THE IMAGERY OF FEMINISM IN HENRY JAMES' THE BOSTONIANS

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THE IMAGERY OF FEMINISM IN HENRY JAMES'

THE BOSTONIANS

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Henry James' The Bostonians portrays women who are feminists, so the study and criticism of its characters demand, perhaps more than in other circumstances, objectivity on the part of the student and critic concerning this social question. Should one attempt to analyze these characters with a bias in favor of or against feminism, such a viewpoint could be allowed to color the analyst's comments. This seems to be what has happened in the majority of criticism dedicated to The Bostonians. This novel and James' motives in writing it have repeatedly been judged anti-feminist without sufficient proof. Instead, one should use more objective criteria upon which to base his judgment of the pro- or anti-feminist nature of The Bostonians.

Nan Baur Maglin is particularly certain that this novel and its author are anti-feminist. "In the anti-feminist The Bostonians," says Maglin, "James' attitude is that of disgust and mockery" towards independent women, the women's movement, and women in general. Maglin states that "to Henry James these women who fight for equality and the vote . . . are sick, perverted, and weird," and the critic goes on to cite aspects of Olive Chancellor's character and description as support for her statement. Maglin charges that James sees Olive as "an archetypal 'castrating bitch,'" and that "James seeks to discredit the women's movement by portraying a feminist leader as an 'odd' woman [and] by portraying the women who work with Olive as dull and unsociable

misfits." She even goes so far as to say that "his opening portrait of Miss Birdseye is not so much an attack on Miss [Elizabeth] Peabody as on women who are politically dedicated." James' worst mistake in this novel, Maglin feels, is that he "attempts to make us focus on what he implies is Olive's personal mental sickness rather than on the causes of women which she espouses." She derides him for giving us "very little background information on the political context of nineteenth century feminism" and for "constantly confusing politics and personal relationships." Concerning the end of the novel, Maglin states: "Verena is 'rescued' from the supposed double evil of feminism and lesbianism by the chivalrous Basil Ransom. James has the threat to home and family defeated in the end. . . . He presents us with a picture of the feminists of his time as seen from the point of view of the movement's opponents."[1]

Second to Maglin in discovering an anti-feminist cast to The Bostonians, but not attacking the view, is Irving Howe in his introduction to the 1956 American edition of the novel. Howe is more willing to concede that Basil Ransom is not treated as an ideal man in James' view and that the characters in the novel are not necessarily typical of the women's movement, but apart from his comments on the origins and success of The Bostonians, the introduction is full of implications of the novel's (and the novelist's) anti-feminist nature. He finds humor in the novel coming from "James' quickness at seizing upon those large glaring elements of the ridiculous that were inherent in the feminist movement and, for that matter, in the whole feminine effort to find new modes of social conduct." Howe believes that James saw "feminism as inseparable from the conditions of American culture, as emblematic of a

social and moral malaise." Howe believes that James does not like or sympathize with Olive, and "one of the few times that James relaxes his hostility to Olive Chancellor is the moment she draws back from the feminists because they offend, not her moral sense, but her fastidious sensibility. Throughout the book there are occasions in which James seems to be applying small measures to large matters, judging difficult social and moral issues by esthetic criteria a little too neat for the job." Howe is uncompromising in his judgment of the characters in the novel: "Except for the still impressionable Verena, all the women in the novel seem, by intent, off-center and abnormal, lacking in womanliness or femininity." Dr. Prance, for example, Howe characterizes as "a comic grotesque, rather likable for her blunt common sense but also frightening in her disciplined incapacity for emotion. She is a reductio, though hardly ad absurdum, of feminism, a warning of what it could become if driven to its extreme. For she has done what Olive Chancellor would like to do but cannot quite manage: she has totally denied her life as a woman. This, James seems to be saying, is how you may yet prance, dear ladies--like the good and terrible Mary Prance." In Verena, Howe finds "a pure feminine center, available to none but Basil Ransom"; nonetheless Howe says that James is "quite aware that even at its most apparently innocent the feminine character can have a biting malice of its own and an aggressiveness that is almost as great a threat to male assurance as the open assaults of the feminists." His comments concerning Olive are relentless: "Her rejection of femininity goes far beyond a distaste for the traditional status of women: it is part of her fundamental impatience with the elementary conditions of human life. She rejects the idea of 'the natural,' either as fact or category.

Olive's sexual ambiguity, like her social rootlessness, is in part due to her fastidious incapacity for accepting any of the available modes of life." Concerning the end of the novel, Howe states that "the logic of the book itself demands that Ransom win. For if the struggle between Ransom and Olive over Verena is a struggle between competing ideologies over a passive agent of the natural and the human, then it is a struggle between ideologies that are not equally in opposition to the natural and the human. When she is finally driven to her choice, Verena chooses in accordance with those rhythms of life which Olive bluntly violates but Ransom merely exploits."[2] Thus Howe implies that the life of a dedicated feminist is less natural than the life of a male chauvinist.

