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Leon Edel Prize Essay

Innocence Abroad: Henry James and the Re-Invention of the American Woman Abroad

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O my country, may you not be judged by your travelling children!

—Ella W. Thompson, *Beaten Paths* (1874)

In December 1875, at the start of a publishing season that would witness keen interest in the already popular genres of travel writing, women's fiction, and internationally themed literature, the Chicago house of Jansen, McClurg & Company released a new novella by a young author who was just beginning to explore the relationships among nationality, setting, and character that would become career-long interests. Described by the *American Bookseller* as “an extremely lively story of an extremely lively American girl living in Rome” (“New Books” 52), the narrative tells of a vivacious young woman who sparks first the affections and then the suspicions of a well-heeled American youth who observes with puzzlement and dismay her unbecoming conduct toward an unsuitable Italian rival. Conscious that the *nouvelle's* racy portrayal of the American girl abroad might vex its domestic audience, the *American Bookseller* cautioned that “[m]ost readers will call her [the eponymous protagonist] ‘fast’” but went on to reassure the trade that “her desperate flirtations will interest a large class of novel-readers” (“New Books” 52). Two years later, when Henry James's “Daisy Miller: A Study” sallied onto the scene, most readers and reviewers had likely forgotten *Mae Madden: A Story*¹ by Mary Murdoch Mason,² the “extremely lively” tale that prefigured James's famous “invention” of the flighty American belle who runs afoul of the conventions and mores of her staid compatriots in Rome.³

The existence of a narrative that so closely parallels the setting, characterization, plot, and theme of “Daisy Miller” points up the fact that in writing “Daisy Miller,” James situated his work at the epicenter of a popular literary mode of the 1870s: the narrative of the American woman abroad. Indeed, the motif of the American woman abroad provided James a point of entry into a distinct niche market comprising a predominantly female middle-class readership. The juxtaposition of *Mae Madden* and “Daisy Miller” illustrates how James, like Nathaniel Hawthorne and William Dean Howells, located his work at the intersection of two highly fashionable spheres of literary activity—travel writing and polite fiction—effectively “colonizing” a fictional form pioneered by European women such as Madame de Stäel and Anna Jameson and subsequently adapted by three generations of American women writers, from Lydia Sigourney to Edith Wharton.⁴ A close reading of *Mae Madden* within the context of contemporary accounts of American women in Europe illustrates how, and to what end, James artfully—and artistically—rewrote this earlier version of the naïve and feckless American girl running amok in Rome.

Critics and literary historians have long credited Henry James with the invention of the fictional motif of the American girl abroad. In 1903, Howells formally attributed to his friend this distinction when he asserted:

Mr. James is not quite the inventor of the international novel [. . .] but he is the inventor, beyond question, of the international American girl. He recognized and portrayed the innocently adventuring, unconsciously periculant American maiden, who hastened to efface herself almost as soon as she saw herself in that still flattering if a little mocking mirror, so that between two sojourns in Europe, a decade apart, she had time to fade from the vision of the friendly spectator. In 1860–70, you saw her and heard her everywhere on the European continent; in 1870–80, you sought her in vain amidst the monuments of art, or on the misty mountain-tops, or at the tables d’hôte. (165–66)⁵

Howells’s claim has long gone unchallenged;⁶ nevertheless, a glimpse into the popular fiction of the decade preceding the appearance of “Daisy Miller” reveals a bevy of “international American girls” who share with Daisy the very qualities Howells singles out for comment. In fact, by the time *Mae Madden* appeared in 1876, the reading public was already intimately acquainted with her type. According to a review of Mason’s novella in *Appleton’s Journal*, “‘Mae,’ the heroine, has evidently cost the author some pains; but she only adds another item to the rapidly-accumulating evidence that the *ingénue*—the fresh, piquant, impulsive, unconventional child of Nature, impatient of restraint, ignorant of forms, charmingly doing wrong and as charmingly repenting of it—promises to become a literary nuisance of the first order” (“Books and Authors” 90). As this reviewer implies, the character of the charming American *ingénue* was rather too familiar to contemporary readers. Her cousin, the American Girl Abroad, or International American Girl, was simply a variation on a theme, and she, too, was already in danger of becoming shelf-worn and hackneyed before James breathed new life into a genre whose moment had already passed.⁷

Daisy and Mae

In the preface to *Shawl-Straps* (1872), a series of sketches in which the author of *Little Women* recounts her recent travels and travails in Europe, Louisa May Alcott writes:

There is a sort of fate about writing books of travel which it is impossible to escape. It is vain to declare that no inducement will bribe one to do it, that there is nothing new to tell, and that nobody wants to read the worn-out story: sooner or later the deed is done, and not till the book is safely shelved does peace descend upon the victim of this mysterious doom. (v)

The concern that “there is nothing new to tell” was evidently a common one in the 1870s, when the popularity of American women’s travel writing was at its peak. Alcott’s solution to the problem was to write in an engaging, humorous, and economical style, capturing the unique experiences of the travelers at the expense of the oft-recounted facts and figures. She explains to her readers:

The only way in which this affliction may be lightened to a long-suffering public is to make the work as cheerful and as short as possible. With this hope the undersigned bore has abstained from giving the dimensions of any church, the population of any city, or description of famous places, as far as in her lay; but confined herself to the personal haps and mishaps, adventures and experiences, of her wanderers. (v)⁸

But the author of *Little Women* does more than that: she further spices up the narrative by fictionalizing her “three lone women [. . .] on a wild-geese chase after health and pleasure” (3–4). As a result, Alcott rewards her readers with a “novel” glimpse into the real-life adventures of American women abroad.⁹

Like *Shawl-Straps*, both *Mae Madden* and “Daisy Miller” render women’s travel writing in the form of fiction. In contrast to Alcott’s sketches, however, these narratives of young American women abroad are more novel than travelogue, more drama than description. If the plot of “Daisy Miller” is so familiar that a synopsis is unnecessary, that of Mason’s novella, which drifted into obscurity shortly after publication, bears retelling. Prefaced by a poem of Joaquin Miller’s,¹⁰ this enjoyable romp is quickly summarized. At the time of its release, *Publishers’ Weekly* offered the following précis:

Mae Madden, by Mary Murdoch Mason, with an introductory poem by Joaquin Miller. (Jansen, McClurg & Co.) Joaquin Miller’s poem, “A Dream of Italy,” is a short allegory, introducing “Mae Madden,” the fantastic heroine of the story—a young American girl who with some friends goes abroad and spends a winter in Rome. Her escapades and love quarrels are quite amusing, and the descriptions of the carnival really clever. 16 mo, cloth, red edges, \$1.25. (“Books Received” 936)

To this, one might add that among nineteen-year-old Mae's traveling companions are her two brothers, studious Albert and fun-loving Eric; Albert's sweetheart, Edith; Edith's mother (the pious Mrs. Jerrold), and Eric's college buddy Norman Mann, cousin of the Jerrolds. Norman is very much taken with the winsome young Mae, whose romantic interest in him appears to be in no way vitiated by her admiration of a dazzling Piedmontese officer named Bero, who has a habit of turning up unexpectedly at awkward moments. As a result, misunderstandings occur, overheard confidences are misconstrued, notes are intercepted, and Mae and Norman continually rebound between conflict and reconciliation. Up to this point, the story is remarkably similar to that of "Daisy Miller." At its denouement, however, Mae departs radically from her famous sister, absconding to the Bay of Naples to pursue her dream of a sunny Italian Heaven, with both Mr. Mann and Signor Bero in hot pursuit. By the end of the novella, the love triangle has resolved itself and the couples are paired off appropriately: Mae is engaged to Norman, the dashing Bero betrothed to a mysterious Italian beauty named Lillia, and Edith and Albert are newlyweds.

