club ASIAN

Meet Madame Butterfly

Decolonize your mind!

Play, pageantry, and the politics of performing Filipino-ness

new club ASIAN

February 2021

Katie Li

A WHITE MAN'S FANTASY

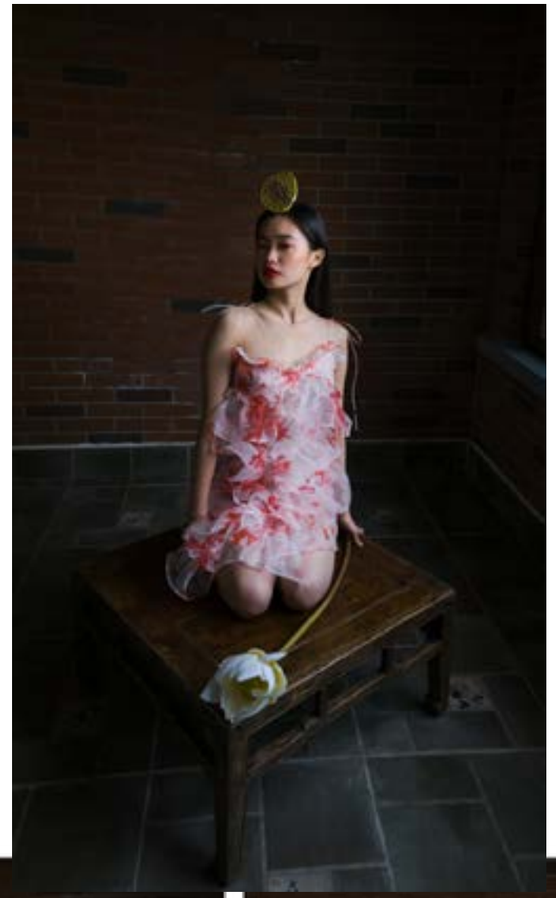
photography + writing by katie li

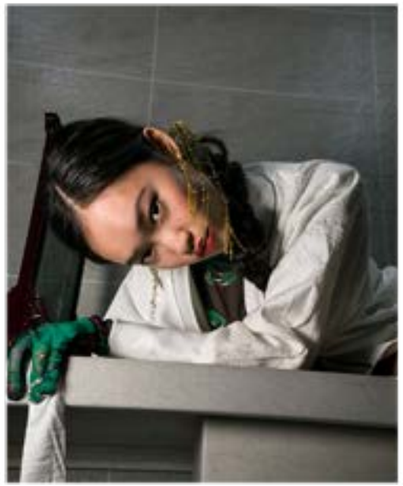
"asian women's bodies are always contextualized into colonial, historical meanings. preconceptions of our race as either overtly sexual or submissive places our bodies as objects. they erase our actual human experiences."

LOTUS BLOSSOM

the ultimate symbol of ‘oriental’ femininity is most commonly portrayed as the lotus blossom trope, also known as the china doll or geisha girl. the lotus blossom stereotype depicts asian woman as a sexual, romantic object. they paint asian women as shy, virginal, passive, and subservient figures that exist to serve (white) men. this is intricately associated with the ‘white man savior’ trope: the lotus blossom as a female, passive actor awaits for white man’s saving. we see this in miss saigon, a musical showcasing a racialized, sexual fantasy: a romance between an american g.i. and an innocent, desperate vietnamese prostitute ‘victim’ of her surroundings must be ‘saved’ by the love of a white man — this musical is still in theaters today.

this racial stereotype in the lens of the colonial world reaffirms asian’s inferiority and primitivism, reassuring the occidental of the orient’s submission to western domination. such oriental femininity fetishizes and hypersexualizes asian women’s bodies into submissive ‘dolls,’ obedient sex objects for a colonial, white man’s desire.





DRAGON LADY

“the predatory, dangerously evil asian women. the dragon lady epitomizes the feminized representation of the yellow peril. in hollywood films, asian female roles are often as the menacing, devious madams. by framing asian women as lacking morality, narratives of asians as inferior and primitive are justified and reassured.

anna may wong is the most notable example. as the first asian american actress in hollywood, she played limiting roles that reproduced stereotypes of the dragon lady, such as princes ling moy, an exotic dancer, and murderer in the daughter of the dragon (1931) and a mongol slave in the thief of baghdad (1942).

it is this overtly sexual dragon lady that seeks to perpetuate the yellow peril, a racial stereotype that depicts asians as an existential threat to the occidental world.”