Other critics are also quick to point out elements in The Bostonians and its author which they consider to be anti-feminist. Robert Falk describes Olive Chancellor and Verena Tarrant as typical of "the visionary reformers who comprised the lunatic fringe" and "the short-haired women and effeminate men of the 'so-called women's movement'"; he calls them members of "a world of superannuated females, spiritualists, eccentrics, canting reformers, and long-haired agitators."[3] Maxwell Geismar finds Basil Ransom "close to being the Jamesian spokesman" and believes his satire of the movement to be malicious. Here, Geismar states, James "lumped together all movements of social reform . . . into one large stew of quackery. Even the Civil War, by implication, was another kind of colossal fraud in these bright, sparkling pages. . . . James' real position in this satire was conservative, traditional or reactionary; uninformed, abstract, and aloof." To Geismar, James' anger at, perhaps hatred of, Boston was "transparently clear" in this novel; he also

finds "an element of guilt and shame about his own Civil War behavior in this scornful repudiation of New England's Abolitionist and Transcendental fervor."[4] Louise Bogan describes the atmosphere of the novel in much the same terms as Falk does, and characterizes Olive as "a female organism driven by a masculine will, without the saving graces of masculine intelligence or feminine tenderness and insight."[5] F. W. Dupee believes that in The Bostonians feminism is treated in a farcical spirit on the surface, but deeper it is "a grotesque comedy of the Boston reformers with Olive Chancellor at their head . . . they crudely exploit a taste for causes and curiosities which has now become public property."[6] John L. Kimmey analyzes the novel along the same lines, finding the feminists to be ludicrous, melancholy and malcontent, with Olive no more than a caricature.[7] Edgar Pelham judges that James did not have any idea of what he was trying to do in the novel: "Even in his own mind he is not clear whether his main purpose was to give a fantastic account of the feminist movement at a time when it was more comical than effective, or tell the love story of Verena and Basil Ransom."[8] Quentin Anderson describes Ransom as James' only male character not subordinated to a woman, who is nevertheless sympathetically presented. Anderson depreciates Olive, but he condescends that she is not responsible for her actions in the novel since her particular evil is the result of an unhealthy social atmosphere.[9] Joseph Warren Beach proposes that the theme of the novel is "an ironical picture of feminism and the Boston temper of mind . . . that Basil wins shows the triumph of common sense or natural law."[10] Martin Green labels feminism one of the "ugly social challenges" and, like Geismar, sees Ransom as the spokesman of James' attitude toward women.[11]

Some critics of The Bostonians mention anti-feminist elements of the novel within other contexts. Within the framework of placing The Bostonians in the pastoral tradition, Robert C. McLean analyzes the struggle between Olive and Ransom as a struggle between aberration and normalcy, death and life. In the end of the novel, according to McLean, Ransom rescues Verena from an unnatural union with Olive and "brings her back to a recognition of her place within the rhythms of nature."[12] Edward Grossman, while making the point that this is a novel about lesbianism rather than feminism, mentions that it is Ransom's job in the novel "to hold opinions on certain subjects [as feminism] in an exaggerated, smug way that James can be ironic about, but which might be close to his own way of thinking."[13] William Wasserstrom offers the possibility that in The Bostonians James uses "feminism" as a euphemism for sex: in saving Verena from Olive, Ransom "saves her from neuroticism and impotence. Marriage will allow her to adapt her gifts to society at large; Ransom says her force will endow 'the sentiment of sex' with new dignity. This in turn will mold anew the life of society."[14] These critics still imply that active feminists are abnormal and undesirable.

A few critics imply that The Bostonians is not harshly anti-feminist, or at least that one cannot attribute this opinion to James for writing the novel.[15] These critics do not treat the subject in detail, but either mention in passing that other themes are more important in studying the novel, or advise that in spite of this novel one should not assume that James hated women. They do not state categorically, however, that The Bostonians is not an anti-feminist novel.

It seems that most of the above critics have let their personal biases about feminism influence their comments concerning The Bostonians. The principle reason for this conclusion is that their assertions cannot be supported by material from the novel, and some of the discrepancies in their logic will be pointed out as proof that personal prejudices interfered in those judgments. Consequently, the question remains as to whether The Bostonians is a pro- or anti-feminist novel, or neither. The novel concerns women who are feminists, and although one cannot assume that James sought to portray "typical" feminists,[16] it is possible to determine to some degree whether or not James derides these women for their dedication to this social question. In order to avoid making the same mistake as the aforementioned critics, i.e., letting personal bias affect judgment, this study will employ a more objective analytic procedure on which to base its conclusions: an analysis of the imagery connected with feminism in the novel. First some support will be given for the theory that a close study of the imagery connected with a character or group of characters may help reveal an author's intentions in presenting these characters. Then some of the imagery connected with the women's movement in The Bostonians will be pointed out, which is strikingly dominated by associations with war. Last will be an attempt to ascertain James' attitudes toward war in general from his non-fiction writings on the subject (which are far more numerous than his comments on feminism). I hope to show that James idealized war to some degree and, by extensively using images of war in connection with the women's movement in The Bostonians, presents feminism in the novel in the same light.

