SARA MORGAN, AMERICAN GIRL

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> There is in all the wide domain of psychology perhaps no such *terra incognita* as the heart of the adolescent girl.
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> -G. Stanley Hall, "A Medium in the Bud" (1918)

> The American girl isn't any girl; she's a remarkable individual in a remarkable genus.
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> -Henry James, "Pandora" (1884)

In October 1868, a few months after Dayton and Susan Morgan of Brockport, New York welcomed their daughter Sara into the world (their third child of seven and first of three girls), young writer Henry James published a scathing review in the *Nation* of a book entitled *Modern Women and What Is Said of Them*. **[SLIDES: DAYTON AND SUSAN MORGAN, SARA IN CHILDHOOD, YOUNG HENRY JAMES]** The book was a collection of articles previously published in the British newspaper *The Saturday Review*. The book, James said, was "trivial, commonplace, and vulgar" throughout.

James devoted particular attention to the lead article in the book, "The Girl of the Period," which he found especially slanderous of modern girls and completely off the mark. **[SLIDE: ELIZA LYNN LINTON]** It portrayed the upper-class English girl as a completely "demoralized" young woman: "She is a painted, powdered, 'enamelled' creature, stained with belladonna and antimony, crowned with a shock of false hair, wearing her walking dress indecently high and her evening dress abominably low. She has no manners and no feelings, and only brains enough to ensnare a rich husband." However accurate this picture might be of the well-to-do English girl (and he had resolute doubts about this), James insisted that she was nowhere to be found on Fifth Avenue in New York or Beacon Street in Boston. There you would see instead "a

large number of very pretty and, on the whole, very fresh-looking girls, dressed in various degrees of the prevailing fashion."

This is not to say that James did not find some fault with the American girl. "She is absorbed in the care of her person," he complained, and given to an obsession with fashion. "A young girl given up to dress is certainly a very flimsy and empty creature," he remarked. But, on the other hand, "their extravagance is a part of their increased freedom, and their increased freedom a part of the growth of society." Moreover, "as women, they strike us as still remarkably patient, submissive, sympathetic—remarkably well-disposed to model themselves on the judgment and wishes of men." Therefore, if men had any complaints about the modern woman, "we think it the part of wisdom for men to cast a glance at their own internal economy."[1]

This review was, of course, far from James's last word on the wealthy American girl of the late-nineteenth century. She would figure centrally in his fiction for the next nearly fifty years. The American girl was a particularly prominent figure in his work of the late 1870s and early 1880s in which he began to explore the "international theme" of a complicated clash abroad of American and European sensibilities. This theme featured in one of his most memorable stories, "Daisy Miller" (1878), and one of his most extraordinary novels, *The Portrait of a Lady* (1881).

I

James modeled Daisy Miller, like many of the young women in his fiction, in part on his free-spirited cousin Minny Temple, who died tragically in her early twenties of tuberculosis. He was indebted as well to a true story about an American girl and her mother that James had heard in

[1] Henry James, "Modern Women" (1868) in *Henry James Literary Criticism Volume One* (New York: Library of America, 1984), 19-25.

Rome in 1877. **[SLIDES: DAISY MILLER COVER, MINNY TEMPLE]** As befits a writer who advised his fellows to "try to be one of the people on whom nothing is lost" and who insisted that "the only reason for the existence of a novel is that it does attempt to represent life," James was a close observer of women, American and otherwise. It would not be at all surprising if his female readers saw something of themselves in his characters.[2]

I do not know if Sara Morgan ever read "Daisy Miller" or saw herself therein. The story was an international sensation upon its publication and her mother, whom we know to have been an avid reader and a close friend of Brockport's prolific novelist Mary Jane Holmes (another close student of the American girl), may not only have read the story but pressed it upon her daughters.[3] **[MARY JANE HOLMES]** (She was forever urging her children to read more). Be that as it may, what I would like to suggest is that we ourselves can see more than a little of Daisy in Sara Morgan, particularly in the important months of her life living alone in Berlin in 1892.

II

"Daisy Miller" is the story of the encounter between a young, American expatriate Frederick Winterbourne, living in Geneva, with an American girl, Annie P. Miller, known as "Daisy," in the Swiss resort of Vevey on the north shore of Lake Geneva and then in Rome a short time later.

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[2] James, "Prefaces to the New York Edition" in *Henry James Literary Criticism Volume Two* (New York: Library of America, 1984), 1269; James, "The Art of Fiction" in *James Literary Criticism Volume One*, 46, 53.

[3] No copy of *Daisy Miller* survives in the small collection of Morgan family books in the Morgan-Manning Archives. In the nineteenth-century, no American woman writer other than Harriet Beecher Stowe sold more books than Holmes did (roughly two million). On Holmes and her context, see Mary Kelley, *Private Woman, Public Stage: Literary Domesticity in Nineteenth-Century America* (New York: Oxford, 1984).

Daisy, from Schenectady, New York--the daughter of a wealthy father--is touring Europe with her mother and younger brother, Randolph.

Winterbourne and Daisy first meet in the garden of the Hotel des Trois Couronnes in Vevey ("an American watering place"), where he has gone one summer to visit his aunt.[4] **[SLIDE: VEVEY, HOTEL DES TROIS COURONNES]** Winterbourne repeatedly observes over the course of the story that Daisy is extraordinarily pretty, evidence or at least as much evidence as we ever get from James that Winterbourne finds her sexually attractive. But Daisy also puzzles Winterbourne, for she is like no other girl he has encountered in Europe. She appears "extremely innocent" and yet behaves in an unseemly fashion that would never pass muster with proper society in Geneva. She is flirtatious and talks incessantly. She meets his gaze directly, tells him forthrightly that she has "always had a great deal of gentleman's society," and rarely blushes. She is altogether too familiar with the family's tour guide, Eugenio. Winterbourne wonders whether her impropriety is attributable to an unfamiliarity with the ways the best people in Europe do things, which he terms a lack of "culture"—a perhaps excusable vulgarity. Or does she have darker, more knowing, more predatory motives. Winterbourne is reluctant on such brief acquaintance to accuse Daisy of *inconduite*:

> He felt that he had lived in Geneva so long that he had lost a great deal; he had become dishabituated to the American tone. Never, indeed since he had grown old enough to appreciate things, had he encountered a young American girl of so pronounced a type as this. Certainly she was very charming, but how deucedly sociable! Was she simply a pretty girl from New York State—were they all like that,

[4] "Daisy Miller" in *Henry James Complete Stories, 1874-1884* (New York: Library of America, 1999), 238. Subsequent page references in the text.

> the pretty girls who had a great deal of gentlemen's society. Or was she also a designing, an audacious, an unscrupulous young person? Winterbourne had lost his instinct in this matter, and his reason could not help him (246-247).

But Daisy is too damn attractive for Winterbourne to leave the question unresolved without further investigation. He offers to take her on an excursion with her mother to the Château de Chillon across the Lake. **[SLIDE: CHÂTEAU DE CHILLON]** Her mother will not go, she tells him, and she suggests that they go alone. "The programme seemed almost too agreeable for credence," Winterbourne says to himself. However, for propriety's sake he tells Daisy that he will introduce her to his aunt, who will vouch for him. His aunt though refuses to meet the Millers: "They are very common," she declares. "They are the sort of Americans that one does one's duty by not—not accepting" (250). She is particularly disturbed by rumors of Daisy's untoward relationship with Eugenio. She becomes all-the-more adamant about refusing Daisy's company when she learns that Daisy wishes to go alone with Winterbourne to the castle. "I am an old woman," she says, "but I am not too old—thank Heaven—not to be shocked!" (252).

Winterbourne and Daisy go to the Château nonetheless, after Mrs. Miller, as apparently oblivious in her own right as Daisy to European convention, raises no objections whatsoever. He remains puzzled by Daisy (and now her mother) as she seems to him "an extraordinary mixture of innocence and crudity" (263). Winterbourne must return to Geneva the next day, which annoys Daisy. She boldly accuses him of being under the thumb of "mysterious charmer in Geneva" whom he was afraid to keep waiting (Winterbourne had been dogged by rumors of such a woman). She extracts a promise from him to visit her in Rome, the next stop on her itinerary. Winterbourne readily agrees to this rendezvous ("not a difficult promise to make" he tells her [264]).

They reunite in Rome in January. Winterbourne learns from his aunt (now ensconced in Rome) and another scandalized ex-patriot American matriarch there, Mrs. Walker, that Daisy has publicly displayed a penchant for inappropriate behavior with a host of Italian gentlemen. She has chosen a favorite, the handsome Mr. Giovanelli, and they have become inseparable and, Daisy says, "intimate." Still, she welcomes Winterbourne's arrival, and proceeds now to hang out with two men, which outrages the old ladies further. Mrs. Walker tells him that Daisy does "Everything that is not done here. Flirting with any man she could pick up; sitting in corners with mysterious Italians; dancing all the evening with the same partners; receiving visits at eleven o'clock at night." Coming in her carriage upon Daisy with her two boyfriends strolling the Pincio **[SLIDE PINCIO],** Mrs. Walker admonishes her for her behavior, to little effect. Shortly thereafter at a party at Mrs. Walker's home to which the Millers had been invited, she "cuts" Daisy, who arrives late to the gathering with her intimate friend Giovanelli.

