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Rachelann Lopp Copland

"Daisy Miller's Elimination: A Post-Colonial Social Darwinist Theory"

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Abstract: This essay historicizes and investigates social Darwinism and social eugenics as they appear in Henry James's *Daisy Miller,* using postcolonial theories such as mimicry, imperialistic discourse, and reverse diaspora. Henry James's personal travel writings, which contain an element of xenophobic anxiety, are also discussed. In addition, the essay argues that Daisy is extracted suddenly from the text on two levels: The first level is located within the fictive narration; i.e., she is not socially desirable by the colonialist Europeanized Americans with whom she encounters in Europe. The second level exists within the reality of Henry James's fears of the "other" and within the context of the historical time period in which the text was written.

Keywords: Henry James, Daisy Miller, Postcolonial Theory, Social Darwinism, Social Eugenics, Imperialism, Xenophobia, American Literature

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Rachelann Lopp COPLAND

Daisy Miller's Elimination: A Post-Colonial Social Darwinist Theory

0. Introduction

A sense of individuality and self can be obscured when one travels to a strange place; finding likenesses to oneself in others may be comforting. However, discovering that the likenesses have an unreliable fragility, which can be used to corner and control the sense of self, can be quite destructive. Henry James, an American male writer in the early twentieth-century, writes about a young American female abroad, casting her in the society of Europeanized Americans. This narrative move seems innocent, until the layers of American culture and gender differences, within the larger context of the European society, are exposed—to the fatal end of Daisy Miller. This encourages a rethinking of the tragic end of an innocent, seemingly healthy young lady. Henry James's Daisy Miller exhibits a desire to maintain an American self during her travels abroad—but faces the scorn of Europeanized Americans. The desire to be accepted by these Americans does not exist to Daisy, perhaps because she considers these Americans her compatriots, fellow tourists; however, their extreme disdain for her behavior, and insistence on following European custom, eventually lead her to doubt the inherent trust she has in human relationships. Literary theorist and critic Edward Said's belief that "colonialism created a way of seeing the world, an order of things that was to be learned as true and proper" applies to the Europeanized Americans because they are mimicking colonialist European values. (McLeod 21) Alternatively, Daisy Miller's construct of self, revolving around kindness, is problematic to her compatriots because she chooses to exist outside of their acceptable borders of behavioral expectations. Her fellow Americans are desperately trying to quell her seemingly rebellious behavior before they are assigned a bad reputation by Europeans as well. To avoid the scrutiny of Europe, the Europeanized Americans take on the role of the colonist, manipulating Daisy to become malleable to their desires. As Oswald Spengler notes in *The Decline of the West,* "we [Westerners] say 'thou shalt' in the conviction that so-and-so in fact will, can and must be changed or fashioned or arranged conformably to the order, and our belief both in the efficacy of, and in our title to give, such orders is unshakable." (176) The Europeanized Americans' obsession over controlling Daisy reflects colonialist and Social Darwinist ideologies that have saturated their attempts to create a mimicking colonialist culture within the larger context of Europe.

1. Rethinking Postcolonial Theory as Applied to Social Darwinism

Edward Said's concept of Orientalism is used primarily in analyzing how the West thinks about the East and tries to control it; however, Said says himself that, "Orientalism is not just a vicarious experience of marvels of the East…But it really has to do with how you control actual populations…" (Viswanathan 169) This rhetoric is mirrored in the rhetoric of Social Darwinism[1] and eugenics. Being awestruck by exoticism, but also fearing it, is what lends itself to a group trying to control what they consider to be unacceptable. Social Darwinism and eugenics was becoming widely studied during the late nineteenth-century and into the twentieth-century. (Leonard 690) Eugenics, broadly defined, is the study of

[1] The term Social Darwinism was coined by Herbert Spencer, a 19th century philosopher:
Social Darwinism is an application of the theory of natural selection to social, political, and economic issues. In its simplest form, Social Darwinism follows the mantra of "the strong survive," including human issues. This theory was used to promote the idea that the white European race was superior to others, and therefore, destined to rule over them. At the time that Spencer began to promote Social Darwinism, the technology, economy, and government of the "White European" was advanced in comparison to that of other cultures. (allaboutscience.org)

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producing more wellborn offspring in a population.[2] "Wellborn" is debatable, and the definitions are held in place by the dominant ideologies circulating at any given time in a society. Eugenics is oftentimes associated with social cleansing—the removal by a dominant group in a society of any other group which it finds undesirable, specifically those disadvantaged.[3] Eugenics and Social Darwinism are complements: primarily, Social Darwinism applies Darwinistic concepts such as survival of the fittest, to discuss the so-called progression of a society. Eugenicists' aims are to purify any certain group of people, retaining the "fittest." In "'More Merciful and Not Less Effective:'

Eugenics and American Economics in the Progressive Era," author Thomas C. Leonard comments, "American eugenics in the Progressive Era tended to be racist, but the catalog of unfit persons included far more than inferior races. Fitness was also applied to sex and class. Women and the 'lower orders,' whatever their race, were commonly regarded as biologically inferior." (691)

Combined with Said's post-colonial literary concepts, the study of Social Darwinism and eugenics sheds light onto why Daisy, a lively, seemingly healthy female character of "apparently inexhaustible good humour," (James 41) dies suddenly from malaria after being excluded from society.

