

The Latin Library of Henry James: His Roman References in “Daisy Miller”

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Much ink has been spilt on “Daisy Miller: A Study” by the American novelist Henry James (1843-1916), first published in 1878, a significant amount of which dealing with the setting and its symbolism. The focus has usually been on the latter half of the novella set in Rome (Bisztray being the finest example in a list of studies too long to cite for the purpose of this paper), which understandably permits both writer and reader to tap into the very rich classical tradition of the ancient capital. Yet, the focus has been on its ruins and not (surprisingly) on the literary allusions, which is what one would expect from an author as well read as James, one whose father once even described as “a devourer of libraries” (Kaplan 42, 571 n.25). One scholar has even gone so far as to claim

that James’s education included just enough access to Roman literature – especially Augustan literature – to account for his attitude towards Rome. The traces of classical Rome found in James are not allusions in any technical sense; rather, they are the imaginative distillation of a culture only vaguely grasped and recalled with deliberate vagueness”

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(Block 142).

Alternatively, when a study analyses the former Swiss half of the tale, the classical reading tends to ebb (Wood being the prime instance of, again, works too many to reference here). This essay, then, demonstrates how classical the entire text is from a literary perspective, in addition to its more well know non-literary counterpart. As the renowned Jamesian Adeline R. Tintner once described the Rome in James’s novel *Roderick Hudson* as “all museum” (*The Museum World of Henry James* 43), “Daisy Miller” as a whole can comparatively be viewed as his Latin library.

The novella’s overall setting comes from James’s European trips taken in 1869 (*CLHJ 1855-1872* 2: 3-241) and 1872-3 (*1872-1876* 1). A letter sent to his older brother William, the famous psychologist and philosopher, from Rome dated 9 April 1873 confirms this fact:

But in the long run I have gained for it has all [sic] after all been “quite an experience” & I have gathered more impressions I am sure than I suppose – impressions I shall find a value in when I come to use them.
(255-6)

He seems also to have used some of the imagery from his past travel essays such as “Swiss Notes” (19 September 1872; *CTW* 2: 626-32), “Roman Rides” (August 1873; 433-4) and “From a Roman Note-Book” (November 1873; 471-2), all of which include references to the ancient periods of Switzerland and, of course, Italy. Vevey, to begin with, used to be an ancient Roman military stop (Deakin 4). The hotel there, where the first half of the story takes place, Hôtel des Trois Couronnes, is where the Nortons stayed in July 1869 (*CLHJ 1855-1872* 2: 25, 28), where James twice visited them (25, 29-30, 40, 43, 50, 102), and where he himself stayed on 5 July 1872 with his sister and aunt (*1872-1876* 1: 39, 47-8). The narrator of “Daisy Miller” describes it as being “classical” (*CS* 2: 238) in the opening paragraph, and the Tuscan columns inside can still

attest to that description.¹

Vevey and the Trois Couronnes are “seated upon the edge of a remarkably blue lake – a lake that it behoves every tourist to visit.” “The starlit lake” (254) with its “beauties” (263) is, of course, Lake Geneva. Coupled with the “sights and sounds which evoke a vision, an *echo*, of Newport and Saratoga [springs]” (emphasis added) the setting begins to resonate with lines from the third book of Ovid’s *Metamorphoses* (ll.339-510); recounting the myth of Echo and Narcissus, where

fons erat inlimis, nitidis argenteus undis (l.407)

[the spring was clean, the water a shiny silver]²

and which Narcissus, like the tourists in the novella, is “faciemque loci fontemque secutus” (l.414), “attracted to the appearance of the place and the spring.”³

Furthermore,

There is a flitting hither and thither of “stylish” young girls, a rustling of muslin flounces, a rattle of dance-music in the morning hours, a sound of high-pitched voices at all times (*CS* 2: 238), reminding one of Domenichino’s (neo)classical, pastoral painting *Diana and Her Nymphs at Play* (1616-7). In the dramatic version (1882) of the novella, Mrs. Costello complains that “[s]he’s [Daisy is] always wandering about the garden” (*CP* 126). It should also be noted that Vevey held the Fête des Vignerons every year, an ancient Roman feast of wine in honour of Bacchus

¹ For view of the interior, visit http://www.le-voyage.com/vip-luxury-travel/en/externalImage.svc?sp=zmtgallery_big%2Ci150859%2Cnull%2Cmimage%2Fjpeg%2Cmimage%2Fjpeg.