Winterbourne, now confronted with a serious rival for Daisy's attentions, convinces himself that Giovanelli is a "spurious gentleman," and Daisy's liaison with him makes Winterbourne further wonder "whether this was in fact a nice girl" (273). She remains to him "an inscrutable combination of audacity and innocence" (274). He takes it upon himself to follow Mrs. Walker's lead and lecture her on propriety. "Flirting is a purely American custom," he tells her, "it doesn't exist here" (281). Daisy resents his preaching, and continues to flaunt conventions. Winterbourne asks "himself whether Daisy's defiance came from the consciousness of innocence or from her being, essentially, a young person of the reckless class" (287). Daisy ups the ambiguity by telling Winterbourne that she and Giovanelli are engaged and then retracts the statement, leaving him even more puzzled by her.

Finally, one night while returning from a dinner party, Winterbourne takes in the Roman Colosseum in the moonlight. **[SLIDE: COLOSSEUM]** He knows this is ill-advised since he risks contracting the Roman fever (malaria) there at that time of night. But the evening is so beautiful and the Colosseum so stunning in the diffused moonlight that he decides to risk a brief view of the interior. There he spies Daisy and Giovanelli sitting together. He overhears Daisy tell Giovanni that Winterbourne "looks at us as one of the old lions or tigers may have looked at the Christian martyrs!" (291). Winterbourne is offended to hear this, but also relieved, for he thinks the riddle of Daisy has been solved: "She was a young lady whom a gentleman need no longer be at pains to respect" (291). He confronts them and, learning that they have been there for a long time, warns Daisy of the dangers of the place. Giovanelli agrees that Winterbourne has a point, and hurries to collect their carriage. Winterbourne silently and stiffly walks Daisy to the carriage. She asks him if he really believed she was engaged to Giovanelli. He tells her coldly that it no longer matters one way or the other.

This encounter is Winterbourne's last with Daisy. He learns a few days later that she is seriously ill with malaria. He hangs around her hotel seeking news of her, and on one occasion there runs into her mother, who tells him that Daisy has spoken of him affectionately. She has asked that her mother tell Winterbourne that she was never engaged and that she hopes he remembers as fondly as she does their excursion to the Swiss castle. A week later she is dead. Winterbourne attends her funeral and, touched by her final messages to him, tells his aunt that he feels and wonders if he may well have done Daisy an injustice—"she would have appreciated one's esteem" (295). He returns to Geneva, from which eventually issues "an intimation that he is much interested in a very clever foreign lady" (295) **[SLIDES: PROTESTANT CEMETERY IN ROME/CONSTANCE FENIMORE WOOLSON GRAVE THERE]**

III

Although "Daisy Miller" launched James on a path to becoming, as he wryly put it to his brother, "a (sufficiently) great man," the story also elicited controversy.[5] William Dean Howells told James Russell Lowell that the novella divided American society into "Daisy Millerites and anti-Daisy Millerites." James much later reported that a friend had suggested to him that the editor of a Philadelphia magazine had rejected the story because it was "an outrage on American girl-hood." Some of the reviews of the novella suggest that James's friend might have been correct. The *NewYork Times* weighed in on the anti-Daisy Millerite side: "[t]he tragical sketch of a young girl from Schenectady may not be recognized as a portrait of any maiden of that old Dutch town, who traveled in Europe only to find her grave in the Eternal City. Schenectadians—if that be the right term to use—may not be pleased to find their town identified with a young person of bad manners. Nor is it likely that Schenectady, or any other town of the Middle States, would produce just such a compound as the pretty, independent, but very ill-advised damsel whose name is Daisy Miller." The reviewer for *The North American Review* concurred finding Daisy "irredeemably vulgar in her talk and her conduct." The Daisy Millertites were equally adamant in her defense. John Hay observed in *The Atlantic Monthly* that: "[a]ll poor Daisy's crimes are purely conventional. She is innocent and good at heart, susceptible of praise and blame; she does not wish even to surprise, much less outrage, the stiffest of her censors. In short, the things she does

[5] Henry James to William James, [late January 1878], as quoted in Leon Edel, *Henry James: A Life* (New York: Harper and Row, 1985), 215.

with such dire effect at Vevay [sic] and Rome would never for an instant be remarked or criticized in Schenectady. They would provoke no comment in Buffalo or Cleveland; they would be a matter of course in Richmond and Louisville."[6]

For his own part, James was (at least at this point) on Daisy's side. He told Eliza Lynn Linton, the anti-feminist author of "The Girl of the Period," that "Poor little Daisy Miller was, as I understand her, above all things *innocent*. . . . The whole idea of the story is the little tragedy of a light, thin, natural, unexpecting creature being sacrificed as it were to a social rumpus that went on quite over her head, and to which she stood in no measurable relation." If indictments were to be drawn, he implied, critics should direct them at Winterbourne and the other expatriate stiffs who failed to understand her.[7]

James's biographer Leon Edel said that with *Daisy Miller* James "had discovered 'the American girl'—as a social phenomenon, a fact, a type."[8] Yet James was not alone in this discovery. As the reviews of the story suggest, the American girl was in the late nineteenth century the subject of widespread comment and concern. For many, as for Winterbourne, she was a puzzle.

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[6] Reviews of *Daisy Miller* as quoted in Sarah Marsh, "Malaria and the Revision of *Daisy Miller*," *Literature and Medicine* 30 (2012): 218.

[7] Henry James to Eliza Lynn Lynton [August 1880] in Leon Edel, ed., *Henry James Selected Letters* (Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 1974), 170-171. James rewrote "Daisy Miller" twice. Once as a play with a happy ending that, like all his determined efforts to write for the theater, bombed. For the New York Edition of his works (1909), he made significant revisions to the story, larding it with the mannerisms of his late style and aestheticizing (and desexualizing) Daisy. In this version, Daisy's innocence is less an exculpation of an oblivious girl than an indictment of American society and culture. Few, if any, have found the second version preferable and publishers, including the Library of America, usually reprint the initial version.

[8] Edel, *James: A Life*, 217.

Over the course of the late nineteenth century, "a Daisy Miller" became a commonplace descriptive phrase. As Edel notes, one heard the term "whenever some particularly charming, forward young lady from America showed up in Continental surroundings." Daisy had become "archetypal."[9] **[SLIDES: REPRESENTING DAISY MILLER; MOVIE]**

IV

What sort of American girl was Sara Morgan in Germany in the early 1890s? Was she "a Daisy Miller"? Did she, at all, manifest this archetype of the independent, innocent, sportive American girl abroad of the Gilded Age? Did she contravene genteel convention? Might one at all describe her as a "flirt"? How might we fit Sara not only into the sketch James drew but also into the comparable yet richer portrait of the bourgeois American girl of the period that historians such as Jane Hunter have painted for us?[10] Might there have been a Daisy strolling the streets of Berlin in 1892 who hailed not from Schenectady but from Brockport?

Brockport and the Morgan family certainly fill the "Daisy" bill. The population of Schenectady at the time Daisy Miller promenaded on the Pincio was three times that of Brockport when Sara Morgan ventured onto Unter den Linden. But Brockport could have equally well served as the sort of the bustling provincial New York town that James offered up as the hometown of a number of his American girls abroad. Brockport was after the mid-nineteenth century a major center of farm implement manufacturing, of which Sara's father was an integral part. **[SLIDE: D.S. MORGAN WORKS]** And it is hard to imagine that Daisy's businessman

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[9] Edel, *James: A Life*, 217, 218.

[10] Jane H. Hunter, *How Young Ladies Became Girls: The Victorian Origins of American Girlhood* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 2002).

father was any wealthier than Dayton Morgan, who left his heirs an estate of two million dollars when he died in 1890 (about $57 million in today's currency).[11]

When twenty-two-year-old Sara—unmarried and still living with her mother in Brockport--arrived in Germany, she was at the outer edge of "girlhood," as it was understood at the time. A "girl" in contemporary parlance was a young, respectable, postpubertal, unmarried female—and included those in their early twenties who had yet to tie the knot. While in Europe in 1890-93, Sara consistently referred to herself and her slightly younger sister as "girls."

