⁶ He often wrote of religious matters to Father Hudson, sometimes hinting that he would like to end his days in a monastery, perhaps at Santa Barbara, "if they could only take me as a lay brother".⁹⁷

During the last months of his life, Stoddard lived mostly in silence. By January 1909, crippled by rheumatism, and feeling too worn to write anymore, Stoddard sensed that his life was ending. During the months that followed, he often stayed in bed all day. The doctor gave the final diagnosis of heart disease. A new will was prepared, and brief notes were written in a trembling hand to such old friends as Father Daniel Hudson. Finally, on Friday, April 23, 1909, Charles Warren Stoddard suffered a heart attack, and passed away.⁹⁸

⁹⁵ Stoddard to Horace Traubel, (Huntington Library) [undated in quote], cited in Austen and Crowley, *GP*, 164-165).

⁹⁶ Corinne O'Connor to Stoddard, August 10, 1906 (Bancroft Library), cited in Austen and Crowley, *GP*, 165

⁹⁷ MS. Letters, Stoddard to Daniel Hudson, November 18, 1905, December 9, 1906, April 22, 1908 (University of Notre Dame Archives), cited in Austen and Crowley, *GP*, 165

⁹⁸ Austen and Crowley, *GP*, 167

Posthumous Kudos

When Charles Warren Stoddard passed away, newspapers printed bare, brief obituary articles which told where and when he would be buried, and stated that his friend Father Mestres would conduct the requiem high mass. The newspapers printed a few biographical facts and information about the fact that Stoddard was a "noted writer", though few named even one of his books. No wide circle of readers was made suddenly aware that it had lost a favorite author. Those who regretted his passing were the many friends who recalled his graceful talk, his charm of manner, and his kindness. During his lifetime of many friendships and acquaintances, these personal qualities had spread his reputation, perhaps as widely as had his books; and by the time Stoddard died, many of those who had also known him were also passing away.⁹⁹

One of the many friends who had eulogized Stoddard, Thomas Walsh, wrote this posthumous poem in Stoddard's honor. The poem bespeaks of Stoddard's fame as a noted writer of Oceania:

⁹⁹ Stroven, "A Life", 314

Charles Warren Stoddard

The Poet of the South Seas

Thine exile ended, -- O beloved seer, --
Thou turnest homeward to thine isles of light;
 Thy reefs of silver, and palmetto height!
Yea, down thy vales sonorous thou wouldst hear
Again the cataracts that white and clear
Called from young days—oh, with what loving might!—
That from our arms and this embattled night
Thou break'st away and leav'st us sobbing here...¹⁰⁰

¹⁰⁰ "Introduction" to *Poems of Charles Warren Stoddard*, collected by Ina Coolbrith (New York: John Lane Company, 1917), 10

CHAPTER 7

CONCLUSION

Charles Warren Stoddard's passage through life in the nineteenth century, as we have seen, was indeed a long and interesting one for a man of his period. Having left his native roots of rural New York, Stoddard (along with his family) was transplanted to the fertile soils of an early and cosmopolitan San Francisco, from where he continued along on many ventures: not only into Oceania, but in Europe and the Middle East. Literature formed one of the three apexes of the triadic theme of his life, and took him places where he probably never before imagined. The two other apexes of Stoddard's life in the limen included his sexual liminality and spirituality, which he made all attempts to integrate in a meaningful, life-giving way.

From an early period in his life, Stoddard felt a keen sense of difference from his peers, both on the East coast of the United States where he spent his formative years, and on America's Pacific frontier, where he would come of age. This

perceived sense of difference was a strong signal of Stoddard's sexual liminality, namely his homosexuality, which he tried to come to terms with within himself and the society in which he eventually reaggredated. Stoddard's sexual liminality began to emerge at his coming of age, a time during which he was doing his best to get an education. A welcome respite during this time was needed, and Stoddard found himself then venturing into the Pacific Islands, where he seems to have found a modicum of serenity in several significant *aikāne* relationships with native Hawaiians. As we have seen from this thesis, Stoddard's sojourns spent in the Pacific brought welcome rest, as well as a source of productivity and spiritual refreshment in his life.

When Stoddard returned to the United States after his first sojourn in the Pacific, he became preoccupied with making a place for himself in a world in which he felt unsure and insecure, at best. At this time, Stoddard needed a refuge, a source of comfort and *communitas* he was not yet experiencing on America's Pacific frontier. This

quest for career, serenity and *communitas* led Stoddard to become a member of the Catholic church at the age of twenty-four. Stoddard took life long solace in the comfort and *communitas* he found within the church, although he might not have always agreed with its official position on the very same-sex relationships he found so comforting, especially in Oceania.

Men like Stoddard, who were in turn influenced by the great American poet Walt Whitman, were on a literary quest to find a language and discourse which could express their deepest longings and desires for same-sex intimacy. Whitman successfully found the language of love in his poetry and other writings, in a brave, bold way which other men-loving-men of his time seldom, if ever, dared to express. Whitman found the words at hand to express the love of one man for another, while men like Stoddard did so, albeit in sometimes veiled forms.

