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Publicazione periodica di Sell Out: *The Bostonians*

Lazzaretti Editore Via Paolini 15,10138 Torino, ITALIA

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Direttore Responsabile: Aldo Lazzaretti

Segreteria di redazione: Paola Dobrilla

Iscrizione al Tribunale di Torino n.4568 del 17/03/1993

Anno VII - Numero 5 - Settembre 1999

Publicità inferiore al 45% - Spedizione in abbonamento postale

Contiene inserto redazionale. La videocassetta non può essere venduta separatamente dalla rivista.

Stampa: Graf Art - Venaria (Torino)

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CAST & CREDITS

THE BOSTONIANS (1984)

Director: James Ivory, **Producer:** Ismail Merchant, **Screenplay:** Ruth Praver Jhabvala (from the novel by Henry James), **Director of Photography:** Walter Lassaly, **Music:** Richard Robbins, **Production Designer:** Leo Austin, **Editors:** Katherine Wenning, Mark Potter, **Cast:** Christopher Reeve, Vanessa Redgrave, Jessica Tandy, Madeleine Potter, Nancy Marchand, Linda Hunt, Wesley Addy, Wallace Shawn.

FOCUS ON THE FILM

REVIEWS

“Ruth Praver Jhabvala’s finely honed script cuts through both Henry James’ cynicism and dense jungle of his prose to reveal a story of unexpected passion, a love triangle set against the early stirrings of the suffragette movement in late 19th century Boston. The core of the film is the battle between shy, intense proto-feminist and struggling, reactionary lawyer for the love, and allegiance of a young girl who also happens to be a formidably gifted orator. At times too decorous, too slow for its own good, it is given guts by intense, acutely observed performances from Reeve and Redgrave.”

Richard Rayner

“Over the last few years the Merchant/Ivory brand name has become synonymous with the tasteful literary adaptation, a genre much beloved of those critics who insist that film, like the novel should, in E.M Forster’s words, ‘tell a story.’ In this sense, the hysterical adulation that regularly greets even the most mediocre ‘film of the book’ - Lean’s *Zhivago*, or, more recently, Anthony Minghella’s *English Patient* spring to mind – can be seen as a symptom of a wider problem afflicting the identity of cinema tout court.

If we consider the ‘virtues’ for which such literary adaptations are routinely praised: narrative fidelity, historical verisimilitude, structural coherence, decorum, and so on, we can discern the outlines of a code of cinematic practice that is implicitly ‘moral’, and of which the literary film is the paragon, against which not only the vulgar masses of, often infinitely more inventive, commercial movies, but also those films engaged in the production of a genuinely cinematographic language, are constantly measured and, almost always, found wanting. And so it is that under the tutelage of literature, cinema is straitjacketed and its autonomous powers of being and becoming repressed as effectively as a woman’s body strapped into a whale-bone corset. Which brings

us to *The Bostonians*.

For what is peculiar about this apparently unexceptional, rather muted adaptation of James's great novel, on what he referred to as the 'situation of women' is the way in which, through the ostensible subject matter – women's struggle for self-determination and emancipation from the yoke of patriarchy - it unconsciously stages the crisis of cinema's subordination to the demands of 'the word'.

Verena Tarrant, the archetypal Jamesian innocent is, like Daisy Miller before her, a moral and spiritual *tabula rasa*, a veritable 'blank screen' who becomes a site of hegemonic struggle between manipulative suffragette, Olive Chancellor (Vanessa Redgrave) and the charming reactionary and would-be *homme des lettres* Basil Ransom (Christopher Reeve).

What is interesting about Ivory's film is the way it foregrounds its own incapacity to find a language that can adequately represent Verena. At one point her father, the faith healer Tarrant, advises Olive to 'let her act out her own nature' though it is impossible to guess what this may be. And while nothing in the film is adequate to the task of representing Verena's nature, it can equally be said that she herself is woefully inadequate as a representative, either of Olive's sacred cause, or of Ransom's ideal woman. She is inconsistent, simultaneously too much and not enough, and thus the film constantly misses her, but in missing her reveals her ontological absence from the frame. And thus an unsettling emptiness appears at the heart of a picture which is essentially all talk. This emptiness is, paradoxically, cinema itself, for if the cinematic image has a relationship with the word it is either dialectical, as in Rohmer, where word and image are engaged in a relationship of mutual betrayal (in the sense of revealing each other) or durational, as in Antonioni where the image becomes a question of what happens after everything has been said, or in Tsang Ming Liang where it is a kind of mute ur-speech which produces a pure affect.

In as far as no word or image can embody Verena, she either appears interstitially – in cinematic terms, as an effect of montage - witness the fine parallel montage sequence which juxtaposes Verena's walk in the park with Ransom and Olive's interview with Mrs Burrage - or in her disappearance, the ten minutes which becomes Olive's infinite waiting (a sequence that shows the influence of Whistler overlaid with Visconti's *Death in Venice*), or Olive's final speech in which she declares the individual to be 'of no account.' Thus Verena is drowned in the cry of all women. But as Lacan would say, Verena's essence resides precisely in the 'not all'. Not in her existence but in her insistence."

Felix Bolling

ON THE FILM

Ivory recalls that it "was in 1972 or so that I got on this Henry James kick and began to read everything." He liked *The Bostonians* and could envision it as a film, but he did not consider it seriously until almost a decade later.

In 1980, as it happened, WGBH television in Boston drew up plans for a five-part series on the James family, with four hour-long profiles each of Henry James, senior, and his famous offspring William, Henry, and Alice. The fifth segment was to be a dramatization of a work by Henry James, which the station asked Merchant Ivory to do, choosing the work themselves. The work Ivory chose was *The Bostonians*. WGBH applied for funding to the National Endowment for the Humanities, and Jhabvala went ahead with a screen version of the novel.

In 1981, however, the Reagan administration slashed the NEH's budget, and the five-part series had to be abandoned. But by then Jhabvala had written her screenplay, and in 1983 Merchant Ivory made the decision to shoot it as a feature film. Merchant secured financing for the \$3 million project chiefly from Rediffusion, Curzon Film Distributors, Almi (the film's American distributor), and the Rank Organization.

James's *The Bostonians*, which deals with feminists and reformers in Boston after the Civil War, is dramatic in structure and many of its confrontational scenes, yet would seem impossible to transfer to the stage or screen. Its story concerns a strenuous Back Bay spinster (Olive Chancellor) of high-strung nerves and unconscious lesbianism, who adopts a vibrant young inspirational speaker (Verena Tarrant) as her companion in the Woman's Movement, only to have her wooed away by the Southerner Basil Ransom, an intransigent reactionary and male chauvinist who is in his way as unattractive as she. (Robert Emmet Long, *The Films of Merchant Ivory*)

The film won two Academy Award Nominations, including Best Actress (Vanessa Redgrave).

THE NOVEL by Henry James (1843-1916)

a. Writer's biography

Henry James was born in New York in 1843. James was educated in Europe and in 1862 he went back to the States and entered Harvard Law School which he later gave up to write. He contributed regularly to several periodicals and in 1870 he went back to Europe where he finally decided to settle in 1875, living first in Paris and then in London where he spent more than twenty years and met many of the major intellectuals and writers of the time. James wrote prolifically: twenty long novels and many short stories, travel sketches, plays and essays.

In his early novels, such as *The American* (1877) and *Portrait of a Lady* (1881), his main concern was the relationship between the older civilization of Europe and the new ways of American life. The second phase of James's career is devoted to exploring social issues such as the suffragette question and anarchism, questions which lie at the heart of *The Bostonians* (1886). In his last novels he returned to the "international theme" and the clash between America

and Europe. This phase includes *The Wings of the Dove* (1902), *The Ambassadors* (1903) and *The Golden Bowl* (1904).

In 1915 James became a British citizen but he died a year later, in 1916.

b. On the Novel:

FROM HENRY JAMES'S NOTEBOOKS

Boston, April 8, 1883.

I transcribe here part of a letter I have just written to J.R. Osgood, my publisher, in regard to a new novel.