Sara's adolescence was more prolonged than that of most girls, who married earlier than she did, and it abruptly ended shortly after her return home from Berlin and marriage in December 1893 to Brooklyn doctor, F.A. Manning (who had courted her mostly from afar during her German years).[12] If it is true, as famed contemporary psychologist G. Stanley Hall said, that "there is in all the wide domain of psychology perhaps no such *terra incognita* as the heart of the

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[11] William G. Andrews, *Brockport in the Age of Modernization, 1866-1916* (Mount Pleasant SC: Arcadia, 2018), 42. Morgan was the head of D.S. Morgan & Co., successor to Seymour & Morgan Co., a leading manufacturer of farm implements since the late 1840s. But much of his wealth at the time of his death derived from other lucrative investments, particularly in Chicago real estate.

[12] Hunter, *How Young Ladies*, 393-395, 385 James does not reveal Daisy Miller's precise age, though nineteen would be a reasonable guess. Isabel Archer of *Portrait of a Lady* (1880) is twenty-one when she arrives from Albany on English shores. The median age at first marriage for white women in the United States rose slightly from 1850 to 1900 to twenty-two, but at three months short of her twenty-sixth birthday, Sara was considerably beyond the norm, more than three years above the median for 1890. However, female high school graduates generally married significantly later than other girls did. See Catherine A. Fitch and Steven Ruggles, "Historical Trends in Marriage Formation, United States 1850-1990," https://users.pop.umn.edu/~ruggles/Articles/Fitch_and_Ruggles.pdf. While in Europe in 1890-93, Sara consistently referred to herself and her sister as "girls."

adolescent girl," what might we nonetheless know with any confidence about the heart of the adolescent Sara Morgan?[13] **[SLIDE: SARA MORGAN IN ADOLESCENCE]**

Not as much as one might desire, but more than one might hope. The best studies we have of late Victorian American girlhood, most notably Hunter's remarkable book *How Young Ladies Became Girls: The Victorian Origins of American Girlhood* (2002), rely heavily on evidence from the diaries and journals of adolescent girls. Unfortunately, Sara's diaries or journals from these years, if they existed, have not survived.[14] Hence, I have had to rely strictly on Morgan family correspondence, which is often quite revealing but not quite as rich in evidence for the themes of interest to me as I would ideally like.[15]

What I can say with great confidence is that Sara fit exactly the general profile of nearly all of the girls whom Hunter studied. A child in a prosperous bourgeois family, Sara's upbringing was typical of girls of that class.[16]

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[13] G. Stanley Hall, "A Medium in the Bud," *American Journal of Psychology* 29 (1918): 156. It is to Hall and his *Adolescence* (1904) that we owe the beginnings of the widespread use of the term "adolescence" to refer to a stage of life between puberty and adulthood.

[14] Diaries from later periods of Sara Manning's life are extant and housed in the Morgan-Manning House Archives, Brockport, New York.

[15] As will become evident, my most significant evidence are the letters exchanged between Susan Manning and her two daughters in Germany, and the letters Sara wrote to sister Susie when the two were separated in that country. "I do not keep a diary," she wrote her mother from Germany, "so the only account of what I am doing will be found in your letters." Fortunately, her mother was not her sole correspondent. Sara Morgan to Susan Morgan, 30 January 1891, Morgan-Manning Archives. Another unhappy circumstance is that the Susie Manning archive is much thinner than that of her sister (at least for now—future accessions from Susie's heirs may turn up more material). Eunice Chesnut published excerpts from family letters in her *And Papa Cried Hoorah!* (Brockport: Western New York Historical Society, 1987). I have relied on my own transcriptions of these and other letters.

[16] See the current exhibit in the Morgan-Manning House put together by curator Rozenn Bailleul-LeSuer on the making of a late Victorian woman. Here one gets an excellent sense of the material culture of a girl maturing in a bourgeois family.

The last half of the nineteenth century was a pivotal period in the evolution of American girlhood among the upper middle class. The transformation of the American economy over the century from a relatively simple market society consisting largely of petty-proprietors engaged in household production to a complex, increasingly industrial and urbanized society of wage earners and bourgeois employers, wrought substantial change in the lives of girls.[17] Once essential participants alongside other family members in household production, they now assumed new roles, divided along class lines, as either wage laborers contributing to a family wage economy or as cultural furniture in the respectable Victorian bourgeois home. Over the course of the nineteenth century, the lines between the spheres of activity of middle-class men and women sharpened. Public life—work and politics—fell to men, and private life—the sacred hearth--became the principal domain of women.[18] Mothers trained daughters for the roles of wife and mother, and daughters fell into what Jane Addams would term the "snare of preparation." As Hunter says, "Increasingly, daughters of this expanding capitalist elite found themselves without a job" other than self-cultivation.[19]

Though no longer essential producers of domestic goods and services (a role that fell to servants, often Irish), bourgeois daughters found much to do in the realm of self-culture. They

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[17] Signified, as Hunter says, in a change in the meaning of the term. "The language of girlhood evolved over the century. . . . Initially, at midcentury, the correct term for middle-class females after menarche was *young lady*. The term *girl* suggested the subordinate status of either a prepubescent child or a domestic laborer, or it was faintly sexualized. Over the nineteenth century, however, the term extended its reach through menarche and the years of secondary school" (*How Young Ladies*, 5).

[18] See Mary Ryan, *Cradle of the Middle Class: The Family in Oneida County, New York, 1790-1865* (New York: Cambridge University Press, 1981).

[19] Jane Addams, *Twenty Years at Hull House* (New York: MacMillan, 1912), 65-88; Hunter, *How Young Ladies*, 12.

did a bit of light housekeeping, maintaining a tidy bedroom above all. And they practiced ornamental skills: sewing and needlepoint, reading and writing, and amateur musicianship. Their duties were hence largely for "instructional and improving purposes."[20] Freed from adult responsibilities, girls assumed a liminal status between childhood and adulthood. Although the term only gained currency at the turn of the century, they were pioneering "adolescents" *avant la lettre*.

In an important sense, bourgeois girls, if not producers, were a new species of domestic goods—in two senses. In the first place, they were symbolic goods for their parents, signifiers of a family's class stature. As Hunter puts it, "Initially considered necessary allies in the steady work of processing the stuff of survival, the daughters of middle-class families became themselves the prime products the home produced—the embodiment of the principles of sensibility and refinement."[21] And, in addition, they were a crop raised for eventual sale on the marriage market, accumulating over the course of their adolescence the value-added of their education for virtuous domesticity.

Though formal education for girls from some wealthy families took hold in the early republic, more and more bourgeois parents sent their daughters to school in the last decades of the century—either private boarding academies or public high schools--in order to further their refinement.[22] But doing so, Hunter demonstrates, had unintended consequences and introduced a tension in girls' lives between the norms of Victorian propriety and the transgressive values of an

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[20] Hunter, *How Young Ladies*, 37.

[21] Hunter, *How Young Ladies*, 20.

[22] See Lucia McMahon, *Mere Equals: The Paradox of Educated Women in the Early American Republic* (Ithaca: Cornell University Press, 2012).

extra-domestic peer culture. School, then as now, enrolled post-pubescent girls not only into formal learning but also into a rich, sometimes adversarial, culture of their own design, one that, Hunter shows, "presented a strong challenge to the influence of maternal domesticity." Of greatest relevance here is her characterization of private boarding schools, in which "duty-bound Victorian daughters learned languages of desire and emotional excess censored from other parts of their lives. They struck up relationships with peers which flowered into a full-blown sentimental culture less likely to flourish with the trying disciplines of home. . . . Freed from the constant scrutiny of adults, these girls created a culture which allowed for a greater sense of fun and play than their elders encouraged." Boarding schools were an intense and expressive environment. "Within private, female, boarding academies, duty-bound Victorian daughters learned languages of sentiment, desire, and emotional excess censored from other parts of their lives." Girls remained eager to please their mothers and to be conventionally "good girls," while at the same time they were pulled toward an emotional register—sometimes sexually charged--out of step with these goals. They "aspired to womanliness, purity, and virtue," while also joining their peers in "antics in the city streets." The result often was inner conflict belied by a placid exterior. "A girl's serenity masked a soul deeply engaged in the struggle between desire and virtue. . . . A dutiful and compliant appearance covering a profound and richly textured interior."[23]

As best I can tell from limited evidence, the tension-filled norms of bourgeois girlhood that Hunter uncovers, is at one with those guiding the first twenty years of Sara Morgan's life. Of particular note, is her attendance (along with her younger sister Susanne) at Miss Masters

[23] Hunter, *How Young Ladies*, 4.5, 179, 167, 168. I will not engage Hunter's treatment of public high schools only because it is much less germane to Sara Morgan's story. The key difference between the two sorts of schools was that the public high schools unlike private, girls-only boarding schools such as Sara attended introduced competition, sometimes fierce, between boys and girls.

School, an elite, private, female academy in Dobbs-Ferry, New York, seventeen miles up the Hudson from New York City. Here she was immersed until the age of twenty in the sort of boarding school peer culture that Hunter describes, which had a significant impact on her European sojourn, especially her early months in Berlin.