Daisy is placed into a category of *otherness* that threatens the Europeanized Americans; and thus, her character must be destroyed. According to Lois Tyson's description of post-colonial theory in *Critical Theory Today,*

> Colonizers saw themselves as the embodiment of what a human being should be, the proper 'self'; native peoples were considered 'other,' different, and therefore inferior to the point of being less than fully human. This practice of judging all who are different as less than fully human is called *othering*, and it divides the world between 'us' (the 'civilized') and 'them' (the 'others' or 'savages'). (420; emphasis in the original)

In the case of Daisy Miller, her own compatriots are trying to colonize, or stifle Daisy's sense of self—a modern American self. Daisy is referred to as "very crazy," (James 33) "running absolutely wild," (34) "a very reckless girl," (35) "uncultivated," (36) and "intellectually incapable" (43) to name a few. These terms are naming Daisy as *other*—she does not fit into the mold of suitable behavior, thus the efforts to "colonize" her character. "Colonize" has many denotations and connotations. According to *The Oxford English Dictionary*, to colonize is "to settle a country with colonists; to plant or establish a colony in." "To settle" also has many meanings: It could mean "to seat," "to cause to sit down," or in the case of one's clothing—"to place material things in order or in a convenient or desired position, to adjust." The connotations of these definitions when combined are confinement, order and specific place. These terms then, can be used in the context of personal interactions, instead of country colonizing country—a literal example would be when Mrs. Walker insists that Daisy *sit down* (or "settle") in her carriage instead of walking in public with Giovanelli: Mrs. Walker first says to Winterbourne, "[I intend] 'To ask her to get in, to drive her about here for half-an-hour, so that the world may see she is into running absolutely wild and then to take her safely home,'" then she comments to Daisy, " 'Will you get in…?…Do get in and drive with me…Come into my carriage and I will tell you.'" (34) Mrs. Walker is insisting that Daisy obey her—*settle* into her carriage, and enter her domain, for the purpose of reprimand.

2. Critical Scholarship and Support

[2] From *The Oxford English Dictionary* (2013)
[3] From *The Oxford English Dictionary* (2013)

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Critics have noticed the 'othering' of Daisy and the inclination of the Europeanized Americans in the text to change her. In "What Daisy Knew: Reading against Type in *Daisy Miller: A Study,"* Sarah Wadsworth discusses Winterbourne's confused national allegiances and social behavioral expectations and the effect these have on his interactions with Daisy. Winterbourne's opinion of her behavior is influenced by the Europeanized American women around whom he socializes. Wadsworth aligns Winterbourne and Daisy as having similar experiences, for example, "each is overseen by a maternal figure, in the father's absence…both become subjects of gossip." (32) This argument does not account for the extreme difference in repercussions for these experiences—Winterbourne is allowed to continue his patronizing study of other women, while Daisy rots in a Roman grave. Wadsworth does however, mention that "critics have often analyzed the characters in *Daisy Miller* as literary types…most recently, [Daisy Miller] as 'an emblem of otherness,'" referencing Dennis Pahl. (34) Dennis Pahl's "'Going down': with Henry James's uptown girl: Genteel anxiety and the promiscuous world of Daisy Miller" creates an "other" space for Daisy that conflicts with Henry James's own personal agenda; through analyzing James's *The American Scene*[4]*,* Pahl claims that James cannot combine the "contradictory, utterly foreign nature of Daisy Miller" with his own Anglo-Saxon genteel class agenda. (Pahl 144) Not only is Daisy foreign within the borders of Europe, she is foreign to her own people as well. Daisy Miller progresses in the novel as an *exotic other*, which demands for her tragic end according to the Social Darwinist ideologies circulating at the time Henry James was writing the novel.

3. Female Embrace of and Use of Patriarchal Oppression

Other women in Daisy Miller are trying to control her behavior; so ultimately, it is female controlling female using patriarchal oppression—Mrs. Walker, along with Mrs. Costello ostracize Daisy and exploit Winterbourne's friendship with her to relay that she exists on the outside perimeters of a strict social code already firmly in place. As Europeanized females, they must use a male to impose their civilized oppressive agendas onto Daisy. In discussing Charles Darwin's concept of survival of the fittest, Eva Figes in *Patriarchal Attitudes: Women in Society* notes,

> The idea of the survival of the fittest allowed man to extemporize on the qualities of reason, initiative, social adaptability and good physiology which had allowed him to reach his present lofty heights of civilized life…in an age of imperialism it encouraged the white European to regard himself as the superior. (113)