The logic behind the previously cited critics' assumptions is definitely flawed. To cite a few examples, Maglin labels Olive as a "feminist leader" and states that James seeks to discredit the women's movement by portraying her as "odd" (F. W. Dupee makes a similar allegation); however, anyone who is familiar with the story will remember that Olive does not have any qualities of leadership or any true way of working for the movement beyond donations,[17] and it is in Verena that she sees these qualities that she lacks. On the other hand, Mrs. Farrinder is a character who _is_ depicted as a feminist leader in _The Bostonians_, and she is portrayed as not only majestic, handsome, and successful, but also "She was held to have a very fine manner, and to embody the domestic virtues and the graces of the drawing room; to be a shining proof, in short, that the forum, for ladies, is not necessarily hostile to the fireside."[18] Maglin chides James for focusing on "Olive's personal mental sickness" rather than on the feminist issues, for "confusing politics with personal relationships"; however, one who is familiar with Jamesian techniques realizes that the psychological portraits of his characters are of utmost importance to his novels.[19] James himself says that this novel was meant to be "a study of one of those friendships between women which are so common in New England,"[20] _not_ a study of the feminist movement. Maglin has let her fervor for the cause of women blind her to the facts. Howe makes the same type of mistake, but for the opposite reason; he lets his contempt for the women's movement show through his comments on _The Bostonians_. For example, he interprets James' words about the decline of "the sentiment of sex" being characteristic of American society as meaning that feminism was "emblematic of a social and moral malaise" in

America (William Wasserstrom makes a similar comment), when James merely ended a notebook entry describing his original sketch of the novel with this phrase and did not further explain himself;[21] thus the critics' interpretations are not based on fact. Even more chauvinistic is Howe's analysis of Dr. Prance, the unmarried woman doctor who has dedicated her life to the physical ailments of her fellow women. She is portrayed as a crusty, independent individual who does her part for women with deeds rather than words, and is nowhere in the novel treated unsympathetically. Even Basil Ransom, who is most passionately against the women's movement, has nothing but positive reactions to her. In reviewing Howe's comments about her, however, she is described as grotesque, blunt, frightening, incapable of emotion, terrible, totally denying her life as a woman, and the extreme of feminism against which James was trying to warn his audience. One cannot help but wonder if Howe would describe a crusty old bachelor doctor supremely dedicated to his patients in quite the same terms. Howe totally gives his true viewpoint away when he finds "a biting malice . . . and an aggressiveness" even in the docile Verena and calls it "almost as great a threat to male assurance as the open assaults of the feminists." This is purely Howe's interpretation, based not on The Bostonians nor on the life of Henry James.

Howe and the other critics use numerous derogatory adjectives to describe the women's movement as portrayed by the novel, including aberrant, abnormal, comical, crude, deathlike, eccentric, evil, fantastic, fraudulent, grotesque, ludicrous, malcontent, neurotic, odd, perverted, quackery, radical, sick, ugly, unnatural, and weird; however, one cannot find a basis for such interpretations within the novel nor

within James' personal beliefs. When writing of the movement in The Bostonians, James speaks of it using terms of war, which it is hoped can be shown as not derogatory. It is true that through Ransom's eyes (consciousness) some of these terms may apply, but one cannot take for granted that Ransom was meant to be the voice of James' opinions, principally because of the several occasions in the novel when James' narrator satirizes Ransom's views or points out his mistakes in judgment.[22] Furthermore, if Verena was "rescued" by Basil to be given a "normal" life by him, her happiness in marriage should have been projected; instead, the novel ends with: "It is to be feared that with the union, so far from brilliant, into which she was about to enter, these were not the last [tears] she was destined to shed."[23] When perusing James' comment on this novel in his notebooks, one finds that the entry for April 8, 1883, gives a rather complete summary of its projected plot. This is followed by some discussion of the nature of the story; the only negative comment included here is about the character of Matthias Pardon, who James describes should be vulgar, hideous, and impudent. Concerning the women's movement he states only: "I wished to write a very American tale, a tale very characteristic of our social conditions, and I asked myself what was the most salient and peculiar point in our social life. The answer was: the situation of women, the decline of the sentiment of sex, the agitation on their behalf" (italics his).[24] Later, when attacked for implying (by the title) that all Bostonians were like those he represented in his novel, he found such criticism "idiotic and insulting."[25] Furthermore, when charged with modeling his character Miss Birdseye on Elizabeth Peabody, a contemporary feminist, with the purpose of deriding her, James denied

it emphatically in a letter to his brother William, stating that she was a complete fabrication of his imagination who "originated in my desire to make a figure who would embody in a sympathetic, pathetic, picturesque, and at the same time in a grotesque way, the humanitary and ci-devant transcendental tendencies which I thought it highly probable I should be accused of treating in a contemptuous manner in so far as they were otherwise represented in the tale" (italics mine).[26] The implication seems to be that James knew that the nature of his story would be misinterpreted and he attempted this character to help remedy this situation.

In order to get closer to an understanding of how James did portray feminism in The Bostonians, the method of imagistic study has been chosen. The advisability of the study of imagery in ascertaining an author's intent, however, must first be established.