When Sara and Susie attended it, the Masters School, founded in 1877, was a "finishing school," according to the biographer of its founder and headmistress Eliza Masters. **[SLIDES: ELIZA B. MASTERS; MASTERS SCHOOL]** But Masters disliked the term, thinking it implied superficiality. And she had a point, given the school's challenging curriculum in literature, music, art, history, and languages. Nonetheless, the degree that girls received at the school was, for most, a terminal one.[24] Masters aim was to provide her students with a "broad general culture" that would serve them well as genteel wives and mothers. Until the turn of the century, she (like many of her colleagues) resisted lending her school a college-preparatory function.[25]

Masters did her best to serve her girls *in loco parentis*, aiming to help them develop "Christian characters and healthy bodies, as well as sound habits of scholarship." She sought to preserve as much continuity as she could between the environment of her school and the proper Victorian homes managed by the mothers of her students. Aiming to be an "ideal grandmother," she promulgated an array of rules designed to preserve the "home influence" and mandating order, tidiness, proper clothing, healthful exercise, church attendance, and a weekly Bible-study

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[24] The curriculum included a little mathematics but no natural science. At one point, Sara wrote her father: "You said something in your letter about my dropping algebra, perhaps you have forgotten that we decided not to take it up in the first place. I find that I have plenty to do with French, German and other studies," Sara Morgan to D.S. Morgan, 3 December 1887.

[25] Marion Brown Shelton, *An American Schoolmistress: The Life of Eliza B. Masters, 1845-1921* (New York: G.P. Putnam's Sons, 1927), 111.

class that she herself taught. Students lived in cottages, presided over by a "house mother." Masters urged the girls to keep their distance from boys and men. "Never sit on the same sofa with a man," she reportedly said, "the devil sits between you." At the same time, the school provided its girls "plenty of wholesome fun," and according to her biographer "no one enjoyed a good time or a jolly laugh more than Miss Masters."[26]

For all Miss Masters's vigilance, there is no reason to believe that an adolescent, emotionally expressive peer culture did not take hold in her boarding school as in others. Perhaps Masters—described as once a "slender, animated, fun-loving, conscientious girl"—was not herself immune at one time to its attractions. That she knew something of it is evident in her rules that appear devised to thwart its influence. Those strictures of which she was proudest she termed the "Communication Rules." Once a bell sounded in classrooms "filled with chattering girls" every girl was on her honor "not to communicate with her neighbor by 'word, look or manner.' This means no whispering or giggling in class rooms, no surreptitious passing of notes, no sign messages to distract a student from the subject in hand."[27]

Given her commitment to "broad culture," Masters could not responsibly deny her students the riches of nearby New York City. She brought luminary artists to campus to perform, but she also permitted her girls regular excursions to the city to take in such events as concerts of

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[26] Shelton, *American Schoolmistress*, 112, 66, 115 Sigrid MacRae, *A World Elsewhere: An American Woman in Wartime Germany* (New York: Penguin, 2014), 39.

[27] Shelton, *American Schoolmistress*, 70.

the New York Philharmonic.[28] Here, as for girls in schools in or near other urban settings, adolescent peer culture flowered. Venturing into town or city streets, as Hunter shows, introduced girls "to one another and to the shops, squares, and sidewalks of urban life." Here, walking arm in arm with one another and shopping enthusiastically, they encountered an emerging consumer culture and heterogeneous populations that "were seriously threatening to notions of a uniform and genteel righteousness. . . . This new culture of friends celebrated fun and challenged rectitude."[29] It was this fun-loving culture of friends that Sara Morgan reentered when she moved to Berlin in the spring of 1892, exploring its sites and lively streets with young people her own age—American as well as German girls, including at least one former classmate who was definitely the sort of spirited "new girl" who worried adults at the time. And more than a few young men.

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[28] See Sara Morgan to D.S. Morgan, 3 December 1887; Sara Morgan to Susan Morgan, 9 February 1888. In the latter letter, Sara reported that among the celebrities Masters brought to campus was whistling virtuoso Alice J. Shaw, known as "The Whistling Prima Donna."

[29] Hunter, *How Young Ladies*, 261. This adolescent peer culture in urban America cut across class lines. See Kathy Peiss, *Cheap Amusements: Working Women and Leisure in Turn-of-th-Century New York* (Philadelphia: Temple University Press, 1986). .Looking back in 1906, Henry James recorded an encounter twenty-five years earlier on the streets of Boston with the adolescent peer culture of girls from "the most fashionable school in Boston." His description unsettled the defense he offered in 1868 of the serenity of the belles of Beacon Street, and suggests that he had lost patience with the American girl. "Being fashionable, they yet were vociferous, and in conditions that, as they ingenuously shrieked and bawled to each other across the street, and from its top to its bottom, gave the candid observer much to think of. They were freely and happily at play, they had been turned out for it to the pavements of the town, and with this large scale of space about them for intercourse they could scarce do other than hoot and howl. They romped, they conversed, at the top of their lungs from one side of the ample avenue to the other; they sat on doorsteps and partook of scraps of luncheon, they hunted each other to and from and indulged in innocent mirth quite as if they had been in private gardens or a playroom." Henry James, *The Speech and Manners of American Women* (Lancaster Pa.: Lancaster House Press, 1973 [1906/07]), 31-32.

If before 1890 my argument for a tension between virtue and desire in young Sara's experience is mostly contextually informed speculation, on German soil in the early nineties she at last put pen to paper in revealing fashion. She opened her heart to an historian's more direct examination.

V

In November 1890, seven months after their father's death, Sara and Susanne (Susie) Morgan left the United States for Germany to master the language, study the arts, and soak up the culture--a capstone to their education for refinement.[30] Sara was twenty-two and Susie was twenty-one. Basing themselves in Karlsrühe in southwest Germany, something of a backwater, the two girls traveled around the Rhineland and in the spring of 1891 went to Italy to oversee the production of a bust of their late father produced in the studio of the prominent Florentine sculptor Pietro Bazzanti. Sara studied music at the Baden Conservatory and Susie took voice and art lessons. They boarded with German families, and both worked hard to improve their German. During this first part of their German sojourn, they were under the protective surveillance of their particularly straight-laced German landladies and nearby family friends in Heidelberg, Mr. and Mrs.Young. In the spring of 1892 the two girls split up. Susie remained in Karlsrühe, while Sara went by herself a few hundred miles northeast to Berlin for voice lessons. **[SLIDES: KARLSRÜHE, BADEN CONSERVATORY OF MUSIC, GALLERIA BAZZANTI, MORGAN BUST, GERMAN EMPIRE MAP]** She would largely remain there until the two sisters returned home in the fall of 1893.

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[30] I realize that it may be easy for listeners to confuse Susan (mother of Sara and widow of Dayton) with Susanne (sister of Sara), so I will refer to the latter as "Susie"—as both Susan and Sara did--and the former as "Susan" or "Mama." Sara sometime referred to her sister as "Sue" but I will avoid using that moniker.

The eighteen months or so that the Morgan sisters spent together in Karlsrühe were relatively placid. They studied diligently, enjoyed concerts and other local outings (especially the celebration of the Kaiser's birthday in late January 1891), visited nearby Rhineland sites, spent time in Heidelberg and Stuttgart, and generally had a quiet, dull time of it.[31] Sara and Susie shared a room as they had at home, and, to be sure, they took note of dashing soldiers and flirted a bit with (among a few others) a young man living opposite them who brought them roses.[32] But they were held in check by their strict landlady, Frau von Leuchtsenring, and her successor Fräulein Heidel. Sara told her mother that German women were "poor cooped up creatures" and she "wouldn't be a German for all the world." On the other hand, she said, her late father would no doubt have made "a capital German," for "he used to stop and consider the way in which things must be done, and how such a thing would appear."[33]

The sisters' Italian trip in April 1891 was far more eventful and allowed the girls to kick up their heels a bit more. They were chaperoned by Mrs. Young, who was critical of the overly strict regimen imposed on girls by German women ("those old fashioned people, what do they know?") and eager to advance her own social ambitions by allowing the Morgan sisters under her auspices freer commerce with fine society.[34] Sara

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[31] On the birthday celebration, see Sara Morgan to Susan Morgan, 30 January 1891, Morgan-Manning Archives.

[32] Sara Morgan to Susie Morgan, 1 September 1891, Morgan-Manning Archives.

[33] Sara Morgan to Susan Morgan, 21 February 1891, Morgan-Manning Archives.

[34] Sara Morgan to Susan Morgan, 30 January 1891, Morgan-Manning Archives; Sara Morgan to Susan Morgan, 19 April [1891], Morgan-Manning Archives ("Sue, Mrs. Young, and I are like three girls together"). On Sara Morgan's account, Mr. and Mrs. Young were a wonderfully comic couple, worthy themselves of a Henry James story. See especially Sara Morgan to Susan

brightly reported to her mother that at one reception, she had "the honor of dancing three times with the finest dancer of Florence." The dancing of American girls apparently provoked widespread interest among Italian men, and she persuaded a heretofore "blasé" young American to join her in performing "some dances unknown to the Italians." She happily informed her "Mama" that "the men are very handsome and most of them speak a little English."[35] The return to Karlsühe that spring must have been a letdown.

