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novel but he did not give any suggestions, why? The reasons may be in three possibilities: First, it seems that James sees that the solution may be forthcoming by an inquiry into human nature that is more honest and less restricted by societal fashion and political movements. Second, it is likely that James leaves the matter for the reader to guess. Third, James is not in need to give solutions or suggestions because he is decisive in illustrating the bitter reality for feminists that fighting against the “natural matters” – like patriarchy – is often doomed to fail. This last possibility emphasises the fact that the presence of women in society is through the absence of their voices as activists. Woman's presence in the life of man is essential and important when she plays her normal role as a wife, a mother and a lovable creature.

Sqwe3qwe3elf-defeating and unworkable” (Fetterly 24)?

Olive's defeat and Basil's triumph at the end of the novel may evoke some questions: Why does James agree to the collapse of Olive's feminist ideology? Does James want to say that the position of women is at home as wives and mothers? Does James refuse and deny any feminist call for reforming women's situations? For me the answer of these questions is definitely 'no' and very unlikely. James does not agree to the collapse of the feminist ideals simply because his portrayal of Olive in this reactionary way is unfavourable and completely different from the portrayal of other women characters in the novel. He seems to say the woman has the right to call for reforming whenever necessary in a reasonable way. If we compare Olive's role to that of Miss Birdseye, we find that Birdseye is normal, kind, philanthropist, selfless and without eccentric qualities. Therefore S. G. Putt sees that "Miss Birdseye is a kindly example of those professional reformers" (Putt 180). These qualities of Birdseye are not available for Olive. So she is defeated and her defeat does not necessarily declare James's true view on the situation of women.

Although Henry James is clear in determining the winning party represented in Basil, he is expected to give solutions or even suggestions for the mutiny of feminists at the end of the

really feels. It can be understood that she evaluates her situation well.

In terms of some feminist interpretations, the end of the novel can be read as a strong support for patriarchal role of man. For example, Claire Kahane sees that the novel's male protagonist, Basil Ransom, "is a symbol of political authority and 'voice'" (Kahane, 66). That is to say he practices his role as a patriarch and he succeeds. Kahane does not accept this success. Sarah Blair sees that Basil's marriage to Verena is a sort of fraudulence:

Basil converts Verena into a silent domestic by forcing her violently into marriage. He enchants her with the "natural" impressions of heterosexual romance within the naturalized atmosphere of New York's Central Park. Therefore, Basil 'biologizes' Verena, reminding her of a woman's "natural" obligations to serve as the nation's 'behind the scenes' (Blair 151-63).

In fact Basil does not oblige Verena for marriage. Marriage comes after a long period of persuasion from Basil to Verena. I think that Blair is mistaken in her judgment of Basil-Verena relationship. Judith Fetterly is like other women critics in their judgment and reads the end of the novel as "contempt for
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dominate Verena for two reasons: first, Olive acts as if she revengs on the male sex for their patriarchy. Second, Verena has been taught right how to be normal not revolutionary feminine. This is why Basil finally wins his battle with Olive for possessing Verena. Olive's quest for being a patriarch ends in failure because she imprisons Verena in her views and does not allow Verena a sort of freedom to act separately. John Hoarth wonders: "How can Olive possibly fight for female emancipation whilst simultaneously making a prisoner out of Verena" (Howarth 83)? Basil's triumph is supported at the end by making Verena the happy and content wife:

[Basil] allowed [Verena], certainly. no illusion on the subject of the fate she should meet as his wife; he flung over it no rosiness of promised ease; he let her know that she should be poor, withdrawn from view, a partner of his struggle, of his severe, hard, unique stoicism. When he spoke of such things as these, and bent his eyes on her, she could not keep the tears from her own; she felt that to throw herself into his life (bare and arid as for the time it was) was the condition of happiness for her (James. *Bostonians* 386-7).

When Verena leaves with Basil to their home, she said "Ah, now I'm glad" (James, *Bostonians* 450). Verena utters what she

views to Verena and to control her destiny. In his treatment with Verena Basil adopts the course of persuasion whereas Olive adopts the course of obligation. Verena may suffer as the wife of a conservative man like Basil who has stiff and anti-feminist opinions. But Olive's use of Verena as a tool is a sort of oppression. Basil's triumph over Olive — which is apparently understood as a triumph of man over woman — can also be understood as a triumph of woman's personality because Verena refuses to be a tool at the hands of Olive. Although James is more biased to Basil's views than those of Olive's, this bias seems logical and normal because it conforms to what is happening in the world around him. James seems to say 'woman cannot be a patriarch'. This ending may satisfy men who believe in the patriarchal system and dissatisfy women especially feminists who do against patriarchy.

Though it seems that Basil's notion of marriage — based on his ideology — will not give Verena the chance to be independent, Verena decides to accept Basil's offer of marriage. And this decision belongs to her alone. This means that James affirms the authenticity and mutuality of the male-female instinct of love for each other. Basil's marriage to Verena means that this sacred relationship must continue regardless of what surrounds it with problems and impediments. On the other hand, Olive fails to

see it possible or desirable, from the perspective of the two sexes, for the woman to take the role of man as a patriarch.