René Wellek and Austin Warren advise against an attempt to reveal a poet's psyche through his poetry by way of assuming that the poet's images, offered for illustration, might be expected to betray his real centers of interest. They also warn against trying to discover an author's personal habits or biography (as Caroline Spurgeon did) through imagistic study. They invite the student to "focus, rather, on an important element in the total meaning" of a work when studying images. Furthermore they state: "That two spheres repeatedly summon up each the other may be supposed to show their real interpenetration in the creative psyche of the poet."[27] This is close to the focus of this study: (1) that the women's movement tends to repeatedly summon up images of war in The Bostonians, and (2) that this leads us to an important element in the total meaning.

Stanley Edgar Hyman takes a less negative view of Spurgeon's contribution to scholarship in criticism. He points out a number of her contributions to greater critical understanding and appreciation in the field of imagistic study, one of which is: "She recognizes that imagery can give a sense of approval or revulsion to a character, apparently not accounted for by the text . . . and can reveal the temperament and character of the person using them when nothing else does. It would thus be both an unconscious device for expressing Shakespeare's deepest attitudes and a conscious device of high artistry for deepening, altering, or foreshadowing effects."[28] It is hoped that it can be shown that the imagery connected with feminism and feminists in The Bostonians gives a sense of approval to them, and that this is an expression of James' deepest attitudes toward them and what they stand for in this novel.

Florence Marsh, in an academic review of the critical theory concerning imagery, concludes her remarks with: "Imagery, then, is the central core of both language and poetry. In it the sensuous, the emotional, and the intellectual merge, and the vision of life is whole. It seems reasonable to suppose, therefore, that a poet's genius will appear most clearly in the figurative images that he creates to convey his meaning, that study of a poet's imagery will reveal the poet's basic intuitions concerning reality."[29] One finds this merging of the emotional and the intellectual in The Bostonians.

Robert L. Gale, an analyst of Jamesian imagery, holds the view that "A good novel is now seen to express its author's background, nature, and view reliably, to mirror its times revealingly, to persuade its readers maturely, and withal--containing as it does 'the precious

life-blood of a master spirit'--to have 'a life beyond life.'" He goes on to say that "a study of the figurative language of any master novelist ought to reveal a good deal concerning his nature and that of his age, [and] ought also to tell much concerning his message." He intends his study of the imagery in the fiction of Henry James to "throw varied lights upon his personality, and on the modes of his thought; say much about what in reality especially engaged his attention; and finally, help explicate his texts by showing that his imagery habitually paints setting, characterizes, foreshadows, implements plot, and reinforces theme."[30] Gale proceeds to classify all of James' images, discuss the classifications generally, and to relate them superficially to a selected number of James' works. The aims of this study mirror many of Gale's, but here it is possible to go into much more detail than possibly could be done in such a large scale project.

Lastly, Alexander Holder-Barell, also a student of James' images, quotes Deutschbein on the psychological character and meaning of metaphors: "'As long as they are not merely of an ornamental and purely decorative character, they take away the veil from the soul of a human being; they disclose his innermost feelings and show us not only on what his attention concentrates (sphere of facts) but above all what his thoughts are preoccupied with and where his fancy likes most to dwell.'" Concerning James, Holder-Barell feels that due to the author's vast imagination and keen sensibility "he sometimes must have felt rather despairing about the limited possibilities of the language. Imagery must then have appeared to him the only possible, adequate way of conveying his visions." Holder-Barell believes that "in prose, imagery tends to be precise, to render inwardness as exactly as

possible," and in James' works the imagery "is the direct outcome of an inner vision of his characters."[31] The present study attempts to discover this inner vision of the characters of The Bostonians.

According to Gale, The Bostonians contains 669 images, about 4.4 images per 1000 words, a little above James' average density.[32] In his chapter concerning war images, Gale mentions The Bostonians several times, but only for examples and never in depth nor in relation to its theme. In this study the analysis of imagery will be organized according to the characters to which the images refer, beginning with those characters represented by the least imagery and concluding with those characters represented by the most (the principal characters of the novel).

At this point there should be some mention of the problems encountered in this study and the methods used to circumvent them. As previously discussed, Jamesian technique is much involved with stream of consciousness, psychological studies of characters, and point of view; consequently, it was sometimes difficult to classify an image as pertaining to a certain character, for it may have been uttered by Ransom, yet descriptive of Olive or Verena. As a solution (though perhaps there is a better one), an image is classified as "belonging" to a character if it was spoken by him in dialogue, attributed to his thoughts (stream of consciousness), or descriptive of him by narration. A second problem had to do with the decision of whether an image definitely suggested war or battle to most readers or not. With the Oxford English Dictionary as a guide, the images connected with the principal characters are divided into three categories: (1) those which usually connote war or a battle; (2) those which connote opposition or a

physical fight; and (3) allusions to weapons. Other imagery is mentioned only in passing. Lastly, no distinction is made between metaphor and simile.