² All translations are mine, unless otherwise stated.

³ Scholars have already noted traces of this epic throughout James’s long career (Laschinger), particularly the myth of Narcissus (Claggett).

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(Deakin 4).

Like the "resonabilis" (Ov. *Met.* III.358, "resounding") and "garrula" (l.360, "babbling") nymph Echo who even "longo prudens sermon tenebat" (l.364, "cunningly held in long conversation") Juno, the queen of the gods, Annie P. (CS 2: 244) "Daisy" Miller constantly "chatter[s]" (245, 261, 267, 280, 283, 292), "talk[s]" (261, 263, 280), "teas[es]" (264), "convers[es]" (266), "flirt[s]" (281), and "tell[s]" her modern Roman companion, Giovannelli, what to do (284), admitting herself that she "was always fond of conversation" (271). Mrs. Costello even labels her a "chatterbox" in the play (CP 135), while in the novella Frederick Forsyth Winterbourne believes that one of her conversations "was the most charming *garrulity* he had ever heard" (CS 2: 261, emphasis added). His Aunt Costello claims that "[s]he goes on from day to day, from hour to hour, as they did in the Golden Age" (285) referring to the first period of classical mythology as recorded by Hesiod in his *Works & Days* (ll.109-29), Virgil in both his *Eclogues* (IV) and *Aeneid* (VI.791-807, VIII.314-36), Horace in an *Epode* (XVI.64) and *Ode* (IV.2.39-40) as well as Ovid in his *Metamorphoses* (I.89-112). The year before "Daisy Miller" was published, James wrote to his friend Elizabeth Boott, who was in Rome, where he longed to be:

never are the quiet & lonely – the *golden*-aired – places of Rome, so enchanting as now. Go to the quietest & *goldenest* & imprint a kiss, from me, upon some sunny slab of travertine! (CLHJ 1876-1878 1: 60; emphasis added).

This allusion to nymphs and divine entertainment is not restricted to Daisy. On their first date, Winterbourne asks her on the boat ride to the Château de Chillon, "Should you like me to dance a hornpipe on the deck?" (CS 2: 262), the traditional British dance of sailors. Simultaneously, however, the rhetorical question also doubles as a reference to Pan, the Greek god of nature and companion of nymphs, who often moves to the tune of his own

trademark flute as Ovid recounts in a later story in his epic (*Met.* XI.146-71). In Rome Daisy finds her Pan in Giovanelli who has

got the most lovely voice and he knows the most charming set of songs. I made him go over them this evening, on purpose; we had the greatest time at the hotel” (*CS* 2: 280)

as the narrator agrees: “He sang, very prettily, half-a-dozen songs” and

Daisy sat at a distance from the piano, and though she had publicly, as it were, professed a high admiration for his singing, talked, not inaudibly, while it was going on.”⁴

She, naturally, wants to dance to the music like her mythological counterparts, while Winterbourne fails to take this opportunity to assume the role of the deity of the wild:

“I am not sorry we can’t dance,” Winterbourne answered; “I don’t dance.”

“Of course you don’t dance; you’re too stiff,” said Miss Daisy.

The final connection between the Ovidian myth of Echo and Narcissus and James’s story occurs at the end of both narratives. As Narcissus dies of a broken heart, the mourning nymphs look for his corpse,

nusquam corpus erat; croceum pro corpora florem
inveniunt foliis medium cingentibus albis (*Met.* III.509-10)

[but it was not there; instead of his body, they found a flower
its yellow centre surrounded by white petals].