On the surface, Mason's tale unambiguously fulfills the traditional conventions of the "American girl abroad" narrative, as represented by such accounts as Alcott's *Shawl-Straps*, as surely as it satisfies (and as surely as "Daisy Miller" flouts) the generic expectations of romantic comedy.¹¹ Like Daisy, Mae travels to Europe without a traditional male guardian, in the company of other young people (men as well as women) and an older woman for a chaperon (the mother of her friend). In addition, Mae, like Daisy, is pretty and vivacious and clearly has the power to captivate the men with whom she comes in contact.¹² Presented from the female point of view, *Mae Madden* contains no passage to rival James's initial description of his heroine (or, at least, of her attire): "She was dressed in white muslin, with a hundred frills and flounces, and knots of pale-coloured ribbon. She was bare-headed; but she balanced in her hand a large parasol, with a deep border of embroidery; and she was strikingly, admirably pretty" (*DM* 9).¹³ Instead, we see Mae as she sees herself—in the mirror, rather than through the eyes of a male admirer:

Life and color and youth, a-tremble and a-quiver in every quick movement of her face, in the sudden lifting of the eyelids, the swift turn of the lips, the liteness and carelessness of every motion; above and beyond all, the picture possessed that rare quality which some artist has declared to be the highest beauty, that picturesque charm which shines from within, that magnetic flash and quiver which comes and goes "ere one can say it lightens." (98)

The peculiar power of Mae's beauty affects those around her in a fashion similar to that of Daisy Miller, with its "youth, and intense life, and endless variety," and these qualities, as Mason knowingly observes, "usually carry the day with a man's captious heart."

As flighty and impressionable as Daisy Miller, Mae easily falls under the spell of the magnificent Bero, whose attractions consist largely of his elegant

uniform and impressive physique. Of a different type than the urbane Italian dandy who pursues Daisy, Bero, like Mr. Giovanelli (whom Daisy refers to as “the handsomest man in the world—except Mr. Winterbourne!” [25]), is exceptionally attractive. Upon espying Bero for the first time, in company with another soldier, Mae gasps, “O, Eric, are they gods or men?” (32). Although Mason, unlike James, expends little ink lingering over her heroine’s outward appearance, she rhapsodizes about the officer’s physical charms in a passage that mirrors James’s delightful depiction of Daisy:

The Piedmontese officer is godlike. He must be of a certain imposing height to obtain his position, and his luxurious yellow moustaches and blue black eyes, enriched and intensified by southern blood, give him a strange fascination. The cold, manly beauty and strength of a northern blonde meet with the heat and lithe grace of the more supple southerner to produce this paragon. There is a combination of half-indolent elegance and sensuous langour, with a fire, a verve, a nobility, that puts him at the very head of masculine beauty. Add to the charms of his physique, the jauntiest, most bewitching of uniforms, the clinking spurs, the shining buttons, the jacket following every line of his figure, and no wonder maidens’ hearts seek him out always and young pulses beat quicker at his approach. (32–33)

More benign than the mercenary fortune-hunter of “Daisy Miller,” Bero poses no serious threat to Mae, other than as a distraction from Norman and a rival for his affections. Nevertheless, this superlative specimen of male beauty causes Mae a great deal of discomfiture by involving her in a series of apparently compromising situations.

Mae Madden shares with James’s heroine the intriguing, “maddening,” and “inscrutable combination of audacity and innocence” (*DM* 27) that struck such a chord with James’s audience that “Daisy Miller” and “Daisy Millerism” entered the popular vocabulary as common nouns. On the occasion of their first conversation, after Bero “rescues” Mae from what he erroneously believes to be a bothersome beggar, Mae—who is slightly more self-conscious than Daisy—is suddenly seized with embarrassment. In a scene strikingly similar to that in which Mrs. Walker passes Daisy and Giovanelli in her carriage, Mae realizes, in a way that Daisy never does, that conversing with the handsome officer is an unsuitable pastime for an unescorted, unattached young lady:

Mae saw the sunlight strike his hair; she half heard his deep breath; and, like a flood, there suddenly swept over her the knowledge that this new friend, this sympathizing soul, was an unknown man, and that she was a girl. What had she done? What could she do? Confusion and embarrassment suddenly overtook her. She bent her eyes away from those other eyes, that were growing bolder and more tender in their gaze. “I—I—” she began, and just at this very inauspicious moment, while she sat there, flushed, by the stranger’s side, the clatter of swiftly-approaching

wheels sounded, and a carriage turned the corner, containing Mrs. Jerrold, Edith, Albert, and Norman Mann. They all saw her. (47–48)

As in “Daisy Miller,” Mae’s “recklessness” arouses the suspicions of those around her, prompting some to doubt her innocence and all to question her judgment. Just as Winterbourne asks himself, “Would a nice girl—even allowing for her being a little American flirt—make a rendezvous with a presumably low-lived foreigner?” (*DM* 27), Norman Mann wonders whether enchanting young Mae is as naïve and virtuous as she appears.

Mrs. Jerrold’s response to Mae’s “wayward” behavior is to issue “commands never to go out alone in Rome, because it wasn’t proper” (51)—a response echoed in “Daisy Miller” by the punctilious Mrs. Walker, who remonstrates, “Should you prefer being thought a very reckless girl?” (28). Norman, however, realizes that “Albert and Edith and Aunt Martha [Mrs. Jerrold] are too vexed and shocked to do the little rebel any good” and therefore takes it upon himself “to keep her from something terribly wild.” Norman faces the same predicament as Winterbourne, however, since he has “no possible authority over her, or power, for that matter” (50). Moreover, just as the gallant Mr. Mann resolves to save Mae from further folly, he observes Bero outside her window during the evening hours, after she has retired to her chamber (53).