If James is interested in showing the difference between Basil-Verena and Olive-Verena relationships all over the novel, he becomes decisive in showing the result of male-female combat. Failure is the destiny of Olive-Verena relationship because Olive wants to possess Verena's mind; even she wants her to be virgin. Success is the destiny of Basil-Verena relationship because it is normally doomed like any man-woman relationship. Olive fails because she does not allow Verena an "empty space" inside herself. She fails to play the role of real patriarch. Olive is a dictator in her feeling towards Verena. On the other hand, Basil allows Verena some space to think and decide. Although Basil does not allow her to distance herself from him, he usually shows respect for the limitations Verena insists on.

In the end Basil wins the battle when he gets married to Verena. His patriarchal ideology triumphs over Olive's feminist ideology. This triumph means the triumph of masculinity over femininity in control and authority. It seems for James that Basil's triumph is normal and more positive of the two possible endings. Basil really loves Verena and this love ends in normal marriage but Olive seeks, with all her power, to dictate her own

carefully as that of her sister was encouraged to stray” (James, *Bostonians* 10).

Thus *The Bostonians* provides an amusing glance at the competition between man and woman. Basil is portrayed as a man who has more realistic view of the world. He points out that suffering is the lot of mankind in general, and that we must simply make the best of it, while his cousin Olive is convinced that suffering is the lot only of women, and then only until they emancipate themselves. Basil strives to convince Verena that she is made for love to give.

It seems that the novel is, obviously, concerned with sexual politics and tensions between the two sexes. James is skeptical about the feminist reformers of his time. All over the novel, except at the end, James seems neutral in the battle between Basil and Olive. And in that he is like his fictional character, Verena. He sometimes sympathizes with Olive and other times with Basil. And this sympathy symbolically means that in the course of life either man or woman can win. In order to go to the root of the issue, James prolongs the events to expose various views of women in the issue of feminism. He has a sense that man's look to woman should be serious because women can no more be regarded simply as a 'decorative sex'. James does not

socialistic figures of names and episodes ... She looked as if she had spent her entire life on platforms, in audiences, in conventions, in phalansteries, in séances” (James, *Bostonians* 55). Miss Birdseye is the only person who emerges far from James's scorn. She has no desire to win. She just expresses her views objectively. She is neither stern nor fanatic like Olive.

In contrast to the feminist reformers, James offers another different woman character. She is Mrs. Luna, Olive's sister. Luna is a worldly woman who does not subscribe to the concept of the “new woman.” She is a widower and lives with Olive. While Luna concerns herself with fashions, and physical appearance, her sister Olive Chancellor is quite different. Mrs. Luna usually resort to attract men to herself throughout her overbearing perfume, her tight bodice, winking eyelashes and forward manners — she makes use of her femininity to advance herself in society, therefore representing all that Olive detests about women. She represents the real and normal woman whose intention is to be an attractive woman. James puts her in contrast with her sister Olive to illustrate the normal role of woman not in her deliberate attraction of men but in her interest in the other sex. James's description of Olive is contrast to Luna: “[Olive is] habited in a plain dark dress, without any ornaments, and her smooth, colorless hair was confined as

On an ideological level, James sets up two systems: the modern sexual emancipator represented in Olive, and the radical conservative represented in Basil. Verena has to choose between them. Basil considers that Olive's views about women's liberation are inanities she is not sure of their meanings:

the inanities she uttered — the rights and wrongs of women, the equality of the sexes, the hysterics of conventions, the further stultification of the suffrage, the prospect of conscript mothers in the national Senate. It made no difference; she didn't mean it; she didn't know what she meant, she had been stuffed with this trash by her father, and she was neither more nor less willing to say it than to say anything else (James, *Bostonians* 62).

Basil's masculinity and his indifference towards feminist ideals constantly always annoys Olive Chancellor who accuses him of being the stiffest of conservatives whose minds were steeled against women.

The female struggle against patriarchy is not confined to Olive and Verena but the other minor characters fill out the picture of the Bostonian feminist society. Miss Birdseye is a very elderly feminine activist from a previous generation. Though she is a feminist, she is different from Olive. She represents the reasonable voice of feminism: "She seemed ... a multitude of

it that she will never marry, but continue her life just like Olive, and give speeches to convert others to feminism. Olive could convince Verena to leave her faith healer father and her vulgar, but socially ambitious, mother and to join her in Boston. There, Olive attempts to mould her into being the voice of the feminist cause. The handsome Basil, whose political philosophy is the antithesis of Olive's, pursues Verena from Boston to New York to Cape Cod in an attempt to win her away. The struggle between Basil and Olive is: Who is to have Verena? That is the question which is asked with great particularity and at great length.

Verena is at first appalled by Basil's views. But women are always attracted to heroes. And though he is poor and has met no wider success in life, Basil Ransom is heroic. He is heroic in his self-confidence, his certainty and his defiance of the spirit of radical democracy. In her book *Sexual Personae*, Camille Paglia sees that Basil is an eminent character among James' male protagonists in being "a virile hero" (Paglia 611). Paglia's opinion of Basil's virility can be linked to the concept of patriarchy, whereas her assesment of Olive is that she is "an irritable political ideologue whose summery Cape Cod has no connection to dangerous chthonian nature" (Paglia 611).

in this young woman an alter ego, a woman who can give to the movement of female liberation a sort of inspiration she herself lacks. Her beauty attracts Basil who sees her a good and suitable future wife.