Regardless of female behavior, white European males were the "height of civilized life." Winterbourne, although born American, has a perspective that "has been skewed by his long absence from his native country and the gradual supplanting of the American sensibility with that of a Europeanized one complicates his response to Daisy." (Wadsworth 33) His response is complicated because he allows Mrs. Costello and Mrs. Walker to dictate how he should interact with Daisy; they threaten ostracism for him as well if he continues to see her: "'They are the sort of Americans that one does one's duty by—not accepting,'" Mrs. Costello warns Winterbourne (James 14). It is not stated how this *duty* has been created or by whom—perhaps the construction of *duty* develops out of allegiance to what is socially acceptable in European society. Mrs. Walker is more direct with Winterbourne: "'I wished to beg you to cease your relations with Miss Miller…to let her alone, in short,'" comments Mrs. Walker. When Winterbourne responds that he cannot, she pursues, "'If you wish to rejoin the young lady I will put you down. Here, by-the-way, you have a chance'" (James 36)—so, while the females hold power over Winterbourne, they nevertheless need his maleness to suppress Daisy's behavior and assert their desires for what constitutes acceptable society. Winterbourne's *study* of Daisy is about whether or not she can be an acceptable member of

[4] Written about James's 1904-05 travels across America (Daisy Miller written 1879)

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their exclusive group; he even considers marriage to stop her flirtatious behavior.[5] Also, the word *study,* seems to have scientific connotations, which supports the alignment of this text with the study of eugenics. Winterbourne's decision about his study of Daisy will influence the society in which he lives—Daisy is offended that he never stands up for her…and he cannot or else his societal power will be taken away from him. In explaining social evolutionism, Lucas McGranahan fittingly explains in "William James's Social Evolutionism in Focus," that "By definition, the individual affects the environment most strikingly in the case of what [William] James calls a 'great man,' who is just someone who manages to become selected by the social environment in such a way as to influence society greatly." (McGranahan 87)

Winterbourne is chosen by the Europeanized American women to influence Daisy's behavior. Eva Figes continues her point about male domination in society by noting, "a not altogether successful attempt [by scientists/philosophers such as Rousseau Darwin, and Lecky] was made to use evolutionary theory to justify male domination over women, and to prove men be naturally superior." (113) Notably, the scientists Figes mentions were European males, and their social application of the "survival of the fittest" was a dominant ideology circulating in the Victorian era. Consequently, the women of the novel have to use a hesitant Winterbourne as a catalyst for their ideas: He advises Daisy, "'I think you have made a mistake…You should sometimes listen to a gentleman.'" (James 32) Winterbourne does Mrs. Walker's bidding, "the young man went in pursuit of Miss Miller" to get her into the carriage. (34) "'I think you should get into the carriage,'" Winterbourne encourages Daisy, as Mrs. Walker has failed to convince Daisy to do so. (35) Mrs. Walker's efforts are not thwarted however; by using colonial and military discourse, the narrative exposes Mrs. Costello and Mrs. Walker as despots, trying to control and manipulate Daisy (in Mrs. Costello's case, through Winterbourne, because she refuses to meet Daisy[6]).

Mrs. Costello is first introduced in the narrative with colonial discourse that presents her as not American. She wears a "*rouleaux"* on top of her head, a French style, and she has "social sway" in New York while living abroad. (James 13) Her power extends overseas behind her, much like a colonizer's power remains within the colony, even after the colonizer has left. Mrs. Costello admits to being "very exclusive" and respects the "hierarchical constitution of the society of that city [New York]." (13) She does not explain this "hierarchical constitution" in the narrative—she gives the illusion that she remains powerful in American society, while trying to burgeon her way to the top of European society as well. The way in which she presents this respect for hierarchy is "oppressively striking" to Winterbourne. (13) The use of words such as "hierarchical," "exclusive" and "oppressively" in the context of Mrs. Costello exudes colonial discourse. Mrs. Costello also refers to the Millers collectively as "'hopelessly vulgar…they are bad enough to dislike, at any rate.'" (26) A binary of superiority/inferiority is obvious. Mrs. Costello also separates herself from anyone she considers "the other:" She encourages Winterbourne's condescension of Daisy by writing to him:

> Those people you were so devoted to last summer at Vevey have turned up here, courier and all…the courier continues to be the most *intime* [familiar, intimate]. The young lady however, is also very intimate with some third-rate Italians, with whom she rackets about in a way that makes much talk. (25)

"Those people" and "third-rate Italians" are a derogatory separation, and the use of French to identify and describe the courier's relationship with the Millers shows Mrs.

[5] Winterbourne believes "he could have eloped with her" (22) and advises her that Giovanelli is not the right one, (32) the implication being that Winterbourne is the right one for her.
[6] Mrs. Costello first refuses to meet Daisy before knowing anything about her except that she saw her with her courier: "I can't [accept/meet Daisy], my dear Frederick. I would if I could, but I can't.'" (James 14) She again refuses on page 15: "'I must decline the honour of her acquaintance.'"