Several rather minor characters figure in this discussion. Mrs. Tarrant, Verena's mother, twice refers to the women's movement and the other social work in which she is involved in war-like terms: once finding herself enrolled in the great army of her husband's social endeavors (p. 72) and once considering herself a leader of the van of human progress (p. 171). Her husband, Selah Tarrant, is represented only by images of animals and religion, but he has little directly to do with the movement. Mrs. Burrage, a character whose association with the movement is ambiguous, in the space of fifteen pages uses six war-like terms in conversation with Olive: attack (Olive), p. 305; subjection (of Verena to Olive), p. 313; charge (Olive) and tyranny (of Olive over Verena), p. 314; and defend (Verena) from dangers (of men), p. 320. Dr. Prance, another character whose role is ambiguous in relation to the movement, but who seems rather more against it than for it, is generally represented by animal imagery, more often gentle than fierce; however, twice a war-like image is connected with her: her battle of life (p. 41) and her private revolution (p. 49), the latter implying her unconventional life as a woman. Matthew Pardon, the newspaperman who is represented as a grasping self-seeker but is nevertheless for the women's movement, insofar as it fulfills his own needs, mentions the movement's winter campaign (p. 64), defense (p. 124), and Verena's rank in the field (p. 128). Mrs. Luna is often described in the novel with images of food and is definitely against the movement, but she

speaks of it as revolutionary (p. 264) and at one point she alludes to herself as a spy on Ransom for Olive (p. 289).

Miss Birdseye and Mrs. Farrinder are both important figures of feminism in the novel, hence the imagery connected with them might be considered representative. Miss Birdseye is presented as an old woman approaching senility, but several references are made to her past work in the movement. She is referred to as selfless and philanthropic by the narrator, as well as a battered monument of her struggles (p. 408). Her death is spoken of as her supreme surrender (p. 408). More is said of Miss Birdseye along these lines, but it is said through other characters, and it is dealt with below. Mrs. Farrinder, on the other hand, is portrayed as an active, influential, and highly regarded feminist leader in the novel. She is represented as majestic, strong, noble, and cold, all of which are characteristics usually connected with a good soldier. Her work is referred to in numerous war-like terms: she campaigns (p. 32); she returns to the charge, takes up the fight, and seeks recruits (p. 36); she prefers hostility in audiences massed before her like an army, at which times she feels like Napoleon Bonaparte on the eve of a great victory (p. 46); she is martial, heroic (p. 46), and imperial (pp. 164, 165). At first Mrs. Farrinder does not really seem to accept Verena as on her side in the battle; Olive refers to her as the commander-in-chief and, like someone in such a responsible position, Mrs. Farrinder must be sure of a new recruit's loyalty before fully accepting her. The end of the novel, however, indicates that she finally does approve of Verena, for she occupies a place of honor in the hall where Verena is to speak (p. 443).

The three principal characters are represented by so many images of war that it would be impractical to discuss each one individually in this study; for this reason an appendix containing tables which indicate each war-like allusion, to whom it is connected, and the page number of the novel on which it is found is included with this study. Here will only be presented implications of and conclusions drawn from the tables' information.

War imagery in connection with Basil Ransom is not prevalent in the first pages of the novel, but it increases considerably in Book Two and Book Three (see Appendix). This is because in Book One his character is drawn and established, the scene is set, but he has little interaction with the feminists beyond meeting them and forming first impressions of them. His analysis of Verena is heavily laden with supernatural or occult imagery in these pages, and he uses little imagery of any kind in his thoughts concerning Olive. The narrator's imagery descriptive of Ransom leans toward animals, games, and monetary terms. However, by Book Two Ransom is much more involved with the novel's feminist characters; that the war images connected with him should significantly increase in number at this point helps to prove that it is feminism in particular that this imagery suggests. Being "as a representative of his sex, the most important personage"[33] in the novel, and being portrayed as expressing severe anti-feminist opinions, Ransom is the representative of anti-feminism against whom the feminists must "fight." It is interesting to consider that Ransom has formerly been an "enemy" of the North by fighting for the South in the Civil War; in the light of James' experience with the Civil War (see below) one

might be less ready than the abovementioned critics to view Ransom as the Jamesian spokesman in the novel.

The war imagery connected with Verena follows much the same pattern as that of Ransom: the first pages of the novel reveal significantly fewer such images, with an increase in them once she becomes more attached to Olive. Early imagery of her, presented through the narrator, is sparse; in the main she is observed by other characters and has little character of her own; what images there are allude to her childish qualities. This is fitting, for it is within the novel that James has Verena mature and develop an individual character. Since she does this under the guidance of Olive, she too becomes dedicated to the cause of women, in a more sincere and intellectual way than formerly when she was under the influence of her parents. Accordingly, as the character becomes a true feminist the images connected with her begin to allude to war; by the end, when she is deeply involved in the "battle" against anti-feminism (Ransom), such imagery is fairly prevalent.