For her part, Susan Morgan grew increasingly anxious about her daughters' well-being in Europe. She was, in any case, in a terrible state in late 1890. Her husband's recent death hung heavy upon her. And then in December, her second oldest son, William (Will) eloped with a young woman from nearby Bergen whom his mother regarded as an unsuitable mate far beneath his station. Will, she told Sara had committed social "suicide" with this marriage. "It was a most cowardly act," she angrily asserted. "I have known of good many young men who have married quite inferior & sometimes, as in this case, unworthy. But they told their family of their intentions & did not sneak off." She refused to see the new bride and declared Will *persona non grata*. The rest of the family joined her in shunning him.[36]

Susan was despondent. "The numbers that this family is dwindling to is just sad. . . . This family is fast losing its identity—everything is changed. I hope you will return

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Morgan, 8 February 1891; Sara Morgan to Susan Morgan, 1 May 1891; 1 September 1891; 20 September 1891;

[35] Sara Morgan to Susan Morgan, 12 April [1891], Morgan-Manning Archives.

[36] Susan Morgan to Sara Morgan, 15 December 1890, Morgan-Manning Archives. Sara agreed wholeheartedly with her mother: "I never dreamed that he would do anything to pull us down," Sara Morgan to Susan Morgan, 30 December 1890. The Morgans were not often given to open class prejudice, but this event brought it out strongly.

my dear children."[37] Sara tried to comfort her mother, and urged her repeatedly in the spring of 1891 to pay the girls a visit. She assured Susan that she and Susie were "very good girls." But this assurance perhaps proved less relief to their mother than it might have had Sara not added that "we could be nothing else as there are so few temptations."[38] Likewise, she later urged her mother, a temperance advocate, not to worry that she and her sister were now drinking beer. German beer was different from American beer, she said. Moreover, Germans believed a little beer-drinking made women stronger. And one has to wonder what Susan made of the photograph Sara had taken in Stuttgart wearing "a low neck Grecian dress."[39] [**SLIDE: SARA IN GRECIAN DRESS]**

VI

The pivotal moment in my story comes when the Morgan sisters spilt up in the spring of 1892, and Sara lived in Berlin alone apart from anyone in her family until her mother's surprise arrival in Germany in August.

What sort of place was the Berlin that greeted Sara Morgan in 1892? In the mid-nineteenth century, Berlin was not much of a city. But in the wake of the unification of Germany after the Franco-Prussian War in 1871, it became the capital of the new Empire and grew exponentially over the next half century. In 1890 shortly before Sara arrived the city's population was one and a half million.[40] By 1920 Berlin was home to four million people, the third largest city in the world after New York and London.

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[37] Susan Morgan to Sara Morgan, 20 December 1890, Morgan-Manning Archives.

[38] Sara Morgan to Susan Morgan, 10 January 1891, Morgan-Manning Archives.

[39] Sara Morgan to Susan Morgan, 3 March 1892; 15 January 1892, Morgan-Manning Archives

[40] As compared to less than 75,000 for Karlsrühe at the time.

Like the United States, Germany witnessed rapid industrialization in the late nineteenth century and Berlin was at the heart of it. The city established an impressive array of factories and office buildings. Extensive railroad lines connected it to the rest of Germany and Europe. Immigrants from the rural eastern provinces of Silesia, East Prussia, West Prussia, and Pomerania—many of them Poles--flooded into Berlin and filled thousands of tenement houses thrown up in the northern part of the city. By 1900 nearly two-thirds of Berlin's population was comprised of first or second-generation immigrants and industrial workers made up almost 60 percent of the residents. As historian Alexandra Richie puts it, "Within decades [Berlin] had become the mightiest industrial capital on the continent. No European city rose from obscurity so quickly, and none would be so drunk on its success."[41]

The American city to which observers most often compared Berlin at the time was Chicago. "Berlin is the European Chicago," declared Mark Twain (who was visiting the city with his family shortly before Sara Morgan arrived). Indeed, it had if anything, he said, the air of an even more freshly minted metropolis than Chicago (a city well-known to the Morgans):

> The bulk of Berlin of today has about it no suggestion of a former period. The site it stands on has traditions and a history, but the city itself has no traditions and a history. It is a new city; the newest I have ever seen. Chicago would seem venerable beside it; for there are many odd-looking districts in Chicago, but not many in Berlin. The main mass of the city looks as if it had been built last week, the rest

[41] Alexandra Richie, *Faust's Metropolis: A History of Berlin* (New York: Carroll and Graf, 1998), 157, 169, 152. Perhaps the best portrait of Berlin in this period is that drawn in several novels and abundant journalism by Theodor Fontane, a writer too little appreciated by Anglo-American readers.

of it has a just perceptibly graver tone, and looks as if it might be six or even eight months old.[42] **[SLIDES: MARK TWAIN, CLARA CLEMENS]**

Like Chicago and New York, Berlin underwent a "Gilded Age" in the late nineteenth century. As its industrial bourgeoisie consolidated, the city was awash with new money, boasting dozens of millionaires. "Berlin began to be called the *parvenu* capital of Europe," Richie notes," loud, pushy and ostentatious." However, unlike the American cities, the Berlin bourgeoisie was not its ruling class.[43] It deferred to the landed Prussian aristocracy that continued to hold the reins of overweening power in the city and the rest of the country.

Music was central to Berlin culture. It boasted schools such as the *Musichochschule* and the *Stersche Konservatory*. The Academy of Music, founded in 1869, attracted composers the likes of Schumann, Wagner, Brahms, and Dvorak. The Berlin

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[42] Mark Twain, "Berlin—the Chicago of Europe" in Andreas Austilat, *Mark Twain in Berlin: Newly Discovered Stories and an Account of Twain's Berlin Adventures by Andreas Austilat* (New York: Berlinica, 2013), 133, 132. Twain's daughter, seventeen-year-old Clara Clemens was like Sara Morgan studying piano and voice in Berlin—though unlike Sara she later enjoyed a professional singing career. Clara was very much a "Daisy Miller." Andreas Austilat notes that in Marienbad before the Clemens family arrived in Berlin, she "aroused a lot of attention in her new, low-cut dress. A group of young officers gathered around her, and one of the men exhibited an especially keen interest, until Twain reprimanded him sharply and banished Clara to her room." Later, in Berlin, she attended a ball "where forty officers were present. Her father made it clear to her that a young American woman should not be alone in such company, but she went anyway." Clara stayed in Berlin after the rest of her family departed in March 1892. Austilat suggests that "It was astonishing that her father permitted" Clara to remain in Berlin after the rest of the family left, "considering the arguments they had over Clara's fondness of dashing young officers (and vice versa)" Austilat, 64, 126. Clara studied piano with famed teacher Moritz Moskowski, but she had to dismiss him after he made sexual overtures toward her. Clara, unlike Sara, went on to have a noteworthy career as a singer, though one marked by scandal over a purported affair with her accompanist, a married man. As far as I know, Sara and Clara never crossed paths.

[43] See, for comparison, Sven Beckert, *The Monied Metropolis: New York City and the Consolidation of the American Bourgeosie, 1850-1896* (New York: Cambridge University Press, 2003).

Philharmonic, founded in 1882, fell under the baton of conductors Richard Strauss, Tchaikovsky, Mahler, and Grieg.[44] Wealthy Americans such as the Morgans were alert to Berlin's musical reputation, and sent their children in droves to study there in the late nineteenth century. Many girls, in particular, did so under the influence of a remarkable, best-selling memoir by Amy Fay, *Music-Study in Germany* (1880), that vividly recounted her experiences as a student of Franz Liszt and other teachers in Berlin (and Munich) in the early 1870s.[45] **[SLIDES: AMY FAY; MUSIC-STUDY IN GERMANY]**

One thing that stood out about Imperial Berlin to nearly every visitor who commented on the city was the extraordinary military presence in its streets. The German Empire owed its origins to the Prussian army, and after 1871, Richie says, Berlin became "the center of an ever larger military machine." Otto von Bismarck, the "Iron Chancellor," built this machine over twenty years, and his abrupt dismissal in 1890 by young Kaiser Wilhelm II did nothing to slow its growth **[SLIDES: BISMARCK, WILHELM II].** The Kaiser, whatever his differences with Bismarck, was himself an enthusiastic militarist and he expanded the Prussian officer corps to 20,000 men and gave them free run of Berlin.[46] W.E.B. Du Bois, a graduate student in Berlin at the same time Sara Morgan was there, remarked that "German ideals from king to lower orders

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[44] Richie, *Faust's Metropolis*, 222.