The scene of the story is laid in Boston and its neighbourhood; it relates an episode connected with the so-called "woman's movement." The characters who figure in it 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, co-educating them with men, etc. They regard this as the great question of the day – the most urgent and sacred reform. The heroine is a very clever and "gifted" young woman, associated by birth and circumstances with a circle immersed in these views and in every sort of new agitation, daughter of old abolitionists, spiritualists, transcendentalists, etc. She herself takes an interest in the cause; but she is an object of still greater interest to her family, who have discovered in her a remarkable natural talent for public speaking by which they believe her capable of moving large audiences and rendering great aid in the liberation of her sex. They cherish her, as a kind of apostle and redeemer. She is very pleasing to look upon, and her gift for speaking is a kind of inspiration. She has a dear and intimate friend, another young woman, who, issuing from a totally different social circle (a rich conservative exclusive family) has thrown herself into these questions with intense ardour and has conceived a passionate admiration for our young girl, over whom, by the force of a completely different character, she has acquired a great influence. She has money of her own, but no talent for appearing in public and she has a dream that her friend and she together (one by the use of her money and the other by her eloquence) may, working side by side, really revolutionize the condition of women. She regards this as a noble and aspiring task, a mission to which everything else should be sacrificed, and she counts implicitly on her friend. The latter, however, makes the acquaintance of a young man who falls in love with her and in whom she also becomes much interested, but who, being of a hard-headed and conservative disposition, is resolutely opposed to female suffrage and all similar alterations. The more he sees of the heroine the more he loves her, and the more determined he is to get her out of the clutches of her reforming friends, whom he utterly abominates. He asks her to marry him, and does not conceal from her that if she does so, she must entirely give up her "mission." She feels that she loves him, but that the sacrifice of the said mission would be terrible, and that the disappointment inflicted on her family and friends, and especially on the rich young woman, would be worse. Her lover is a distant relative of the rich young woman, who in an evil hour, by accident, and before she was acquainted with his opinions (he has been spending ten years in

the West) has introduced him. She appeals to her friend to stand firm – appeals in the name of their intimate friendship and of all the hopes that are centred on the young girl's head. The tale relates the struggle that takes place in the mind of the latter. The struggle ends, after various vicissitudes, with her letting everything go, breaking forever with her friend, in a terrible final interview, and giving herself up to her lover. There are to be several other characters whom I have not mentioned – types of radical agitators – and as many little pictures as I can introduce of the women's' rights agitation' – so much to Osgood. I must return to this with more details. The subject is strong and good, with a large, rich interest. The relation of the two girls should be a study of one of those friendships between women which are so common in New England. The whole thing as local, as American, as possible, and as full of Boston: an attempt to show that I can write an American story. There must, indispensably, be a type of newspaper man – the man whose ideal is the energetic reporter. I should like to bafouer the vulgarity and hideousness of this – the impudent invasion of privacy – the extinction of all concept of privacy, etc. Daudet's Evangéliste has given me the idea of this thing. If I could only do something with that pictorial quality! At any rate, the subject is very national, very typical. 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.

c. FROM THE NOVEL

"It was just as she was, that she liked her; she was so strange, so different from the girls one usually met, seemed to belong to some queer gypsy-land or transcendental Bohemia. With her bright, vulgar clothes, her salient appearance, she might have been a rope-dancer or a fortune-teller; and this had the immense merit, for Olive, that it appeared to make her belong to the "people", threw into the social dusk of that mysterious democracy which Miss Chancellor held that the fortunate classes know so little about, and with which (in a future possibly very near) they will have to count. Moreover, the girl had moved her as she had never been moved, and the power to do that, from whatever source it came, was a force that one must admire. Her emotion was still acute, however much she might speak to her visitor as if everything that had happened seemed to her natural; and what kept it, above all, from subsiding was her sense that she found here what she had been looking for so long – a friend of her own sex with whom she might have a union of soul. It took a double consent to make a friendship, but it was not possible that this intensely sympathetic girl would refuse. Olive had the penetration to discover in a moment that she was a creature of unlimited generosity. I know not what may have been the reality of Miss Chancellor's other premonitions, but there is no doubt that in this respect she took Verena's measure on the spot. This was what she wanted; after that, the rest didn't matter; Miss Tarrant might wear guilt buttons from head to foot, her soul could not be vulgar.

- Mother told me I had better come right in – said Verena, looking now about the room, very glad to find herself in so pleasant a place, and noticing a great many things that she should like to see in detail.

- Your mother saw that I meant what I said; it isn't everybody that does me the honour to perceive that. She saw that I was shaken from head to foot. I could only say three words, I couldn't have spoken more! What a power, what a power, Miss Tarrant!

- Yes, I suppose it is a power. If it wasn't a power, it couldn't do much with me!

- You are so simple, so much like a child – Olive Chancellor said. That was the truth, and she wanted to say it because, quickly, without forms or circumlocutions, it made them familiar. She wished to arrive at this; her impatience was such that before the girl had been five minutes in the room, she jumped to her point, enquired of her, interrupting herself, interrupting everything: - Will you be my friend, my friend of friends, beyond every one, everything, for ever and for ever? – Her face was full of eagerness and tenderness.

- Verena gave a laugh of clear amusement without a shade of embarrassment or confusion. – Perhaps you like me too much.

- Of course I like you too much! When I like, I like too much. But of course it's another thing, your liking me, – Olive Chancellor added. – We must wait, we must wait. When I care for anything, I can be patient. – She put out her hand to Verena, and the movement was at once so appealing and so confident that the girl instinctively placed her own in it. So, hand in hand, for some moments, these two young women sat looking at each other. – There is so much I want to ask you, said Olive.

- Well, I can't say much except when father has worked on me, - Verena answered, with an ingeniousness beside which humility would have seemed pretentious.

- I don't care anything about your father, – Olive Chancellor rejoined very gravely, and with a great air of security.

- He is very good, - Verena said simply. – And he's wonderfully magnetic.

- It isn't your father, and it isn't your mother. I don't think of them, and it's not them I want. It's only you, just as you are.”

d. On WOMEN and THE WOMEN'S MOVEMENT during James's Time

Henry James, in creating his novel, *The Bostonians*, meticulously planned certain reference points that would clearly indicate a credible setting and definite time period. Having decided that his novel would embrace the new era of reform, particularly the women's movement, and knowing that these radical views would be pitted against the lingering views of a post-Civil War South, James has the novel begin in the year 1873, just ten years after the Civil War.

The thoughts of the feminist activists, especially in and around the city of

Boston in the late 1860's, may have some degree of kinship to the antislavery cause of the early 1800's. Both movements reportedly sought to free a people held in bondage, women and blacks respectively. Miss Birdseye is the culmination of this suggestion. James describes several of the hardships endured by Miss Birdseye for the cause of Emancipation before she began her support for the women's rights.

Though James readily denied it, some believe that Miss Birdseye is the portrait of Elizabeth Peabody, an active abolitionist of the pre-war era. Moreover, though some critics contend that James had very little contact with and influence from historic feminist figures, the critics Sara de Saussure Davis suggests that James' most vivid impressions from the feminist movement apparently began in 1870 when he "haunted the streets of Cambridge, seeking diversion and fictional subject matter, attending demonstrations, meetings, seances, and speeches by reformers".

James witnessed forty-two women vote in Massachusetts, an act that inspired women in ten other states to do the same the following year. However, James also witnessed the failure of these attempts.

Some representatives of the feminist movement impressed James so greatly that he drew some of the traits of his major characters from them.

According to Davis, "the striking similarity between the triangle of Anthony-Dickinson-Reid and of Olive-Verena-Basil is easily recognizable, once the historical facts are known". Even disregarding the similar intermingling relations of each of these characters, both actual and fictional, the specific aspects of each one's life are reflected in James' individual creations. Davis maintains that the charm, physical beauty, and immediate success of Verena Tarrant are taken directly from the attributes of Anna Dickinson. Similarly, James' portrayal of Olive's risky first speech to an audience who was used to viewing the "pretty but deceptively pleasant face of a young, beautiful girl" is believed to be a reference to Susan B. Anthony's own beginnings as a speaker.

If the history and geography previously described provides a basis for the characters and plot of the novel, James' observation of his own family may have provided the "psychology" for the work. James returned to Cambridge on two occasions in 1882, the deaths of his mother and father. It is suggested that during his stay, his recollections of his mother's sacrificial life may have either prompted or enhanced James' desire to write about women's rights. Observations of his sister's "intense, symbiotic emotional relationship" with Katherine Loring is thought to have influenced James' subtle incorporation of Olive's "unconscious lesbianism" into the novel.

Detested and rejected by many contemporary feminists, *The Bostonians* has been referred to as a "tremendous satire on the whole 'woman question'" and a "caricature" of the movement. Considering the historical occasions herein described, James' opinion of the feminist movement, and his reasons for depicting it as a failure become more readily understood. As Davis notes, Olive supposedly condemns the male race for holding her captive and controlling them while she herself is contradictorily lording over Verena. Questions may be

raised then concerning the degree of historical validity in *The Bostonians* versus James' own biased opinion of the movement. The feminist movement faced a period of lost interest and declining power in the mid 1880's, just at the time *The Bostonians* was being published in 1884. Obviously, opinions vary in relation to the historic quality of the feminist movement as it is portrayed by James in *The Bostonians*. Certainly, the events surrounding the women's movement were filtered and assessed by the author, and the aspects of the movement as James views them are carried into his work, either consciously or subconsciously. As a writer portraying the complex social setting of his era, Henry James defined his own goal: " 'to leave a multitude of pictures of [his] time, projecting [his] small circular frame upon as many different spots as possible' ".