But what is not clear about Verena is whether she is a naïve genius who allows others to exploit her unwillingly, or she is a representative of the majority of women who are in need to leadership. She has a strong voice that makes Olive call her "charming creature". Verena is admired by all characters of the novel: "She's a high-class speaker. She had certainly spoken with great facility to cultivated and high-minded audiences". She has "an air of artless enthusiasm, of personal purity," whose nature is "to emit those charming notes of her voice ... to please everyone who came near her and to be happy that she pleased" (James, *Bostonians* 54, 56, 62).

Olive persuades Verena to leave her parents' house, move in with her and study in preparation for a career in the feminist movement. But Basil attracts Verena's attention through his charismatic character and she finds herself attracted to him. And here the normal patriarchal role appears: male-female mutual attraction. Olive, meanwhile, also really likes the girl and invites her to come and stay for a prolonged period of time. Verena falls under the influence of Olive and has set her mind to

Bostonians 335-6). For Basil, women are 'quite inferior' because they are 'weak and second-rate'. Basil, like Olive, wants to possess Verena. And he opposes the idea that her place is to be with the public.

In persuading Verena to adopt their ideologies, Basil and Olive follow different methods. Verena is the proper setting for the two sides to wage war, the best battleground, for she is perfectly innocent and neutral. She has an extraordinary sympathy for all arguments; she offers herself up to anyone: "She gave herself up, only shutting her eyes a little, as we do whenever a person in whom we have perfect confidence proposes, with our assent, to subject us to some sensation" (James, *Bostonians* 80). So her happiness and freedom are at stake because she leaves herself in the hands of others, and we can only hope she finds a third way in between.

Verena Tarrant is like a fertilized land in which every plant can grow; she is a purely imaginary being. Henry James, in his depiction of Verena, makes her refined, beautiful, and spiritual in her power. These aspects of character make her hesitated between Olive and Basil. Verena is both highly intelligent and girlishly feminine. She has a special gift of communication; she is able to stand before an audience and deliver moving speeches for her hearers. Olive immediately sees

less intelligent and weaker than men. He holds that women are 'delicate, agreeable creatures, whom providence has placed under the protection of the bearded sex' (James, *Bostonians* 202).

If Olive's view of feminism is that it is 'human progress', for Basil feminism is not any kind of progress and he calls it 'modern pestilence' that should be eradicated. Here Basil's partiality to the male sex is very clear; he is interested in saving his own sex, from, as he puts it, "the most damnable feminisation!" His ideology appears clearly when he says:

The whole generation is womanised; the masculine tone is passing out of the world; it's a feminine, a nervous, hysterical, chattering, canting age, an age of hollow phrases and false delicacy and exaggerated solitudes and coddled sensibilities, which, if we don't soon look out, will usher in the reign of mediocrity, of the feeblest and flattest and the most pretentious that has ever been (James, *Bostonians* 334).

For Basil, woman's place should be at home, not in public. "My plan," he informs Verena, "is to keep you at home and have a better time with you there than ever.... I have such a boundless appreciation of your sex in private life that I am perfectly ready to advocate a man's having a half a dozen wives" (James,

motivations as objectively as possible. For having unpleasant and dull ideas, Olive's manner is described as morbid and nervous: "this pale girl, with her light-green eyes, her pointed features and nervous manner, was visibly morbid; it was as plain as day that she was morbid" (James, *Bostonians* 12). Like many of the most influential real-life feminists, such as Simone de Beauvoir and Virginia Woolf, Olive is unmarried and consequently non-maternal. Her being unmarried is out of her choice:

There are women who are unmarried by accident, and others who are unmarried by option; but Olive Chancellor was unmarried by every implication of her being. She was a spinster as Shelley was a lyric poet, or as the month of August is sultry (James, *Bostonians* 18-19).

Basil is not cruel like Olive. He too has a "private vision of reform." But "the first principle of it was to reform the reformers" (James, *Bostonians* 20). He does not consciously set out to change Verena who becomes a star on the lecture circuit with her advocacy of women's equality. He never asks her to give up her role as a feminist. He exclaimed [to Olive]: "The position of women is to make fools of men. I will change my position for yours any day" (James, *Bostonians* 24). Basil's views are intensely male-chauvinistic, that is to say women are

If Olive believes that 'whatever is, is wrong', Basil believes that 'whatever is, is right.' Basil believes that women were meant for exclusive love and for privacy. He sees that woman's feeling should be directed towards being passive and private and to leave publicity to the tougher sex of men. This view reflects that Basil is conservative who holds stoicism and chivalry in the highest regard and at the same time his view contrasts the feminist view of liberation. He is like a stoic who is able to endure pain and suffering without complaining and who does not give any consideration for the stupid things in this world that most people care so much about. He believes that the age in which he lives is "talkative, querulous, hysterical, maudlin, and full of false ideas, of unhealthy germs, of extravagant, dissipated habits, for which a great reckoning was in store" (James, *Bostonians* 189-90). Basil naturally includes the women's rights movement in the more hysterical categories of the era.

It is very clear from the narrative that Olive is a man-hater and consequently her battle with Basil is symbolic to her battle with the male sex. This battle is ideological, idealistic and passionate. Because she is rich, Olive pays a sum of money for Verena's father to allow his daughter to live with her. It is very difficult for the reader to like Olive character, but James is scrupulously honest in giving us her inner thoughts and

Though he is diligent and ambitious, Basil has not yet been successful. He believes that he is unlucky. He wonders whether he is stupid or unskilled; and he is finally obliged to confess to himself that he is unpractical. Though he is devaluated like that, he is good-looking in his own way; he is a handsome man to the other sex:

He was tall and lean and dressed throughout in black; ... In spite of this decoration the young man looked poor — as poor as a young man could look who had such a fine head and such magnificent eyes; ... his head had a character of elevation which fairly added to his stature (James, *Bostonians* 2).