ME LOVE YOU LONG TIME

DO YOU WANT ONE MORE TALE OF A VIETNAM GIRL?

‘Miss Saigon’ Ages Horribly In Era Of #MeToo

By Dino-Ray Ramos
July 29, 2019

Miss Saigon in 2019 is not the Miss Saigon I remember from 1997. With music by Claude-Michel Schönberg and lyrics by Richard Maltby Jr. and Alain Boublil, Miss Saigon is inspired by the opera Madame Butterfly and revered as a theater classic since it made its London debut in 1989. It later premiered on Broadway in 1991 to wild success, with Lea Salonga winning a Tony and Olivier Award and putting her on the map as one of the most talented stage actresses. It was a big score for Asian representation as Salonga, of Filipino descent, went on to become the singing voices of Jasmine in 1992’s Aladdin and the titular heroine in Mulan.

In 1989 and 1991, Miss Saigon was seen through a different scope, being one of the few musicals, films and TV series providing representation for Asians and Asian Americans. In 2019, when there’s a craving for authentic representation and inclusion, those optics are vastly different. I remember watching a touring production for the first time in 1997 and being impressed and mesmerized because of the epicness of it all. Being more impressed with the fact that I was “going to the theater,” I wasn’t mature enough to unpack its cultural impact. That said, the dated musical is highly problematic in the way it frames its narrative — no matter which angle you look at it.

With that in mind, is it time that we revisit problematic musicals and existing IP from the past and reevaluate their optics when it comes to poor representation of people of color, women and other marginalized communities? Many films and TV series have been rebooted and revived through a more empathetic and inclusive lens. We have seen One Day at a Time rebooted with a Cuban immigrant family as well as a female Doctor Who and a Latino-led Magnum P.I. On the film side, we have seen an all-female Ghostbusters and Ocean’s 8, and the Star Wars universe has become a story led by a female with black

and Latino co-leads. As the decades have passed, musicals have stayed true to their source material, but perhaps it is time to retool the problematic ones — like Miss Saigon.

Currently playing at the Pantages Theatre in Los Angeles, Miss Saigon is set during during the Vietnam War in the 1970s and follows a young Vietnamese woman named Kim. As an orphan of war, she is forced to work in a bar brothel run by a self-serving con-man/pimp known as "The Engineer." While put in this unfortunate position, she hangs on to hope as she falls in love with Chris, an American G.I. When Saigon falls, they are separated. After three years, she desperately attempts to find her way back to him as she has mothered his child. It's an epically tragic musical with riveting, soul-stirring music — but that is not enough to make up for its tone-deaf narrative swaddled in white guilt.

From the beginning, Miss Saigon had its problems.

When Jonathan Pryce first played The Engineer, they altered his eyes and skin color to make him look more Asian. Luckily, producers of the musical decided to stray away from this practice of yellowface after Pryce won the Tony and departed the show, and Miss Saigon became the one and only beacon for working Asian American stage actors. But now that we are living in a time where musicals like Hamilton have changed the game when it comes to inclusive storytelling and providing more opportunities for people of color, Miss Saigon remains an archaic, cringe-worthy musical that ages as well as its history of yellowface.

Yes, Miss Saigon is a product of its time, but that does not make it all right to keep telling a story that

"Various productions have changed the lyrics and have even taken out the fact that Kim is 17 — but I have never forgotten."

perpetuates stereotypes and serves as a reminder that Asians and Asian Americans once were relegated to roles of "Me love you long time" prostitutes, abusively domineering desexualized male figures (mainly the character of Thuy — played in the current Los Angeles production by Jinwoo Jung — a man betrothed to Kim) and shady, clownish men used as comic relief (The Engineer played here by Red Concepcion). As soon as the show opens, we see these stereotypes play out and celebrated in a number called "The Heat Is On," where we see scantily clad sex workers beg the attention of American military men. It's clear that the direction here was: "Be as over the top and lewd as possible to echo the era." There is no female empowerment or ownership of their bodies whatsoever as men fling these women over their shoulders as if they are objects. There are several instances of women are spread eagle and men burying their faces in crotches. It's '70s-brand toxic masculinity at its best, and another layer of disgust is added when in one part of the scene ends in violence after a woman begs a G.I. to take her to America.