In contrast to the above two characters, the imagery connected with Olive is consistently dominated by war-like terms throughout the novel, for Olive does not change her attitudes in the course of the action; she is ever represented as a dedicated feminist. As Table III indicates, the number of images connected with Olive which specifically call to mind war or battle, as opposed to those which merely imply opposition or a physical fight, far outweighs the number of such images connected with the other two principal characters. Taken out of context, some of these images might be construed to have negative connotations, but in context this is not the case. For example, "The serious, tired

people, in their bonnets and overcoats, began to glow like a company of heroes" (p. 37); "it would be a new era for the human family, and the names of those who had helped to show the way and lead the squadrons would be the brightest in the tables of fame" (p. 38); "after he had left her she seemed to see the glow of dawning success; the battle had begun" (p. 147); and "when one wanted to assault the wrong with every engine one was happy not to lack the sinews of war" (p. 311). The number of images seem to be in proportion to her dedication to the cause of women, which also far outweighs that of even the most publicly voluble advocates of feminism in the novel, Mrs. Farrinder and Verena. Thus it may be concluded with some certainty that images of war in The Bostonians are deeply associated with and indicative of feminism in the novel and perhaps a knowledge of James' attitude toward war in general may help uncover how James represented the feminist movement in this novel.

The Civil War broke out just as James turned eighteen, and occurring as it did at this time of his life it left a deep impression on him. As Leon Edel has said, "for Henry 'war' was to mean all his life the Civil War."[34] On July 4, 1861, in Newport, Rhode Island, James' father delivered an Independence Day oration full of praise for the goal of the war (freeing the slaves).[35] Two of James' cousins died in battle, and there is evidence that at various times both Henry and his older brother William entertained plans to participate in the war; however, neither did, the reason being on James' part an accident which he had at this time. James was never specific in his memoirs about the circumstances of the accident nor the details of his injury, but it caused him much pain and was never completely cured. What he did say

on the subject was that it made him feel as if he were "a body rent with a thousand wounds" which "treated me to the honour of a sort of tragic fellowship" with those soldiers who were at that time being wounded in the Civil War.[36] His younger brothers, Garth Wilkinson and Robertson, did take part in the war, so James did have quite a bit of second hand experience with it through their letters and a visit to Garth, the latter which James described in glowing terms in his memoirs. It is significant that he viewed the war from afar rather than from the field; negative attitudes toward war are less easily formed that way. His brothers both became officers and participated in decisive battles. In August of 1863 Garth Wilkinson was badly wounded and had to be brought home on a stretcher, from which he recovered and returned to battle. Robertson suffered a serious sunstroke during a raid, from which he also recovered to return to the field; later he demonstrated such bravery during combat that he was rewarded by a captaincy.[37] Thus James did not experience any death in his immediate family as a result of the Civil War, but he did see his brothers and other soldiers rising to glory and fame through their exploits on the battlefield. In his memoirs James records that the rereading of his brothers' war letters "settled for me into the single sense of what I missed, compared to what the authors of our bulletins gained, in wondrous opportunity of vision, that is <u>appreciation of the thing seen</u>" (italics his).[38] The following passage from Leon Edel's biography of James helps support the conclusion that James idealized war experiences to some degree:

> The Civil War letters of his brothers form a logical bridge to Henry's later reading of war memoirs and Napoleonic lore. The passionate interest with which he absorbed the three volumes of Marbot in the 1890's represented a continuation of the earlier experience; in other words he continued over

> the years to read other war letters cast in the form of memoirs, and the passages he marked in Marbot are not unlike those he excerpted from Wilky's letters--scenes of violence, storming of positions, the rugged life and observations of men committed to action. When Field Marshal Viscount Wolseley sent him his two-volumed Story of a Soldier's Life in 1903 Henry wrote him: "To a poor worm of peace and quiet like me--yet with some intelligence--the interest of communicating so with the military temper and type is irresistible--of getting so close (comparatively!) to the qualities that make the brilliant man of action. Those are the qualities, unlike one's own, that are romantic, that you have lived all your days by and with them and for them, I feel as if I had never questioned you nor sounded you enough. . . . I would give all I have (including Lamb House) for an hour of your retrospective consciousness, one of your more crowded memories--that for instance of your watch, before your quarters, during the big fight at Ashantee--when the fellow was eyeing you to see if you wouldn't get out of it. . . ." This was doubtless true: Henry would have given much to have been able to pass to vivid conquering action in his waking hours as he had done in his nightmare of the Louvre: the measure of his offer was the measure of his passion.[39]

James could not have acted nor spoken this way if he did not idealize war experiences.

To say that James idealized war does not imply that he advocated wars; on the contrary, in the "real world" he preferred to avoid the risk of bloodshed except under extreme necessity. For example, in an 1878 letter written to William, James had this to say concerning the prospect of England's possible involvement in the Russo-Turkish War:

> At any rate I believe that England will keep out of war for the reason that up to this stage of her relation to events in the East, her going to war would be simply for the sake of her "prestige," and that the nation as a whole, looking at the matter deliberately, have decided that mere prestige is not sufficient ground for a huge amount of bloodshed. This seems to me to indicate a high pitch of civilization--a pitch which England alone, of all the European nations, has reached. It has been curious to see that all the French republican papers have lately been denouncing her fiercely for not pitching into Russia--the defense of prestige being a perfectly valid casus belli to the French mind.[40]

James' intellect could quickly grasp and objectively analyze such a situation without bias for or against war itself; however, in his fictional world it seems that war-like images do impart an idealistic and heroic nature to the character with which it is connected, due to his experience with, his passionate interest in, and his own words concerning military experiences.