In addition to his good-looking, Basil has some good characteristics and reactionary views that set his politics:

As the result of a considerable intellectual experience, he was, in social and political matters, a reactionary. I suppose he was very conceited, for he was much addicted to judging his age ... He was an immense admirer of the late Thomas Carlyle, and was very suspicious of the encroachments of modern democracy ... He liked his pedigree, he revered his forefathers, and he rather pitied those who might come after him (James, *Bostonians* 190-1).

Ransom. James is clear in giving the reader a type of the life style Verena will have if she stays with Olive, but there is no explicit idea of what her life will be like with Basil. Will she be placed on the right way of the feminist movement with Olive or be condemned to a life of domestic servitude with Basil?

In contrast to Olive, what Basil Ransom wants from Verena is love followed by marriage. He is like any man who loves the other sex by instinct. He falls in love with Verena Tarrant as a beautiful woman even if he does not agree to her feminist ideas; and he seems intent on persuading her to marry him. He believes that people must excel within their appointed roles in society. Basil Ransom is a struggling writer of a romantic appearance and a man of deep ideas in life. His views are extremely reactionary and conservative:

He was sick of all the modern cant about freedom and had no sympathy with those who wanted an extension of it. What was needed for the good of the world was that people should make much better use of the liberty they possessed. ... He thought the spread of education a gigantic farce — people stuffing their heads with a lot of empty catchwords that prevented them from doing their work quietly and honestly. (James, *Bostonians* 328).

into liberalism's lap not because she has believed in it but because she is attracted by its novelty and its romantic ideas. Olive finds it easy to convince Verena that women have been oppressed throughout history. The lovely girl quickly agrees. And hence Verena is to serve Olive's purposes in a scheme of social revenge on man for his patriarchal role.

Verena is hesitated all the time between Olive and Basil as if she is waiting for the true patriarch to convince and dominate her. So *The Bostonians* explores one of the themes of early feminism, patriarchy. James is at best ambivalent about the feminist movement and the early chapters harshly satirize Olive and her fellow ideologies. The reader is left to wonder about the motives beyond Olive's "love" for Verena. Olive's motives towards Verena maybe to fight man for power or to free her from the domination of man; or she may have lesbian tendencies. James is not explicit here, partially due to the conventions of the time. As a young woman of limited means, Verena probably has few options available to her. There is an attraction in the young lady's centered life offered to her by Olive Chancellor. For Verena, Olive's character "was full of a queer, touching, tragic expression, saying ever so many things, both familiar and strange" (James, *Bostonians* 319). Nevertheless, she also obviously enjoys being attracted by Basil

causes Olive to be “haunted... with the fear that Verena would marry, a fate to which she was altogether unprepared to surrender her” (James, *Bostonians* 118). But her sister, the widowed Mrs. Luna, is convinced of the fact that marriage is normal and necessary for any woman. She states that:

[Verena] would stay with Olive as long as she served her purpose ... she will give Olive the greatest cut she has ever had in her life ... [But] she will run off with some lion tamer; she will marry a circus man [when she has the chance] (James, *Bostonians* 206).

So when Mrs. Burrage wants to propose Verena for her son, Olive feels she must defend her attachment to Verena and, taking a “superior tone,” becomes hostile toward Mrs. Burrage: “You do believe – though you pretend you don’t – that I control her actions, and as far as possible her desires and that I am jealous of any other relations she may possibly form” (James, *Bostonians* 312). Olive puts herself as the guardian or caretaker for Verena and this is not her real role; it is the role of Verena’s father. It is the patriarchal role Olive wants to play.

Hence Olive Chancellor represents the true believer of the feminist right to replace man’s patriarchal role in family and in society at large. She herself plays it with Verena Tarrant. At the same time Verena is the symbol of victimized woman who falls

desires that are contained within her subconscious and quite often, through this influence, she can get herself into situations and wonder "how did I end up in this" (Weor, *Treatise* 28) ? In Weor's definition:

Gnosis is a spiritual psychology [or philosophy] that aimed at the emancipation of the consciousness from the pain and fear produced within the mind. It is to transform the material mind into the spiritual mind - to think, feel and act in accordance with the values of the Being. This is to awaken to our own humanity (Weor, *Perfect Matrimony* 23).

So Olive is like those who have recently entered Gnosis; she is "full of impatience; [she] wants immediate phenomenal manifestations, instantaneous astral projections, illumination, wisdom ... etc" (Weor, *Perfect Matrimony* 85). Whereas the Christian sees salvation in the next world, the Gnostic sees salvation in this present world. Eric Voegelin sees that the Gnostic man "no longer wishes to perceive in admiration the intrinsic order of the universe. For him the world has become a prison from which he wants to escape" (Voegelin 8-9).

In Olive's view Verena is a good and decent creature on whom she is able to influence easily especially Verena is still young (eighteen years). This wrong understanding of Verena

sisters, they were her own, and the day of their delivery had dawned. This was the only sacred cause; this was the great, the just revolution. It must triumph, it must sweep everything before it; it must extract from the other, the brutal, blood-stained, ravening race, the last particle of expiation (James, *Bostonians* 38).