[45] Amy Fay, *Music-Study in Germany* (Mineola N.Y.: Dover, 2011 [1880]), 81-82. The book was edited by Fay's sister, Melusina, a leading feminist and onetime wife of philosopher Charles Peirce. As far as I have been able to determine, a copy of this book has not survived in what remains of the Morgan family library, but it would be a surprise if it were unknown to Susan Morgan (or Mary Jane Holmes). Fay was also something of a "Daisy Miller." She complained about the rules governing relationships between young men and women in Germany, and admitted to her own "bold stand," which delivered to her landlady's "moral system a series of shocks." She notes that she often made music together with three male friends in her pension room, and relays a few incidents of her flirting with other young men, including a Prussian officer (107).

[46] Richie, *Faust's Metropolis*, 203, 189.

appear at first sight to be clad in spurs and shoulder straps." Berlin moved in a "half military stride."[47] **[SLIDES: MILITARY PARADE; PRUSSIAN OFFICER, WEB DU BOIS]**

The adjective visitors most often used to describe the officers filling Berlin's streets was "arrogant." Fay recalled, for example, that

> The Prussian men are often semi-insolent in their street manners to women, and sometimes nearly knock you off the sidewalk, from simply not choosing to see you. I suppose this arrogance is one of the benefits of their military training! They *will* have the middle of the walk where the stone flag is laid, no matter what *you* have to step off into![48]

Yet, Fay also found the officers terribly handsome. And she was not alone. For young "Daisy Millers" in Berlin, nothing surpassed Prussian military men as eye candy. Or, to be sure, as arm candy and dance partners.[49] Sara Morgan, as we will see, was not immune to the appeal of stepping out for a walk or taking a turn or two on the dance floor with a young Prussian sporting "brass buttons."[50]

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[47] David Levering Lewis, *W.E.B. Du Bois: Biography of a Race, 1868-1919* (New York: Henry Holt, 1993), 137. DuBois and Sara Morgan were almost exact contemporaries born a month apart in 1868, He is unlikely to have run across her since he made a point of avoiding white Americans in Berlin, and white American women in particular.

[48] Fay, *Music-Study in Germany*, 57.

[49] Fay noted that "the German officers waltz perfectly, and with great spirit and elegance. Dancing is a part of their military training and they are obliged to learn it. But they are not very comfortable partners, for one rubs one's face against their epaulets unless you are just the right height, and you've no rest for your left hand" (*Music-Study*, 305).

[50] Some young women were immune. One, Rosa Luxembourg (Polish to be sure), found that "Berlin made a ghastly impression on me. It is a cold, tasteless, massive barrack filled with those *darling* arrogant Prussians, every one looking as if he has swallowed the stick with which he had just been beaten" (Richie, *Faust's Metropolis*, 206).

VII

Sara found a room in a pension on Bülowstrasse in the so-called "American Quarter" of Berlin in Schöneberg near Nollendorf Platz, and resumed her music studies.[51] **[SLIDES: BERLIN MAP; CENTRAL HOTEL; NOLLENDORF PLATZ (3); ROCHESTER CHURCH]** It is unclear why she went to Berlin alone. It is apparent from correspondence as late as March 1892 that she expected Susie to switch locales as well. "You great goose! Why didn't you come? . . . You little ass! Why didn't you come?" she wrote to her sister in early June.[52]

Sara attempted to entice her sister to Berlin (unsuccessfully) with stories of encounters with Prussian officers, including one she referred to as "my officer" with whom she had gone on an excursion.[53] "I am having the giddiest time you can imagine," she informed Susie:

> I believe I wrote you just a week ago and said we intended to have a reception. Well, we did, and Mama! What a brilliant one . . . three more students . . . and your dear little officers. . . . the next day Sunday one of the officers called and remained to supper.[54]

But Prussian soldiers were not the only men Sara was seeing in Berlin: students, artists, and others also sought her company. "I see a great deal of gentlemen in Berlin,"

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[51] Since Weimar, Sara's neighborhood has been at the heart of gay Berlin. What would Mama have made of that?

[52] Sara Morgan to Susie Morgan, 3 June 1892.

[53] Sara Morgan to Susie Morgan, 12 July 1892.

[54] Sara Morgan to Susie Morgan, 4 June 1892, Morgan-Manning Archives.

she told Susie—nicely echoing Daisy Miller's oft-quoted line: "I have always had a great deal of gentleman's society."[55]

I do not mean to suggest that Sara simply ran wild once she got to Berlin. Far from it. When she first arrived in Berlin, she was anxious about living alone and knew well that "German men think they can talk differently to American girls." Such undue familiarity had to be "squelched."[56] Yet the attentions of young men--German, Polish, and American alike--quickly grew on her. Like other late Victorian girls, she was torn between conventional duty—hammered into her by her mother and her German landladies--and sexual emotion. Moreover, these impulses not only competed but also balanced one another complementarily. She sought a difficult equilibrium. As Hunter says, she like others was looking for "a way to release *and* contain rebellious impulses, however circumscribed, without breaking with families."[57] In this, I would suggest, she was a considerably more ambivalent, complex, and intriguing, Daisy Miller than Daisy herself.[58]

Meanwhile, Susan Morgan's anxiety grew as 1892 wore on. She was particularly distressed that her girls refused to respond affirmatively to her entreaties to return

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[55] Sara Morgan to Susie Morgan, 12 July 1892.

[56] Sara Morgan to Susie Morgan, 4 June 1892.

[57] Hunter, *How Young Ladies*, 47, my emphasis. Hunter finds this quest for balance most evident in girls' diaries. I am arguing that one can see it as well, if less self-consciously, in Sara's correspondence.

[58] Both Daisy and Sara dearly loved their mothers, but imagine a story in which the *laissez-faire* Mrs. Miller is replaced by the altogether different Mrs. Morgan.

home, first by the summer of 1891 and then again by the summer of 1892. Susie was particularly adamant about staying in Germany. Sara was more accommodating, but reluctant to leave her sister alone in Europe.[59]

Although Susan's anxiety had its peculiar causes, I would also put it in the context of the wider anxiety about the behavior of American girls in the latter decades of the nineteenth century. The debate over "Daisy Miller" was but one symptom of this anxiety. For a long time, American mothers had held that the best way to raise a child was not to surround him or her with constant adult interdictions, but to cultivate their moral character to a point at which they would be self-guided by a virtuous character and a "inner-directed" moral "gyroscope"[60] This decidedly evangelical Protestant view, they contrasted (rightly or wrongly) with European child-rearing principles. Amy Fay, who shared Sara Morgan's uncomfortable response to the "cooped up" lives of German girls governed by external "conventionalities," remarked that "I've come to the conclusion that the New England principle of teaching daughters to be independent and to look out for themselves

[59] Sara Morgan to Susan Morgan, 13 July 1892. "You know I am here on her account, I mean in Germany. If she means what she says that she <u>will not</u> go home until next spring, I can stand it, that is if it is the best thing for all of us. I am having singing lessons with one of the best teachers in Berlin and (don't laugh) my voice is getting big with age." Sara also committed a bit of sisterly betrayal, telling her mother than Susie's reason for staying in Germany was not simply to improve her German. "She likes that old Jim Seymour [of Brockport] and thinks she is in some inconceivable manner hurting him or spiting him by keeping herself in distant Germany." This betrayal and Sara's laying of the entire burden of responsibility for their prolonged stay on Susie has to be put in the context that at this time she was sorely "provoked" by Susie for failing to come to Berlin.

[60] The terms "inner-direction" and "gyroscope" are, of course, those of David Riesman's hugely influential 1950 study of "the Changing American Character," *The Lonely Crowd*. It is perhaps worth noting that much of the evidence Riesman drew on to argue for a shift from "inner-direction" to "other-direction" was drawn from the behavior, attitudes, and values of adolescent peer culture.

from the first is an excellent one. . . . The best plan is the old-fashioned American one, viz.: Give your children a 'stern sense of duty,' and then throw them on their own resources."[61]

This apparently was Susan Morgan's view. After all, she had permitted her daughters to live alone in Europe, trusting they would behave themselves. Shortly after the girls' ship had sailed, she wrote to Susie:

> If you have judgment wisdom & true Christian principles I am sure all will go well with you and you are just as much under God's care & guidance in one place as another. Keep yourself the same innocent girl that you have ever been for if we cannot be wise we can be wholly pure in thought and deed.[62]

But late Victorian mothers confronted a difficulty as their daughters' gyroscopes felt the force of magnetic fields, such as adolescent peer culture, that might pull them off course. Maternal confidence faltered. The advice literature of the period filled with warnings about "precocious" and "willful" girls drifting into morally dangerous territory. As Hunter demonstrates, this

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[61] Fay, *Music-Study in Germany*, 82. Alexis de Tocqueville has a similar view in the 1830s: "Long before the young American woman has attained the age of puberty, one begins to free her little by little from maternal tutelage; before she has entirely left childhood she already thinks for herself, speaks freely, and acts alone; the great picture of the world is constantly exposed before her; far from seeking to conceal the view of it from her, they uncover more and more of it to her regard every day and teach her to consider it with a firm and tranquil eye. Thus the vices and perils that society presents are not slow to be revealed to her; she sees them clearly, judges them without illusion, and faces them without fear; for she is full of confidence in her strength, and her confidence seems to be shared by all those who surround her." My point is that this confidence of all those who surround her was waning in the late nineteenth century. Tocqueville, *Democracy in America* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 2000), 563.