What is even equally if not more offensive is the introduction of the main romance between Chris (Anthony Festa) and Kim (Emily Bautista). Chris is clearly not into any of this scene and seems like he's the good guy of the bunch with a moral compass — until he sees Kim.

In the sea of women strutting their stuff and singing about their sexual talent, Kim comes forward and endearingly belts out her intro. The original lyrics are: "I'm 17 and I'm new here today/The village I come from seems so far away/All of the girls know much more what to say/But I know I have a heart like the sea…a million dreams are in me." Various productions have changed the lyrics and have even taken out the fact that Kim is 17 — but I have never forgotten.

Chris spots her from across the room and is immediately taken by her golden-heart innocence and purity, and sings, "Good Jesus, John, who is she?" I must reiterate: She is 17 years old.

Things slow down in the song "The Movie in My Mind" and the women sing an internal dialogue that is supposed to validate their actions as to why they are doing this and the pain that goes along with the work they are forced to do. "They are not nice, they're mostly noise," one of the nameless women sings. "They swear like men, they screw like boys/I know there's nothing in their hearts/But everytime I take one in my arms, it starts…the movie in my mind." As the women sing about what they do to distract themselves from their loveless trysts with men, Kim comes forward and sings: "I will not cry, I will not think/I'll do my dance, I'll make them drink/When I make love it won't be me/And if they hurt me I'll just close my eyes, and see."

Soon after this number, there is a transaction when The Engineer, after slapping Kim around, sells her off to a reluctant (but not really) Chris. She goes off to service him and, as kind-hearted and gentle as he is, he still sleeps with her and, in a Stockholm syndrome turn of events, they fall in love. Again, she is 17 years old.

After Chris sleeps with Kim, he sings "Why God Why?", a song with the lyrics: "How can I feel good when nothing's right," and "Why God, why today/I'm all through here on my way/There's nothing left here that I'll miss/Why send me now a night like this." Apparently, the song makes everything OK and the two express their love for each other in "Sun and Moon," and later on in "The Last Night of the World" — both are the musical's most popular benchmark songs. And within the first six songs of Miss Saigon, a problematic picture is painted and a frustrating tone set that resonates throughout and makes it unbearable to watch.

First and foremost, the problem is not the actors in the musical; they are fantastic, and the talent is there. With pitch-perfect ease, they deliver stellar performances. Bautista soars as Kim, and Concepcion as The Engineer moves the story along with charisma. The staging is phenomenal — particularly the helicopter scene — and the orchestration is powerful. They all have a job and they do it well. It's just unfortunate that it has to be veiled by such an oppressive story that has not aged well and will continue to make Asians and Asian Americans squirm.