A few lines later, Olive imagines that turning the existing order of patriarchy would bring about a new era for the human family and that she must be devoted in every pulse of her being to the cause of emancipating women from the dominance of man especially the weak, insulted and persecuted ones even if she would die for it.

Miss Chancellor wants to change the world to the better; and the better in her view is matriarchy instead of patriarchy or at least equality between man and woman. Olive sees that what she is doing is a sacred struggle: "The most secret, the most sacred hope of [Olive's] nature was that she might someday have such a chance, that she might be a martyr and die for something" (James, *Bostonians* 14). Some critics see that James describes and explains Olive's cause in terms of the Psychology of the Gnostic in which "the subconscious reacts to the events of life obscuring the perception of the true nature of things". The choices Olive makes in life are largely due to the many fears and

As a central figure in the reform movement, Olive Chancellor makes use of her intelligence for political change. She is not content with the world as it is. Her activity in the reform movement blinds her to see the vital role of man in the life of woman. In the words of her sister, Olive is a "female Jacobin ... a nihilist." For her "Whatever is, is wrong" (James, *Bostonians* 6). This refers to the idea of her being radical, left-wing revolutionary politician who does not believe in the traditions of her time. The left-right politics describes an outlook or specific position that accepts or supports social equality, often in opposition to social hierarchy and social inequality. She is an eminent star in the world of Boston radicals: "She was brought up in the city of reform. ... She would reform the solar system if she could get hold of it" (James, *Bostonians* 7).

Olive imagines herself to be born to "lead a crusade" which would redeem "that dreadful image that was always before her." This image is concerned with the unhappiness of women:

The voice of their silent suffering was always in her ears, the ocean of tears that they had shed from the beginning of time seemed to pour through her own eyes. Ages of oppression had rolled over them; uncounted millions had lived only to be tortured, to be crucified. They were her

journey behind them is mapped out and figured, with its false steps, its wrong observations, and all its infatuated, deluded geography (James, *Bostonians* 411).

Theodora Bosanquet, Henry James' secretary, remarked that James's female protagonists were often young American women facing oppression or abuse:

When he walked out of the refuge of his study and into the world and looked around him, he saw a place of torment, where creatures of prey perpetually thrust their claws into the quivering flesh of doomed, defenseless children of light [American women]... His novels are a repeated exposure of this wickedness, a reiterated and passionate plea for the fullest freedom of development, unimperiled by reckless and barbarous stupidity (Bosanquet 275–76).

In her desire to control Verena, Olive wants to possess her body and mind. And this is a mistaken course because she wants to do away with Verena's entity as a woman. Olive forgets that Verena is a gifted eloquent speaker and she has a share of it in personality. Thus, if she submits to Olive's will, Verena will be reduced to a puppet, with no real self.

Rights in Nineteenth-century America, Ann Braude contends that the early women's rights movement and Spiritualism went hand in hand. Her book makes a convincing argument for the importance of religion in the study of American women's history. More specifically, Braude argues that "Americans throughout the country found messages from spirits most plausible when delivered through the agency of adolescent girl" (Braude 118).

It is clear that James criticises Olive, Basil and Verena, for what they are doing. There is something moving, something recognizable, in the way Verena, Olive and Basil cannot see themselves the way James and the reader can see all around them. There are several things they are unaware of. They are confused about what and why they are doing and will not realize it until it is too late. It gives the uncomfortable hope that one day they will look back on the raging arguments of the day and see all the mistakes they were making. As James puts it:

These hours of backward clearness come to all men and women, once at least, when they read the past in the light of the present, with the reason of things, like unobserved finger-posts, protruding where they never saw them before. The

indirectly that patriarchy is a normal phenomenon. Those who call for doing away with patriarchy want to do away with political and domestic virility and morality which accompany the public presence of women. James's representations of women-characters in the novel reflect the real women figures of the nineteenth-century woman. They were domestic, silent and picturesque. James' overwhelming tone for the feminists' call for equal rights is clearly a picture of the time when the novel was written. It can be aid that women's fascination with reform is related to spiritualism which was very prevalent in the American society during the nineteenth century. Many of the people who associated themselves with Spiritualism were political reformers and abolitionists. Spiritualism attracted more followers like the women's rights movement; and other proponents of equality saw that they could lecture freely and advance their unconventional ideas. Like the Spiritualists, some women were crying out for equality. Especially they saw Christianity, America's primary religion, still viewed women as secondary to men. Of course the feminists disagreed wholeheartedly with this, and as a result, many turned their backs on the Christian churches. Those women seem to say that woman should be dealt with as a spiritual being not a physical one. In her book *Radical Spirits: Spiritualism and Women's*

James has a rather ironical view of the suffragette movement and its members, it is important to note that Basil Ransom's views of manhood and domestic bliss do not escape careful examination. In other words, each party is somewhat ridiculous. Both Olive and Basil attempt to convince Verena of the right way to live, and of the right ideas to have.

Olive is a pioneer and a true believer in the reform movement that proclaims equal rights for women. All the sufferings of women all over the past years are in front of her eyes and in her heart, so she feels:

All the bullied wives, the stricken mothers, the dishonored, the deserted maidens who lived on earth and longed to leave it, passed and repassed before her eyes ... she had made up her mind that it was women, in the end, who had paid for everything. ... the whole burden of the human lot came upon them ... The sacrifices, the blood, the tears, the terrors were theirs (James, *Bostonians* 182).

As a result Olive tries to convince Verena that "after so many ages of wrong, men must take their turn, men must pay" (James, *Bostonians* 185).