JAMES IVORY - FILMOGRAPHY

- 1953** *Four In The Morning* Director, screenwriter, editor, photography
- 1957** *Venice: Theme and Variations* Producer, director, screenwriter, photography
- 1959** *The Sword And The Flute* Director
- 1963** *The Householder* Director
- 1964** *The Delhi Way* Director
- 1965** *Shakespeare Wallah* Director, screenwriter
- 1969** *The Guru* Director, screenwriter
- 1970** *Bombay Talkie* Director, screenwriter
- 1972** *Adventures Of A Brown Man In Search Of Civilization* Director, screenwriter
- 1972** *Helen, Queen Of The Nautch Girls* Screenwriter
- 1973** *Mahatma And The Mad Boy* Producer
- 1975** *Autobiography Of A Princess* Director
- 1975** *The Wild Party* Director
- 1976** *Sweet Sounds* Producer
- 1977** *Roseland* Director
- 1979** *The Europeans* Director, performer
- 1979** *Hullabaloo Over Georgie And Bonnie's Pictures* Director
- 1980** *Jane Austen In Manhattan* Director
- 1981** *Quartet* Director, screenwriter
- 1982** *The Courtesans Of Bombay* Producer, screenwriter
- 1983** *Heat And Dust* Director
- 1984** *The Bostonians* Producer, director, screenwriter
- 1985** *A Room With A View* Director
- 1987** *Maurice* Director, screenwriter
- 1989** *Slaves Of New York* Director
- 1990** *Mr. & Mrs. Bridge* Director
- 1992** *Howards End* Director
- 1993** *The Remains Of The Day* Director
- 1995** *Jefferson In Paris* Director
- 1996** *Surviving Picasso* Director

Basil Ransom, a southern gentleman of somewhat traditional views is invited to a meeting of suffragists by his distant cousin, Olive Chancellor, who hopes to pair him off with her widowed sister, Mrs Luna. At the meeting, however, Ransom is bewitched by the main speaker of the evening, Verena Tarrant, the untutored daughter of a dubious faith healer whom, Ransom realizes, has an amazing gift for oratory, even if he strongly disagrees with her views. Verena has a similar effect on Olive who sees in her the ideal spokesman to carry her ideas about female emancipation to the wider public. Olive invites her to visit and embarks on educating the girl to be a proselyte for the feminist movement, expressing the hope that she will 'never marry'. Ransom has other ideas. He finds out from the elderly activist Miss Birdseye that Verena is staying in Cambridge and meets her at Harvard University, beginning a courtship which gradually turns into a battle of wits between himself and Olive for the girl's heart. But Ransom is not Verena's only admirer. The son of the rich and influential Mrs Burrage also has his heart set on her, and asks his mother to intervene on his behalf. She puts it to Olive that Verena would be much safer with her son than with Ransom since he supports the aims of the women's movement. Olive begins to see the contradictions between her desire for female emancipation and her manipulation of Verena's destiny. Meanwhile Verena, unable to prevent herself falling for Ransom's charms, asks Olive to take her away. The pair retire to Miss Birdseye's seaside retreat where they are soon joined by Ransom, whose persistence eventually pays off. Torn between her mentor and her would-be lover, Verena finds herself unable to make the speech that Olive has prepared for her at the Music Hall, and finally decides to elope with Ransom, leaving an embittered and disillusioned Olive to make the speech in her stead.

PRINCIPAL CHARACTERS

OLIVE CHANCELLOR

The activist Olive Chancellor appears much older in the film than she does in the book, which has the effect of deflecting our sympathies away from her. Olive is very learned and highly perspicacious yet is unable to see the contradictions inherent in her ideas. Believing she speaks for all women, she refuses the idea of women as a heterogeneous community, embracing both radical and reactionary elements.

VERENA TARRANT

Verena is the wide-eyed innocent, the simple American girl pure of soul and spirit whom both Olive and Basil see more as a force of nature to be moulded and shaped than a person. The book gives her character much more scope to develop than does the film, in which our impression of her remains that of an empty-headed girl oscillating wildly from pillar to post, incapable of grasping the complex power games in which she is entangled.

BASIL RANSOM

The film's treatment of the reactionary lawyer and article writer Ransom, partly the fault of the fatal miscasting of the instinctively amiable Christopher Reeve in the role, make us unduly sympathetic to him, turning him into something of a fairytale figure, the dashing white knight who saves the princess from her wicked stepmother, an impression compounded by the age gap between Verena and Olive (Vanessa Redgrave), when James leaves us with the idea of him as a fatally flawed young man who seems destined to become a tyrannical husband.

1. A STAR IS BORN (15' 31").

- 1.1 The Organist (Opening Title Sequence).
- 1.2 Distant Cousins.
- 1.3 The Meeting.
- 1.4 The Speech.
- 1.5 Friend of Friends.

2.THE GETTING OF WISDOM (15' 27").

- 2.1 Educating Verena.
- 2.2 A Man of Letters.
- 2.3 Making Plans for Verena.
- 2.4 The Captive Speaker.
- 2.5 We want to be Alone.

3.'TIS THE CHASE THEY SEEK (13' 43").

- 3.1 A Possible Convert.
- 3.2 A Meeting of Minds.
- 3.3 Songs without Words.
- 3.4 Verena takes a Vow.

4. THE WEDNESDAY CLUB (13' 16").

- 4.1 Rejection.
- 4.2 Mother and Son.
- 4.3 Tête à Tête.
- 4.4 Ransom's Request.

5. THE GREAT PURSUIT (11' 14").

- 5.1 Loose Talk.
- 5.2 Little Betrayals.
- 5.3 Cross Purposes.
- 5.4 Verena's Decision.

6. A SUMMER RETREAT (29' 00").

- 6.1 Women without Men.
- 6.2 A Surprise Visitor.
- 6.3 Verena's Confession.
- 6.4 One Hour.
- 6.5 Dr Prance.
- 6.6 Miss Birdseye's Last Wish.
- 6.7 Ten Minutes.

7.THEATRE OF WAR (13' 12").

- 7.1 Where is Verena?
- 7.2 The Music Hall.

PART 1 - A STAR IS BORN.

1.1 The Organist (Opening Title Sequence).

1.2 Distant Cousins.

OLIVE Our fight is directed against those that want to keep women in an inferior position.

BASIL Oh,I'd change my position for yours any day. That's what I said to myself as I sat there in your comfortable **parlour**.

OLIVE But do you **reproach** me for having a little money?

BASIL Oh! Certainly not!

OLIVE It's the dearest wish of my heart to do something with it for others

 Don't you believe in the coming of a better day, that it's possible to do something for the human race?

BASIL Well... what strikes me most, Miss Olive, is that the human race has just got to bear its troubles.

OLIVE Why, that's what men say to keep women in the position they have made for them!

BASIL The position of women's nothing but to make fools of men.

OLIVE Don't you believe in our emancipation?

BASIL I'll tell you after the meeting.

GLOSSARY

parlour – living room.
reproach – criticize.

1.3 The Meeting.

Miss BIRDSEYE Your cousin looks like a genius, my dear.

OLIVE He's only a distant cousin.He's a lawyer from Mississippi.He left his mother and sisters behind, and he's...come to try to make his living in New York.He's not in sympathy, I'm afraid.

Miss BIRDSEYE Well,I've often found that people are only waiting for the light.Oh! Here's our guest of honour!

 Miss Birdseye, what a pleasure to see you.

Mrs FARRINDER Excuse me. May I ask you who is that lady?

BASIL Mrs Farrinder is the leader, and you might say of the apostle of the movement to emancipate the female

PARDON

BASIL
Mrs FARRINDER
PARDON

sex!
Oh,I see.
How nice to see you again.
Matthias Pardon representing the Press "The Transcript",don't you know. Well,I'm hoping Mrs Farrinder will **give an address**. I'll write it up for "The Transcript". You know, there's a great interest in the movement among **the public at large**. And I'm here in the service of the public at large. "Pro bono publico".

BASIL
I beg your pardon.Are you acquainted with the lioness? I mean the **renowned** Mrs Farrinder. Has she convinced you that women are superior to men?

Dr PRANCE
I guess I know more about women than she does. I'm a doctor. Prance is the name.

BASIL
Dr PRANCE
I'm Basil Ransom.Hello.
Men and women are all the same to me. There's room for improvement in both sexes. Neither of them is **up to the standard**.

MISS BIRDSEYE
VERENA
Dr PRANCE
Verena,my dear!
Hello, Miss Birdseye...
The Tarrants. Doctor Tarrant,he calls himself. He's a **mesmeric healer**. Miraculous cures.

GLOSSARY

give an address – make a speech.

the public at large – the general public whom Pardon serves, conceived by James as an abstract entity incapable of expressing anything other than dumb curiosity;thus under its gaze every 'movement' is reduced to a simple novelty whose real power of rupture with the past is neutralized by the media's indifference to everything but its supposed 'message' which is translated into a language whose terms the public already understands. In this sense Verena, in as far as she embodies all the traditional feminine virtues is considered by Pardon to be the perfect spokeswoman, since she in no way endangers the existing symbolic order of patriarchal society.

renowned – famous, celebrated.

up to the standard – good enough.

mesmeric healer – one who heals by hypnosis, following the theories of Franz Mesmer, a physicist who lived during the 18th century.