Hence The Bostonians should not be considered an anti-feminist novel because the feminists are represented by imagery dominated by allusions to battle, and James had idealistic and positive associations with war. Olive Chancellor is a feminist to the marrow from the beginning to the end of the novel and is throughout represented in these terms; Mrs. Farrinder, though a minor character, is also consistent in her devotion to the cause and is represented in the same manner. As Ransom and Verena are drawn closer into involvement with Olive, a sincere advocate of the women's movement, the imagery surrounding those characters begins to evidence the elements of war. One of James' goals in this novel was to correct the flaw he found in Daudet's L'Evangeliste, his self-confessed model for The Bostonians, which he felt did not depict true devotion. James attempts to do this, certainly not by ridiculing Olive, who is a true devotee of her cause, but by presenting her and her ideas in an idealistic, if not entirely practical light.

If this thesis is tenable, an analysis of other Jamesian fiction for the prevalence of war-like images may help unveil some of James' intentions in those works. The Portrait of a Lady, for example, might benefit from such a study, for it too revolves around a very independent woman character, Isabel Archer, and the consequences of her

independence; Daisy Miller is another example of this type of character. Expanding the concept upon which this thesis builds, i.e., its method of imagistic study, opens several areas for study of The Bostonians, other Jamesian fiction, and the fiction of other authors about whose life and thoughts much is known. In the course of this study alone several possibilities have suggested themselves, such as a study of the religious imagery in The Bostonians in connection with James' background in and ideas about religion. When more certain information is not available, this method of ascertaining an author's intentions in his work is at least more reliable than critical interpretations based on conjecture or the critic's personal prejudices.

NOTES

[1]Nan Baur Maglin, "Fictional Feminists in The Bostonians and The Odd Women," in Images of Women in Fiction: Feminist Perspectives, ed. Susan Koppelman Cornillon (Bowling Green, Ohio: Bowling Green Univ. Popular Press, 1972), pp. 219-24.

[2]Henry James, The Bostonians (New York: Random House, Inc., 1956), pp. xvi-xxvii. All references are to this edition.

[3]Robert Falk, The Victorian Mode in American Fiction, 1865-1885 (East Lansing: Michigan State Univ. Press, 1965), pp. 153-54.

[4]Maxwell Geismar, Henry James and the Jacobites (Boston: Houghton Mifflin, 1963), pp. 61-66.

[5]Louise Bogan, Selected Criticism: Prose, Poetry (New York: Noonday Press, 1955), pp. 297-301.

[6]F. W. Dupee, Henry James (New York: William Sloane Associates, 1951), pp. 149-51.

[7]John L. Kimmey, "The Bostonians and The Princess Casamassima," Texas Studies in Literature and Language, 9 (1968), 541-43.

[8]Edgar Pelham, Henry James: Man and Author (New York: Russell and Russell, Inc., 1964), p. 265.

[9]Quentin Anderson, The American Henry James (New Brunswick, New Jersey: Rutgers Univ. Press, 1957), pp. 42-43.

[10]Joseph Warren Beach, The Method of Henry James, 2nd ed. (1918; revised ed. Philadelphia: Albert Saifer, 1954), pp. 224-25.

[11]Martin Green, Re-appraisals: Some Commonsense Readings in American Literature (New York: W. W. Norton, 1965), p. 163.

[12]Robert C. McLean, "The Bostonians: New England Pastoral," Papers on Language and Literature, 7 (1971), pp. 380-81.

[13]Edward Grossman, "Henry James and the Sexual Military Complex," Commentary, 53, No. 4 (1972), p. 37.

[14]William Wasserstrom, Heiress of All the Ages: Sex and Sentiment in the Genteel Tradition (Minneapolis: Univ. of Minnesota Press, 1959), pp. 32-34.

[15]David Bonnell Green, "Witch and Bewitchment in The Bostonians," Papers on Language and Literature, 3 (1967), p. 269; Katharine Rogers, The Troublesome Helpmate: A History of Misogyny in Literature (Seattle: Univ. of Washington Press, 1966), pp. 237-240, n.; Michele Murray, A House of Good Proportion: Images of Women in Literature (New York: Simon and Schuster, 1973), p. 135; Oscar Cargill, The Novels of Henry James (New York: Macmillan, 1961), p. 131.

[16]James, concerned as he was with the "psychological" novel (see note 18), sought to portray highly individualized characters rather than general representatives of large groups.

[17]James, pp. 36, 140. Some subsequent references to the novel are indicated by page numbers appearing parenthetically in the text.

[18]James, p. 31.

[19]Henry James, The Art of the Novel (New York: Charles Scribner's Sons, 1934), passim.