It seems that Henry James sees that the annihilation of patriarchy is a collapse of national ideals. He wants to say

patriarchy and be a patriarch herself? Will Basil overcome Olive and triumph over her in their battle? Will patriarchy have superiority as a normal social system?

James presents exciting and interesting but not sympathetic characters. Olive Chancellor is in a state of battle all the time with Basil Ransom. This battle is represented in two things: first illustrating their intellectual attitudes (Basil's normal patriarchy and Olive's attempts for being a patriarch) and second their success or failure to control Verena Tarrant. Verena and Olive are activists in the woman's emancipation movement and have set up house together. What attracted Basil to Verena is her appearance and voice while Olive is attracted to her eloquent oratory. It is the genteel battle between Basil and Olive for the heart and mind of the young Miss Tarrant. So this battle is an attempt to see who wins and controls: man over woman or woman over woman. Or is the woman able to take the role of man as a father and husband? In other words, from a feminist point of view, can woman dispense with man? Or it is the normal law of life that woman is in need to man.

In *The Bostonians* James illustrates the role of Boston reformers throughout the women's suffrage movement in the 19th century. He portrays the mercurial nature of the feminist movement through his political satire. While it may appear that

female. She runs a battle between her and her cousin Basil for the affections of the young beautiful, Verena Tarrant. The goal of this battle is different for both fighters. Olive's goal is to take Verena to be an active member in the feminist movement by dominating her in a patriarchal way. Basil's goal is a sort of normal attraction and love that can be ended in marriage. Olive wants to manipulate Verena into a machine for 'the cause' of the feminist movement and at the same time to take her away from Basil whereas Basil wants to marry her and live a traditional life, therefore ending her career as a feminist. The two competitors live out their philosophies of life and society, and inevitably the poor Verena is caught in the crossfire. At the very beginning she is neither too dedicated to her feminist ideas nor in love with Basil. She plays a relatively passive role, and so her heart is up for either Olive or Basil to win. Hence James succeeds in depicting Verena as a blank paper on whom the powerful influence may work.

There are some questions that can find an answer in the novel. What does James want to say about the situation of the American women in the nineteenth century? How does James use his characterization technique to present the plight of these early feminists? Will Olive Chancellor succeed or fail in her quest of emancipating Verena and herself from the system of

details of Basil's and Olive's competition for Verena's loyalty. Verena, an innocent, young girl who has a talent for public speaking. Olive tries to control her in a patriarchal way and Verena becomes a star lecturer in the feminist lecture system. As a result, hostility develops between Olive and Basil. So the novel is a competition between a man and a woman to control a woman. Olive, all over the novel, tries to prove that patriarchy can be annihilated by women themselves throughout their influence upon each other. In Alfred Habegger's view, James's three main characters Basil, Olive and Verena portray three separate identities of the feminist movement that became the unraveling of gender roles. Basil represents the role of men, Olive represents those women consumed by the feminist movement and Verena represents those women caught in the middle (Habegger 195). In many ways Olive and Basil can be seen as direct opposites to one another; Basil represents the traditional patriarchal society and Olive represents feminist ideals that call for emancipating woman from the domination of man by being a patriarch herself; Verena represents the indicator that may tend to any of them.

The story is concerned with the interactions of these three characters: Olive Chancellor is a hard-hearted, bitter woman who is fiercely opposed to all traditional things of both male and

I wished to write a very American tale, a tale very characteristic of our social condition, and I asked myself what was the most salient and peculiar point in our social life. The answer was: the situation of woman, the decline of the sentiment of sex, the agitation on their behalf (James, Notebooks 47).

By the 1880s, some female voices had proclaimed some questions of race, gender, and sexuality. These voices influenced James's choice of the subject of *The Bostonians*. In one of his letters James writes:

The characters are for the most part persons of the radical reforming type, who are especially interested in the emancipation of women, giving them the suffrage, releasing them from bondage, coeducating them with men, etc. They regard this as the great question of the day—the most urgent and sacred reform (James, *Complete Stories* 18).

The Bostonians centers on an odd triangle of characters: a man and two women. Basil Ransom is a political conservative from the South (Mississippi); Olive Chancellor is Ransom's cousin and a Boston feminist; and Verena Tarrant is a young girl patronizing Olive in the feminist movement. The storyline concerns the battle of Ransom (the man) and Olive (the woman) for dominating Verena's life, and most of the novel gives the

social, or economic issues of their society. By not giving voice and value to women's opinion, responses, and writings, men have therefore suppressed the female, defined what it means to be feminine, and thereby devoiced, devalued, and trivialized what it means to be a woman. In effect, men have made women the 'non-significant other' (Bressler 180).

On the whole feminist literary criticism exists to counter, resist, and eventually eliminate the traditions and conventions of patriarchy.

Henry James' *The Bostonians* (1886) is a satirical study of the feminist movement. This novel can be read as a study of woman's quest for being a patriarch in United States of America in the 19th century. The events of *The Bostonians* are set in New England of U.S.A. The female characters of this novel are involved in the feminist reform movement that swept New England during the latter half of the nineteenth century. The novel appeared thirty-five years before female suffrage. James foresaw the catastrophic weakenss of the feminine life force by the dominance of men over women. When Henry James started writing *The Bostonians* in 1883, he uncovered his intentions for this novel:

societies women fight for their rights and struggle to survive without the power and domination of men threatening them. Women see that they are as capable as men to do the role of man.