1.4 The Speech.

Dr TARRANT
VERENA

If I might request a few moments' silence, I'll **start her up**. Quietly... quietly... It will come, my dear child. The Spirit will come. Let it gather. Let it come. The light,the tide, is rising...is rising...I feel...I hear a calling. Calling for help. Uncounted millions have lived,only to be tortured. To be crucified.Ages of oppression have rolled over them.But the day of

BASIL
Dr PRANCE
VERENA
Dr PRANCE
BASIL
VERENA
Dr PRANCE
BASIL
Dr PRANCE
BASIL
VERENA

their delivery has dawned.This is the only sacred cause. This is the great,the just revolution.It must triumph.It must sweep everything before it.It will be the greatest change the world has seen.And the names of those who have helped to show the way and lead the **squadrons** will be the brightest in the **tables of fame**. I don't speak...
Do you know my cousin, Miss Chancellor?
I can't say I know her, but I guess I know others like her pretty well.
When I look at the world,and at the state that men have brought it to, I confess I say to myself, well,if women had fixed it this way, I should like to know what men would think of it.
Do you like it?
What she's saying? Nah.But I suppose she's been taught all that by her Daddy.
I say that if this is the best they can do by themselves, they had better let us come in a little and see what we can do. We couldn't possibly make it worse,could we? There is a brutal element in the world which **tramples down** the feeble and treads down the weak.
I stand in a place of peace and beauty. And I look into a **wilderness** of poverty and ignorance and misery. The world is **drenched** in blood...
I guess I've heard it all before.
But she looks so pretty when she says it.
I think she looks anaemic, and she probably eats too much candy. Well,I've got work to do. I don't want the gentlemen doctors to get ahead of me.
Oh,nobody'll ever get ahead of you,Doctor Prance, I'm very sure.
Good night,sir.
Good night.
I'm only a girl. **A simple American girl**. And of course, I haven't seen much,and there's a great deal of life I don't know anything about, but there are some things that I feel.They're in my ears in the stillness of the night.And before my face in the visions of the darkness Let us remember, in our trials and discouragements that if our lives are true, we walk with angels If we trust one another, if we are true and gentle and kind,those regal ideas that struggle for liberty will come forth and spread their

Mrs FARRINDER
PARDON wings to **soar high**.
You speak well. And no wonder...
Isn't she wonderful? There's money for someone
in that girl. You'll see if she don't have **quite a run**.
BASIL Perhaps I could become a sympathiser after all.
OLIVE Do come and see me.
VERENA Where do you live?
Mrs TARRANT I know where Miss Chancellor lives.
I'm acquainted with your family, of course, Miss
Chancellor... I believe your father knew my father,
Abraham Greenstreet, the **Abolitionist**.
OLIVE I want to thank you. Mister Ransom...

GLOSSARY

start her up – the expression used by Verena's father suggests that she is a marionette who can be manipulated at will.

squadrons – armies.

tables of fame – Verena's speech emphasises the fame that will come to the leaders of the feminist movement. In this sense she cannot conceive the movement as anything other than a spectacle.

tramples down – crushes

wilderness – barren land, desert – a word which came into its own during the modernist period when writers such as Eliot and Conrad used it to embody the sense of moral and spiritual emptiness that they thought the world had fallen into.

drenched – covered, soaked.

a simple American girl – a coy reference to the family of Jamesian innocents Verena belongs to, foremost among whom Daisy Miller.

soar high – the rhetoric of lightness employed in Verena's speeches, although soul stirring reveals the extent to which they are without any real substance, as is she.

quite a run – the cynical Pardon uses an expression normally employed to talk about the durability of plays on Broadway before the audience becomes tired of them.

Abolitionist – one involved in the campaign to abolish slavery, one of the motives behind the American Civil War.

1.5 Friend of Friends.

OLIVE I was certain you would come, I felt it all day,
something told me.
VERENA Mother said I'd better come right on.
OLIVE Your mother saw that I meant what I said. I was
shaken from head to foot... What power, what
power, Miss Tarrant.
VERENA It's a regular dream-like place.
OLIVE I want to know you. I felt that as soon as I heard you
speak last night. So much I want to ask you.
VERENA Well, I can't say much, except when father has
worked on me...
OLIVE I don't care anything about your father.

VERENA He's wonderfully **magnetic**.
OLIVE It isn't your father and it isn't your mother. It's only
you, just as you are. Will you be my friend? My
friend of friends? For ever and ever?
Mrs LUNA My carriage was ordered for three and it still hasn't
appeared. You have a visitor.
OLIVE Miss Verena Tarrant, my sister, Mrs Luna.
Mrs LUNA Why, you're on stage! What do you do? Are you an
actress? Do you sing?
VERENA I can never carry a tune.
OLIVE Verena has a divine gift.
Mrs LUNA Oh, Olive, we have another visitor. Our interesting
cousin whom you so providentially discovered.
OLIVE We'll meet again soon. Very, very soon. This is only
the beginning.
BASIL Why, Miss Chancellor... Good afternoon.
Mrs LUNA I'm so glad my carriage is late, or you would have
missed seeing me.
BASIL Oh, Mrs Luna, I would have been **disconsolate**. I
have come to say good-bye. I'm going back to New
York today.
NEWTON Mama! I want to go!
Mrs LUNA Now, Newton, you know Mama will be back.
NEWTON I want to go!! I want to go! I want to go...
Mrs LUNA Mama has to go, now Newton, dearest...
NEWTON No!!
BASIL Miss Tarrant won't be surprised if I recognise her,
if I take the liberty to speak to her?
VERENA Many gentlemen speak to me.
OLIVE We'll see each other again tomorrow.
BASIL Miss... Miss Tarrant. I know what your ideas are.
You expressed them last night in such beautiful
language I'm **duly** ashamed of being a man. But
must you go the moment I appear? Do you **flee**
before the individual male?
VERENA I like the individual well enough.
BASIL Won't you sit down again? I'm certain Miss
Chancellor will be extremely sorry to part with you.
OLIVE You'll just catch the Charles Street car...
BASIL I would like to interpret for you the position of
women in history. Now... Well, what do you say to
Helen of Troy? **The fearful carnage** she excited? All
without the benefit of the vote?

VERENA Excuse me. He's a joker.
 OLIVE He's an enemy. An enemy of our movement and our sex. You must fear him.

VERENA Do you?
 OLIVE I fear his ideas. Tomorrow we'll be alone. And we'll talk and talk... Just you and I.

Mrs LUNA All of Olive's friends are like that. What an extraordinary young woman, Olive. Is she your latest discovery?

OLIVE Your veil is not put on straight, Adeline. Goodbye, Mr Ransom. I hope you have a safe journey back to New York.

BASIL Well, I thank you very much for...
 Mrs LUNA Come away with me and I'll explain her as we go. I must get away from here. We'll meet often. I've **made up my mind** to **winter** in New York.

BASIL Look here, Mrs Luna. If your sister was not going to like me, then why in the world did she write to me?

Mrs LUNA Because she thought I'd like you.

GLOSSARY

worked on me – prepared me.
magnetic – fascinating, (the word is comically appropriate to describe the bogus faith healer, Tarrant whose methods involve magnetism).
disconsolate – disappointed.
duly – as a consequence.
flee – escape.
fearful carnage – death, slaughter. Ransom refers to the battle for Troy reported in the Iliad. His remark is a provocation but here it seems somewhat obtuse, since it ignores the alliance between the women's movement and the peace movement, for whom Helen of Troy would not exactly be a positive role model.
made up my mind – decided.
winter – spend the winter.

Part 2 - THE GETTING OF WISDOM.

2.1 Educating Verena.

OLIVE “Then when a little more I **raised my brow**, I **spied** the master of the sapient throng seated amid the philosophic train. Him all admire, all claim reverence to... There Socrates and Plato both I **marked**. Nearest to him in **rank**, Democritus, who **sets the world a chance**. Diogenes with Heraclitus and Ampedocles, and Anaxagoras, and Thali's sage, Orpheus I marked. And Linus, Tully, and moral Seneca, Euclid... and Ptolemy. Hippocrates, Gallilinos, Avocani, Xeno and Deoscorides, well read in Nature's secret law...”

VERENA “Entsagen solst Du solst entsagen.”
 OLIVE What does it mean?
 “Thou shalt give up Entsagen solst Du...” It means to renounce everything, yourself, your life. Are you ready for it?
 VERENA “I feel I am something of a **novice** upon this platform... Born of a race whose inheritance has been outrage and wrong, most of my life has been spent in battling those wrongs. But I did not feel as keenly as others that I had these rights in common with other women...”
 Photographer Ladies, no movement please.
 OLIVE When we recited our Latin and Greek to him he said, ‘Very smart girls, unusually capable. But can you cook?’ I answered with the utmost patience, ‘Well, Mr Quincy, we want to go to Harvard College with our brothers’. ‘No, my dear’, said he, ‘that is not possible’. At that I burst out: “Then I wish I were God that I might kill every woman from Eve down and let you have a masculine world all to yourselves, and see how you like that!” What if I were to ask you to give up your parents, everything, oh how can I ask you! I must give up!
 VERENA Perhaps you like me too much.
 OLIVE Of course I like you too much. When I like, I like oo much.
 VERENA “When I was a child and you were a child in our kingdom by the sea, we loved with a love that was more than love, I and my Annabel Lee.”

GLOSSARY

raised my brow – looked up.
spied – saw.
marked – noticed.
rank – position.
sets the world a chance –
novice – beginner.

2.2 A Man of Letters.

BASIL "...the rediscovery of natural order. As in any democracy, we must establish..." Come in. "...cannot resist the vulgar..." Oh, thank you, Tim. Right here. Ten cents, please, sir.
 Boy Would, would you ask Mr Richards if I might **settle with him** tomorrow? Thank you. "...cannot resist... the vulgar temptation to serve themselves. Serve

themselves although a true, natural leader will not keep another man down. Neither... will he set him free...free." From manner we pass naturally to the notions of honour, decorum and what is proper and becoming to a man which constitute the deeper essence of aristocracy. It is a sort of primitive uprightness that has ripened and expanded into a great cleanness and decency, a wholly admirable **rectitude**, and it is one of the most pleasant things that ever grew up on American soil." All this must be very dull for you.

Mrs LUNA I adore it. Stop it! Stop it right now! Get that ugly brute off my Newton!

Fat boy's mother Pat Murphy, take your hands off that boy!

Mrs LUNA Stop it!

Fat boy's mother Don't you be calling my Pat no names! It's your **little shrimp** that's...
...right now!

Mrs LUNA Are you going to do it again?

Fat boy You stink!!

NEWTON Newton, never start a fight you can't finish.