The situation looks worse and worse for poor Mae, who only bridles at her companions’ judgments and stubbornly refuses to mend her ways. To Norman, she retorts, “You had better content yourself with the fact that you have four proper traveling companions, and bear the disgrace of being shocked as best you may by one wild scrap of femininity who will have her own way in spite of you all” (59). That evening, at the theater, Mae proceeds to prove her point, acknowledging her Piedmontese officer with “a free, glad, welcoming smile on her lips” (68). Naturally, “Norman Mann saw it and followed it, and caught the officer receiving it, and thought ‘She’s a wild coquette.’ And Mae knew what he saw and what he thought” (68). Further confusion occurs when Norman spots Mae and Bero together at a little church near Capo le Case. (On a grander scale, James, who, coincidentally, rented an apartment in Via Capo le Case in 1877, has Winterbourne “[perceive] Daisy strolling about” St. Peter’s “in company with the inevitable Giovanelli” [33].) Later, Norman discovers that Bero has made a habit of flinging bouquets on her balcony during the festivities of Carnival. Just as in “Daisy Miller,” circumstances conspire to sway the young man’s opinion of the girl until finally he begins to despair of her heart along with her virtue. In the penultimate chapter, when he discovers Mae and Bero together, alone, in a boat on the Bay of Naples, Norman desperately clings to the one scenario that could possibly justify such behavior. When the boat lands, he demands of Mae, “Are you married?” (168), to which Mae replies “I! married! What do you—what can he mean?” Similarly, both Winterbourne and Mrs. Miller grasp at the same explanation for Daisy’s inexplicable behavior: Winterbourne remarks, “Ah! [. . .] if you are in love with each other it is another affair” (32), and Daisy’s mother announces, “I keep telling Daisy she’s engaged!” (34). Daisy meets both of these suggestions with the same mixture of protest and confusion with which Mae responds to Norman’s inquisition.

In *Mae Madden*, Mason's heroine continually wavers between repentance and defiance: after Albert admonishes his sister, chiding, "we shall have to buy a chain for you soon," she retorts, "If you do [. . .] I'll slip it" (80). Unlike James, who creates a sense of drama and suspense by restricting the point of view to Winterbourne, however, Mason presents both sides of the relationship. In defense of Mae, she writes: "Bless us! who is to blame a young woman for forgetting everything but the 'other man' when he is a godlike Piedmontese officer, with strong soft cheek and throat, and Italian eyes, and yellow moustaches, and spurs and buttons that click and shine in a maddening sort of way?" (68–69). While Mason captures precisely the kind of physical, purely visual response to an attractive member of the opposite sex that James attributes to Winterbourne, she also acknowledges that, for Mae, "There was a malicious sort of teasing pleasure in running away from Norman, mingled with a shrinking modesty" (136). This coy, coquettish quality is, of course, the very hallmark of the pretty American "flirt" immortalized in "Daisy Miller."

Throughout Mason's novella, amidst a volley of imprecations against Mae's "recklessness, her waywardness" (123), the narrator interjects numerous cautionary remarks about the social dangers of venturing out alone in the city of Rome and as many ominous reminders about the pestilential air of the sultry Roman nights. Mae writes to her mother, "I seriously think I shall die if I stay here much longer. There's a spirit-malaria that eats into my life" (25), a remark that anticipates Daisy's offhanded "We are going to stay all winter—if we don't die of the fever" (26). Later, sulking over Mrs. Jerrold's condemnation of her friendship with Bero ("How dare they accuse me of flirting?" she asks herself [52]), Mae retires to her room, where she "opened her window wide, and held her head out in the night air—the poisonous Roman air" (51). Norman, who witnesses this scene, cautions Mae the next morning "that the Roman air at midnight [is] dangerous to your health" (60), just as Mrs. Miller warns Daisy, "You'll get the fever as sure as you live" (25). A few nights later, Norman repeats the warning, admonishing, "We had better go in now; this night air is bad for you" (124), perhaps saving Mae from the untimely death that awaits Daisy.

In addition to marshalling the conventional elements of American women's travel writing, from the superiority of American girls to the social and environmental hazards of foreign locales, Mason draws on an older tradition of "woman abroad" narratives, incorporating a theme well-established in both European and American novels. From de Staël's *Corinne* to Hawthorne's *The Marble Faun*, literary artists had exploited the cultural richness of Italy, with its exotic scenes, stirring history, and gorgeous works of art, as a backdrop against which to explore the intellectual and artistic development of creative women. *Mae Madden*, although ostensibly a lighthearted and superficial romance, contains the elements of the female *Bildungsroman* or *Kunstlerroman* that distinguish this long tradition of novels about English and American women writers and artists in Italy—elements that James squarely rejects in "Daisy Miller."

The founder of this feminine tradition of fictionalized travelogues was Madame de Staël, whose *Corinne, or Italy* appeared in 1807. A love story involving an enigmatic young woman of mysterious origins, as brilliant as she is

beautiful, and a Scottish nobleman (Oswald, Lord Nelvil) who ultimately betrays her, *Corinne* quickly became an international sensation. Frequently cited in nineteenth-century American literature, both *Corinne* and its author came to symbolize, in the popular imagination, the struggle of the woman of genius for honor and love.¹⁴ *Corinne* exerted a powerful influence on *The Marble Faun*: in one scene, Hawthorne explicitly invokes de Staël by having Miriam (whose dark beauty and mysterious sorrow are echoed in Mason's Lillia, just as Miriam recalls Corinne) re-enact a scene from the novel. She instructs Donatello, "I have often intended to visit this fountain by moonlight [. . .] because it was here that the interview took place between Corinne and Lord Nelvil, after their separation and temporary estrangement. Pray come behind me [. . .] and let me try whether the face can be recognized in the water" (146).¹⁵ For Hawthorne, as for de Staël, Rome is a place where the female artist may enjoy freedom "to a degree unknown in the society of other cities" (55). Of Hilda, he writes:

This young American girl was an example of the freedom of life which it is possible for a female artist to enjoy at Rome. She dwelt in her tower, as free to descend into the corrupted atmosphere of the city beneath, as one of her companion-doves to fly downward into the street;—all alone, perfectly independent, under her own sole guardianship, unless watched over by the Virgin, whose shrine she tended;—doing what she liked, without a suspicion or a shadow upon the snowy whiteness of her fame. (54)

As Hawthorne suggests, in Rome "the customs of artist-life bestow such liberty upon the sex, which is elsewhere restricted within so much narrower limits" (54). Like Hawthorne's Miriam, Mae even goes so far as to exercise this liberty by disguising herself as a *contadina* in order to sample first-hand the peasant life. In both narratives, as in *Corinne*, this contrast between the "shackles" and "insufferable restraint" (Hawthorne 55) of life at home and a free, unfettered existence in Rome acts as a catalyst on the creative energies of the Anglo-Saxon woman abroad.

Like de Staël and Hawthorne, Mary Murdoch Mason constructs a narrative in which the roles of the imagination and the intellect are crucial to plot, setting, and character. For unlike the conventional travelers in contemporary nonfiction accounts of American women abroad, Mae enacts an interior journey as well as an exterior one: a journey that is only partly one of adventure and romance. Mae—whose "greatest idol" is Shakespeare (56)—speaks Italian, sings snatches of *Il Trovatore* (30), debates the merits of translating *Othello* into Italian (55–57), defends pre-Raphaelite art from its detractors (101), "loves" Wordsworth and, according to Eric, "holds the 'Daffodils' and 'Lucy' as her chief jewels, and quotes the 'Immortality' perpetually" (102), contemplates Hawthorne and Byron as she views the celebrated statues of the Faun and the Gladiator (137), and occupies her mind, during periods of anticipation, by reciting poetry (25, 133). Her friend, Edith, says of her, "she craves beauty and poetry in everything" (74), and in a letter to her mother, Mae writes, "I feel as if all the volumes of Roman history

bound in heavy vellum, that papa has in his study, were laid right on top of my little heart, so that every time it beats, it thumps against them" (25). She recovers from this sense of oppression, however, upon experiencing an epiphany as she contemplates the exquisite marbles in the Capitol: the site of Corinne's splendid debut in de Staël's novel. (Daisy, on the other hand, tells Winterbourne that upon arriving in Rome, she was sure they "should be going round all the time with one of those dreadful old men that explain about the pictures and things," adding, "[b]ut we only had about a week of that, and now I'm enjoying myself" [26].) Moreover, in moments of homesickness and amidst feelings of remorse, Mae, who complains that the tourists in Rome "take travel so solemnly [. . .] and treat Baedeker, like the Bible" (29), longs for the familiar articles of home, in particular "the dear old library" (42)—"and a book!" (163).