[62] Susan Morgan to Susie Morgan, 3 November 1890.

literature was reactionary, striving to hold up mid-Victorian norms under pressure from peer culture. And its prescriptions were increasingly at odds with the behavior of bourgeois girls. This was the occasion for deep disquiet, if not panic.[63]

Sara's move from the sedate streets of Karlsrühe to the exciting avenues of Berlin, brought Susan Morgan's concerns to a boil. She had received a report on her daughters' activities from her oldest son George (28), the family's new paternal figure, who checked up on them periodically on business trips to Europe and had helped Sara with her move. In mid-June, she wrote a blistering letter to Susie:

> I am in such a state since George's return. I am not at all pleased with your and Sara's plans. When you left home I only gave my consent to an absence not to exceed one year and now to think of remaining part of three years is—well, I have no English for it. Sara is in Berlin alone and in one of those hornets nests they call pensions. You know very well she will get into mischief.

Susan was particularly upset by the sort of men the girls encountered in Germany. "Professors and artists perfect Bohemians. You would not look at them here in America. I hate the whole business as an abomination." Improvident European men saw rich American girls such as her daughters as low-hanging fruit. She demanded that Sara return to Karlsrühe and that she and Susie leave for home by early July 1892.[64] The girls, led by the especially willful Susie, refused. At the end of July, Sara received a cablegram loaded with a "shock." Her mother was on her way

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[63] Hunter, *How Young Ladies*, 284-289.

[64] Susan Morgan to Susie Morgan, 13 June 1892, Morgan-Manning Archives.

to Germany with her younger siblings, Gifford (19) and Gladys (7), in tow. She was to arrive in Hamburg in early August.[65]

"Who put the idea in her head to come?" Sara wondered.[66] Well, I think *she*, if not she alone, did so. Two aspects of Sara's life in Berlin, both conveyed to her mother, Susan Morgan seems to have found particularly alarming.

First, Susan proved correct, by her lights, in worrying that Sara's pension was a hornets' nest.[67] George helped Sara find suitable lodgings overseen by a respectable German widow, Frau Medenwald, who like many such women in Europe ran a boarding house in order to make ends meet. In June, the other girls in the pension left Berlin for the summer, and Medenwald was approached by three young men about renting rooms in her establishment. Very much in need of money but also concerned about the appearance of impropriety should Sara be alone in the house with three male borders, Medenwald told Sara she would decline the offer unless one more girl could be recruited to join her as a boarder. Sara tried and failed (again) to persuade Susie to come to Berlin, and so told Medenwald that she would not allow her to forego much needed income for her sake. Medenwald arranged for Sara to board nearby on Zietenstrasse with another German woman, spinster Fräulein Pfeffer. **[SLIDE: 12 ZIETENSTRASSE]** But before she was installed in her new quarters, she told her mother, she remained for a while in the Medenwald

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[65] Sara Morgan to Susie Morgan, 25 July 1892, Morgan-Manning Archives.

[66] Sara Morgan to Susie Morgan, 25 July 1892.

[67] Not surprisingly, pensions often appeared in nineteenth-century fiction. Henry James had the narrator of one of his stories, himself a writer, remark, quoting Stendhal and Balzac, that a boarding house "is a capital place for the study of human nature." Henry James, "The Pension Beaurepas" in James, *Complete Stories, 1874-1884* (New York: Library of America, 1999), 401.

pension with the "three gentlemen." The three men included two Americans and a Pole. The latter was Herr von Obernowsky in Berlin to study for a civil engineering examination. Sara said little about one of the Americans, but the other, a young man ("Mr. Kelchner") from Williamsport, Pennsylvania, caught her fancy ("my favorite"). Sara said that she continued to see the two men and "liked them very much, but only as friends." Perhaps most troubling to Susan was Sara's report to her mother that when they learned she was to leave the pension, the men "declared they would leave the house if they had driven me away, said that they knew according to German custom that it did not do but an American girl, why what was the harm."[68]

There is a charming innocence in Sara's retailing of this story to her mother, as if she knew it was her duty to keep her mother fully informed of her activities and to assure her that her Victorian moral gyroscope was functioning well. Even if, here again, she may have said too much for her mother's comfort on the question. But that comfort would have been much more challenged than it was, had Sara been as forthcoming with her mother about these events as she was with sister Susie. To Susie, she recounted the pension affair in the emotionally-charged sentiment of adolescent peer culture. She described the Polish young man as "dark tall handsome" and said that Mr. Kelchner "liked me very well and is a splendid fellow," who apparently "stuck to [her] so with that American cheek" and diverted her from her Prussian officer. At the end of the interlude between pensions, she "positively longed to stay though I know it was not proper. I have never had better 'times' in my life." When Kelchner left Berlin in July, she told Susie that she felt "very sad" and consoled herself with the thought that "I shall probably never see him again so it is all right and no harm done."[69]

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[68] Sara Morgan to Susan Morgan, 13 July 1892, Morgan-Manning Archives.

[69] Sara Morgan to Susie Morgan, 3 June 1892; 12 July 1892, Morgan-Manning Archives.

The second aspect of Sara's early months in Berlin, another mix of "audacity and innocence," that distressed her mother was that she was spending a lot of time with Frances Walton "Fanny" Losey, a friend of whom Susan very much disapproved. If Susan was worrying that Sara was on a rapid path to becoming a full-fledged "Daisy Miller," she had no doubt about Fanny on this score. She described her in terms right out of the "Daisy Miller" debate as "a girl that did not care for appearance, a perfect type of the Western American girl abroad."[70]

Here again, Susan Morgan's antennae did not betray her. Fanny Losey was the daughter of a prominent La Crosse, Wisconsin family.[71] She was a classmate of Sara's at Miss Masters School and, like Sara, she was studying music in Berlin. She would go on to a career as a noted concert violinist. She was a high-spirited girl with "different ideas." In June, she proposed that Sara and Susie join her and her sister at the seashore near Bremen for a vacation. "She is an awfully nice girl," Sara told Susie, but there was one catch. Fanny "hates a chaperon." Apparently, George got wind of this plan for an unchaperoned adventure and did not like the idea (and probably reported it to his mother). Sara, however, was undeterred, and the plan fell through only because Susie declined.

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[70] Susan Morgan to Susie Morgan, 13 June 1892, Morgan-Manning Archives.

[71] I know what I know about Fanny Losey by virtue of the fact that she was the aunt of Joseph Losey, who would go on to be an important film director. Her father was a leading Wisconsin lawyer, businessman and politician. In 1908, she would marry George Lincoln Bunn, a justice of the Minnesota Supreme Court. See David Caute, *Joseph Losey: A Revenge on Life* (New York: Oxford, 1994), 2, 12, 20; and Michel Ciment, *Conversations with Losey* (London: Methuen, 1985), 26. Apparently, Sara's father had met Losey during her school days, and thought no more of her than his wife: Susan Morgan to Susie Morgan, 13 June 1892, Morgan-Manning Archives. In pursuing a performing career after her schooling, Fanny Losey matured from "new girl" to "New Woman." See Hunter, *How Young Ladies*, 368-406. George Morgan, on the other hand, apparently "liked her very much." (Sara Morgan to Susie Morgan, late May 1892). He was himself hot on the trail in 1892 of another "new woman," Eloise Barry, a vaudeville and light opera star whom he married in 1895. There is no evidence that Susan Morgan disapproved of this match.

By July 1892, Susan Morgan had heard enough. She had little doubt that Sara had become a "very ill-advised damsel." She departed precipitously on an unplanned trip to Germany that lasted well into 1893.