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Costello's European mimicry. She is judging Daisy's social relationships through Europe's eyes, not her own. Daisy's friendliness with her courier and with "third-rate Italians" associate her—in Mrs. Costello's mind—with *otherness.* Because she is loyal to these associations, Daisy herself becomes *other* to Mrs. Costello as well (which is worse than simply the American *noveau riche* identity Mrs. Costello disdains). Mrs. Costello goes on to explain vehemently to Winterbourne that Daisy "'goes about alone with her foreigners…She has picked up half-a-dozen of the regular Roman fortune-hunters, and she takes them about to people's houses.'" (26) Here, Mrs. Costello differentiates between "Roman fortune-hunters" [nameless, not "people"] to "people." "People" probably refers to Mrs. Costello's acquaintances which would be either Americans or Europeanized Americans who would not normally have Romans as guests (as implied from this passage). If the Roman men with whom Daisy is socializing were hunting her for money, it is odd that Mrs. Costello would not have more of a maternal feeling of protection over a compatriot; instead, she patronizes both the Romans and Daisy to Winterbourne, trying to ostracize her. It is important to note here, that ALL of Mrs. Costello's superfluous observations, complaints, and comments about Daisy are second hand. She never meets Daisy. Alternatively, Mrs. Walker, another Europeanized American woman, does meet Daisy.

Mrs. Walker is introduced by the European qualification of her character: she is an American woman who has "spent several winters at Geneva, where she had placed her children at school. She was a very accomplished woman and she lived in the Via Gregoriana [A fashionable street near the head of the Spanish Steps]." (James 26; his note) It is unclear whether she was "accomplished" in America, or in Europe, but the implication is Europe, since she lives there now—showing that her feelings of success and efficacy are from European ventures, not American. The first time she speaks in the text is in a "tone of a partisan of Winterbourne." (29) Partisan has several colonial connotations: a partisan can be someone who supports a person zealously or blindly; one-sided and prejudiced—a blindly fanatical adherent. A partisan can also mean relating to military partisans or a commander of such a body of irregular troops engaging in surprise attacks.[7] Her alliance is with Winterbourne, implying that they are somehow *against* Daisy. Upon Mrs. Walker's first words, her character is qualified with militaristic discourse. Mrs. Walker exerts physical command over Daisy, disguised as something maternal: "'My dear young friend,' said Mrs. Walker, taking her hand, pleadingly, 'don't walk off to the Pincio at this hour to meet a beautiful Italian.'" (30) Previous to this excerpt, Daisy mentions Giovanelli's name twice, and Mrs. Walker cannot *name* him—he is simply an exotic *other* foreigner to her, even though Mrs. Walker is the foreigner in his country. Daisy's walking around with two men physically upsets Mrs. Walker, who has just been introduced to Daisy: "Mrs. Walker was flushed; she wore an excited air. 'It is really too dreadful…That girl must not do this sort of thing. She must not walk here with you two men. Fifty people have noticed her…It's a pity to let a girl ruin herself!'."(33)

This physical reaction must be because of Mrs. Walker's fear of what Europeans will think of her as an extension of Daisy because they are both American. The fear of the exaggerated number of people noticing Daisy is a dread of exclusion. Her intense insistence that Daisy get into the carriage (shielded from view) displays colonial discourse, as Mrs. Walker becomes a "lady [who] did not enjoy being defied." (35) The word "defied" is often used in oppressive/reactionary contexts. Through her rebuff of Mrs. Walker, Daisy is rising up, rebelling, against the tyrannical instructions given her by a total stranger. Mrs. Walker must devise another tactic to control Daisy; she must use the male—William James's strong male— Winterbourne, to do so. Making an "imperious claim upon his society" immediately after Daisy's refusal to get into the carriage, Mrs. Walker convinces him to stop Daisy's savage "recklessness." (35) Noteworthy is the use of the word "imperious," a military, colonial discursive term. Mrs. Walker remains powerful through her meticulous manipulation of Winterbourne.

[7] From *The Oxford English Dictionary* (2013)

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4. Winterbourne: "Caught Between" Cultures

Winterbourne is a character who is *"caught between*[i] two cultures," (Pahl 147; his emphasis) thus making him easily vulnerable to Mrs. Walker and Mrs. Costello's imperious claims upon his social loyalties. Winterbourne, an American, assimilates into the Europeanized American crowd by setting a clear social boundary that protects him from Daisy's foreign impurities, including her association with foreigners like Giovanelli and Eugenio. Winterbourne's desire to create these boundaries stems from his interactions with other Europeanized women who have established boundaries for many reasons. Winterbourne seems uncertain as to why he should be setting these boundaries, but in the end, decides to draw them anyway. Winterbourne becomes attached to "the values and judgments of the supercilious, hypocritical American colony." (Wadsworth 33) Wadsworth goes on to note:

> Even his [Winterbourne's] nationality appeared confused and unstable, a farrago of German inflections and British reserve, with a dash of American aplomp and yet a spice too of native expertise, suggesting a more intimate relationship to the Swiss surroundings than could conceivably be acquired as a casual tourist. (32)

Because Winterbourne does not have a stable set of socially acceptable cultural values, he is subject to manipulation by those he trusts and to their exclusionary social views.