Journals and epistolary narratives were common modes for nineteenth-century travel writers, and, although *Mae Madden* is primarily conducted by a limited third-person narrator, the novel is something of a pastiche, incorporating, in addition to the occasional Italian folk tale, Mae's correspondence with her mother, as well as Mae's creative efforts (we are given the full text of a "pre-Raphaelite" poem she writes, entitled "All on a Summer's Day"). When Mae makes her way to the Bay of Naples, Norman speculates that Mrs. Jerrold has searched her trunks and read all her "private papers" (174), an indication that Mae has been committing her thoughts and experiences to paper. In James's narrative, in contrast, Daisy Miller is all exterior, or surface—all ruffles and flounces and fashion and mannerisms—so that readers have no direct access to Daisy's thoughts. Whereas Mary Murdoch Mason characterizes Mae as both reader and writer, James transfers these functions to Winterbourne, who becomes reader (of character) and writer (of plot).

In chapter 8 of *Mae Madden*, Mae's traveling companions discuss the merits and demerits of her poem, which is published anonymously in Rome's English-language newspaper. Little suspecting the identity of the poet, Mae's brother Albert suggests that "work or study, and a general shutting up of the fancy is what this mind needs" (106), but Eric, who throughout the novel is more sympathetic to Mae, declares, "She needs [. . .] to be married. She is in love. That's what's the matter" (106). Mae responds with indignation, but, of course, Eric's diagnosis is near to the mark. And, although Bero seems to offer some relief from bookishness (Mae tells him, "I am tired and sick of books, and people, and reasons" [45]), as does her flight to the Bay of Naples (where, incidentally, Corinne and Oswald run off together in de Staël's novel), Norman reaffirms Mae's love of imagination, aesthetics, and art. He tells her: "The world is full of color and beauty, and poetry you love. All study is full of it—most of all it lives in humanity" (176).

The endings of "Daisy Miller" and *Mae Madden* align, to some extent, with the divergent endings of *Corinne* and *The Marble Faun*: Daisy, like Corinne, dies in Rome, albeit of Roman fever rather than a broken heart, and Mae, like Miriam, dons the colorful raiment of a *contadina* and skips off to frolic with the "children of the sun." But while the exotic Miriam easily slips into her new identity and, with Donatello at her side, melts into the Italian scenery, Mae balks at her new surroundings. The romantic vision of the Bay of Naples, with its blue waters and

picturesque *lazzarone*, dissipates, leaving in its stead a repellent display of poverty and squalor. Out on the bay, seated in a boat across from her Piedmontese idol, Mae awakens simultaneously to the magnitude of her indiscretion and the tenacity of her New England roots:

Could she take that villa for her home? That man for her husband? She had half thought till now in soft luxurious Italian, but “my home” and “my husband” said themselves to her in her own mother tongue. She gave a long shiver, and pulled her eyes from his. It was like waking from a dream. “No—oh, no; take me home,” she gasped, and turned toward the shore, where, erect, with folded arms and head bared, stood Norman Mann. (167)

After the boat has landed and its passengers disembarked, Mae stands poised between the two men, torn with indecision. Half-convinced that Norman must despise her, she is momentarily tempted to cast her lot with the officer: “She held out weakly her right hand toward Bero; but the left stretched itself involuntarily to Norman. Then the two met in each other’s pitiful clasp over her bent head, and with a low wailing cry she fell in a little heap on the sand” (169). When Mae comes to, her decision is clear. She implores Norman to take her home and gently dismisses the ever-obliging Bero.

The resolutions of “Daisy” and *Mae*, *Corinne* and *The Marble Faun*, point to the various alternatives open to the Anglo-American woman abroad as her sojourn draws to a close: death, home, assimilation, or escape into the foreign unknown.¹⁶ The path Mae chooses is the one typically taken by American women abroad in nineteenth-century narratives. Mae, like other American women who left Italy for the United States, must become reconciled to the loss of her recent freedom and the exchange of art and imagination for familiar “domestic” pleasures: those of her own country as well as those of hearth and home. Contemplating the future, she reflects:

I’ve said good-bye to my dreams of life—the floating and waving and singing and dancing life that was like iced champagne. I’d rather have cold water, thank you, sir, for a steady drink, morning, noon and night. I’m going to be good, to read and study and grow restful [. . .]. I am going to grow, if I can, unselfish and sympathetic, and perhaps, who knows, wise, and any way good. (175–76)

At the conclusion of the Bay of Naples episode, this negotiation plays out symbolically as Mae and Norman dally on the beach, whiling away the time before the arrival of the next train to Rome. When Mae idly traces her name in the sand, Norman draws pictures depicting Mae at progressive stages of her life, from the tender age of one to “Sweet Sixteen” (182). From this innocent pastime, the two proceed to narrate, by turns, the history of Mae’s life, taking note of the books she read at various stages of her childhood and adolescence—Eliza Cooke, a very revised edition of the *Arabian Nights*, *Villette* (her first novel), some

history. As the waves lap the shore, the artwork gradually dissolves, leaving Mae to observe that “[a]ll the Mae Maddens have faded away” (184). On the brink of engagement and on the verge of her journey home, her story draws to a conventional romantic conclusion as the image of the American girl abroad is inexorably effaced: no longer an immature girl, no longer an innocent abroad.

The “end” of Mae Madden’s life, signaled by her engagement to Norman and symbolized by the evanescent storyboard in the sand, lacks the grim finality of Daisy’s end. Even her erasure on the beach is only fleeting. After Mae remarks that “[a]ll the Mae Maddens have faded away,” Norman appends his own last name to Mae’s signature in the sand. His tacit proposal of marriage, represented by the inscription “Mae Madden Mann,” brings her back, in a sense, so that Mae is revived, redeemed, and, ultimately, repatriated through marriage, as she affirms to Norman:

“No, Italy is not my home, although I love it so well. There is a certain wide old doorway not many miles from New York, and the hills around it, and the great river before it, and the people in it, all belong together, too. That’s where we belong, Norman, in America, our home,” and Mae struck a grand final pose with her hands clasped ecstatically, and her eyes flashing in the true Goddess of Liberty style. (188)

Mason leaves no doubt, however, that “Mae Madden Mann” will be a different person from the old Mae Madden. In the final chapter, as the newly engaged couple savor their last days in Italy before summering with the rest of their party in Switzerland (where “Daisy Miller” begins), Mason remarks that “this young woman was losing half her character for willfulness, and Norman was growing into a perfect tyrant, so far as his rights were concerned” (186). Mae, who throughout the novella has delighted in reading books, reciting poetry, composing verse, and listening to stories, announces her intention to turn her attention to domestic concerns. After Norman scoffs at the idea that Mae has “work” to do—he declares, “To think of your coming down to work, you young butterfly” [188]—a conversation unfolds between the two in which Mae anticipates the kind of work that is to occupy her in her new life:

“I don’t expect to come to stone-cutting or cattle-driving, but I do expect to settle down into a tolerable housewifely little woman, and—”

“And look after me.”