BASIL Let mother see... Oh, poor Newton. He needs a father's **guidance** to help him stand up for himself.

Mrs LUNA What do you hear from Boston from your sister?

BASIL Can you imagine? She's brought that red-headed **hoyden** into her house to live! She's educating her.

Mrs LUNA Do you mean that rather... striking young lady whom I met in Boston?

BASIL Newton, you're too heavy for Mama. Get down.

Mrs LUNA Dory! Would you come and get him please and give him a bath?

BASIL Go on, Newton.

NEWTON No!!

Mrs LUNA Yes, I remember your being **struck** by Verena.

BASIL Verena? Is that her name?

Mrs LUNA If you ask me, I think she cares as much for the rights of women as she does for the Panama Canal. The only right of a woman she wants is to be able to climb up on something where men can look at her. But mark my words. One of these days she'll give her the greatest **cut** Olive's ever had in her life.

BASIL Oh? What will she do to your sister?

Mrs LUNA She'll run away with a lion tamer. She'll marry a circus man. Unless of course you want to marry her... you seem so interested in her.

BASIL
Mrs LUNA

Well... I thank you for an excellent dinner.
You're not to belong to any Verena. You're to belong to me.

GLOSSARY

settle with him – pay him.

rectitude –

little shrimp – (slang) weak, pathetic boy.

guidance – supervision, teaching.

hoyden – tomboy, unconventional girl.

struck – impressed.

cut – injury, disappointment.

2.3 Making Plans for Verena.

Dr TARRANT The mind rules the body with the sceptre of reason. Can you feel my hand draw out the Rays of Affirmation? Have you got that, Mr Pardon? Shut your eyes... Repeat after me... I am the child of reason, and as such pure, perfect, and without **flaw**.

Old lady patient "I am the child of reason, and as such pure, perfect, and without flaw".

Dr TARRANT Now rest your mind from the thought. Eyes shut. Shut, shut! Now **draw back** to the thought.

Old lady patient "I am a child of reason, and as such pure, perfect, and without flaw".

Dr TARRANT That is all for today. This healing must not **strain**, but descend gently.

Old lady patient "I... am the child of reason..."

Dr TARRANT I want you to think of... green fields. Nothing but green fields this week. Our next session will be on Thursday. Remember to keep her knees warm. We don't want **fluid on the joint**.

Old lady patient We're very grateful to you, Dr Tarrant. She's felt a beautiful benefit.

Dr TARRANT Have you got that, Mr Pardon?

YOUNG RELATIVE Thank you, Doctor.

PARDON It's time for Miss Verena to press forward. I want to see her in a front seat.

Dr TARRANT What do you have in mind?

PARDON Her name on the biggest posters. Her portrait in the windows of all the shops I tell you straight. I want to see her in the Music Hall. At fifty cents a ticket.

Dr TARRANT We shall have to talk with Miss Chancellor.

PARDON Miss Chancellor hangs back, I'm prepared to **take hold** myself, do you understand me? The American public want to hear Miss Verena, and they shall hear

her. Good day, sir.

GLOSSARY

flaw – defect.
draw back – recall.
strain –
fluid on the joint –
take hold – manage.

2.4 The Captive Speaker.

PARDON I don't know what everyone's waiting for. I don't suppose they're waiting 'til she's fifty years old, there's enough old ones in the field already. You know, I've known a lot of celebrated ladies, and had the honour of **condensing them in shorthand**, and some of them were quite **voluminous**. But I can tell you this. There's never been a more attractive female speaker before the American public.

Mrs TARRANT It's a pleasure to see you in our home, Miss Chancellor. It quite raises my appetite for social intercourse... Verena seems to be having such a time with those gentlemen...

Gentleman I have the most terrible prejudices, I'm full of wrong ideas.

Mrs TARRANT It's a privilege to hear you talking. It's what I call real conversation. First I catch one thing then another! Seems as if I couldn't take it all in!

PARDON Miss Verena has charm. And there's a great demand for that nowadays in connection with the new ideas. There's just so many who've **fallen dead for want** of it. But Miss Verena ought to walk right up to the top. The truth is, she needs to **shed** her father. She don't want him **pawing** around her that way on the platform. It don't add to the attraction one bit. Now, I'll put it to you, Miss Chancellor. We could **run her** together.

Dr TARRANT Might I tempt you, madam? The apple fritters are very fine.

VERENA Do offer them over here, father. You know how students from Harvard college are always starving!

BURRAGE Yes, for truth and knowledge, and of course, principally beauty.

VERENA Well, they certainly teach you to talk.

GRACIE We don't want to talk at all. We want to listen.

VERENA You should listen to Olive Chancellor. She knows much more than I do and she has wonderful ideas.

GRACIE
VERENA
BURRAGE

VERENA

Mrs TARRANT

PARDON

OLIVE
PARDON

VERENA

OLIVE
PARDON

Dr TARRANT
VERENA

BURRAGE
OLIVE

VERENA
OLIVE
VERENA
OLIVE

VERENA

OLIVE

Go and talk to her.

But we want to hear you...

I can't do anything with a small audience...

Well, Gracie here is a host in himself... Everyone in the University wants to hear you. We are sunk in ignorance and prejudice!

Oh, I didn't realise that you were Harvard University...

Mr Burrage is from New York. He's very fashionable. He goes out a great deal in Boston. I've no doubt you know some of the places. His family's very rich... Well, he knows plenty of that sort, but he didn't know anyone like us so we told Mr Gracie, of course, bring him...

I'll speak seriously. I don't want to make money out of it.

What do you want to make?

I want to make... history. I want to help the ladies. In general. And Miss Verena... in particular.

They're asking me to speak. What do you say? I know you'd like me to speak.

Yes. At the right time and in the right place.

Now's your chance with Harvard College! These gentlemen will carry the news! Make them gasp! Would you like me to start her up?

I'll do it alone, if you prefer. This might be a good chance to try without father. What do you want me to do?

Oh, come on, give us the whole programme.

I want you to address audiences that are worth addressing, not to exhibit yourself to... individuals.

I want you to touch the heart of nations. Do as you like my dear. I must leave.

I can see you don't want it.

Come with me.

You're angry. What have I done?

I'm not angry, I'm anxious and afraid. Verena, those young men don't care for you. They don't care for us. All they want is to make us give up everything we think is sacred...

They don't want that, Olive. They don't ask as much as that.

Then go in and speak for them and sing for them

VERENA and dance for them!
 OLIVE Olive, you're cruel.
 Yes, perhaps I am. But... promise me one thing and I'll be... oh, so tender... Oh, my poor darling, it's cold. I'm selfish and **dreadful**, I know it, but... but promise me that...
 Mrs TARRANT Verena, you'll catch your death of cold out there.
 OLIVE Promise me... not to marry.

GLOSSARY

condensing them in shorthand – here Pardon refers both to the physical dimensions of the ladies and to the prolixity and complexity of their views, which he reduces and simplifies for his readers.
voluminous – fat.
fallen dead – failed.
want – lack.
shed – get rid of
pawing – touching.
run her – manage her, but the expression also has a more mechanical aspect as though Verena were a machine.
dreadful – terrible.

2.5 We want to be Alone.

OLIVE Leave us alone. Entirely alone. For a year. And I'll write you another.
 Dr TARRANT The great thing is to help her to develop. That's all we ask of you, just... **let her act out her own nature**. Don't shut down the cover, Miss Chancellor, just let her **overflow**.

GLOSSARY

let her act out...nature – what is Verena's nature? This is one of the key dilemmas of the story which is of course never satisfactorily resolved, for we never see Verena except as a creature 'of somebody or something'
overflow – emphasises the excessive quality of Verena which makes it impossible to pigeonhole her either as a feminist proselyte or as a traditional woman.

PART 3 - 'TIS THE CHASE THEY SEEK

3.1 A Possible Convert.

BASIL Miss Birdseye! Miss Birdseye! Good morning, ma'am. You don't remember me, but I attended an evening at your house last year at which a young lady gave a wonderful speech. I came with Miss Chancellor.
 Miss BIRDSEYE I remember you now, and Olive bringing you. But you live in New York! Have you come to stay in Boston now?
 BASIL Well, I'm here on business for a day or two, ma'am. May I... **escort** you a little ways?

Miss BIRDSEYE A gentleman from the South is not required to escort an old Bostonian around her own city!
 BASIL Well. Only in **chivalry**, Miss Birdseye. Our old Southern chivalry.
 Miss BIRDSEYE They didn't show me so much of that when I was down there in the old days.
 BASIL Oh?
 Miss BIRDSEYE They were always **round after me!**
 BASIL Why was that? On account of your work for the Negroes?
 Miss BIRDSEYE Yes. I carried them the Bible.
 BASIL "Woman of the 19th Century".
 Miss BIRDSEYE Verena Tarrant spoke on that subject at the last convention.
 BASIL Does she speak... often?
 Miss BIRDSEYE She raises her voice a good deal in places around, like Framingham and Billerica. It's as if she were gathering strength just to break over Boston like a wave...
 BASIL What a great pity she isn't speaking somewhere tonight. Tomorrow I have to return to New York.
 Miss BIRDSEYE Today she's visiting with her mother in Cambridge. Olive mentioned that.
 BASIL Where in Cambridge does her family live?
 Miss BIRDSEYE Oh... it's in one of those little streets that doesn't seem to have much of a name.
 BASIL Well, it must be called something... Is it a street, ... a square, a place?
 Miss BIRDSEYE Yes, that's it! A place, yes! Err... umm... Monadnoc.
 BASIL Mondanoc.
 Miss BIRDSEYE Monadnoc Place.
 BASIL I see.
 Miss BIRDSEYE But ain't you going to see your cousin, too?
 BASIL Oh, Miss Birdseye. I wonder... if you'd be so kind as not to mention our meeting to my cousin.
 Miss BIRDSEYE You want me to conceal.
 BASIL Well, I don't want you to conceal anything, I simply... wish you'd let it pass. Not mention it.
 Miss BIRDSEYE I never did anything of that kind. Won't Verena tell her? She tells her most everything, their union is so close.
 BASIL She won't want her to be wounded.
 Miss BIRDSEYE Well, you are considerate. It's a pity you can't sympathise.
 BASIL Well, perhaps Miss Tarrant will bring me around.