Nevertheless, Stoddard's depictions of same-sex relationship, as related in his *South Sea Idyls*, reflects the emergence of a man coming to

terms with his sexuality in a day and age when it was socially risky to acknowledge this mode of life. Sexuality, as we have seen in the life of Stoddard, and as we know from day to day life as human beings, reflects one of the deepest currents of human creativity, and is one of the very sources of life itself. Once Stoddard was able to celebrate his life in the South Seas (as seen in *South Sea Idyls*) and the meaningful relationships he experienced there, he became one of the most beloved traveloguers of his age, striking a cord in the hearts of many who could not, like Stoddard had, be in Oceania. Although the representations of the Pacific Islanders he encountered may have been tinged with previous readings of Oceanic classics such as Defoe's *Robinson Crusoe*, they were nevertheless important for their day and age, for in true liminal fashion, Stoddard was able to tell a story from his unique, anti-structural perspective which he seems to have maintained throughout his life. This position, as we have seen, made for a difficult, if tentative reaggregation into American life, once he accepted two positions at two prominent

universities. It seems that Stoddard's time spent in the Pacific served as a model for him of a way of life he had always desired, but tried his best to achieve once he returned home.

In the final years of Stoddard's life, republication of his South Seas islands sketches appeared in book form, called the *Island of Tranquil Delights*. In the publication of this book, and in the second edition of *South Sea Idyls*, Stoddard seems to have gathered the courage to be more forthright about the very specialness of his *aikāne* relationships experienced in the Pacific Islands in a way he had not been able to when the tales were first published:

It may be that sometime, somewhere, the tale-tellers will tell the tales of two horses and their boys and that our harmless life and adventures will become historical, as has many other incident of little moment; it may be that this episode is hardly worth remembering at all, yet I cannot forget it for it touched me to the quick. It does not matter if in my calmer moments reason cautions me to beware – my head and heart don't hitch—they never did—and so I have written as I have written; and shall not have written in vain if I, for a few moments only, have afforded interest or pleasure to the careful student of the Unnatural History of Civilization.¹

In this prescient statement, Stoddard appears to be beckoning to chroniclers of the future who may study him and his sojourns in the Islands.

¹ Stoddard, *ITD*, 276

Stoddard's reference to "unnatural" history reflects his own, turn of the century internalized homophobia regarding the supposed "unnaturalness" of same-sex intimacies. The twentieth and twenty-first centuries, as we have seen from the significant work of Carl Stroven, Roger Austen, and John W. Crowley, have come to show us that the time is *now* for studying such historically liminal figures as Stoddard; for Stoddard in many ways could be viewed as a man living at a pivotal, changing time, in which same-sex relationships and intimacies were only beginning to be better understood. It is hoped that this thesis, with new explication of Stoddard's significant *aikāne* relationships, will be a good step forward toward future scholarship.

By stepping on to the shores and into rural communities of Hawai'i, such as in Halawa Valley on the island of Moloka'i, Charles Warren Stoddard stepped beyond the limen of a Pacific Islands beach, and experienced a new sense of place and spirit in a uniquely Hawaiian cosmos and timeframe. Stoddard's *aikāne* relationships gave him a unique

opportunity to successfully integrate the three apexes that made up the thematic triad of his life, although for a very short time. Stoddard remembered this fact his whole life through. At the end of the first section of his *South Sea Idyl* entitled "Chumming With a Savage", Stoddard had this to say about time spent with his beloved Kana-ana. Remembering his structural commitments, Stoddard wrote:

I couldn't make up my mind to stay; yet I'm always dying to go back again. So I grew tired over my husks. I arose and went unto my father. I wanted to finish up the Prodigal business. I ran and fell upon his neck and kissed him, and said unto him, "Father, *if* I have sinned against Heaven and in thy sight, I'm afraid I don't care much. Don't kill anything. I don't want any calf. Take back the ring, I don't deserve it; for I'd give more this minute to see that dear, little, velvet-skinned, coffee-colored Kana-ana, than anything else in the wide world, -- because he hates business, and so do I. He's about half sunshine himself; and, above all others, and more than any one else ever can, he loved your Prodigal.²

In this manner, Stoddard in many ways foresaw his tentative reaggregation into American society some many years later.

Charles Warren Stoddard always remembered his structural commitments as a travel writer, and hoped for an eventual, comfortable reaggregated status in United States society. In many salient ways, he achieved this goal as a travel

² Stoddard, *SSI*, 42-43

writer, although the compromise for such a career meant living in a kind of permanent limbo vis á vis nineteenth century mainstream society. Stoddard felt keenly at odds with that world, which is one of the reasons why he traveled so much. Travel kept him at bay from the structural tenor of American society.