“Yes, I suppose so—and myself, and probably a sewing-class and the cook’s lame son. Heigh-ho-hum! What a pity it is, that it is so uninteresting to be good. [. . .] No, there’ll be nothing to say about me any more.” (188–89)

Although he hastens to reassure his sweetheart, avowing, “If you and I were in a story-book, you would have ten pages to my one, to keep the reader awake,” Norman promptly qualifies his assertion by declaring, “But then, story-books aren’t the end of life” (189). He refrains from adding the tacit phrase “for a

woman,” but the message is nonetheless clear. For a man (Mann), “story-books” might become the “end” of life—as they did for Henry James and, indeed, for Mason’s own husband, who went on to write a series of adventure books for boys late in life. For a woman, however—whether Mae Madden Mann or Mary Murdoch Mason, who never wrote another novel—the only acceptable “end” of life is attained through duty, domesticity, and unswerving devotion to marriage and family life.¹⁷

James and Mason

As the foregoing discussion reveals, the parallels between Daisy Miller and Mae Madden are both numerous and strongly suggestive of a line of influence between Mary Murdoch Mason and Henry James. Indeed, James’s three major occupations at the time *Mae Madden* was published—book reviewing, travel writing, and fiction writing—very likely brought Mason’s narrative into his purview. The differences between the two texts are at least as interesting as the similarities, however, offering an opportunity both to assess the distinctive Jamesian stamp and to analyze his response to the genre of women’s travel writing and the popular motif of the American woman abroad. Ironically, as recent criticism has shown, James exhibited a great deal of interest in popular writing, much of which emanated from women writers, and he aspired to popular success even as he scorned the literary tastes of “the multitude” and condemned the work of women writers in both his private and his public writings.¹⁸ In “Daisy Miller,” James transforms the story of *Mae Madden*, revising and masculinizing the narrative of the American woman abroad in order to reclaim literature as a gentlemanly pursuit.

The final page of *Mae Madden* finds Mae and Norman comfortably ensconced in their new lodgings in Florence. As the couple gaze together out of the window, contemplating a letter they have lately received from Bero and Lillia, Mae dreamily imagines the wedding of the Piedmontese officer and his magnificent bride. Waking from her reverie, Mae’s eyes gravitate to another window on the opposite side of the street, where a stranger surreptitiously observes them from afar:

[H]er gaze wanders back to the coral and mosaic shops below in the street, and up across to the opposite window, where a long-haired, brown-moustached, brown-eyed man leans, puffing smoke from his curved lips, and holding his cigarette in his slender fingers. She meets his gaze now, as she has met it before. “He is wondering what life will bring to these two young people, I fancy,” says Mae.

“Our own wedding-day, Mae,” Norman replies; and they both forget all about Lillia, and Bero, and the stranger, and suddenly leave the window. The long-haired man puffs his cigar in a little loneliness, and wishes that wedding bells might ring for his empty heart too. (192)

The scene is full of intrigue: a mystery to be unraveled in an otherwise unenigmatic text. Who is this “long-haired, brown-moustached, brown-eyed man”? What

significance lies in the statement, “She meets his gaze now, as she has met it before”? The text records no prior exchange of glances between Mae and this stranger; nor does Mason make any allusion elsewhere in the narrative to such a person. The identity of this lonely bachelor, whether “friendly spectator” or detached voyeur, will most likely remain an impenetrable secret, if, indeed, a real-life model exists. Nevertheless, his presence in the text offers a tantalizing clue as to how male storytellers appropriated the stories and experiences of women writers and women travelers. For in this scene, it becomes clear that Mae and her story are subject to the male gaze in much the way that the American woman abroad is the object of Winterbourne’s scrutiny, and of James’s analysis, in “Daisy Miller: A Study.”¹⁹

Shortly before Mae and her sweetheart retire to the window where Mae observes the mysterious stranger, Norman jokes that he has “half preached a sermon” to her. Offhandedly, Mae replies, “so long as you take me for a text, you may preach as you want to” (190). Mae’s response incorporates the traditional language of Puritan liturgy, but the notion of taking the girl as a “text” raises a relevant question: Whom did James “take for a text” in writing “Daisy Miller?” Leon Edel speculates:

It may have been while they were galloping over the daisies of the Campagna, or one evening while they were together with the Bootts. At some point, Alice Bartlett had occasion to mention an episode which had occurred in Rome during the previous winter [1876]. [. . .] Her anecdote concerned a simple and uninformed American woman who had been trailing through the hotels of Europe with a young daughter, “a child of nature and freedom.” The girl picked up, with the best conscience in the world, a good-looking Roman “of a rather vague identity.” The Italian seemed astonished at his luck. He was serenely exhibited, and introduced, in the Victorian-Roman-American society, where “dating” was much less relaxed than it is today. Miss Bartlett seems to have furnished few details. There had been some social setback, some snub administered to the innocent girl. Henry’s pencil made a brief record of this seemingly inconsequential anecdote. (298)²⁰

According to Edel, “The evidence points to its having been Miss Bartlett [who told James this anecdote], for James was to write later that he had the story from a friend then living in the Eternal City, ‘since settled in a South less weighted with appeals and memories’—and of his Roman period it was Alice Bartlett who lived ultimately in South Carolina” (298). Although the historical record leaves no trace of James having met Mary Murdoch Mason, James did spend much of 1873 in Rome—the year after Mason married, which was most likely the year following the events that suggested the plot of her novella. And while it seems odd that shortly after the Civil War James should refer to the ravaged state of South Carolina as “a South less weighted with appeals and memories,” it may be significant that during the period in question Mason resided in Florida, Mexico, and Columbia, South America, all three of which might be more plausibly

described in those terms, at least from a Northern or North American perspective. Moreover, the resemblance between the vernal nicknames “Daisy” and “Mae” reinforces that of the alliterative occupational surnames “Miller” and “Mason,” a similarity underscored by Mrs. Walker when she alludes to Daisy’s friendship with Giovanelli as “that young lady’s—Miss Baker’s, Miss Chandler’s—what’s her name? Miss Miller’s intrigue with that little barber’s block” (33).²¹ Notwithstanding James’s complaint that “[e]veryone seems to be in Rome” and “[t]hese shoals of American fellow-residents with their endless requisitions and unremunerative contact, are the dark side of life in Rome” (letter to Henry James, Sr., 4 March 1873; *SL* 100), this “colony” of Americans abroad was surely small and close-knit: in a letter to Grace Norton (5 March 1873), James lamented that “entanglements with the American colony” in Rome were “inevitable (or almost so)” (*SL* 103). Even if he did not know Mason personally, he almost certainly read, or read of, or heard of, her novella. Indeed, one of James’s principal occupations at the time of *Mae Madden*’s publication involved writing and reviewing for the *Nation*.²² Not only did he review numerous women’s novels during this period,²³—many of them fictionalized accounts of women traveling in Europe—but the *Nation* actually included an unsigned (and still unattributed) review of *Mae Madden* in its “Recent Novels” feature for 3 February 1876. Moreover, a notice of Philip Gilbert Hamerton’s *Round My House: Notes of Rural Life in France in Peace and War* that is known to have been written by James appears in the same installment of “Recent Novels.”²⁴ Whether the style of the brief notice excerpted below discloses a Jamesian hand is a matter for speculation:

Mae is to be seen travelling with a party of friends and relatives, but their hold upon her is very slight, and she makes the acquaintance of the godlike officer, who finally proposes to her to share his villa on the shore of the Bay of Naples. She refuses him, however, and marries Norman Mann, her American lover, after she has disported herself in a way that French novelists and dramatists consider to be customary with all of our fellow-countrywomen. M. Alexandre Dumas may read this story, and disarm any hostile criticism of his new play by pointing to “Mae Madden” as a novel written by an American woman about an American woman, and as probably true. Even he would find it hard to invent a bolder disregard of conventional decorum than fills this little book, of which the main characteristic is its innocent silliness. (“Recent Novels” 83)²⁵

A decade later, in an essay on Constance Fenimore Woolson (1887), James wrote about the dominance of women writers in the American literary marketplace:

Flooded as we have been in these latter days with copious discussion as to the admission of women to various offices, colleges, functions, and privileges, singularly little attention has been paid, by themselves at least, to the fact that in one highly important department of human

affairs their cause is already gained—gained in such a way as to deprive them largely of their ground, formerly so substantial, for complaining of the intolerance of man. In America, in England, to-day, it is no longer a question of their admission into the world of literature: they are there in force; they have been admitted, with all the honours, on perfectly equal footing. In America, at least, one feels tempted at moments to exclaim that they are in themselves the world of literature. (EL 639)

James's ambivalence toward the women writers who had become tantamount in his estimation to "the world of literature" has been a subject of lively debate. In *James and the "Woman Business,"* Alfred Habegger argues that James habitually wrote against "the enormous culture of nineteenth-century literary women" (4), revising and reshaping the women's fiction that was so popular at the time.²⁶ He explains:

His early fiction, like his reviews [. . .], *answered* the women, showing them how they should have told their story. His first novel, *Watch and Ward*, took one of the women's favorite stories—the orphan heroine who grows up to marry her guardian—but tried to get it right by transforming the guardian from a tyrant into a tolerant encourager and by making the girl grow up to be a proper lady. Indeed, in this novel James lifted a scene from one of the agonists' [Habegger's term for a particular strain of women's fiction writers] novels (the same scene his review had singled out) and laundered it of its flaw (the same flaw the review had ridiculed). James's early reviews establish an unbroken line between the agonists' novels and his own corrective narratives. Once he started retelling the ladies' fictions, however, their original logic began to assert itself and work against his own gentlemanly impulses. (24–25)

Whether James was "correcting" *Mae Madden*—"laundering" it of its "innocent silliness"—when he wrote "Daisy Miller," and whether *Mae Madden* was yet another point on the "unbroken line between the agonists' novels and his own corrective narratives," are questions that await answers. Regardless of James's specific knowledge of *Mae Madden* and its author, however, in writing "Daisy Miller," James was clearly fashioning his own response to the popular tradition of "women abroad" narratives.

In "Daisy Miller," James revises, or "answers," the conventional story of the American woman abroad. Instead of stressing greater freedom for women in Italy, as do Mason and other writers who found inspiration in *Corinne* and her sisters, James portrays the Anglo-American society in Rome as one of greater restrictions. He also strips the American girl of her intellectual and artistic aspirations and diminishes her mental accomplishments.²⁷ One reviewer, Richard Grant White, declared that Daisy, "without being exactly a fool, is ignorant and devoid of all mental tone or character" [qtd. in Gard 61]. In addition, James Europeanizes the

central male character—Winterbourne “had become dishabituated to the American tone” (12)—so that his failure to “read” Daisy’s character and behavior is predicated on his expatriate status. In *Mae Madden*, Norman Mann has not lived long overseas, as has Winterbourne: he is American to the core, and thus the conflict is fundamentally between the sexes rather than between cultures. Most importantly, however, James shifts the interior conflict from the young woman to the young man. Instead of having access to the girl’s thoughts, as in *Mae Madden*, readers of “Daisy Miller” have insight only into the male protagonist’s limited point of view.

In effect, then, James skillfully builds on the popular genre of the American girl abroad, expanding its rather limited base, successfully capturing a wider audience (one that included men as well as women), thereby reclaiming travel writing as a masculine pursuit and elevating the genre to the level of the “upper middle cultured” (qtd. in Hayes 60). In doing so, however, he recasts the time-honored figure of the American woman abroad as a superficial object of study for the idle male observer and reorients the conventional progression of women’s travel writing so that the shape of the narrative shifts from the development to the demise of the “international American girl.”

Epilogue

SCENE. Deck of an ocean steamer.

Characters. Mrs. Jerrold, matron and chaperon in general.

Edith Jerrold, her daughter.

Albert Madden, a young man on study intent.

Eric, his brother, on pleasure bent.

Norman Mann, cousin of the Jerrolds, old class-mate of the Maddens.

Mae Madden, sister of the brothers and leading lady.

(*Mae Madden* 11)

It is ironic that Mary Murdoch Mason should choose to begin her narrative of the American girl abroad in the form of a play, as James, writing in Boston in 1882, brought his more famous narrative to a new conclusion in the same genre. Yet *Daisy Miller: A Comedy*, the product of this retooling, is not merely a translation to dramatic form of “Daisy Miller: A Study.” Instead, James makes a number of crucial alterations to the plot—modifications that actually close the gap between the storylines of “Daisy Miller” and *Mae Madden*. First, in *Daisy Miller: A Comedy*, James shifts the events of the final act to Rome during Carnival. (One of the three known reviews of *Mae Madden* enthusiastically praised Mason’s use of the Carnival setting as “clever.”) More significantly, Daisy does not die of Roman fever in James’s play. Instead, the convalescent Daisy becomes overwhelmed by the crush and confusion of Carnival, as does Mae in the same situation, and collapses in a faint, as Mae does at the Bay of Naples. Finally, just as *Mae Madden* concludes with the reconciliation of Mae and Norman and their imminent return to America, so the stage version of “Daisy Miller” ends with the engagement of Daisy and Winterbourne, who eagerly contemplate their return

to their native shores. Thus, in this unexpectedly lighthearted dramatization, James eliminates the most significant difference between the plots of “Daisy Miller” and *Mae Madden* and, at the same time, introduces new elements of setting and characterization that bring Daisy into striking, startling conformity with Mae. Perhaps James believed that a more conventional approach to the story of the American girl abroad would be received with greater enthusiasm by theatergoers than a play that retained the unconventional and barely credible twist he gave to “Daisy Miller: A Study.”²⁸ Or perhaps, as Habegger suggests of other stories James modeled on women’s writing, the narrative’s “original logic began to assert itself and work against his own gentlemanly impulses” (25). In any event, the rejection of the play in 1882, followed by its conversion back into print the following year,²⁹ illustrates the extent to which James had found—or made³⁰—and fulfilled a market of his own: a market defined by innovation rather than convention and shaped by the fixity of print rather than the plasticity of performance.