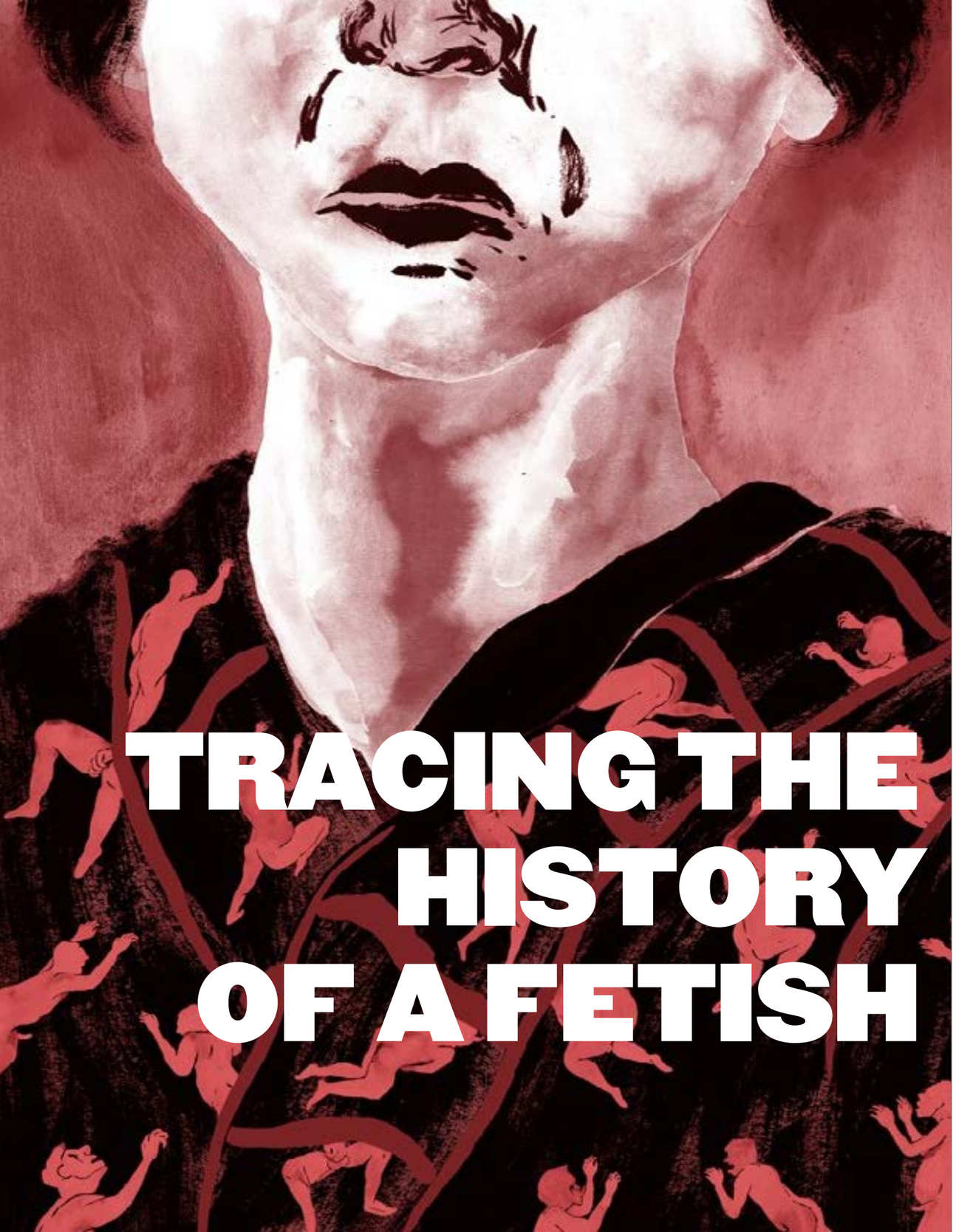
The story is framed and told by white men with little or no consultation from the Vietnamese community. And each time it plays, it will get a standing ovation because — well — the performances are strong and eclipse the racist details and macro-aggressions in the narrative. Miss Saigon, however, is representation gone wrong and lacks empathy in a story that viewed through an Orientalist lens puts a questionable romance in the forefront during a period of strife in Vietnam. Perhaps it is time that we revisit this musical and tinker with it in order to make it not so problematic — if that's even possible. If not, maybe it's time to retire it and listen to "The Last Night of the World" out of context in order to detach it from the controversial stigma of the musical. It's a great love song, once you strip it of all the horrible implications.

Miss Saigon is a story that needs to be told, but through a totally different lens. It's a tragic part of American history that we must face, but when it is put in the context of the white savior narrative, that's when problems arise. Chris, no matter what he does, is seen as the hero and the victim. At one point, his new wife Ellen (Stacie Bono) attempts to understand his PTSD and wants to be there for him, but he pushes her away. In a moment of frustration, she calls him out for having a child with Kim and being irresponsible — he ends up turning the tables, saying "feel sorry for me," and she ends up apologizing. Something isn't right there.

To add to the terrible portrayal of women, Kim is the most tortured character with absolutely no justice in the end. From the beginning, she has no agency over her actions and does nothing for herself. She is literally and figuratively beaten by every person she comes in contact with during the musical. Yes, she has a strong spirit, but that is constantly smothered as she is given no opportunity to show her strength. She is excessively desperate and everything she does is for someone else — mainly the thankless love Chris.

Miss Saigon came after Schönberg and Boublil's musical adaptation of Les Miserables, which puts the spotlight on another revolution, but in France. In the musical, Jean Valjean is the protagonist and he, like Kim, is on a journey of survival — but that's where the comparisons end. Jean Valjean has more control of his narrative and his strength and selfless actions drive him to the end, where his death has a sense of agreeable symmetry and justice. Kim, on the other hand, is tossed around in the context of tragedy porn and dies in vain. There is a difference between being selfless and being a broken soul who is constantly steamrolled. Kim, who is at the center of this Broadway classic, is shown as the latter. No matter how great and grand the music is, this is not something that can be overlooked. It may not be like Song of the South, but it comes close.

