

# [Tracking changes in daisy miller](https://assignbuster.com/tracking-changes-in-daisy-miller/)

There are hundreds of differences between the 1878 edition of Daisy Miller and its 1909 / New York edition. While many of the changes are slight modifications to the placement of words or changes of some terms to an American English spelling, some of the changes vastly alter the connotations of certain scenes and, in fact, the story itself. While the 1879 version and the 1909 version of Daisy Miller are the same book, they are quite different in some key aspects. In the second version, James actually seems to make the book more critical of American tourists by degrading their quality of speech and having the Europeanized Americans more harshly criticize their visiting countrymen. James also builds Winterbourne up in comparison to the other characters by slightly modifying the narrator’s descriptions of Winterbourne. The overall effect of the changes works to undermine the innocence of Daisy and build a stronger case for the Europeanized Americans’ condemnation of the Millers. James also adjusts the way in which the narrator refers to Daisy in the 1909 edition. He replaces the often-used term “ young girl” (1878) with “ charming creature” (1909). The description of Daisy as a “ young girl” is dropped from many other places in the text — over 80 times in all; the odd reference to Daisy as a “ young girl” continues, but much more infrequently. She is usually referred to as either “ Miss Miller”, a “ girl” or a “ strange little creature” (1909). These changes make Daisy less pitiable in our eyes as she is no longer a “ young girl” whose improprieties can be excused due to her age. This works with James’ other edits to make Daisy less of a naïve girl unaware of the consequences of her actions and undeserving of her death, and less worthy of our sympathy. The changes also work to sexualize Daisy by referring to her as a “ Creature” or an object of lust. Daisy’s actions are also referred to differently; in the 1878 edition, Mrs. Walker begs Daisy not to “ walk off to Pincio at this hour to meet a beautiful Italian.” In the same scene in the 1909 edition Mrs. Walker accuses Diasy of “ prowl[ing] off”. This subtle change of verbs elicits a very different reaction to Daisy’s actions, comparing her to an animal that prowls off in search for a mate. In the 1909 edition Daisy’s eyes “ play over” Winterbourne where they once “ glance[d] at” him (1878). When Daisy takes a trip outside she is made to be “ exhibit[ing] herself” (1909). Many adjectives are added to describe Daisy’s eyes in the 1909 edition where there was no mention of them in the 1878 edition: her “ quickened glance” is replaced by her “ shining eyes”; and metonymy is used to replace Daisy herself: “ She” is substituted for “ Her eyes”. This focus in the 1909 edition on Daisy’s eyes, a vital player in the game of seduction, serves to bring out more of her sexuality and passion for the reader. James also degrades the quality of English that the Americans speak in contrast to the proper English spoken by the Europeanized Americans. Mrs. Miller no longer just says things as she did in the 1878 edition, she now “ incoherently mention[s]” them (1909). Randolph, notably, has his quality of speech severely affected by the new edition. In the 1878 edition Randolph says “ I am going to take it to Italy”; by the 1909 edition he says “ I’m going to take it t’Italy”. The importance of the word “ ain’t” in the American diction is realized in the 1909 edition, whose task is to show the ruggedness of Americanspeech. While the word makes four appearances in the 1878 edition, there are thirty-two instances of it by 1909. By degrading the Americans’ quality of English James is able to make the Europeanized Americans look better in contrast and to further separate the two groups in their polarized camps: rough and uncivilized America in one, and old and distinguished Europe in the other. One major change in the book is the depiction of Giovanelli. In the original text Giovanelli was a bit of a sneaky character; he is made out to be an absolute scoundrel by the 1909 edition. James completely dehumanizes Giovanelli through the words he uses to describe him: “ man” is replaced with “ figure”; “ his” is replaced with “ its”; “ he” with “ it”; and “ man” for “ thing.” Giovanelli is no longer worth recognition as a man in the 1909 edition and is referred to by the narrator as a “ thing.” James adds the word “ coxcombical” in the 1909 edition to describe Giovanelli, implying that he is a fool. Even Giovanelli’s actions, which were once called “ very agreeabl[e]” and “ ingenious” (1878) become “ irresponsible” and “ bland” (1909). Any indication of Giovanelli’s intentions to be a mere friend to Daisy is thrown out in the 1909 edition, where the narrator refers to him as “ the girl’s attendant admirer.” By making Giovanelli so despicable the narrator is able to give us even more reason to dislike Daisy for being entranced with the conniving wiles of such a character. Giovanelli and the Millers are not the only subjects of James’s changes. Winterbourne receives a slightly harsher condemnation from the narrator in the 1909 edition. Whereas in the 1878 edition Daisy accuses Winterbourne of “ cut[ting] her” at the Coliseum, by 1909 he “ cuts [her] dead.” The use of the word “ dead” where before there was nothing is a notable change because it strengthens the narrator’s condemnation of Winterbourne’s cruel response to Daisy. This is the point in the story where Winterbourne finally believes he has understood the true Daisy, where he decides that “ she was a young lady about the SHADES of whose perversity a foolish puzzled gentleman need no longer trouble his head or his heart” (1909). The narrator condemns Winterbourne when Winterbourne condemns Daisy, and this is made even more obvious in the 1909 edition. An interesting addition to the later edition occurs when Winterbourne is criticizing Giovanelli for taking Daisy out to the Coliseum at nighttime: suddenly Winterbourne switches from English to French when he tells Giovanelli that he does not care if Giovanelli were to catch the fever, only if Daisy does. This introduction of French into the play works well to develop Winterbourne’s educated character and impress us with his intelligence. The hundreds of minor changes in the 1909 edition of Daisy Miller work towards further polarizing the Europeanized Americans and the Americans tourists, such as the Miller family. James does this by degrading the Millers’ quality of speech while preserving the proper speech of the Europeanized Americans, by adjusting the descriptions of Daisy from being a “ Young girl” (1878) to being a “ charming creature” (1909), by sexualizing Daisy and giving us a reason to distrust her because of her alluded promiscuity, and by condemning Daisy for being so easily taken by such an obvious fraud as Giovanelli. A few of these issues existed in the 1878 edition, such as the allusions to Daisy’s promiscuity and Giovanelli’s undesirability, but James works hard to bring them into the foreground in the 1909 edition. The result is a more controversial book that pits black against white, polarizes the Americans and leaves less room for Daisy to be pitied.