NOTES

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¹ The subtitle “A Story” appeared in the book’s initial announcement in *Publisher’s Weekly*. It does not appear in the published volume.

² Although I have as yet been able to trace few details of Mason’s life, the similarity between the maiden and married names of author and protagonist (Mary [Elizabeth] Murdoch [Mason] and Mae Madden [Mann]) strongly suggests a close identification between the two. In 1872, Mary Murdoch married Alfred Bishop Mason, an editorial writer for the *Chicago Tribune*. Mason, who had graduated from Yale in 1871, was admitted to the bar in 1875 and published a *Primer of Political Economy* the same year. He held the positions of vice president of the Jacksonville, Tampa & Key West Railroad (1883–89), vice president of American Cotton Oil Co. (1892), president of Vera Cruz & Pacific Railroad in Mexico (1898–1902), and president of Cauca Railroad in Columbia, South America (1905–07). In the early twentieth century, he wrote boys’ series books (the Tom Strong series, 1911–1919) as well as several works of nonfiction. Apart from *Mae Madden*, the only published works of Mary Murdoch Mason’s that I have been able to discover are three sketches in *Harper’s Weekly* (“Three Christmases,” “Joke of the Gemini,” and “The Flying Man”); a history of New York co-authored with her husband (“The Fourteen Miles Round”); two poems in *The Century Magazine* (“O Brothers Blind!” and “The Surgeon’s Hand”); and a review entitled “The Fourth Art.” She died in 1912. I am indebted to James Keeline for generously supplying biographical information on Alfred Bishop Mason.

³ James wrote “Daisy Miller: A Study” in London in the Spring of 1878. The novella first appeared in the *Cornhill Magazine* in June and July 1878. Two American periodicals quickly pirated it: *Littell’s Living Age* in July 1878 and *Home Journal* in July and August (using the subtitle “Americans Abroad”).

⁴ See Baym. Habegger has argued that James engaged throughout his career in an “appropriation, masterly and distorting, of American women’s fiction” (4) and urges that “it is necessary to take a longer, closer look at the many women’s narratives that helped compose the literary cosmos James grew up in” (15).

⁵ Twenty-five years earlier, a review of “Daisy Miller” in the *Pall Mall Gazette* had asserted, “Indeed, he [James] has revealed to many of us a new distinct variety of womankind in these sketches of American girls” (qtd. in Hayes 74).

⁶ The author of a recent dissertation on the theme of the American girl abroad, for example, writes, “Between 1874 and 1881, one may argue that the American Girl Abroad was willed into literary existence by Henry James and William Dean Howells” (Matsukawa 34). Matsukawa further claims that “James and Howells established the character type of the American Girl as young, beautiful, innocent, vibrant, and hard to read” (29).

⁷ Writing in 1936, Thompson observed, “The now-familiar theme of a rich American girl’s seeking to marry a titled foreigner—or vice-versa—is at least a century old [. . .]” (35). Several contemporary reviews of James’s fiction also indicated that the theme of the American or the American girl abroad was a familiar one. A review of “Daisy Miller” in the *Pall Mall Gazette* (20 March 1879) remarked that “Travelling Americans are a tempting subject, and many people have attempted to describe them” (qtd. in Hayes 74), while a reviewer for the *Academy* (October 1878) praised “Daisy Miller” as “out and away the best thing of *its kind* in recent English” (qtd. in Gard 54; emphasis mine). Similarly, a review of *Roderick Hudson* in the *Chicago Tribune* (December 1875) stressed that “despite [. . .] the blemishes [. . .] the novel is to be distinguished from the innumerable hosts of its tribe by its power to furnish very agreeable recreation” (qtd. in Hayes 8), and a review of *The Europeans* in *Atlantic Monthly* (February 1879) conceded that “one cannot help wishing that our native authors would have done with this incessant drawing of comparisons between ourselves and the folk in Europe, and our respective ways of living, thinking, and talking” (qtd. in Hayes 63). Then, too, James complained in an 1865 review of Alcott’s *Moods*, “We are utterly weary of stories about precocious little girls” (qtd. in Anthony 179).

⁸ Alcott’s use of the phrase “haps and mishaps,” a resounding echo of Grace Greenwood’s *Haps and Mishaps of a Tour in Europe* (1854), underscores the sense of travel writing as a “worn-out” genre.

⁹ In *Shawl-Straps*, Alcott casts herself as “Lavinia,” her older sister Anna as “Amanda,” and her younger sister May as “Matilda.” A review in *Harper’s Magazine* questioned “whether to class *Shawl-Straps* [. . .] with fiction or with books of travel. It is the latter under the guise of the former” (“Editor’s Literary Record” 616).

¹⁰ A slightly longer version of this poem, “A Dream of Italy; An Allegory Introducing ‘Mae Madden,’” appears in Miller’s *Songs of Italy* under the title “The Ideal and the Real.” Its sequel, “The Ideal and the Real, Part II,” is dated “Venice, 1874.” Two concluding stanzas appended to the version in *Mae Madden* carry the date “Chicago, Nov. 1875.” The connection between Mary Murdoch Mason and Joaquin Miller is somewhat vague. Miller spent part of 1873 and most of 1874 in Rome, and both authors were published by Jansen, McClurg. Moreover, Miller wrote an Italian *roman à clef* called *The One Fair Woman* (serialized as *The Pink Countess* in *Frank Leslie’s Popular Monthly* from February to June 1876 and published in book form shortly after *Mae Madden*). In 1892, Miller outrageously claimed that this novel, which features an artless, impertinent American girl abroad (Mollie Wopsus) and her mischievous younger brother, was the inspiration for “Daisy Miller.”

¹¹ For a discussion of the conventions of contemporary narratives of American women abroad, see Wadsworth (169–77).

¹² Matsukawa notes, “In Europe, the American Girl Abroad that we encounter in fiction rarely traveled with a full set of parents—she was either with a chaperon or her mother or with siblings—and therefore she was allowed the liberty of compensating for the lack of male authority by taking on some of the characteristics of the ‘man of the house’” (26). Mae hails from New England, somewhere near New York, and Mason singles out New York girls for admiration, writing, “Praise Parisian modes all you will, but for genuine style, a New York girl, softened a trifle by common-sense or good taste, leads the world—certainly if she is abroad” (65–66).

¹³ Quotations from “Daisy Miller: A Study” are from the original (*Cornhill Magazine*) printing, as reproduced in Stafford.

¹⁴ As Brodhead notes, *Corinne* was “one of the works that most helped to romanticize Rome and expatriate women artists for nineteenth-century audiences” (477 n). Constance Fenimore Woolson’s story “At the Château of Corinne” is a fine example of the way American writers invoked de Staël. In this story, an American woman poet is forced to choose between her art and the man who loves her but scorns literary women as traitors to their sex, declaring of Madame de Staël: “A woman of genius! And what is the very term but a stigma? No woman is so proclaimed by the great brazen tongue of the Public unless she has thrown away her birthright of womanly seclusion for the miserable mess of pottage called ‘fame’” (263).