While the two Europeanized American women are introduced by the qualification of their "Europeanness," Winterbourne's name alone has many connotations. Dennis Pahl notes that "the 'bourne' in his name, it should be noted, means 'boundary'" and that Winterbourne seems more unsure about his social boundaries than "his cold, exclusive society would like." (Pahl 147) The juxtaposition of "Winter" and "Daisy" is clear—it is a binary of life and death, cold and warmth, and the obvious: winter and spring; but whereas the season of spring brings life after winter, the story of Daisy ends in tragic death. It does not seem a feasible ending (that follows the binary) until Social Darwinist theory is applied to the story. The closer the exotic *other* is to nature, the more savage—and according to Social Darwinism and eugenics, the savage's social existence is unnecessary, not beneficial to progress. Daisy is often associated with nature—glancing at it ("she then turned her head and looked over the parapet, at the lake and the opposite mountains" (James 6)) and the obvious—her *name.* This nature association is clearly marking her as savage. According to Tyson, "Sometimes the 'savage' is perceived as possessing a 'primitive' beauty or nobility born of a closeness to nature (the *exotic other*). In either case, however, the 'savage' remains other and, therefore, not fully human." (420)

The association of Daisy as exotic other and savage requires further textual evidence of militaristic or colonial discourse in the text: Even as Winterbourne first meets Daisy, his actions are described with militaristic discourse: "He wondered whether he had gone too far; but he decided that he must advance farther, rather than retreat." (James 6) Advancing has the connotation of advancing in order to possess or expand one's borders of ownership, while retreating has connotations of defeat. According to the *Oxford English Dictionary,* "retreat" is first seen in 1460 in *Knyghthode & Bataile*[8] creating the militaristic implication of the current meaning: to "pull back, especially when confronted by a superior force." Winterbourne's thoughts on his interactions with Daisy reveal a narcissistic belief that the exchanges will be orchestrated by *him*.

His thoughts also reveal a fear that Daisy is a "superior force" who may not accept his advancements. At first glance, Winterbourne seems to genuinely desire Daisy's company, but as the story progresses, and the Europeanized women have an impact on Winterbourne's opinions, he slowly becomes the William Jamesian male he needs to be for

[8] *Knyghthode & Bataile* (Pembr. Cambr. 243) 2112 (MED), "And this doing, retretoete [*read* retrete] thi lifte horn Fer, al abak, and raunge it like a spere."

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the betterment of the group. The study of Daisy is "through the eyes of Winterbourne, relentlessly suppressing Daisy's thoughts and thereby obscuring the double standard that underlies the story's highly gendered social codes." (Wadsworth 33) In the end, Winterbourne reveals himself as having Puritanical American ideals that are challenged by Daisy (Pahl 146): Pahl claims, "[Henry] James hints that though his genteel expatriate [Winterbourne] may be immersed in the fine manners of the Old World, the scene of America[9] cannot be kept from infiltrating Winterbourne's consciousness and thus significantly shaping his behavior." (Pahl 146) Pahl is referencing Winterbourne's possible fears of the *other* infiltrating his society.

Daisy confronts Winterbourne's militaristic discursive thoughts after he interprets the entreaty to accompany her to meet Giovanelli: "His own mission, to her sense, apparently, was to consign her to the hands of Mr. Giovanelli." (James 31) He believes Daisy sees him as simply exchanging her, as she does not have power to control her self. This simply does not align with Daisy's characterization. Her shock at Winterbourne's silence in defense of her, and she scolds him: "'I shouldn't think you should let people be so unkind!' She said. 'How can I help it?' he asked. 'I should think you would say something.'" (James 46) For Daisy, there are no borders of behavior marked with societal boundaries—her behavior is based on kindness as motive, not what is "proper"—she asks Mr. Winterbourne: " But did you ever hear anything so cool as Mrs. Walker's wanting me to get into her carriage and drop poor Mr. Giovanelli; and under the pretext that it was proper? People have different ideas! It would have been most unkind; he had been talking about that walk for ten days" (39). Her self-assertion against the rule of Winterbourne's Europeanized American female friends shows the trust she has in him and also her strength of individuality. She surprises his expectations by declaring independence: "'Then I shall find him without you'"—to which Winterbourne *cries*, "'You certainly won't leave me!'" The desperation for security is in Winterbourne, *not* Daisy. She even mocks him with laughter, "'Are you afraid you'll get lost—or run over?'" (31) She talks to him as if he were a child under her command. He becomes the female expectation of neediness—constantly thinking about what Daisy's motives *really* are, if she is just innocent, etc…His obsessive analysis of Daisy becomes a mission to fit her into one of his socially acceptable formula of a young woman's behavior; however, her transparent borders do not allow for this intrusion. It is ironic that she is transparent with regard to her personality and discourse, yet Winterbourne cannot figure her out. Why the discrepancy for him? It is unfathomable to him that a young American woman can have her own mind and will: "He was vexed at his want of instinctive certitude as to how far her eccentricities were generic, national, and how far they were personal. From either view of them *he had somehow missed her, and now it was too late."* (45; my emphasis) He cannot understand a female who has constructed her own identity—separately from the patriarchal rules he has followed, and separately from a male. His formulas include this patriarchal aspect, and that is why he cannot figure her out—he is used to fitting women into certain categories, of which Daisy does not fit. His analysis is frivolous, as Pahl notes: "More often, though, his sense of possessiveness remains strictly on a visual, or spectatorial, level, his main action being that of admiring or judging Daisy through his all-consuming gaze." (150) He inwardly patronizes her by thinking: "she was only a pretty American flirt." (James 11) Daisy's refusal to analyze Winterbourne or care about his *study* of her is clear, as Wadsworth claims: "…whether he finally made up his mind to advance or retreat[10] was a question over which she would allow herself to lose no sleep." (32) Winterbourne clearly is distraught at how to dominate and subdue Daisy.