After the emergence of feminist literary criticism at the level of both theory and practice, feminist critics “reflected the political goals of feminism in that authors and texts were judged in accordance with how far they could be reconciled with feminist ideology” (Newton 26). Feminist literary criticism is an extension to feminism as a movement. It arises from the viewpoint of feminism. It suggests that women in literature were historically presented as objects seen from a male perspective. It examines gender politics in works of literature. Judith Fetterley sees that feminist criticism is “a political act whose aim is not simply to interpret the world but to change it by changing the consciousness of those who read and their relation to what they read” (Fetterley 8).

Feminist criticism is concerned with basic representations of genders. In his book *Literary Criticism: An Introduction to Theory and Practice*, Charles Bressler attempts to mention the central issues of feminism as follows:

Men, either unconsciously or consciously, have oppressed women, allowing them little or no voice in the political,

the degrading views of women so that all women can realize they are not a 'nonsignificant Other' and can realize that each woman is a valuable person possessing the same privileges and rights as every man. A feminist theorist Carole Pateman sees that "The patriarchal construction of the difference between masculinity and femininity is the political difference between freedom and subjection" (Pateman 207). And according to Judith Bennett patriarchy is the "central problem" of women's history, and even "one of the greatest general problems of all history" (Bennett 54, 80).

As regards the main features of patriarchy, feminists claim that women's representations in major institutions are weak compared to the powerful roles of men. Even in the quality of both sexes' roles, it is noted that woman is less represented in decision-making positions and in employment and industry. Male violence against women is also a key feature of patriarchy. In Allen Johnson's view patriarchy is clearly found in male identified societies in which: "the aspects of society and personal attributes that are highly valued are associated with men, while devalued attributes and social activities are associated with women." In these societies "the center of attention is the natural place for men and boys, and that women should occupy the margins" (Johnson 58). In some patriarchal

result in dissatisfaction among the majority of women who call for the same privileges given to men. They refuse the existing political and social organizations because they are based on patriarchy. Thus, radical feminists tend to support cultural change that undermines patriarchy. The ideology of radical feminism "aims to challenge and to overthrow patriarchy by opposing standard gender roles and the male oppression of women, and calls for a radical reordering of society" (Willis 117). Clara Fraser, a socialist feminist, sees that the existence of patriarchy is a result of two factors: the social life style and the property of production tools. Fraser discusses the reality of women's position at that time in the 1960s:

Women's 'inferiority' derives from the condition of the majority of women, who are excluded by economics and tradition from participating in public social production and are confined to private domestic labor, leading lives of personal service to isolated families. A man engages in social production, and thereby serves society; a woman essentially serves her man (Fraser 60-61).

Most feminist critics characterize patriarchy as an unjust social system that is oppressive to women. Women's opinions are not given voice and value in the patriarchal societies. Therefore, the goal of feminist critics and writers is to change

control women, children, and property. It implies the institutions of male rule and privilege, and is dependent on female subordination. Some feminists use the term 'male dominance' instead of patriarchy to discuss gender relations. They believe that the dominance of the father within the family is symbolic of the supremacy in all other institutions. Many would argue that the patriarchal family is important because it lies at the heart of a social systematic process of male domination. So various studies view patriarchy as an ideology or a belief in which men dominate women in both private and public affairs and consequently it puts men at the top and women below.

Liberal feminists focus on inequalities between men and women in civil rights and educational opportunities; and they call for individual liberty and personal autonomy for women. That is to say women should live the life of their own choice. Those feminists affirm that "Patriarchal moralistic laws restrict women's options on the grounds that certain options should not be available to women because morality forbids women's choosing them" (Cornell 153). According to radical feminism the superiority and domination of men over women lead to the oppression of women. Radical feminists see that patriarchy gives man rights, privileges and power over woman and consequently

which was the Bronze Age, but it's no longer appropriate. And the reason we find it so hard is that it was institutionalized before Western civilization really, as we know it, was, so to speak, invented, and the process of creating patriarchy was really well completed (Lerner 7).

Now at the beginning of the 21st century some nations all over the world change the idea of women as specialized homemakers and men as providers; women achieve equality with men in recognition of their talents. Today there are many women who gain great influence and contribute greatly to history.

There are different feminist interpretations about the reasons and factors of male domination and female subordination. The early beginning of Feminism came as a reaction to patriarchy as a doctrine in the European societies. Feminism, as an ideology, "opposes the political, economic and cultural relegation of women to positions of inferiority" (Cornell 15). Feminists affirm women's equality with men, and rejects patriarchy which is used in feminism as a concept to investigate the domination of man over woman. Patriarchy refers to "systemic and trans-historical male domination over women" (Edgell 35). It is a social system in which the father or the male member of the family is the leader who has the authority to

division of labor” (Engels 81). With this change emerges property as male strength; and monopoly over certain tools gives men economic ascendancy. Thus the first family emerged to have man as a master who “fiercely defended his claim to sole sexual access to his wives and thus to certainty about his heirs” (Oakley 105). Therefore the existence of family led to patriarchy:

The relational basis for women's subordination lies in the family, an institution aptly named from the Latin word for servant, because the family as it exists in complex societies is overwhelmingly a system of dominant and subordinate roles ... Within such an institution, particularly when, as in the middle-class family, the woman has no job outside the house and any economic independence, women are in fact the chattels or possessions of their husbands (Ritzer 467).