¹⁵ So that the allusion may be perfectly understood, Hawthorne explains, “Corinne, it will be remembered, knew Lord Nelvil by the reflection of his face in the water” (146). Daisy’s insistence on seeing the Coliseum at night may be linked to a passage from Corinne in which de Staël writes: “You cannot know the feeling aroused by the Colosseum if you have seen it only by day. In the Italian sunshine there is a brilliance which gives everything a festive air, but the moon is the star of ruins” (276).

¹⁶ The tragic end of Margaret Fuller (“the American Corinne”), who had become almost legendary, surely hovered over these narratives of American women in Italy. Fuller, who married the Marquis Angelo Ossoli in Italy, drowned in 1850 with her husband and child when the ship in which they were returning to America was wrecked off Fire Island.

¹⁷ Woolson's story "The Front Yard" tells the other "what if" story suggested by *Mae Madden*: Yankee heroine marries Italian "child of the sun" and becomes a careworn peasant woman.

¹⁸ Adeline R. Tintner notes that in James's "first signed tale, 'The Story of the Year' (March 1865) [. . .] certain details indicate that he may have been reading [Alcott's] *Hospital Sketches*." She explains: "James's early tales contain many borrowings from literature and in his own words show 'an admirable commerce of borrowing and lending [. . .] not to say stealing and keeping'" (265).

¹⁹ It is surely no coincidence that in his biography of James, Edell assigns to the period of *Mae Madden* and "Daisy Miller" the chapter title "The Observant Stranger."

²⁰ Most critics follow Edell in tracing the germ of "Daisy Miller" to this real-life anecdote as, indeed, James does in the preface to the New York Edition of "Daisy Miller" (FW 1269). A few critics, however, have sought textual models for the novella. Some have pointed to the novel *Paule Méré* by the French writer Cherbuliez (to which James alludes in "Daisy Miller" by having Mrs. Costello request that her nephew bring her a copy of this novel when he comes to Rome [22]) as a source for "Daisy Miller," but others disagree. Anthony suggests that the Vevey chapters of *Little Women* influenced James in writing "Daisy Miller" (178–79).

²¹ I don't want to claim that James never thought of the kinds of characters, conflicts, and themes he presents in "Daisy Miller" before *Mae Madden* appeared. After all, in *Watch and Ward* (serialized in the *Atlantic Monthly* in 1871 but not published as a volume until 1878), Hubert tells Nora Lambert:

For a young girl it's by no means pure gain, going to Europe. She comes into a very pretty heritage of prohibitions. You have no idea of the number of improper things a young girl can do. You are walking on the edge of a precipice. Don't look over or you will lose your head and never walk straight again. Here, you are all blindfold. Promise me not to lose this blessed bandage of American innocence. (89–90)

Moreover, George Fenton says to Nora: "I confess I don't understand you! But the more you puzzle me the more you fascinate me [. . .]. Are you an angel of purity, or are you the most audacious of flirts?" (187). Nevertheless, the similarity between "Daisy Miller" and *Mae Madden* and the history of James's reviewing for the *Nation* strongly suggest that the parallels between the two are more than coincidental.

²² In addition to reviewing for the *Nation*, James published no fewer than three books around the time of *Mae Madden*, all of different genres: *A Passionate Pilgrim, and Other Tales*; *Transatlantic Sketches*; and *Roderick Hudson*. Thus, in a single year, James was able to test the marketability of his travel sketches, short stories, and novel (specifically, a novel about an American who travels to Italy). The fact that the travel sketches sold in significantly higher numbers than the fiction (White 207) must have provided a powerful incentive to the young James, who was striving to support himself through his writing. At the same time, through his reviewing for the *Nation*, James learned about what kinds of novels people (primarily women) were writing and what kinds of books were selling. Fictional narratives of American women abroad was an area of women's fiction that men could participate in more easily than the traditional domestic novel, since it moves women out of the domestic sphere and into the world.

²³ Habegger observes, "Just as [James] was immersed at an early age in narratives by and about women, often against his will, so, when he began writing for the public in the mid-sixties, almost all the American novels he reviewed were feminine" (12).

²⁴ In the twelve month period surrounding the *Nation's* notice of *Mae Madden* (September 1875–August 1876), James contributed unsigned reviews of more than thirty books to this periodical (Edell and Laurence 313–20).

²⁵ The account book for the *Nation* survives and is in the New York Public Library. All pieces indicating payment to James have already been attributed to him. Although the review of *Mae Madden* is not listed separately from the "Recent Novels" feature of 3 February 1876 in which it appears, the account book does indicate that Henry James received payment for the review of Philip Gilbert Hamerton's *Round My House*, which appeared in the same feature. The account book also shows that James received payment for the entire "Recent Novels" review of 13 January 1876. It is certainly possible that James wrote all of the 3 February "Recent Novels" article as well and that in the account book the title *Round My House* refers to the series of reviews in which that particular book was featured. Regardless of whether James actually penned the review, however, it is highly likely that he received copies of the *Nation* on a regular basis and that he routinely read the literary notices, particularly those to which he had contributed. Correspondence between Henry and William James reveals that William sent the journal to his brother in Europe. (See, for example, Gard 28.)

²⁶ Habegger describes his study as "not simply of one particular male writer but of the interaction between him and a whole insurgent culture of female writers, who, from his point of view,

often looked like usurpers wrongly established from the first." He adds: "What I have to tell is to some extent the story of the collision and interaction of two different ways of dreaming the world, male and female. The opposing daydreams mesh, and do not mesh; but they meet in James's powerful imagination" (15). Swett makes a similarly relevant point: "The post-bellum feminization of travel, like the antebellum feminization of literature, was both attractive and threatening to male writers such as Howells and James. [. . .] Howells and James were faced with [a] [. . .] decision in relation to their female audiences. They wanted to please them even as they questioned the women's right to be there in the first place" (21–22).

²⁷With respect to May Marcy McClellan—another Mae/May, as well as another "MMM"—who had created a scandal by publishing "a gossipy letter [. . .] about Italian social life" (*SL* 216) in the *New York World* (14 November 1886), James wrote: "But good heavens, what a superfluous product is the smart, forward, over-encouraged, thinking-she-can-write-and-that-her-writing-has-any-business-to-exist-American girl! Basta!" (*SL* 215).

²⁸In an early review of James's fiction, Thomas Powell had written: "None of his books end in a conventional way, probably because he is not a conventional writer, and those who look for 'and they lived together happily ever after' at the end of the last chapter of any of his novelettes will be disappointed" (qtd. in Hayes 9).

²⁹New York's Madison Square Theatre rejected the play in 1882 (the year of its composition), and the following year it appeared in the *Atlantic Monthly*, having failed to make the desired transition from page to stage. Later in 1883, James R. Osgood, of Boston, published "Daisy Miller: A Comedy" in book form. At least one twentieth-century critic has speculated that the play has never been produced (*DM* 43).

³⁰In the *Atlantic Monthly* (April 1875), a reviewer (possibly Howells) wrote: "He [James] has already made his public" (qtd. in Gard 31).

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