The narcissus is described not so dissimilarly to the daisy, both white flowers with yellow centres. In James’s version, the story concludes also with a loved one, Winterbourne, “staring at the raw protuberance among the April daisies”

⁴ Adeline R. Tintner sees the Italian as another classical mythological figure, namely Cupid (“*Daisy Miller* and Chaucer’s ‘Daisy’ Poem” 17) and/or his Greek equivalent Eros (21).

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(CS2: 295) of Miss Miller’s grave. This time, ironically, unlike the mythological mourners, he is the one responsible for the broken heart of the American nymph leading to her figurative death.

When the reader is first introduced to Daisy’s younger brother, Randolph C. Miller, he is a “child, who was diminutive for his years, had an aged expression of countenance, a pale complexion, and sharp little features” (239). He has “a voice immature, and yet, somehow, not young” (240), “poked his alpenstock, lance-fashion, into Winterbourne’s bench, and tried to crack the lump of sugar with his teeth” and then “attacked a second lump of sugar” (241). When his sister asks him what he is doing while she and Winterbourne are trying to converse, he answers, “I’m going up the Alps” and speaks “in his little hard voice.” Winterbourne is later shocked that Daisy’s “brother is not interested in ancient monuments,” which is confirmed by the boy himself later in Rome:

“I hate it [Rome] worse and worse every day!” cried Randolph.

“You are like the infant Hannibal,” said Winterbourne.

“No, I ain’t!” Randolph declared, at a venture.

“You are not much like an infant,” said his mother. (267)⁵

Mrs. Miller’s own admission that her son resembles the more mature Roman enemy reminds one of the eighth line of Horace’s sixteenth *Epode*:

parentibusque abominatus Hannibal

[Hannibal (who is) deprecated by parents].

Although Horace mentions Hannibal a few more times in his *Odes* (II.12.2; III.6.36; IV.4.49, 8.16), most of the information about him comes from another ancient Augustan author, the historian Livy, and specifically Books XXI to

⁵ In the dramatic version, it is Charles Reverdy, who is not in the novella, who claims, “You [Randolph] remind me of the infant Hannibal” (CP 156).

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Winterbourne assumes some Hannibalic traits too. Like the ancient invader from another continent, he too wrecks havoc in Italy (killing Daisy in his case), has “lived too long in foreign parts” (*CS* 2: 295), and returns home in the end. Military language is used, furthermore, when he decides to “advance farther, rather than retreat” (242) when meeting Daisy. This language is amplified in the play, for

when Aunt Louisa [Mrs. Costello] gives an order, it’s a military command. She has ordered me [Winterbourne] up from Geneva, and I’ve marched at the word; but I’ll rest a little before reporting at headquarters. (*CP* 127-8)

Returning to the tale, he “pursue[s]” Daisy by asking, “Are you – a – going over the Simplon?” (*CS* 2: 242), a pass through the Alps that Hannibal may have taken during his legendary crossing (Livy XXI.29-38). James was quite familiar with this route, since he himself took it in 1869 (*CLHJ 1855-1872* 2: 82, 113) and 1872-3 (*1872-1876* 1: 74, 84, 89, 308, 311-2, 315; 2: 9, 28). Even the narrator of another tale, “Travelling Companions,” points the Simplon out (*CS* 1: 502), while the one of “At Isella” (615-21) as well as that of “Louisa Pallant” along with his nephew Archie (*CS* 3: 210) cross it. Later in the 1870s, a tunnel was built through Mt. Cenis (Vance 21, 273 n.36), another possible candidate for Hannibal’s crossing. In a letter dated 9 December 1872 to his father, James also intended to “go probably on the 15th (a week hence) to Rome via Mt. Cenis” (*CLHJ 1872-1876* 1: 151; 159), the same route that his friend Lydia Ward von Hoffman (2: 54), his brother William (58), the family friends the Lombards (181) and his friend Elizabeth Boott took (3: 33). Not specifying any route in particular, “The Solution” also refers to Hannibal crossing the Alps (*CS* 3: 671).