Miss BIRDSEYE You have before you a possible convert.
 In that case, I won't say a word to Olive about our meeting.

BASIL Hack! Miss Birdseye, I do hope to see you again.
 Miss BIRDSEYE Well, I'm always about the streets of Boston.
 BASIL Three nineteen West Newton Street. Good day, ma'am!

GLOSSARY
 escort –
 chivalry –
 round after me –

3.2 A Meeting of Minds.

VERENA I've decided to show you Harvard College because it seems to me that I ought to do something for you in return. In return for your kind visit. And the weather is so splendid.

BASIL What an ideal guide! Do you still make speeches?
 VERENA Olive's told me about you. That you're a great enemy to our movement.

BASIL If you regard me as an enemy, it was very kind of you to receive me.

VERENA A great many gentlemen call. Everyone's so interested. In our work, I mean.

BASIL You know, this is where I ought to have been. I should have liked to study here.

VERENA You can't expect me to speak with much admiration of an institution in which the doors are closed to our sex.

BASIL Well, do you advocate a system of education in common?

VERENA I advocate equal rights, equal opportunities, equal privileges... so does Miss Chancellor.

BASIL Oh, I thought what she wanted was a different inequality, simply to turn out the men altogether.

VERENA Now mind, if you don't like what's in here, it isn't my fault.

BASIL Why, is there anything against Mississippi?
 VERENA It's in honour of our young men who fought in the War.

BASIL Oh, it says they're brave, I suppose.
 VERENA Yes. It says so in Latin.
 BASIL Well, so they were. I ought to know that. I had to fight them.

VERENA I wish you could have seen us in June. We just quivered, Mr Ransom. It was our convention. There were delegates from every State and every city. Olive had six wonderful women staying in the house, two in a room! In the evenings, we sat in the open windows, and we talked... and we talked. We had quantities of ice cream.

BASIL Well, now, Miss Tarrant, I am forced to the painful conclusion that you're simply **ruined**.
 Ruined?
 Yes.
 Ruined yourself! Aren't you going to see Olive at all? She's different now. She's much happier.
 Why? Because of you?
 She'll know you've been here.
 Not unless you tell her.
 I tell her everything I do. If I don't tell Olive, then you must leave me here. And there mustn't be anything more. There must not, Mister Ransom, really.
 Why? What are you afraid there might be? Miss Birdseye's hoping there will be, she's hoping you'll convert me. Just think how effective, out of darkest Mississippi I could blaze forth! A first-class **proselyte!**
 Mr Ransom, do you know what strikes me? The interest you take in me isn't a bit controversial. It's just personal.
 Are you going to tell Miss Chancellor?

GLOSSARY
 ruined –
 proselyte –

3.3 Songs without Words.

OLIVE Oh!
 Mrs BURRAGE My son's letters are full of nothing but you and Miss Tarrant. And she is everything he says. Charming...
 What was it?
 "Lied Ohne Worte" by Mendelsson.
 What does it mean?
 "Song without Words".
 She's going **from strength to strength**, her dedication is unshakeable.
 Mrs BURRAGE It would be a privilege for me to introduce her to

sympathetic circles in New York. I hope you'll let me. It would make me happy. It would make my son very happy. She is an original, no doubt. I can see your attraction for her, with your collector's taste...

BURRAGE Oh, mother, it's a very different affair from my collecting.

GRACIE Mrs Burrage.

Mrs BURRAGE Oh! Yes, Mister um...

BURRAGE Tom Gracie.

Mrs BURRAGE Yes, Mister Gracie. How are you?

GRACIE Very well, madam.

Mrs BURRAGE Are you off to supper?

GRACIE Umm... to a tutorial, I'm afraid. Ah, how is the delightful Miss Tarrant?

Mrs BURRAGE Delightful.

BURRAGE As always.

Mrs BURRAGE **Bundle up**, Mister Gracie, it's **chilly** out.

GRACIE Enjoy the rest of your visit, ma'am!

GLOSSARY
from strength to strength –
bundle up –
chilly –

3.4 Verena takes a Vow.

OLIVE You've been so strange all day. Yesterday. Ever since you came back from visiting your mother. Your thoughts have been away from me.

VERENA You know, Olive... I sometimes wonder, if it weren't for you, if I should feel it so very much. About not having a vote. Women being exploited.

OLIVE I feel it. All the time. Night and day. I feel it here. As one feels a **stain** upon one's honour. I know how it is for you. How exposed to men you are. Many would gladly stop your mouth by kissing you.

VERENA Olive, you know what you asked me once to promise you?

OLIVE Hmm?

VERENA I will promise now. I'll take any vow you want.

OLIVE I hope with all my heart you never marry, but not because you promised me. I would rather trust you without. You'll often be asked to marry. I never will. Don't promise. But don't fail me.

GLOSSARY
stain –

PART 4 - THE WEDNESDAY CLUB.

4.1 Rejection.

BASIL "The editor regrets..." Respectfully yours too, sir.

4.2 Mother and Son.

Mrs BURRAGE Thank you, Mary. Perhaps Miss Chancellor's idea of Verena's future... may not coincide with yours. Or mine.

BURRAGE Do you mind? I know it's not what you're entitled to expect, the daughter of a faith healer.

Mrs BURRAGE Oh, I like the girl, Henry. Quite apart from my liking for you.

BURRAGE Well, you haven't met the parents.

Mrs BURRAGE It doesn't in the least matter. A girl like Verena makes her own standards.

4.3 Tête à Tête.

BASIL Madam.

Mrs BURRAGE Oh, Good evening.

Guest 1 Are you a member? I didn't know you had joined.

Guest 2 Oh, I haven't; nothing would induce me!

Guest 1 You must come and hear Professor Gougenheim, I'll invite you. He's going to talk about the **Talmud**...

Guest 3 This woman tonight, isn't she from Boston?

Guest 4 You must be pretty desperate, when you've got to go to Boston for your entertainment.

BASIL Miss Chancellor, how very nice to see you, dear. May I join you? Why, it's very amusing. We don't have anything so brilliant in Mississippi. And how wonderful to see you and Miss Tarrant, the heroines on an occasion like this

OLIVE Do I look like the heroine of an occasion?

BASIL Well now, you would if you didn't hide yourself away. Are you not going into the other room?

OLIVE I'm going when I'm asked. When I'm invited.

BASIL So you're going to **stir up** the fashionable world?

OLIVE We carry our work where it is needed. We have learned to **stifle our distaste**. You will understand when you listen to Miss Tarrant.

BASIL Hmm! Miss Tarrant.

OLIVE Why, what do you know about her?

BASIL Why, don't you remember me hearing her speak that night at Miss Birdseye's?

OLIVE That was the only time

BASIL No, I met her again next day at your house.

BURRAGE Mr Belmont,you really should be going in,we're just about to start.

Mr BELMONT Thank you.

BURRAGE Excuse me, Miss Chancellor. But if you'll do me the favour to take my arm,I'll find you a good seat in the other room.I recommend you find a seat **without delay**. If you've never heard Miss Tarrant, you'll have one of the greatest pleasures of your life.

OLIVE Oh,Mister Ransom only comes to ventilate his prejudices.

BASIL Oh,don't be so rough on me.

Mrs LUNA The last person I expected to see at the Wednesday Club! You never told me you knew Mrs Burrage.

BASIL Well,I don't.I never even heard of her 'til she asked me.

Mrs LUNA Then why in the world did she ask you?

BASIL Well,I suppose your sister had a card sent to me, let me find you a place inside.

Mrs LUNA My sister? My Grandmother! I know how Olive loves you!

BASIL The chairs are all filled up, but we could hear her from the doorway.

Mrs LUNA We won't be disturbed here.

BASIL Well,I don't intend to lose any of the **sport** in there, you know.

Mrs LUNA Oh,you won't find much sport at the Wednesday Club. Isn't it more fun,just the two of us? Tête-à-tête?

Mrs BURRAGE It is the greatest pleasure and privilege for me to welcome Miss Verena Tarrant on her first appearance in New York.Some have called her a great prophetess, some a poetess, some a **seer**. But I will confine myself to introducing her to you only as a young woman with an extraordinary awareness of the great question pertaining to the equality of women.

Mrs LUNA There she goes! **She's off!**

VERENA You stand on historic ground.One hundred years ago on this ground our forefathers poured out their blood in the name of freedom.In the name of freedom I ask you one simple question.Do you think any good can come to a society where women are treated as slaves?The public life of the world

Mrs LUNA will continue in the same...
It was her son's idea,of course. Just between you and me,young Mister Burrage is **in very thick** with Verena. Verena goes around lecturing how no one should ever get married...but I think in this case she's beginning to change her mind.But first they'll have to deal with Olive,because she has not changed her mind about marriage.