In her interpretation of the factors of the emergence of patriarchy Gerda Lerner sees that patriarchy is a human invention coming out of a specific historic period and not natural God-given condition:

Patriarchy was created by human beings; it was created by men and women, at a certain given point in the historical development of the human race. It was probably appropriate as a solution for the problems of that time,

Roman culture, and the thinking of the Church Fathers who extended the dualism of flesh and spirit, body and intellect to the sexes. Women were viewed as highly sexual beings inferior to men by nature. In this seemingly rationally defined natural order, it followed that the man, as the superior being, was head of the household. The woman fulfilled her primary role in marriage through the procreation and nurture of children. The education of children, an intellectual activity, was the man's responsibility (Beach 89). Therefore the women of the Middle Ages were totally dominated by the male members of their family. Those women were expected to instantly obey not only their father, but also their brothers and any other male members of the family.

According to Marxist theory in the West there are different interpretations of the emergence of patriarchy. The factors that destroyed the previous social system of matriarchy, producing what Engels calls, 'the world historic defeat of the female sex' are economic, specifically the replacement of hunting and gathering by herding, horticulture, and farming economies. Marx and Engels see that the existence of patriarchy is a result of the economic oppression of women: " the main factors of women's subordination are the capitalist production method and separation of labor from house, that lead to the gender

associations among people sharing blood ties. Moreover these ties were traced through the female line because one's direct link to one's mother was far more easily demonstrable than one's ties to one's father – the gens was, in other words, matrilineal (Ritzer 468).

The Greek historian Herodotus (484 - 425 B.C.) expressed his astonishment that in Egypt women could inherit, purchase and own property and slaves, and could make legal contracts, all things they could not do in ancient Greece. Herodotus records that there even was a female pharaoh, Hatshepsut, who ruled for almost twenty years in the 15th century B.C., and was responsible for some of Egypt's monumental architecture at Karnak (Meade 38). On the contrary, the works of Aristotle viewed women as morally, intellectually, and physically inferior to men; he saw women as the property of men; he claimed that women's role in society was to reproduce and serve men in the household; and saw male domination of women as natural and virtuous. (Shaver 116)

Maxine Beach, professor of theology, sees that the social position and role of women in Middle Ages (1066 -1485) were determined by the influential, powerful male theologians and church leaders. Their understanding grew out of the patriarchal interpretations of the Old and New Testament writings, Greco-

the male's will dominates the female's] were present, there is literally no variation at all" (Goldberg 76). On the other hand, the major idea in most feminist theories is that woman's subordination to man is a result of social arrangements and not of woman's biology. These arrangements can be changed. Gerda Lerner comments that there are indeed biological differences between men and women, but "the values and implications based on [those differences] are the result of culture" (Lerner 6). And this means that patriarchy takes its power from social culture.

By reading the history of relationships between man and woman since Adam and Eve up till now, we notice that patriarchy exists in the world societies in different perspectives. Adam was created first and then Eve. Paying attention to the early hunting societies, matriarchy had been the first type of social life in some places. This view refutes the claim that such a structure of patriarchal family system is the fundamental institution in all societies all over ages. According to some anthropological and archaeological studies, it is proved that matriarchy was once the dominating power of social life:

For much of human prehistory there were no family structures of this type [patriarchy]. Instead, people were linked in extensive kin network – the gens, large-scale

subordination” (Moghadam 141). Historically, patriarchy has manifested itself in the social, legal, political, and economic organization of different cultures. It also has a strong influence on modern civilization, although many cultures have moved towards a more egalitarian social system over the past century (Malti-Douglas 1104). The word patriarchy was used, throughout history to refer to autocratic rule by the male head of a family. However, in modern times, it is used to refer to “social systems in which power is primarily held by adult men, and in which men oppress, exploit and dominate women” (Gordon 18).

If some sociologists see that patriarchy is the result of sociological constructions that are passed down from generation to generation, some sociobiologists argue that social behavior of both men and women is primarily determined by genetics, and thus that man's superiority over women arises more as a result of inherent biological genes than social arrangement. In his *The inevitability of Patriarchy* Steven Goldberg answers the question ‘why the biological differences between men and women always produce male dominance.’ He sees that patriarchy is a universal feature of human culture. He also writes: “The ethnographic studies of every society that has ever been observed explicitly state that these feelings [feelings of both men and women that

This paper is a rereading of Henry James's *The Bostonians* in an attempt to answer the question 'can woman be a patriarch?' Or how far woman's quest for being a patriarch is a success or failure. First of all, there must be a reference to the origin and meaning of patriarchy as well as its historical development.

Patriarchy is a central concept that is prevalent in large parts of the world. In the sociology of gender the origins of patriarchy are closely related to the concept of gender roles. The positions of men and women pass through several studies in fields like religion, philosophy, anthropology, sociology and psychology. These studies get to various interpretations which conclude that there are natural differences between men and women. These differences lead to normal inequalities and sexual divisions of labor between both genders. These studies refer to patriarchy as a historical and temporal phenomenon.

The word 'patriarchy' comes from the Latin *pater* (father) and *arch* (rule) i.e. "rule of the father" which was an earlier appropriate definition of patriarchy. Valentine Moghadam writes that under classic patriarchy, "the senior man has authority over everyone else in the family, including younger men, and women are subjected to distinct forms of control and

Woman's Quest for being a patriarch
A Rereading of Henry James's
The Bostonians

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