This feat immortalized by Livy was painted by Joseph Mallord

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William Turner in 1812, entitled *Snow Storm: Hannibal and His Army Crossing the Alps*. The painting is usually interpreted as a reference to Napoleon Bonaparte’s crossing of the Great St. Bernard Pass in May 1800. Alert to the visual arts, as well as a great admirer of Napoleon (he called himself as much before he died [CN 581-4; Edel “The Deathbed Notes of Henry James”]), James had his characters in “Daisy Miller” re-enact the same historical deed. For, as the dark and foreboding picture demonstrates (and as occurred to many of both Hannibal’s and Napoleon’s men), such an endeavour displays man’s vulnerability to the elements, a foreshadowing of Daisy’s fatal attack of Roman fever (CS 2: 293-5).

Like the narrative history of the Second Punic War (218-201 BC), inaction in Switzerland gradually leads to action in Italy. In James’s stories, as in his life, the literal passage from the lofty mountain range to the hotter climate of Italy⁶ represents the figurative stages of maturity – from youth, naivety and innocence to experience, reality and corruption (Deakin 13). Jamesian characters are often relatively passive and safe in the northern country, but face tragic events in the southern one. A good example comes from the last chapter of “The Lesson of the Master” (1888), where writer Paul Overt one summer, like Winterbourne,

returned to a quiet corner that he knew well, on the edge of the Lake of Geneva within sight of the towers of Chillon: a region and a view which he had an affection springing from old associations, capable of mysterious little revivals and refreshments [i.e., “Daisy Miller,” James’s first popular success]. Here he lingered late, till the snow was on the nearer hills, almost down to the limit to which he could climb

⁶ In his American journals, James even uses Latin to describe the peninsula’s climate: “into that cool pure Alpine air, out of the stifling *calidarium* of Italy” (CN 222-3).

when his stint was done, on the shortening afternoons. The autumn was fine, ... (CS 3: 595)

Hannibal too, it should be noted, had begun his ascent in the fall (Livy XXI.35). After crossing the mountain range and spending a year in Italy (CS 3: 597), Overt learns that he lost his love, Marian Fancourt, to the hand of his mentor, Henry St. George, in marriage, almost as Winterbourne did with Daisy to Giovanelli. This motif reappears half a decade later in the second chapter of “The Chaperon” where Captain (note the military title) Bertram Jay

had just *popped over the Alps*. He inquired if *Rose* [as opposed to Daisy] had recent news of the old lady in Hill Street, and it was the only *tortuous* thing she had ever heard him say. (839; emphasis added).

When Jamesian characters cross the Alps from northern Europe, then, the harsh realities of life greet them in Italy, much like Livy’s account of the Hannibalic War.

After Randolph, the next character to appear in “Daisy Miller” is the sophisticated assistant to the Millers, Eugenio. Although his name is Italian, its origin is Greek, *Ευγένιος* (Eugenios), meaning “well (εὖ) born (γενιος).” That Eugenio, an Italian Swiss (according to the play [CP 122], and not an Italian as John Carlos Rowe believes [247]), is serving Americans reflects the changing times. By the end of the nineteenth century European countries were beginning to lose some of their international clout to the United States. For a sophisticated European to act as courier to “very common” (CS 2: 250) and “hopelessly vulgar” (265) Americans, as Mrs. Costello labels the Millers, harkens back to ancient times when the less refined Romans had cultured Greek slaves as pedagogues, hence Eugenio’s appellation. The narrator of “The Pupil,” incidentally, makes this classical allusion to tutorship as well (3: 721). The relationship between Eugenio and the Millers, therefore, contains

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two implications. The first is that America was Europe’s cultural understudy, not unlike the way Horace himself described his Rome:

Graecia capta ferum victorem cepit et artis intulit agresti Latio (*Epist.*
II.1.156-7)

[Captive Greece captured her fierce conqueror and introduced the arts
to rustic Latium].

Second, the relationship represents an instance of *translatio imperii*, the medieval notion of a westward “transfer of power” from one dominant civilization to the next, beginning from as far back as Babylon and moving through a succession of empires such as Rome (Le Goff 36, 171-2). According to this idea, many (including James) by the end of the nineteenth century were increasingly viewing America as the eventual heir to British imperialism.