VERENA ...and if you ask me what offices we may fill, I should reply - any. Let us be sea captains and see how we prove ourselves The especial genius of women I believe to be intuitive in function,spiritual in tendency,electrical in movement. Try us and you'll see. I am not here to **recriminate**. Nor to deepen the **gulf** that already yawns between the sexes...

Mrs LUNA You know,I've never understood how Olive can bear Verena's really low style. And I'm surprised at young Mr Burrage, after all he is a gentleman. Certainly he can see that she is not his type of person.

BASIL Let me find you a place inside. You could stand on a chair, you could lean on me...

Mrs LUNA Sit down,Mister Ransom.Surely you wouldn't be so **ungallant** as to leave a lady absolutely alone in a public place?

VERENA ...that is what I shall like to pass on to each of you individually, personally, to give him the vision of the world as it hangs perpetually before me. Redeemed. Transfigured by a new moral tone. There would be tenderness. Sympathy. Generosity. Where now there is only brute force and sordid **rivalry**.

Mrs LUNA How silly she sounds!

BASIL You can't even hear what she's saying.

Mrs LUNA Mister Ransom,my sister never sent you an invitation to this place. Didn't it come from Verena Tarrant?

BASIL If Miss Tarrant sent me an invitation I ought to at least to return the courtesy by listening to her.

Mrs LUNA If you rise from that seat I will tell Olive what I suspect.

BASIL Oh,what do you suspect?

Mrs LUNA That the two of you have been in correspondence.

BASIL
VERENA

Have you been seeing Miss Tarrant? Have you been going to Boston on secret visits?
You've lost your head.
Who shall judge what we require, if not we ourselves? We require simply freedom. We require the lid to be taken off the box in which we have been kept for centuries. You say it is a very nice, comfortable, cosy box. With nice glass sides so that we can see out. And that all that is needed is another quiet turn of the key. That is very easily answered. Good gentlemen, you have never been in the box, and you do not know how it feels. Do you know **how you strike me**? You strike me as men who are **starving** to death. While at home they have a cupboard full of bread, and meat, and wine. Or as blind, **demented** beings who let themselves be cast into a debtor's prison, while in their pockets they have the keys of vaults and treasure chests heaped up with gold and silver. The meat and wine, the gold and silver are simply the suppressed and wasted force, the genius, the intelligence, the inspiration of women. We are the heart of humanity. Let us have the courage to insist upon it.

GLOSSARY

Talmud – Jewish holy book.

stir up – shock.

stifle our distaste – repress our disgust.

without delay – immediately.

sport –

seer – visionary.

she's off – Mrs Luna's somewhat sarcastic expression compares Verena to a race horse, who cannot be stopped once she has been started.

in very thick –

recriminate – blame.

gulf – gap.

ungallant – ungentlemanly.

rivalry – competition.

how you strike me – how I see you.

starving – dying from lack of food.

demented – mad.

4.4 Ransom's Request.

VERENA

Don't you think it's all true?

BASIL

No, I don't. But it doesn't matter what I think.

VERENA

Oh, well. If you're so indifferent...

BASIL
VERENA

BURRAGE

BASIL

VERENA

BURRAGE

VERENA

BASIL

VERENA

BASIL

VERENA

BASIL

Mrs BURRAGE

BASIL

Mrs BURRAGE

BASIL

Mrs BURRAGE

OLIVE

Mrs BURRAGE

BASIL

OLIVE

BASIL

It's not because I'm indifferent.

Mister Ransom here is about the hardest subject I've ever met. He will **stand out**.

You don't mean to say you weren't moved.

No, I didn't say that.

What is it?

Champagne.

Oh, I can't drink that...

Is he a great follower?

He's crazy about our movement. But if you still want to draw me back five thousand years I hope you won't tell Miss Birdseye. She's very romantic about us. About our relations, yours and mine. She is sure that I'm going to convert you. And that you're going to become a **champion**, and that when you get to the top, it will all have been because of me. A sort of marriage between the South and Boston. A marriage of ideas.

You don't want me to **disillusion** her.

You mustn't. Ever.

Mrs Burrage, I thank you so much. I never saw an entertainment of any kind which held me more completely by its charms.

I'm so glad you were able to come. Wonderful creature, isn't she?

Yes.

Miss Chancellor is Miss Tarrant's great friend and colleague. Let me introduce Mister...umm...

Ah, I have the honour to be a sort of cousin to Miss Chancellor, that is, if she doesn't **repudiate** me.

Oh! Well, if you're Miss Chancellor's cousin, take her in to have some supper instead of going so soon.

I'm very much obliged, I never take supper. These occasions leave me exhausted.

Oh, I can imagine that. I'll leave you to be quiet with your cousin. In the best of hands, I'm sure.

I won't disturb you further than ask you a single question. Where are you staying? I want to come and see Miss Tarrant. I don't say I want to come and see you because I have the idea you would not welcome me.

Why do you **apply** to me?

Well, it seems to me more decent to go straight to

you for the information I intend to get.If you won't tell me where you're staying, perhaps you'll ask Miss Tarrant herself to do so.Would she send me word on a card?

OLIVE Number eleven, West Tenth Street. You're free to come.

BASIL Of course I am. Why shouldn't I be?

GLOSSARY

stand out – show himself to be different.
champion – supporter.
disillusion – disappoint.
repudiate – disown.
apply to – ask.

PART 5 - THE GREAT PURSUIT.

5.1 Loose Talk.

BURRAGE Steady!

Mrs LUNA It was you who **took him up** in the first place.

OLIVE I thought you would have married him by now.

Mrs LUNA Marry him yourself! Whatever put such an idea into your head? Do you think I could marry every man that follows me about? It must have been you who encouraged Verena to send him the invitation to Mrs Burrage's.

OLIVE Verena? To him? Why in the world should she?

Mrs LUNA Why in the world wouldn't she, since they're so very close.

OLIVE She had seen him twice in her life before last night.

Mrs LUNA Is that what she told you?

OLIVE She tells me everything.

Mrs LUNA Are you sure? Are you sure that last night was only the third time?

OLIVE Adeline Luna, what are you insinuating?

Mrs LUNA I'm just warning you, that's all.

GLOSSARY

took him up – invited him.

5.2 Little Betrayals.

VERENA Mister Burrage explains everything so beautifully.

OLIVE Did he try to **make love** to you?

VERENA I suppose it was meant for love. He says he likes me for the same reason he likes old enamels and old altar cloths.

OLIVE Ha! Well, you know, Verena, this isn't our real life.

VERENA It isn't our work.

OLIVE No, it isn't. Certainly not.

VERENA How did you get... his address? Mister Ransom's?

OLIVE To enable Mrs Burrage to invite him?

VERENA It was in a letter I got from him.

OLIVE I didn't know you correspond.

VERENA He wrote me once. I never told you.

OLIVE Why didn't you tell me?

VERENA I knew you wouldn't like it because you don't like him.

OLIVE I don't think of him. He's nothing to me.

VERENA How you suffer.

OLIVE Yes. You can make me suffer.

VERENA I never will. I found this note when I came home. He wants to see me. He says he has so much to say to me.

OLIVE Do you want to see him?

VERENA Well, I must confess I'm curious. He's so awfully opposed. I would like to meet him. And make him **give in** at just two or three points more than I'd like anything in the world. You needn't be afraid, I'm strong enough. Why do you make me say such **conceited** things? Look here, Olive Chancellor. We can go home tomorrow if you want.

OLIVE What do you want?

VERENA To do whatever you think is best.

OLIVE And if we do stay, will you be very much of the time with Mister Ransom?

VERENA I thought you knew by now that I'm serious. That I've dedicated my life. I don't know why you don't seem able to trust me. Olive, I'm starving. Get dressed.

GLOSSARY

make love – (fig.) court, seduce.
give in – surrender.
conceited – arrogant.

5.3 Cross Purposes.

VERENA I presume you want to be President of the United States.

BASIL Hah! I certainly do. However, since I shall no doubt die poor and **unheard of**, nobody'll ever know what visions of greatness I've stifled and buried.