Miss Saigon does not track well in 2019 —



The Madame Butterfly Effect

Written by Patricia Park
Illustrations by Juliana Wang
July 30, 2014

"I can't compete with an Asian chick," says the comedian Amy Schumer. When a busty, blue-eyed blond—a type that launched a thousand wet dreams—admits she can't contend with Asian women, it signals a certain shift in our culture's preferred sexual tastes. In her act "Mostly Sexy Stuff"—one of Comedy Central's most watched stand-up routines of 2012—Schumer lists off all the reasons she can't contend: Asian women are good at math, they have "naturally silky hair," they cover their mouths modestly when they laugh "'cause they know men hate when women speak." But trumping all of that? Asian women have "the smallest vaginas in the game." Schumer, creator and star of Comedy Central's Inside Amy Schumer, has been described in the New York Times as having a "laserlike focus on sex and sexual politics," yet her Asian-chick joke merely echoes already hackneyed stereotypes of Asian female anatomy.

This perception of our bodies had been news to me some 15 years ago, when I visited a friend at his MIT frat house. His fratmates—adhering in every way to the MIT stereotype (brainy, gadget-driven, perhaps involuntarily celibate)—proceeded to inform me of all the ways Asian women were desirable. As they deconstructed the female body, they ticked off features like they were taking inventory: Asian women had dark eyes, straight black hair, petite frames, and small hands (which, in the throes of third base, "make your dick look bigger"). When they gathered in the parlor to watch a pornographic video, they extended an invitation to me and I consented—when in Rome, I suppose. The screen flicked onto a white man and an Asian woman. As the man spun her in various sexual positions, the fratmates' running commentary was punctuated with oohs and ahhs about the tightness of the Asian porn starlet's genitalia. From that night at the frat house to Schumer's joke and a million places in between, there is a casualness and ease when talking about this fetish, as if discussions about sex with Asian women were a normal everyday aspiration.

A recent study released by the online dating app Are You Interested found that Asian women are the most "desirable" racial group among white men (and men of all other races, for that matter, with the interesting exception of Asian men). What is particularly noteworthy about the AYI study is how quickly it went viral, despite its shaky stats. The data contradicted an earlier study published by sociologist Kevin Lewis examining interactions between OKCupid users. Lewis's data showed that most potential dates preferred to initiate contact with people of the same race with the exception of Asian women, who were more likely to message white men than Asian men. Yet the AYI chart quickly gained traction across social media outlets; even NPR ran a story based on the data, titled "Odds Favor White Men, Asian Women on Dating App." Cultural evidence abounds that Asian women are "trending."

Terms like "Asian fetish," "yellow fever," and "Asiaphiles" circulate regularly in our modern-day vernacular without the need for an explanation. White male–Asian female pairings are so commonplace it's almost a cliché. As a recent date once informed me: "You're only my second Asian." Writer, comedian, and performance artist Kristina Wong, in an XOJane.com article, writes: "White guys with Asian fetishes used to be easy to spot—pathetic social pariahs planning their sex tour vacations to Thailand, creeping around Japanese language classes. Now, Asiaphiles are attractive tattooed hipsters that possess fantastic social skills, and we meet them through friends of friends."

Asian women might be the flavor du jour, but the construct of the sexualized Asian female has been centuries in the making.

"There's been a very long history and tradition in Europe of a kind of fascination with and terror of the Eastern 'Other,'" says Kim Brandt, associate professor of Japanese history and author of Kingdom of Beauty: Mingei and the Politics of Folk Art in Imperial Japan and the forthcoming Japan's Cultural Miracle: Rethinking the Rise of a World Power, 1945–1965. In the 17th and 18th centuries, the Western male fetishized the veiled Middle Eastern woman. One need only watch The Thief of Baghdad (1924) to catch a glimpse of some of these perceptions at work. In the 1840s, following the end of the First Opium War, the treaty port cities in China, Japan, and Korea were the site of a feeding frenzy for the United States and other Western powers—all desiring a piece of the profitable trade-route action. This led to a rise in the Western bourgeois desire for Oriental art and

collectibles: decorative fans, postcards (more often than not bearing sexualized images of geishas), and other bric-a-brac.