After Eugenio, the reader meets three other characters who also carry classical connotations. One is Daisy’s mother, Mrs. Miller, who was a very different type of maternity from that of the vigilant *matrons* who massed themselves in the forefront of the social intercourse in the dark old city at the other end of the lake” (*CS* 2: 258; emphasis added). This “preference for Latinate terms, a preference that sacrifices nominative precision for a more graphic composite,” as Molten Deakin (18-9) comments on the use of the word “matrons,” is used in comic juxtaposition to the next two women in the tale.

The first is Winterbourne’s aunt, Mrs. Costello,⁷ who had a long pale face, a high nose, and a great deal of very striking white hair, which she wore in large puffs and rouleaux over the top of her head. (*CS* 2: 250)

In the play, moreover, “her hair is very high” (*CP* 127) and it is “done like an

⁷ This name, incidentally, is Irish and not Italian as John Carlos Rowe again claims (247).

old picture” (138; emphasis added). This description perfectly represents the faces and fashion of the ancient Roman ladies from the end of the first century AD to the beginning of the second, the most famous piece of evidence being the Fonseca bust in the Capitoline Museum in Rome. At the beginning of the third chapter, she also claims that the Millers “are bad enough to dislike, at any rate; and for *this short life* that is quite enough” (CS 2: 265; emphasis added), a reference to Horace’s famous *carpe diem* (“seize the day”) theme best represented by his *Ode* I.11.

The last woman is Mrs. Walker, Winterbourne’s friend, who appears only in the second, Roman half of the novella and is described in imperial terms. When Daisy is walking in the streets with Giovanelli, for instance, Winterbourne overtakes them “and, offering the young girl his hand, told her that Mrs. Walker had made an *imperious* claim upon his society” (CS 2: 276; emphasis added). Then, when they fail to persuade Daisy to return home with them, Mrs. Walker “drove *majestically* away” (278; emphasis added).

This type of vocabulary is used by Daisy as well, when, earlier, Winterbourne states that he will accompany both her and her Italian companion on their walk, to which Daisy replies:

“I don’t like the way you say that,” said Daisy. “It’s too *imperious*.”

“I beg your pardon if I say it wrong. The main point is to give you an idea of my meaning.”

The young girl looked at him more gravely, but with eyes that were prettier than ever. “I have never allowed a gentleman to *dictate* to me, or to interfere with anything I do.” (272; emphases added)

This “imperial” language does not appear in the first, Swiss half of the story. That it does in the second, Roman one is a reflection of the American progression from republic toward empire, a parallel between both (ancient

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and modern) countries that gradually manifests itself in this text. Daisy's use of these terms is negative, however, resisting the idea of imperiousness as tyrannical in the manner of those like Tacitus, nostalgic for republican polity and probity. What is even more poignant is that it was republican rather than imperial Rome that appealed to the early United States. There is, therefore, the insinuation here that as America grows in power it also degenerates, a modern instance of the myth of Rome best exemplified by the decadent contrast between Livy's earlier, virtuous republic and Tacitus's later, evil empire.⁸

Set in the Italian capital, the latter half of the novella takes place naturally around many of its glorious ruins. The first is the Pincian Hill, where some ancient Roman families owned villas. The appropriately named Mrs. Goldie of "The Solution," incidentally, who has three daughters, one of whom is called Augusta, perhaps after the emperor Augustus's wife, also "had a house on the Pincian Hill" (*CS* 3: 665). It is here where Daisy has an appointment with her modern Roman companion, Giovanelli (2: 269-71). After she rejects Mrs. Walker's warning to return with her immediately, the latter's "carriage was traversing that part of the Pincian Garden which overhangs the wall of Rome and overlooks the beautiful Villa Borghese" (278). That barrier is the Aurelian Wall, constructed by the third century emperor after whom it is named. The third chapter then ends nearby, namely around the Pincian Gate, where James himself once stayed at a hotel in 1873 (*CLHJ 1872-1876* 1: 188, 190), visited (241), enjoyed (2: 99, 100, 102) and later missed (*1876-1878* 1: 19-20).