His attention is almost obsessive, which is juxtaposed with Daisy's ease of character assessment. She is the only character who, because she knows *herself,* is able to figure

[9] The "scene of America" being James's observations in *The American Scene*—filled with notes about the changing dynamic of the American population.
[10] Wadsworth is referencing *Daisy Miller,* page 6, (quoted elsewhere in this paper): "He wondered whether he had gone too far; but he decided that he must advance farther, rather than retreat."

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others out. After Winterbourne lies about Mrs. Costello being "unable" to meet Daisy, Daisy comments: "'I know just what *your* aunt would be; I know I should like her. She would be very exclusive," and in reaction to Winterbourne's lie that Mrs. Costello cannot meet her because of her sickness: "'But I suppose she doesn't have a headache every day…She doesn't want to know me!...Why don't you say so? You needn't be afraid. I'm not afraid!'" (James 16-17) Daisy knows immediately the nature of Mrs. Costello, and is not afraid of a little exclusion. This intuitive, unafraid nature is dangerous to the exclusionary community the Americans have created, even to Winterbourne—he begins to distance himself from her: Later in the text, he hears her words in a "familiar accent"—he immediately identifies her voice as *other* in qualifying it as having an *accent*. (47) When Winterbourne realizes Daisy has figured him out as a lion preying upon a Christian martyr (her innocence)—"'Well, he looks at us as one of the old lions or tigers may have looked at the Christian martyrs!'" (47)—he immediately decides that she does not deserve his respect, nor his allowance or encouragement to enter into his community: "She was a young lady whom a gentleman need no longer be at pains to respect…He felt angry with himself that he had bothered so much about the right way of regarding Miss Daisy Miller." (48) With Winterbourne's (the powerful Europeanized American male) rejection, Daisy will not be able to penetrate the borders of social existence—in her death, she will forever remain on the outside.

5. Reverse Diaspora and Communal Exclusion

Similar to how "Well-Borns" (the "fittest" socially in a Social Darwinist society) are identified as their own community within a community, Mrs. Costello, Mrs. Walker, and Winterbourne have created an exclusive community of Americans—but in the context of foreign borders—it is exclusive because not just any American is welcome. The community they have created fits Robin Cohen's definition of a diasporic community (even though they are within Europe; usually diasporic communities are created within a colonized country and maintain their loyalty—perhaps even subconsciously—to the colonizing nation. They have created a reverse diaspora.): In *Global Diasporas: An Introduction,* Cohen describes diasporas as communities of people living together in one country who "acknowledge that the 'old country'—a notion often buried deep in language, religion, custom or folklore—always has some claim on their loyalty and emotions" (Cohen ix). The American's living in Europe are living *within* the "old country's" borders, mimicking the European culture. Tyson defines mimicry as a reflection of "both the desire of colonized individuals to be accepted by the colonizing culture and the shame experienced by colonized individuals concerning their own culture, which they were programmed to see as inferior." (421) While these Americans are not victim to proactive colonization, they still suffer from residual colonized shame; their shame is displaced onto other American citizens who do not experience this shame through exclusionary discourse. Daisy is clearly viewed as inferior, and this stems from the American's own desire to be accepted by the colonizing culture—Europe. This American community seems to consider their new European dwellings their "homes," which begs the question: does this eliminate and erase their American culture and values? They have created a space which is American, but also repudiates Americanism; the space also is European, but cannot truly be European because of their true American citizenship. This community is a confused creation of borders that eliminates the chance of disgrace (disgrace in exhibiting American values) within the European context. Is it for a lingering fear of the colonizing nation that these Americans insist on Europeanizing themselves? Is it for a desire to mimic the values that originally were the colonizing values? According to McLeod, "It is by no means safe to assume that colonialism conveniently stops when a colony formally achieves its independence." (32)

The Europeanized Americans do not create their own community within their own country's borders, but they take their desire for Europe *into* Europe, and use it to bar others from maintaining their American separateness. The background of why these characters (specifically, Mr. Winterbourne, Mrs. Costello and Mrs. Walker) have remained in Europe

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(almost denouncing their American citizenship) is not specific in the text; however, it can be assumed by their actions and speech that European values are preferable to their American heritage. An example is when Mr. Winterbourne cautions Daisy about being seen in public with Giovanelli: "When you deal with natives you must go by the custom of the place. Flirting is a purely American custom; it doesn't exist here." (James 40) Winterbourne uses exclusionary discourse to make Daisy feel not only ashamed, but alienated from the friends she has made in Italy. Another example is Mrs. Walker, who is qualified as "one of those American ladies, who, while residing abroad, make a point, in their own phrase, of studying European society…" (37) She cannot shed her Americanness, but tries to fit it into European culture by *studying* it—the implication here is that she is not just observing "native behavior" (as Winterbourne would say), but is *learning* it and making it her own. When one studies, the purpose is to make the knowledge one's own. Their extreme desire for acceptance within a colonizing culture is problematic to Daisy Miller, who carries her American borders with her as she crosses into Europe for an extended vacation. She creates a space for herself within a society of Europeanized Americans who scoff at their own country's youthful representation; the fact that Daisy is a young woman furthers the disturbance.