Imagine the Victorian Western man—buttoned-up, moving stiffly through a society with strict social codes and uneasy views on sex and bodies—confronting the image of a Japanese geisha: a diminutive female dressed in rich fabrics, thick makeup painted across her face, jet-black hair piled high on top of her head. The geisha—the name coming from gei (art) and sha (person)—was at her essence an artist/entertainer. She was a separate entity entirely from the paid-for-hire prostitute (though she did engage in sexual favors if she so chose). Still, the geisha became a highly sexualized image for the Western male. "The East Asian female in native dress," Brandt says, "was viewed as a decorative object but also a sexual object."

At its core, to fetishize something—or someone—is to objectify it to the point that it becomes divorced from the person herself. And it's easy to see how the fetishization of Asian women developed. Valerie Steele, in her book Fetish: Fashion, Sex, and Power, turns to 19th-century sexologist Richard von Krafft-Ebing for an early working definition of fetishism: "The association of lust with the idea of certain portions of the female person, or with certain articles of female attire." According to Krafft-Ebing, "in pathological eroticism the fetish itself (rather than the person associated with it) becomes the exclusive object of sexual desire." There is an inherent deconstruction at work in this definition of the fetish, one that breaks down the actual female body. Steele posits that some degree of fetishization is the norm for men (but not for women); to indulge the old adage "divide and conquer," one reading of fetishization could be the male attempt to conquer the foreign female body.

French writer Pierre Loti's wildly popular 1887 novel, Madame Chrysanthème, largely cemented Western perceptions of Japan and, in turn, of Japanese women. (See our abridged timeline of the Madame Chrysanthème/Madame Buttefly archetype here.) The book is a semiautobiographical tale of a naval officer who travels to Nagasaki and takes a temporary wife—a woman who is painted as a plaything, another piece of Oriental artifact to be acquired. The wife he desires? A "little, creamy-skinned woman with black hair and cat's eyes. She must be pretty and not much bigger than a doll." The novel is peppered with details of "slim," "graceful," "dainty" "little women" with "delicate hands, miniature feet" and "natural skin of deep yellow," who are the "exact types of the figures painted on vases." In one scene the narrator describes how the local women "grovel before me on the floor, placing all this plaything of a meal at my feet." What we see emerging from Loti's text are continual images of tiny, doll-like Japanese women no more human than, in Loti's own words, "china ornaments."

In The Chrysanthème Papers: The Pink Notebook of Madame Chrysanthème and Other Documents of

French Japonisme, Christopher Reed describes the unquestionable impact of Loti's novel—translated into every major European language and reprinted over 200 times during the course of the author's life alone—on the Western construction of the East Asian woman. Reed writes that while Madame Chrysanthème still evokes a nostalgic pleasure for its era in French literature, recent scholarship on it and Loti's other popular novels—which include similar travel narratives of Western men taking on a native woman as lover from Turkey to Tahiti—"often assess them as tools of sexual and cultural exploitation."

The American GI—representing a first world power with first world resources and privileges—colonizes the Asian female, who comes from a place of poverty, weakness, and everything else often associated with the "third world."

Reed goes on to tell us that Loti today "is widely read as exemplifying what went wrong with Western approaches to the East." Still, the image of miniature Asian dolls scuttling about with food trays was already set in motion.

Madame Chrysanthème is widely acknowledged as the source for Puccini's famous opera, Madama Butterfly. The opera, which premiered in 1904, chronicles a similar story: Pinkerton, an American officer, travels to Japan and takes on a local wife during his sojourn, only to return to the West to legitimately marry a white American woman. Cio-Cio-San, the abandoned Japanese wife who has given up everything—her religion, her family, her son, and finally her own life—to be with Pinkerton, became a new archetype. Now the image of the Asian female—dainty, diminutive, doll-like—gets compounded with yet another feature: self-sacrifice. This specific narrative is so intertwined with the perception of Asian women that it was reworked with another Eastern locale in the 1989 musical Miss Saigon, set in Vietnam with the American war as a backdrop. After an announcement of the 2014 London revival of Miss Saigon, presale tickets were reported to be $4.4 million on the first day, breaking box office records and proving that the narrative is not just still popular, but profitable as well.