At the beginning of the last chapter, Winterbourne demonstrates how

⁸ See Bondella for a survey of the myth of Rome throughout Western history, and Malamud for an analysis of it in the American context.

socially sensitive he is to all of these parallels between ancient Rome and nineteenth century America by advising Daisy that “when you deal with natives you must go by the custom of the place” (*CS* 2: 281).⁹ James simply could not resist including the famous quotation

si fueris Romae, Romano vivito more
si fueris alibi, vivito sicut ibi,

most popularly translated in English as “when in Rome, do as the Romans do,” attributed to St. Ambrose, the fourth century Bishop of Milan by Jeremy Taylor in his *Ductor Dubitantium, or the Rule of Conscience* . . . (1660). The novelist also could not resist labeling Giovanelli as Daisy’s “cicerone” (*CS* 2: 290), the etymology deriving from the name of the illustrious Roman orator Cicero, when “guide” would have sufficed. This last episode also occurs on the Palatine (288-90), where the famous ancient statesman lived (Cerutti). That the Sabine women were violated here and “the Temple of Cybele, the great mother goddess, whose male priests practiced orgiastic ceremonies that ended in a frenzy of blood-letting and emasculation” (Deakin 9), stood at this hill are not coincidences either.

James then transitions from ancient history and archaeology to classical mythology, continuing to shift between these disciplines so often until the end of the story that the difference between reality and fiction begins to blur, not unlike the first books of Livy’s “history.” The reader learns, for instance, that “[a] week afterwards he [Winterbourne] went to dine at a beautiful villa on the Caelian Hill” (*CS* 2: 290), one of the legendary seven in

⁹ James had also revealingly confused the United States and Rome in a letter to his friend Jane Norton dated 18 February 1873: “It doesn’t make very ‘middling’ American society any better to be disporting itself against a Roman background” (*CLHJ 1872-1876 1*: 223). Lady Champer of “Miss Gunton of Poughkeepsie” also compares both civilizations (*CS* 5: 214).

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Rome. The Villa Celimontana, or Villa Mattei, is located there and is presumably the “beautiful” building in question. On 1 February 1873 James had lunch there, the residence at the time of his friend, the Baroness von Hoffmann (née Lily Ward), and her husband, the Baron Richard von Hoffmann (*CLHJ 1872-1876* 1: 203, 207, 293; 2: 75). Within its grounds is also where the second king of Rome, Numa Pompilius, would meet the nymph Egeria (Kraan), who would give him wise counsels and whom he eventually married (Plut. *Num.* IV, VIII; Ov. *Fast.* III.154, 262, 275-6; *Met.* XV.479-551).¹⁰ That Winterbourne does not notice Daisy’s constant flirtations with him throughout the story (*CS* 2: 247, 273, 277, 281, 293), her way of communicating her true feelings towards him, seems to be an ironic reworking of this myth.

For, although Winterbourne thinks he “offered you [Daisy] advice” (282), the roles are in fact reversed. Like Egeria, Daisy offers romantic opportunities for Winterbourne to seize, from implying wanting to be accompanied to the Château de Chillon (247), to asking him whether he believes she is engaged to Giovanelli in an attempt to learn what his true feelings are for her (292-3). In the play, unlike the novella, Winterbourne actually realizes as early as at Vevey that “[i]f I should never know her in America, it seems to me a reason for *seizing the opportunity here*” (*CP* 135; emphasis added), another reference to Horace’s *carpe diem* philosophy. At first Winterbourne, although taken somewhat aback by her directness, accepts these advances; yet, he gradually begins to decline them, not because his attraction to Daisy diminishes, but rather in the face of pressure from the American expatriate community. Repressed, he accuses her of being a “flirt”

¹⁰ Later, in 1899, James visited Diana’s place of worship at Lake Nemi, just south of Rome, where Egeria’s sacred fount was located, the source for his novel *The Sacred Fount* (Edel *Henry James* 4: 296-8), which also contains a reference to the nymph (*N* 5: 24), as does the tale “The Madonna of the Future” (*CS* 1: 749).