VIII

Her mother's visit clipped Sara's wings, as one might expect. She traveled around Germany with Susan and her two siblings for a few months after they arrived. Gifford departed for home in the fall of 1892, and Susan found a pension in Berlin for Sara, Gladys, and herself—first on Bendlerstrasse near the Tiergarten and then on Courbierstrasse in Schöneberg, not far from Sara's old digs. **[SLIDES: BENDLERSTRASSE; COURBIERSTRASSE]** Her mother was vigilant. "This morning a money package came for Sara," Susan wrote to Susie. "enough I should say to keep the wolf from the door or to keep more than one there by the scent."[72]

Nonetheless, Sara continued to enjoy a lively social life under her mother's supervision, including a gala Thanksgiving celebration hosted by the American Counsel at the Kaiserhof, Berlin's finest hotel. **[SLIDES: KAISERHOF HOTEL, BALLROOM]** Susan was on the lookout for suitable beaus for Sara (and Susie), making a pitch for two recent Harvard graduates living in the same pension.[73] Sara, for her part, kept her eye on "brass buttons" and continued to take a turn on the dance floor with Prussian officers (as did her mother) Nonetheless, the giddiness of June 1892 had evaporated, and she worried that under her mother's tutelage, she was becoming "awfully German," if not yet a poor, cooped-up creature. She informed Susie that "I

[72] Susan Morgan to Susie Morgan, 3 November 1892.

[73] Susan Morgan to Susie Morgan, 3 November 1892.

don't think that the American fellows think me lively enough—foolish if you like. They don't like me a little bit."[74] In other words, Sara was no longer quite the "Daisy" she had once been.[75]

By 1893 the shine was also off the brass buttons for Sara ("these are old stories to us now," she wrote Susie).[76] But surveillance by her mother and older brother of her love life now intensified. For Sara's heart had steadily turned from Berlin to Brooklyn.

Sometime in the winter of 1890 Rose Manning, one of Sara's closest schoolmates, had introduced her and a number of other girlfriends to her brother, Frederick A. Manning ("Arnold"), a Brooklyn doctor. **[SLIDE: FA MANNING]** Manning was ten years Sara's senior, but (he told her in his initial letter to her on the occasion of her departure from the United States) "of the lot [of Rose's friends] he was quite safe in saying that he liked me the best."[77] Rose, who would act as a diligent matchmaker, urged Sara to respond to her brother (but not to tell him that Rose had pressed her to do so), which Sara did.[78] Manning wrote back warmly and Sara began to

[74] Sara Morgan to Susie Morgan, 3 November 1892; Sara Morgan to Susie Morgan, undated [my guess from internal evidence is early December 1892].

[75] It is perhaps worth noting an obvious difference between "Daisy's" story and Sara's. Daisy's mother raised no objections to her daughter's unconventional behavior and, indeed, was complicit in it. Susan Morgan's views were more in line with the ex-patriot *grand dames* who condemned Daisy. Perhaps this difference is a bit of evidence for Amy Fay's concern in 1880 that European-style "conventionalities" were getting stronger in the United States (*Music-Study*, 81).

[76] Sara Morgan to Susie Morgan, [early December 1892].

[77] Sara Morgan to Susan Morgan, 6 December 1890, Morgan-Manning Archives.

[78] I would suggest that Rose Manning's matchmaking was another instance in which Sara Morgan's life felt the impact of her peer culture.

worry a bit about his intentions, putting herself at ease by concluding that "a letter is such an acceptable thing when one is so far away."[79] Manning visited Sara twice in Germany, but for the most part he wooed her with letters that increasingly made his affections clear.[80]

By July 1892, Sara had told her mother and George of her intensifying relationship with Manning, and admitted that it was of some concern to her:

> There is a little understanding between us which will be made clear when we meet. If I do not care for the man as I believe he regards me, I shall just tell him, and I hope he would act honorably. I am not bound to him in any way. In fact, I only saw him two days when he came to Germany last winter—these things are all so queer.[81]

Over the remainder of 1892, Sara drifted closer to Manning, even as his letters continued to unsettle her. They began to keep her awake at night, her mother reported. Manning wrote to tell Sara that he had just published a book, and proposed to send her a copy along with a piece of jewelry to memorialize the occasion. Susan wrote to Susie that "Sara was quite horrified that anything that cost so much brain labor should be used for such a purpose. I quite agreed with her. . . . These very matter of fact and practical men can be very foolish and romantic."[82]

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[79] Sara Morgan to Susan Morgan, 30 January [1891], Morgan-Manning Archives.

[80] Alas, the courtship correspondence of Manning and Sara Morgan apparently has not survived, but letters from their brief (1893-1896) marriage are extant.

[81] Sara Morgan to Susan Morgan, 13 July 1892, Morgan-Manning Archives.

[82] Susan Morgan to Susie Morgan, 3 November 1892, 17 November 1892, Morgan-Manning Archives. The book was *Physiology: A Manual for Student and Practicioners* (Philadelphia: Lea Brothers, 1892). On the flyleaf of Sara's copy, Manning wrote "To Misſ Sara Morgan With many thanks for the involuntary assistance she has given the author –."

Things had reached the point that Susan and George mobilized to give the relationship much closer scrutiny. George arranged for a Dun & Company (the precursor to Dun & Bradstreet) investigator to look into the Doctor's finances. George reported to Susan that there was cause for concern. Manning had no significant property, and they could not rule out the possibility that he was a gold digger. Moreover, Manning was not wealthy enough to provide Sara with a life in New York in the style that "Sara's tastes" required. Even with the income from Sara's inheritance, the couple could not live a comfortable bourgeois life in New York. "A man marrying with no prospect but a physician's income is far from a promising future."[83]

Both George and Susan believed Sara, though now nearly twenty-five, lacked sufficient experience with men to know that Manning was right for her. "She has had for a girl of her age too little intercourse with the world," Susan remarked. In a similar vein, George argued that her inexperience made her susceptible to Manning's blandishments and to mistakes such as accepting his attentions and gift, "which she should not have done." He proposed that she should be persuaded to delay an engagement to Manning until "she should have a chance by association with other men and to appreciate how others live in order to by comparison know her own mind."[84]

I think Susan and George significantly underestimated Sara's traffic with the world, and with men in particular. By the fall of 1893 Sara firmly knew her own mind on the subject, and she had fully dispensed with whatever "horror" Manning's gestures of deep affection had engendered.

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[83] George Morgan to Susan Morgan, December 1892, Morgan-Manning Archives. George estimated that a married couple in New York hoping to live in a way that would make Sara happy would require an annual income of at least $16,000 ($216,000 in today's currency). Sara's inheritance would provide about half that amount. On Dun & Company, see James D. Norris, *R.G. Dun & Co., 1841-1900: The Development of Credit Reporting in the Nineteenth Century* (Westport, CT; Greenwood, 1978).

[84] Susan Morgan to Susie Morgan, 17 November 1892; George Morgan to Susan Morgan, December 1892, Morgan-Manning Archives.

He had breached her defenses, and she was ready for surrender. In September 1893, she wrote to Susie: "Arnold writes me beautiful letters and I am a 'goner.'"[85] Shortly thereafter, the girls finally returned to Brockport, and soon after that, on 19 December 1893, Sara and Arnold exchanged vows in St. Luke's Episcopal Church near the family mansion.

[SLIDE: ST. LUKES, 1905]

IX

Happily, Sara Morgan's European sojourn, unlike that of Daisy Miller, did not end in her tragic death.[86] And unlike Isabel Archer in *Portrait of a Lady*, she *did* marry the American suitor who doggedly pursued her while she was on the Continent—her "Caspar Goodwood" if you will. But like Isabel's marriage to the serpentine ex-patriot Gilbert Osmond, Sara's marriage to Dr. Manning was a troubled one, albeit for decidedly different reasons.

Months into their marriage, Dr. Manning contracted tuberculosis, and the couple endured two and a half years of his prolonged illness. Manning succumbed to the disease at age thirty-three, almost exactly three years after the wedding. Their son, Arnold, born in 1894, also came down with tuberculosis soon after his father's death, and his own short life ended in 1916.

Returning to Europe in 1897, this time to France, in search of the best medical care for young Arnold and further musical training for herself, Sara again resisted attempts by her family to bring her home. But eventually she relented and again took up residence in the Brockport house with her "Mama" for the next three decades. She never remarried. After her mother's

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[85] Sara Morgan to Susie Morgan, 4 September 1893, Morgan-Manning Archives.

[86] Although she may have dodged a bullet by meeting her mother's ship in Hamburg in August 1892 when the city was in the midst of a terrible cholera epidemic. See Richard Evans, *Death in Hamburg: Society and Politics in the Cholera Years* (New York: Oxford University Press, 1987).

death, she herself then assumed the presiding role in the now Morgan-Manning House (which she purchased in 1934) until she died in the fire that nearly destroyed it in 1964. **[SLIDE: YOUNG WIDOW SARA MORGAN]**

For Sara Morgan, as for other girls of her class, an end to adolescence meant, as Hunter nicely puts it, "leaving 'self' and learning sacrifice."[87] I have to wonder whether after 1893 Sara thought back often and fondly to her girlhood German adventures. As it turned out, her months in Berlin as Brockport's "Daisy Miller" were the most carefree and unmoored of her long life.

[SLIDE: SARA MORGAN-MANNING ≈ 1950]

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[87] Hunter, *How Young Ladies*, 338.