Daisy's reaction to the despotic behavior and exclusive diasporic community of the Europeanized Americans is one of a colonized individual declaring independence and fighting back: When asking Mrs. Walker if she can bring her Italian friend Giovanelli to a party, she asks "without a tremor in her clear little voice or a shadow on her brilliant little face" (James 29). The only reason she *would* tremor is if she were afraid of Mrs. Walker's reaction, and the shadow could only be that of doubt. Soon after, she asserts her independence to everyone by instructing her mother: "'You may go back to the hotel, mother, but I'm going to take a walk.'" (29) A chaperone is not necessary for her, especially because she maintains a certain level of trust with the Italian friends she has made—a trust that no young, white, American girl should appropriate according to the Europeanized Americans' social standards. She fights back against oppression in her self-assertion to Winterbourne, "'I don't like the way you say that,' said Daisy. 'It's too imperious.'" (32) She continues by declaring, '"I have never allowed a gentleman to dictate to me, or to interfere with anything I do.'" (32) Her use of reactionary discourse is clear: "imperious," "never allowed," "dictate," "interfere with." Subsequently, she defies Mrs. Walker and gives a "violent laugh" in both Winterbourne and Mrs. Walker's faces. (35) The use of the word "violent" connotes her active refusal to be controlled. Mr. Giovanelli joins in the mockery of the despotic Mrs. Walker by giving "a triumphantly obsequious salute" to her. (35) Daisy's flirtatious, kind and outgoing personality "talks back" to the Europeanized Americans that judge her.[11] Along with Daisy's verbal reactions, her kind behavior towards other *others* further ostracizes her. From the beginning of the novel, Daisy's association with those considered *below* the social hierarchical place of the Europeanized Americans, gives the Europeanized Americans reason to include her in their condescension of other races or people of lower socio-economic status. Participating in this decision to exclude Daisy, Winterbourne ruminates that "she was too light and childish, too uncultivated and unreasoning, too provincial, to have reflected upon her ostracism or even to have perceived it." (44) While the Americans are discussing Daisy's incontrovertible otherness, she is actually accepting of her outsider status. She embraces her otherness and separates herself from *them* (the other Americans): "'I, thank goodness, am not a young lady of this country…I don't see why I should change my habits for *them.*'" (39) She realizes that embracing her Americanism will set her apart both from the countries she is touring, and the Europeanized Americans with whom she comes in contact.

Daisy unselfishly participates in the social group coined *other* by Mrs. Walker, Mrs. Costello and Winterbourne. The two representations of this group are her courier, Eugenio

[11] The idea of writing back to empire is a post-colonial theory that (among many other ideas) examines literary works that are written by authors who have experienced colonization and now face a post-colonial worldview. For more information, see *The Empire Writes Back: Theory and Practice in Post-Colonial Literatures* by Bill Ashcroft, Gareth Griffiths, and Helen Tiffin.

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and her Italian friend (and possible suitor), Giovanelli, who is a much more important character than other critics have credited him. It is Daisy's association with Eugenio first, and Giovanelli later, that, according to the Europeanized Americans is damning for her. Eugenio's first appearance in the text is an exotic physical appearance: "a tall, handsome man, with superb whiskers, wearing a velvet morning-coat and a brilliant watch-chain…" (James 12) Eugenio separates himself automatically from Winterbourne: "The courier stood looking at Winterbourne, offensively" (12). Eugenio's *otherness* is reinforced to Winterbourne by Mrs. Costello, who "keeps out of their [the Millers and Eugenio's] way." (13) She seems disgusted by the Millers' friendliness with Eugenio: "'Oh the mother is just as bad! They treat the courier like a familiar friend—like a gentleman. I shouldn't wonder if he dines with them.'" (14) Mrs. Costello reflects in abhorrence at seeing the Millers' friendly behavior to their courier, an *other*. This leads Winterbourne to believe "evidently she [Daisy] was rather wild." (14) The adjective "wild" connotes savagery, as Winterbourne analyzes her social behavior. Later in the text, Eugenio speaks to Winterbourne out of "darkness" with a "foreign accent" and Winterbourne "wished to Heaven this pretty girl were not so familiar with her courier." (21) Winterbourne does not name Eugenio, instead he qualifies him as simply *courier,* much like his Aunt does. Mrs. Costello is appalled that Daisy would associate with "foreigners" and that she has "picked up half-a-dozen of the regular Roman fortune-hunters, and she takes them about to people's houses." (26) Daisy's relationships with foreigners make her foreign to the Europeanized Americans as well. Her formation of an intimate relationship with the Roman Giovanelli is also appalling to the Europeanized Americans. In the text, immediately after Winterbourne decides that Daisy is a woman undeserving of his respect, Daisy is not referred to as *Daisy,* but as either "young lady" or "the Signorina." This interesting change of qualification shows that in Winterbourne's social rejection of Daisy, she becomes permanently a member of *the others…*who will disappear from society, as she has already become nameless. The mention of her deadly sickness immediately follows the description of the exclusionary discourse of the "little American circle," commenting on her unacceptable behavior with Giovanelli. The sequence of events is foreboding: Winterbourne's social rejection of Daisy, followed by her foreign identification, followed by complete exclusion, followed by sickness and death. It eerily echoes the Social Darwinist concept of eugenics—elimination of the unacceptable.