(CS 2: 247, 273, 293) – to which Daisy even admits at one point (281). She, in turn, constantly teases him of being so “stiff” (280-1, 289) that at first “[s]he asked him if he was a ‘real American;’ she wouldn’t have taken him for one; he seemed more like a German” (243). For his part, Winterbourne is sufficiently persuaded to feel “that he had lived at Geneva so long that he had lost a good deal; he had become dishabituated to the American tone” (246). Though he continues to scold her for not doing as the Romans do when in Rome, she is in effect trying to help him regain his identity. Daisy continues along this path until her demise, which Winterbourne dearly regrets, an ending similar if not ironic to that of the Roman myth, where it is Numa who eventually perishes instead, leaving his wife so broken-hearted that her tears transform her into a spring on the Caelian, where Winterbourne had dined.

After his dinner, Winterbourne strolls through the Arch of Constantine and the Forum at night where “[t]here was a waning moon in the sky, and *her* radiance was not brilliant, but *she* was veiled in a thin cloud-curtain which seemed to diffuse and equalize it” (290; emphasis added). To genderise the Earth’s satellite is to associate it with the goddess Luna (Greek Selene) or the other divinity with lunar characteristics, Diana (Greek Artemis).

Returning to history and archaeology, Winterbourne enters the Colosseum where he stumbles upon Daisy and Giovanelli. Although Daisy notices someone, she does not realize that it is Winterbourne, commenting, “Well, he looks at us as one of the old lions or tigers may have looked at the Christian martyrs!” (291). When she discovers his identity, she exclaims, “He saw me – and he cuts me” as a gladiator in very same spot would have done centuries ago. The narrator equally notes, “[b]ut he wouldn’t cut her.”¹¹

This scene ends with one last mythological allusion. When Winterbourne reminds Daisy to take her medicine to counter malaria, she answers,

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“*I don’t care,*” said Daisy, in a little strange tone, “whether I have Roman fever or not!” Upon this the *cab*-driver cracked his whip, and they rolled away over the desultory patches of the *antique* pavement. (293; emphasis added)

The insolence that is projected here along with the image of a carriage carrying its passenger off to her death along an ancient Roman road resonates with the myth of Phaëton in Ovid’s *Metamorphoses* (I.746-II.339) and mentioned briefly by Horace as well (*Carm.* IV.11.25-26). When she eventually dies as a result of her carelessness (like Phaëton), Daisy is buried “in the little Protestant cemetery, in an angle of the wall of imperial Rome” (CS 2: 294). This is the same Aurelian Wall mentioned in the scene at the Pincian Gate above. Beautifully presented in terms of setting then, just like the circuit that encircles ancient Rome, Daisy’s Roman holiday has come full circle.

This cycle, as a result, demonstrates a unity that can only be achieved through such a classical reading. That the novella begins and ends with scenes from the *Metamorphoses* is no coincidence either, while the inclusions of Cicero, Virgil, Horace, Livy, and Tacitus in between this Ovidian framework further emphasize James’s homage to Latin literature.¹² Taken together with its non-literary Roman aspects as well, such as art, architecture and archaeology, the tale becomes a celebration of Roman culture as a whole. As already mentioned, “Daisy Miller” was James’s first popular success, a fact to

¹¹ In the New York edition (1907-9) Daisy exclaims, “he cuts me dead” (*NYE* 18: 86). When Herbert Dodd of “The Bench of Desolation” (1909-10) meets Captain Roper, he too “cut[s] him dead” (CS 5: 885), another tribute to “Daisy Miller.” What is more, Dodd’s memory of “the playmates of his youth used to pretend to settle by plucking the petals of a daisy” (887).

¹² Plutarch may even be included in this list since, although he wrote in Greek, his subject matter (Numa Pompilius) is Roman.

a large degree attributable to the imitation of these ancient authors. This text, therefore, acts as an important, formative precursor in terms of style and technique to the crowning achievement of his so-called “early phase” (1864-81), a novel this time, *The Portrait of a Lady* (1880-1), which is also largely set in Rome and contains no less than yet another reference from Ovid’s epic (McCollough 313-4).

Bibliography

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