Nevertheless, Stoddard (quite paradoxically) did his best to adhere to the very structures from which he sought greater freedom. A semblance of a nervous breakdown kept Stoddard away from his school commitments at Brayton Academy during the year 1864, and he sought respite and recuperation for eight months in Hawai'i. After a healing time of recovery, Stoddard was called back to California to return to school. In Venice, Stoddard committed to both writing and relationship with a partner, although ostensibly future writing responsibilities called him to other places in Europe, thereby bringing his domestic idyll with Frank Millett to an end.

In Chapter Five, we have seen how Walt Whitman served as such a strong role model for

Stoddard. Although sometimes criticized for his outspokenness later in life, Whitman's courage, candor and dignity stood as a beacon for Stoddard as he was doing his best to launch his own career as a man of letters. Stoddard, too, experienced turmoil toward the end of his life; he had read many books on homosexuality, bisexuality and human sexuality in general shortly before his death; books which gave him an inkling of future times to come in the gay liberation movement in the United States.

Stoddard was a bohemian when that group was in a stage of liminal diversity in San Francisco. As his homecoming dinner in 1905 illustrates, the group had become structurally congenial, reminiscing of the days of liminal *communitas* of old. This might have been a somewhat bittersweet homecoming for Stoddard, for at the end of his life, he still recoiled at the very artifices of structure from which he had escaped by living as a travel writer over many seas.

Can liminality be successfully incorporated into structure in a productive way, thus taking the "bumps" out of the transitoriness of the liminal

path? Can liminality be integrated into structural dynamics in a meaningful way as a reminder about the importance of *communitas*, and in the case of Stoddard, *same-sex* *communitas*? Or is liminality simply a necessary phase toward structure?

And what of liminality and rites of passage? Van Gennep's and Turner's *rites of passage* paradigm illustrates for us that key turning point mechanisms are necessary for a smoother progression of the human life course. In a country as large as the United States, which does not benefit from national rites of passage (at the macrocosmic level, at least), this has special significance. As we have seen from the life of Charles Warren Stoddard, when the mechanisms of change during the human life course go unheeded (such as a successful integration of a person's sexual orientation, for example), a life can remain in a mode of limbo, unanchored within the structure of society.

As of this writing, structural mechanisms have been set in place whereby a means of same-sex domesticity can be established as a part of social structure: with the legal recognition of same-

sex civil unions in Vermont, the offering of health benefits to same-sex partners in some states and metropolitan areas of the United States, culminating with the recent legal recognition of same-sex marriage in the state of Massachusetts. These events mark a major turning point in United States history, for same-sex couples who live and love together are slowly but surely gaining the legal, structural recognition and sanction to progress happily through the life cycle together. This turn of events in United States history might have existed as a distant dream for men like Stoddard, who lived in liminality during a difficult moment in the history and evolution of sexual diversity in the United States.

Let us take a brief look at what we can learn from the liminal, experiential lens of Charles Warren Stoddard's life and work. Similar to liminars past and present, Stoddard's life was accented by a quest for spiritual solace and community, which he found in the Catholic church when he was baptized in 1867. Given the prevalence of anti-Catholic sentiment during the

mid-nineteenth century, this spiritual commitment should strike us as being very remarkable for a man of his age; especially from a person whose ancestors hailed from the Puritan days of old. Stoddard's spiritual commitments to the church additionally placed him in an antagonistic stance to the business ethos of the nineteenth century; a fact which left Stoddard tentatively engaged (at best) with the mores of nineteenth century Euro-American society. This experience in and of itself shaped his perspective as an occasional critic of American society, and critic of American interests of Hawai'i, as is seen by his sympathetic letter to the deposed Queen Lili'uokalani during the late 1800s.

As the "lens of perception" necessitates, each person's way of experiencing the world will be slightly different, requiring a concerted effort in communication. The favored medium of communication which Stoddard chose was that of writing, which both constituted his unique identity and gave his life meaning as a man of letters. In his writing, Stoddard explored the three apexes which made up the thematic triad of his life: spirituality,

intimate same-sex relationship, and travelogue. Most of Stoddard's writing, as we have seen, conveyed his liminal perspective as an outsider looking in (with the exception of perhaps his religious sketches for the *Ave Maria*) and immediately inform his audiences of the difficult path of the liminar. The South Seas Island sketches in which he recounts his experiences of *aikāne* partnership impart to his audiences not only the joys of new-found relationships, but also the complexities involved in self-acceptance and self-identification in a complex society which apparently had trouble accepting Stoddard for who he was. While reading these stories, we can appreciate and learn from Stoddard's quest for love and acceptance in a changing world, both in nineteenth century Oceania and the United States.

What we can learn from men such as Stoddard, however, is that liminality, like structure, has its lens, which clarifies modes of existence perhaps yet to come. Stoddard's life and work illustrate for us the dialectic between liminality and

structure: one illuminates the other, as in gracefully
moving partners in an intimate dance.

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