

UDC 821.111

## ORIGINALITY OF THE NATIONAL CHARACTER IN HENRY JAMES' SHORT STORIES

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*The article deals with peculiarities of the national character in the short stories «The Siege of London» (1883) and «Daisy Miller» (1878) written by Henry James. The author depicts the representatives of the New World in Europe with particular attention to the creation of Americans' images Nancy Headway («The Siege of London») and Daisy Miller, the short story's character with the same name. The main characters in H. James' short stories find definite similarity in their desire to achieve only one aim to be accepted in European society using natural charm. They have only one goal to shine among subtle members of this society and to be a part of it.*

Henry James is remembered in history of literature as a master of psychological prose. He is the author of novels, short stories, tales and essays. H. James' works are filled with depth and grace of forms and various stylistic devices. A. Zverev notes that the biography of the author influenced on his works [1, p. 13]. H. James left America in the middle of the 1870-s. After that he lived in Europe almost all the time. The author felt uncomfortable at homeland. H. James thought that cult of enrichment and mercenary ideals were incompatible with the world of literature and subtle intellectual interests [2, p. 396].

One of the main themes of the author's art is the contrast of the Old (Europe) and New World (America): «James was the first who revealed it socially and psychologically <...>. Bourgeois-democratic illusions about superiority of republican United States over depended on feudal past Europe get refracted in his conception «American naivety and European corruption»» [3, p. 313].

It should be mentioned that short stories «The Siege of London» and «Daisy Miller» reveal this issue especially fully. The main characters of these short stories are two Americans who want to be a part of society. The title «The Siege of London» corresponds to the aim of the main character Nancy Headway very well. The title «Daisy Miller» helps us to understand that the main character is the young American girl and because of that all reader's attention focuses on her.

The main character of «The Siege of London» Mrs. Headway is a charming American woman. She wants to take hold in Europe and get into the society of London. Nancy Headway «was a genuine product of the wild West – a flower of the Pacific slope; ignorant, absurd, crude, but full of pluck and spirit, of natural intelligence and of a certain intermittent haphazard felicity of impulse» [4, p. 159]. The main character had a bad reputation at homeland, because she had had a lot of marriages and divorces. Mrs. Headway had already tried to get into society of New-York from wild West, but she lost. Nancy «<...> was in no sort of «society»; she only had a local reputation («the well-known Texan belle», the newspapers called her <...>» [4, p. 159].

Mrs. Headway was always sure that was meant for better things. The main character understood that she didn't fit for the upper class: «She knew of course that as a product of fashionable circles she was nowhere, but she might have great success as a child of nature» [4, p. 191]. She had prepared a plan of the «siege» of London a long time ago. Mrs. Headway was going to marry baronet, Sir Arthur, to take hold in Europe. He was fascinated by Nancy, although baronet thought her to be provincial. Sir Arthur had never seen such ladies as Mrs. Headway. The main character was not so naive as it first seemed. Mrs. Headway was playing her own game: she wore a «mask» to hide her true nature; she said nothing about her past, when Sir Arthur asked about her life in America: «A few, verily, were indispensable, and we needn't attempt to scan too critically the more or less adventurous excursions into poetry and fable with which she entertained and mystified Sir Arthur» [4, p. 191].

It is important to note that the surname *Headway* is symbolic. It means «forward movement or progress, especially when this is slow or difficult» [5]. Nancy loved attention very much and she always knew how it should be. And indeed she became successful quickly. Mrs. Headway married Sir Arthur (despite efforts of the baronet's mother to stop their marriage), but she became the person, who was liked by the upper class: «She has come up very quickly; she's almost famous. Every one's asking about her...» [4, p. 42].

Other Americans, Mr. Littlemore and Waterville, were in the London society. They were exactly the opposite of Nancy: they were well-mannered and lived a quiet life. Mrs. Headway asked Mr. Littlemore and Waterville for help, but they tried to stay out of the way and watched her ascension from the sidelines. They thought that Nancy Headway didn't fit the upper class: «Littlemore said to Waterville that it was stupid of her to wish to scale the heights; she ought to know how much more she was in her element scouring the plain» [4, p. 182].

The main character of the short story «Daisy Miller» is a young American girl, a flirt with charming features. She travelled across Europe with her mother and brother Randolph. We watch Daisy from the point of view of Winterbourne. He had been living in Europe for a very long time. Winterbourne got surprised by her open-mindedness, when they first met: «He had never yet heard a young girl express herself in just this fashion – never, at least, save in cases where to say such things seemed a kind of demonstrative evidence of a certain laxity of deportment» [6, p. 22]. Winterbourne saw her as «<...> a pretty American flirt» [6, p. 23].

Daisy loved attention very much, especially from men: «The girl goes about alone with her foreigners. <...> She has picked up half a dozen of the regular Roman fortune-hunters, and she takes them about to people's houses. When she comes to a party she brings with her a gentleman with a good deal of manner and a wonderful mustache» [6, p. 64]. It is important to note, that the real name Daisy is Annie P. Miller, but she used it only on her cards. The word «*daisy*» means not only a flower, but also «classy, wonderful thing»: «thus this name shows her charm, but at the same time it has a shade of vulgarity, which compatriots, from New-York high places, find in the young girl» [7, p. 672].

The behavior of the young American girl was different from European norms: «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» [6, p. 89 – 90]. Freedom was very important for Daisy. She did what she wanted; she was stubborn and very confident. Daisy didn't see nothing wrong at this sort of things. She got a deadly disease because of her recklessness: «Winterbourne had now begun to think simply of the craziness, from a sanitary point of view, of a delicate young girl lounging away the evening in this nest malaria. What if she were a clever little reprobate? that was no reason for her dying of the *perniciosa*» [6, p. 125]. Daisy's death can be perceived as «payback for her carelessness and stubbornness, but there is something symbolic in such bad ending – reality does not accord with romance and poetry, which were in James' character» [7, p. 14].

Winterbourne was exactly the opposite of Daisy. He lived by the rules, set in the society. Daisy was playing her own game with Winterbourne. He couldn't understand the ambiguous behavior of his acquaintance. Winterbourne was torn between morals of the society and his compatriot's behavior. On the one hand, he thought Daisy was a vulgar girl with bad manners, and on the other hand, she was a breath of fresh air for him: «I never was better pleased in my life,' murmured Winterbourne» [6, p. 55]. The image of Winterbourne helps to reveal the image of Daisy more fully.

Thus, H. James depicts Americans in Europe in the short stories «The Siege of London» and «Daisy Miller». We can find similarities between the characters of stories. Mrs. Headway («The Siege of London») and Daisy («Daisy Miller») are charming American girls with bad manners, who love men's attention very much. They are persistent and stubborn: Mrs. Headway goes persistently towards her aim; Daisy is stubborn and does what she wanted. They intrigue their friends and admirers by wearing a «mask», which hide their true nature: Mrs. Headway says nothing about her past and tries on another image to get into European society; the main character of «Daisy Miller» has another real name. The characters' names in the short stories are symbolic: surname *Headway* means «forward movement or progress, especially when this is slow or difficult», name *Daisy* means «classy, wonderful thing». Images of Mr. Littlemore and Waterville («The Siege of London») and the image of Winterbourne («Daisy Miller») complement women's characters more fully.

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