[20]F. O. Matthiessen and Kenneth B. Murdock, eds., The Notebooks of Henry James (New York: Oxford Univ. Press, 1961), p. 47.

[21]Ibid.

[22]James, The Bostonians, pp. 11, 89, 254, 343, etc.

[23]Ibid., p. 464.

[24]Matthiessen and Murdock, p. 47.

[25]Ibid., p. 67.

[26]Ibid., p. 68.

[27]René Wellek and Austin Warren, Theory of Literature, 3rd ed. (New York: Harcourt, 1956), p. 207.

[28]Stanley Edgar Hyman, The Armed Vision: A Study in the Methods of Modern Literary Criticism (New York: Alfred A. Knopf, 1948), p. 217.

[29]Florence Marsh, Wordsworth's Imagery: A Study in Poetic Vision (New York: Yale Univ. Press, 1952), p. 19.

[30]Robert L. Gale, The Caught Image: Figurative Language in the Fiction of Henry James (Chapel Hill: Univ. of North Carolina Press, 1954), pp. 3-4.

[31]Alexander Holder-Barell, The Development of Imagery and its Functional Significance in Henry James' Novels (Switzerland: Satz and Druck, 1959), pp. 10-13.

[32]Gale, p. 251.

[33]James, The Bostonians, p. 5.

[34]Leon Edel, Henry James: The Untried Years (New York: J. B. Lippincott, 1953), p. 168.

[35]Ibid., p. 169.

[36]Ibid., p. 173.

[37]Ibid., pp. 184-87.

[38]Ibid., pp. 187-88.

[39]Ibid., p. 188.

[40]Leon Edel, Henry James: The Conquest of London (New York: J. B. Lippincott, 1962), p. 281.

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APPENDIX

TABLES

TABLE I

IMAGES OF WEAPONRY

Ransom	Page	Verena	Page	Olive	Page
Six-shooter	5	Knife	385	Knife	139
Bowie knife	5	Gun	404		395
"Whipped"	58			Lash	164
Guns	283			Manacles	164
Pistol	442			Chains	186
					259
				Weapons	386

TABLE II

IMAGES OF OPPOSITION OR PHYSICAL FIGHTING

Ransom	Page	Verena	Page		Page
Challenge	50	Power	80	Force	79
	67		335		420
	350	Champions	279		420
Fling down		Danger	295		456
the glove	50	Struggle	326	Power	147
Fight	221		337		159
	404		389		283
	404	Fight	384		314
	415		389		318
	415		394	Struggle	151
	415	Force	399		159
	441				182
	446				420
Knocked					444
about	259			Fight	182
Force	378			Challenge	456
	463				
Power	405				
Struggle	397				
Felt the					
blow	415				
Beaten	434				
Wresting	441				
Colosseum	442				

TABLE III

IMAGES OF WARFARE

Ransom	Page	Verena	Page	Olive	Page
Rallied	13	War	63	On guard	11
Fortified	22	Heroine	64		287
Combat	50		411		289
	415	Joan of Arc	86	Duty	12
Retreat	67		123		18
War	92		147		122
Enemy in		Command	141		177
the camp	221	Wound	141		258
Wounded	226		298		285
Betray	252	In training	171		285
	431	Triumph	230		317
	431	Enemy	230		322
Command	269		273		388
Defense	283	Leaders	231	Defend	13
	283	Uprising	278		185
	445	Betray	295		283
Attack	283		399		323
	378		410		156
Injury	340	Defend	295		386
Destroy	342		296	Defeat	13
Friend in			339	Rallied	13
the camp	361	Treachery	301		420
Triumph	380		296	Danger	14
	380	Banners	308		156
Seige	399	Victory	308		163
Fortress	404	Own ground	325		287
Campaign	405	Offense	325		292
Victory	405	Destroy	342		292
	464	Field	347		322
Field	415		404		322
	417	Attack	359		386
	442	Battle	389		394
Desert	407	Crusade	396	Offense	29
Reconnoiter	361	At his post	397	Injury	29
		Give up	398		155
		On guard	403		390
		Campaign	404	Field	35
		Surrender	458		310
					434
				Company	37
				Revolution	37
				Triumph	37
					182
					426

TABLE III (Continued)

Ransom	Page	Verena	Page	Olive	Page
				Squadrons	38
				Armor	86
				March upon	89
				Surrender	119
				Attack	124
				War	139
					164
					311
					395
				Betray	139
					167
				Battle	147
					156
					166
					182
				Arms	147
					182
					386
				Truce	156
				Plot	157
				Strong ground	157
				Crusade	160
				Courage	163
					283
					288
				Enemy	164
					323
					383
				Feminine camp	165
				Commission	166
				Commander in chief	166
				Conspiracy	173
					289
				Ally	173
				Alarms	175
					388
				Wounds	186
					393
					418
					462
				Uprising	297
				Hung Fire	311
				Assault with every engine	311
				Desert	385
					390

TABLE III (Continued)

Ransom	Page	Verena	Page	Olive	Page
				Sleep at post	386
				Retreat	386
				Give up	386
				Fortify	388
				Destroy	390
				Treachery	388

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