Loti's and Puccini's influence also found its way onto the pop charts; the band Weezer gave a direct nod to Madama Butterfly in their album Pinkerton (1996). Take, for instance, the lyrics to the song "Across the Sea," dedicated to an 18-year-old Japanese girl: "I wonder what clothes you wear to school/ I wonder how you decorate your room/ I wonder how you touch yourself/ And curse myself for being across the sea."

Hollywood's Golden Age gave rise to another archetype of the sexualized Asian female: the dragon lady. Unlike her "butterfly" counterpart, the dragon lady was a fierce Asian woman who wielded power—more often than not of a sexual nature—to the detriment of the men around her. This vampy femme fatale was first popularized by the Chinese-American actress Anna May Wong, who, as the only high-profile Asian American actress of that era, "fascinated European and white American men at the time," says Elaine H. Kim, professor of Asian American and Asian Diaspora Studies at UC Berkeley and writer and director of the short film Slaying the Dragon Reloaded: Asian Women in Hollywood and Beyond. The character was an exotic (read: dangerous) seductress, and Wong's dragon-lady status was epitomized in her role as Fu Manchu's daughter in Daughter of the Dragon (1931). Yet the characters Wong played always met the same tragic end; in many ways, dragon-lady roles were merely a racier rehash of Loti and Puccini's quivering butterflies.

But perhaps the biggest factor sealing the image of the sexualized Asian female as we know it in the United States was the U.S. military presence in Asia, beginning in World War II and continuing through the Korean and Vietnam Wars. Military camp towns cropped up around the U.S. bases, and a local industry—namely "juicy bars" and brothels—was created with the sole purpose of servicing U.S. soldiers. With the universal draft, American men who may not have held preconceived ideas of Asian women were now shipped to Asia, where they would be confronted with local women working in the sex industry. Stanley Kubrick's film Full Metal Jacket (1987), about American gis in the Vietnam War, made famous the following quote, uttered in broken English by a Vietnamese female prostitute: "Me so horny. Me love you long time. Me sucky sucky." Mixed in 1989 as a sample in 2 Live Crew's "Me So

Horny," the quote has taken on a pop-culture life of its own.

The American soldier–Asian female union began as one of commerce: money exchanged for sexual services. But historians layer a possible second reading to this narrative: colonization. The American GI—representing a first world power with first world resources and privileges—colonizes the Asian female, who comes from a place of poverty, weakness, and everything else often associated with the "third world." The Asian female sex worker could be read as another version of the "dragon lady"—a seductress capitalizing on the demand for sex.

The end of the Korean War in the early 1950s created a rise in overseas adoption. War orphans were airlifted from Korea and later Vietnam. The aftermath of the wars abroad brought about "an idea of benevolence toward Asian countries—of bringing women and children into our beautiful families," Kim explains. "At that time, it was possible to think of bringing an Asian woman into your family, and not just someone you take in the back alley."

A savior narrative began to take shape—Asian women became the native women who needed to be whisked away from their impoverished homeland. In the backdrop of the emergence of "blended" families came two films introducing the archetype of the "noble-hearted" Asian prostitute in need of salvation: Sayonara (1957) and The World of Suzie Wong (1960). The "native" woman gets her fairy-tale ending: The Western man marries her.

This salvation narrative is also exemplified in Graham Greene's 1955 novel The Quiet American, set just before the dawn of the Vietnam War. When the titular American, a young, overly idealistic man named Alden Pyle, first lays eyes on Phuong, a young Vietnamese dancer who is already mistress to an older British journalist named Thomas Fowler, he says, "She seems fresh, like a flower." Later, Pyle informs Fowler of his plans to steal Phuong away from him and take her back to America as his wife. "I want to keep her," Pyle insists. "I want to protect her." To which Fowler, who is already married to an Englishwoman back home, retorts, "I don't. She doesn't need protection. I want her around, I want her in my bed." Greene's novel presents both forms of the romanticized Asian female: the native woman as "layover" wife during your foreign sojourn as well as the native woman you want to airlift from the wreckage and whisk back to the safety of American soil. As for Phuong, the object of desire for these two Western men, she remains ever silent. For the majority of the novel Pyle and Fowler talk over her, filling in her desires and wishes with their own.