6. Daisy's Sudden Death: an Imperialist Defeat

It is fitting that Daisy Miller's body is forever held prisoner "in an angle of the wall of imperial Rome," far removed from her American life. This sad ending of the conquered American Daisy signifies how her journey into Europe is one of an *other* intruding upon a structured society which makes a clear distinction between "us" and "them." Westerners considered 'the Orient' a "mythic place of exoticism, moral laxity, sexual degeneracy…" (McLeod 22), and here, Miller becomes a transient Oriental Other, dispersing her otherness throughout Europe, specifically among Europeanized Americans. Daisy is excluded from the Europeanized American's society because of their belief in her "moral laxity," and perhaps her "sexual degeneracy." Her regard for nature and walking outdoors seems an exotic idea to people like Mrs. Walker, who prefers to remain in her carriage and warns Daisy against walking in public unchaperoned. Culminating with her total exclusion from their society, Daisy's journey of simply being herself is prematurely ended. Her total exclusion is because she exists outside of the acceptable societal behavioral borders of an American woman, created by people who are extremely removed from American society: "They [Europeanized Americans] ceased to invite her…Miss Daisy Miller was a young American lady, her behavior was not representative—was regarded by her compatriots as abnormal." (James 44) Note James's choice of the word *compatriots*—showing a deliberate aligning of Daisy with characters who do not really maintain their Americanness. Unfortunately for Daisy, *abnormality* is a curse in a eugenical Social Darwinist society.

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7. Conclusion

Critical theory today encourages rethinking literature and the predispositions we, as readers, bring to the text—"[Homi] Bhaba suggests that literature concerning 'migrants, the colonized or political refugees' could take on the task of unhousing received ways of thinking about the world and discovering the hybridity, the difference that exists within." (Bhaba quoted in McLeod 222) However, while Daisy Miller [as a colonized individual under the oppression of her own colonizer compatriots] represents a challenge to the "received ways of thinking," the conclusion of the story represents the inability of the Victorian Europeanized Americans in a new place to discover this "hybridity." As Pahl has illustrates in his comparative discussion on James's *The American Scene* and *Daisy Miller*, Henry James desires:

> As much as possible to safeguard the purity of *his* conception, of *his* view of America, and to do so through controlling…those elements—social, cultural, or racial—that might conceivably contaminate it. Most essential for James, as well as for the Anglo-Saxon genteel class in general, is a clear notion of sociocultural boundaries, that is, stable and secure boundaries that would help define oneself, socially, in relation to those considered, from various angles, as *other.* (144-45)

This comparison is referencing James's "often unsettling encounter with the foreignness, the otherness, of his own increasingly commercial and industrialized native land" in James's travel narrative, *The American Scene.* (Pahl 144) *The American Scene* makes it evident that James himself falls for setting exclusive, definitive boundaries for what it means to be American. According to Pahl, Henry James exhibited a fear of the influx of immigrants in America. Sensing the immigrants' 'free assault' on the traditional idea of America, the 'readjustment of [this idea] in *their* monstrous, presumptuous interest'(James's *The American Scene* 67), James wonders if America, and particularly the 'American character,' insofar as it is becoming but a 'hotch-potch of racial ingredients' (*The American Scene* 92), is in danger of losing its identity and of becoming, perhaps, something unreadable or '*il*legible'" (*The American Scene* 93). (Pahl 145)

James feels "'haunted' by this 'sense of dispossession' created by the 'hotch-potch of racial' mixing within his country's borders. (Pahl 146, *The American Scene* 67) Perhaps this fear of dispossession is displaced onto James's character, Daisy, because of her insistence on challenging social norms and maintaining a self that differs from what is deemed acceptable. Her unexpected and odd tragic end makes sense when daunting Social Darwinist theory and eugenics are applied to the interpretation: Through Daisy's death and Giovanelli's assertion of her innocence, there is an elimination of her fresh American archetype. Her character does not and will not have the chance to reproduce, a cornerstone of eugenics theory. Perhaps the Social Darwinist discourses circulating in Victorian America and the fear of societal change made its way into James's literature, quite literally quashing any challenge to the residual European social ideologies existent in America.

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Bioprofile of the author: Rachelann Lopp Copland is a graduate student and research assistant at the State University of New York, Cortland. She plans on graduating in the spring of 2014 with a Master of the Arts in Literature; she holds a Bachelor's degree of Science in English Education from Kutztown University in Pennsylvania. In addition to being a student, she is also a mother, a wife, an artist and a writer. Her future plans include publishing her creative writing and literary research and teaching at the collegiate level. The purpose of her creative expression through writing is to examine and rethink the ways in which we perceive the world and its history.

Contact: <rachelann.copland@cortland.edu>