Surveying the history of representation in text and film, the Asian female has continually been exoticized and eroticized, an image that persists today. Last year Katy Perry's performance of "Unconditionally" at the American Music Awards was both lauded and derided as a form of "yellowface." Perry appeared onstage in a Hollywood (read: sexier) version of a kimono, along with a troupe of similarly clad backup dancers. They spun their paper umbrellas on a set designed like a Japanese garden and sang about, well, unconditional love. Bloggers dubbed it Perry's "geisha performance" and criticized it as perpetuating images of the groveling, self-sacrificial woman who has been abandoned.

Cases of extreme "Asiaphiles" abound—the subject of Debbie Lum's recent documentary Seeking Asian Female is a self-described Asiaphile named Steven Bolstad, a 60-year-old white male who finds his bride in China through an online service. When asked what drew him to his prospective wife, he simply responds, "She looks so Chinese!" but fails to elaborate on what he actually means by "Chinese." The abhorrent and potentially harmful case of Michael Lohman, a Princeton graduate student who "admitted to pouring his urine and semen into the drinks of Asian women more than 50 times" in the graduate school cafeteria is an example of an Asian fetish gone too far.

But perhaps the Asian fetish is best captured in the song "Asian Girlz," released last summer by a band called Day Above Ground—a song that quickly went viral with lyrics like the following: "I love your creamy yellow thighs/ Ooh your slanted eyes/ It's the Year of the Dragon/ Ninja pussy I'm stabbin'/ Asian girl, you're my Asian girl."

Rivaling the lyrics was the video itself; it featured a skimpily dressed Asian woman who drinks a magic potion, shrinks down a troupe of (white) men, and locks them up in a cage. The public may have decried the crassness of the song, but no one was asking for explanations for the references made in the lyrics—once again demonstrating how pervasive stereotypes of the sexualized Asian female have become in our culture. The band quickly released a statement explaining what they called their satirical tribute to "the always lovely Asian woman […] some of the most gorgeous women on the planet."

In a recent New York Times piece, Bloomberg View columnist Jonathan Mahler writes, "When you fetishize—as opposed to value—something, you

YOUR MIND HAS BEEN COLONIZED.

As a result of years of vicious colonization, the Asian body has become a commodity across the globe, but most notably in American culture. The goal of New Club Asian is to recognize these internalized ways of perceiving the so-called "Orient" that have evolved into a widely normalized yet toxic practice. This includes the instances of fetishizing the image of the East and South Asian woman as well as the demasculization of the East and South Asian man. While our primary goal is to share resources that encourage self-education and reflection targeted at non-Asian individuals who perpetuate these harmful stereotypes, we hope that we also help our Asian peers further understand these afforementioned micro- and macroaggressions and validate their experiences with them.

The following are featured articles that are available to the public easily accessible through New Club Asian, which can be found at www.newclubasian.com/archive.

The Orientalization of Asian women in America
by Aki Uchida

This paper addresses "Orientalization," which I define as the objectification of Asian women as the "Oriental Woman"—the stereotypical image of the Exotic Other—in the discursive practices in the United States. This process is seen in the history of immigration, in U.S. military involvement in the Far East, and in the contemporary discourse surrounding Asian American women. The "Oriental Woman" is seen as a "controlling image," with a political effect on the distribution of membership and power in the North American culture. However, there are increasing attempts by Asian American women to reject Orientalization and to make their own voices heard.

Intimacy, Desire, and the Construction of Self in Relationships between Asian American Women and White American Men
by Kumiko Nemoto

This study begins with the argument that racialized images and discourses on "Asian women" and "White men" have been produced within the hierarchies of local and global structures of race, gender, and nation.

Yellow Fever: The Problem with the Sexual Fetishization and Exotification of Eastern Asian Women by Celeste Ziehl

An Asian fetish is most commonly ascribed to Caucasian, or white-skinned, cisgender males who have the tendency to serial date or pursue almost exclusively Asian women. Today, however, this term can refer to any non-Asian person who preferentially dates or has a sexual preference for Asian women.

Looking for My Penis: The Eroticized Asian in Gay Video Porn by Richard Fung

Negotiating New Asian-American Masculinities: Attitudes and Gender Expectations
Peter Chua, Dune C. Fujino

Historically, U.S. institutional practices have rendered Asian-American men as simultaneously hypermasculine and emasculated. Today, the model minority myth and asexual media representations have emphasized the feminized Asian-American male. Yet, no empirical study has examined how Asian-American men construct their own masculinities.

NO MORE CHINA DOLLS