VERENA You won't die unheard of When you start, people

BASIL had better look out,with your will.
 What do you know about my will?
 VERENA I know it's stronger than mine. It made me come out
 with you when I thought I'd much rather not.
 BASIL Huh!
 Mrs BURRAGE Well,then.It's **settled**. Miss Tarrant will come to us,
 and will stay 'til she's tired of us.
 OLIVE Why do you want her to visit you,Mrs Burrage? You
 must know that your son desires to marry her.
 Mrs BURRAGE My son firmly believes in your movement.And Miss
 Tarrant herself...I expected success,but I didn't
 expect what she...
 OLIVE ... What...you gave us
 Mrs BURRAGE I know Henry will never again care so much for any
 girl.Oh,my dear Miss Chancellor. The poor boy has
 put the affair in my hands. And you see, I put it in
 yours.
 OLIVE I think you have never seen Doctor Tarrant and his
 wife.
 Mrs BURRAGE You mean they're absolutely **fearful**? Yes, Henry has
 told me they're quite impossible. I'm prepared for
 that.And we can...we do ...offer certain advantages.
 I need hardly say that whatever means we have are
 at the disposal of your movement. You think I don't
 want everything we poor women can get?
 OLIVE And how can I be sure that afterwards, you would
 still care so much about the question that has all our
 thoughts, hers and mine?
 Mrs BURRAGE You think we're **feigning** interest only to get hold of
 her. Now that's not very nice of you, Miss
 Chancellor. Of course, you have to be tremendously
 careful.I dare say you don't like the idea of her
 marrying at all.It would break up a friendship that
 has...**so much interest** for you.
 VERENA Then I'm to understand as your final word that you
 regard us as quite inferior?
 BASIL Oh,for public uses, absolutely. Perfectly weak and
 second-rate. But privately, it's another matter. My
 plan's to keep you at home and have a good time
 with you there.
 OLIVE You seem to think that I control Verena's actions
 and her desires, and that I'm jealous of any other
 relations she may possibly form.I can only say your

Mrs BURRAGE attitude illustrates the way that relations between
 women are still misunderstood and misinterpreted.
 It is these attitudes we want to fight. With all our
 strength and all our life, Miss Tarrant, Verena, and I.
 Well, Miss Chancellor, you're quite a speaker
 yourself.
 OLIVE No, I'm not. I'm awkward and dry, it's she who's
 eloquent and graceful and lovely.
 Mrs BURRAGE My son admires her as much as you do. Of course,
 he would never **obtrude** himself. But suppose he
 withdraws. Do you think others would be as **reticent**
 as he? And would you feel yourself as safe? With
 these others?
 OLIVE What others do you mean?
 Mrs BURRAGE Oh, no one in particular. But for instance, there is
 the young man whom she asked me to send an
 invitation to my party. Ah, I believe he said he was
 your cousin. Now he seemed to me like a possible
 admirer. I wonder if I might give you a word of
 advice. My son is gentle. He's good natured. And he
 believes in your ideas Miss Tarrant would be, from
 every point of view, safer with him than with others.
Adventurers. Exploiters. Or people who, once they
 got hold of her, would shut her up altogether.
 Why don't you write out your ideas?
 VERENA I have. Nobody wants to print them. Editors are a
 mean, timid bunch, always saying they want
 something original, but they're deadly afraid of it
 when it comes. So I get many letters They all start
 the same way. "The editor regrets." Everyone
 regrets in New York. That's all my clients ever do,
 too. There must be something very wrong with me.
 What do you think?
 BASIL No, I think you'll do pretty well, except for your
 opinions.
 VERENA You'll pay for that! One editor sent me back a
 manuscript, said my ideas were three hundred years
 out of date. But, doubtless some magazine of the
 Sixteenth Century would have been happy to print
 it. Oh, he's right. On the rights of minorities I am
 three hundred years out of date, but you see, I
 haven't come too late. I've come too soon.
 VERENA I'm very sorry you can't get published. You must

keep on. And I hope you do succeed, even though all you want is to **put us back**. You may denounce me by name if you like. Only don't say anything about Olive Chancellor.

BASIL There you are again! You women! You always think it's something personal. You always think it means yourselves.

VERENA Yes! That's what people say!
BASIL Well, I don't want to talk about you. My interest is in my own sex. Yours evidently can look after itself. Anyway, I'm tired of always hearing about women, their freedom and their education, their liberty.

VERENA Woe to American women when you get going!
BASIL I love American women! Only certain examples of it I can't stand. Ones that run around screaming 'Down with men! Down with the love between women and men!' Not you... Shall I tell you? I don't believe that you mean what you preach. No, no. It's just your sweet nature. You're always wanting to please someone, Miss Chancellor, your parents... Whoever else is dear to you. But it's not really you. You're meant for something different. You're meant for privacy. You're meant for love. For me.

GLOSSARY

unheard of – unknown.

settled – decided.

fearful – awful.

feigning – pretending.

so much interest – a veiled allusion to what Mrs Burrage sees as Olive's repressed homosexual desire for Verena.

obtrude – interfere.

reticent – withdrawn.

adventurers – libertines, seducers.

put us back – take our freedom away.

5.4 Verena's Decision.

VERENA Have you paid your visit to Mrs Burrage?

OLIVE Yes, I went through that.

VERENA And what did she say?

OLIVE She wants you to stay with her, she says New York will be at your feet.

VERENA I won't stay, I won't. Olive Chancellor... take me away.

PART 6 - A SUMMER RETREAT.

6.1 Women without Men.

Miss BIRDSEYE Well! I guess I go back a long way. Not all the way to '76, but near enough. I've seen changes I can tell you, glorious changes. Verena, come here! Oh, there have been so many! Elizabeth Stanton, Susan B. Anthony, Mrs Lucretia Mott... It's like we're one big army just marching on!

Everybody Ahh!
Miss BIRDSEYE Isn't it lovely!
VERENA Happy birthday, Miss Birdseye.

6.2 A Surprise Visitor.

BASIL Good afternoon!
Miss BIRDSEYE Oh! I guess it's time I should take my **remedy** again.
BASIL You must tell me how much you take. One spoonful, or two.

Miss BIRDSEYE Well! I guess this time I'll take two! It's homeopathic.

BASIL Well, I know you wouldn't take anything else.
Miss BIRDSEYE Well, it's generally admitted now to be the true system.

BASIL One...
Miss BIRDSEYE I thought you were Verena!
BASIL Two. Miss Birdseye, you remember the last time we met? You very kindly gave me Verena's address in Cambridge.

Miss BIRDSEYE Well, here you are again. So it seems she has **shaken** you.

BASIL Yes, ma'am. She has shaken me tremendously.
OLIVE We have seven letters for you, Miss Birdseye.
VERENA Why, Mister Ransom... where in the world were you washed ashore?

BASIL Well, I walked up, I found the door open, Miss Birdseye seemed to think I might stay. Miss Birdseye, I appeal to you now. I put myself under your protection.

Miss BIRDSEYE Don't we have room for all?
VERENA Well, it was by my letter that you knew we were here. The one I wrote just before we came, Olive. Don't you remember? I showed it to you!

OLIVE This is a charming place. Only for you it has one defect. Three quarters of the summer residents are women.

BASIL Miss Tarrant said in her note this is a place you can

VERENA wear your old clothes and lie on the ground. Well. I
 BASIL **delight** to lie on the ground. All my clothes are old...
 I hope to be able to stay three or four weeks.
 They've accepted one of my articles!
 They have? When does it appear?
 I got a letter from the editor of the "National
 Review", telling me he should be very happy to
 print it and he should be very happy to hear from
 me again. Hah! Never fear! He shall hear from me
 again! Oh, this... this will seem **pitiful** to you, but, you
 see, for me, this changes the whole way I look at my
 future.

VERENA Why? Didn't you feel happy about your future
 before?

BASIL No, I felt very **blue**. But now... now I'm building
 castles in the air. And I'm putting you in the
 biggest... and the fairest of them.

Miss BIRDSEYE Where's Mr Ransom? I hope you haven't pushed
 him **overboard**.

VERENA He's gone off around the other way.
 Miss BIRDSEYE I hope he's going to speak for us soon.
 VERENA He's written a very fine article for the "National
 Review".

Miss BIRDSEYE Well! It's delightful to see the way it goes on, isn't
 it? Oh! Verena Tarrant! How cold your lips are.

GLOSSARY
remedy – medicine.
shaken – disturbed.
delight – love.
pitiful – pathetic.
blue – depressed, sad.
overboard – into the water from a boat.

6.3 Verena's Confession.

VERENA There's something I want to tell you. Mr Ransom
 came out to see me in Cambridge once. We took a
 walk and we saw the Colleges. I didn't like to tell
 you... but now I want you to know everything.

OLIVE What is there between you? How can I believe you?
 You've deceived me.

VERENA Olive, it was to **spare** you!
 OLIVE He wouldn't be here if you wanted to spare me.
 VERENA Do you mean that I brought him here? I never in
 my life was more surprised than when I saw him.
 OLIVE What has he come for?

VERENA He's come to ask me to marry him. Help me! Help
 me...
 OLIVE Why not tell him plainly that you love him?
 VERENA Love him? Olive, how can I love him when he tells
 me he wants me to give up everything? All our
 work? Never again to speak in public.
 OLIVE He asks you that? In just that way?
 VERENA No! It's not that way! It's very tenderly...
 OLIVE For Heaven's sake, don't **grovel**!! How does he dare
 come in here? Doesn't he know this is my house?
 VERENA Of course he won't come into it. He wants to meet
 me outside. For just one hour. And I've told him I
 will... He says he wants to know me better.
 OLIVE Oh, don't leave me. Or you'll kill me.
 VERENA You must help me, Olive.

GLOSSARY
spare – save from hurt or injury.
grovel – behave in an obsequious manner.

6.4 One Hour.

VERENA Mister Ransom, you have one hour.
 BASIL Here boy, here boy. Nobody listens to me. See? Ow!
 Dr PRANCE Let me... All right. Verena, I need your help. Nice
 and tight... that's fine. I've got it now.
 VERENA Hello! Hello, Mr Ransom! It's Basil! Hello! Olive
 wants us to leave.
 BASIL Well, you tell her it's useless. I'll follow you
 anywhere you go.
 VERENA If I ask you... very nicely, to go, to let me go... don't
 you see what you're doing to her?
 BASIL Well, I'm not worried about Miss Olive. She's a
 fighting woman and she's not giving me **one inch of
 odds**. Can't I make you see? How much more...
 natural... it is, not to say agreeable... to give yourself
 to a man? Instead of to a movement, or some...
morbid old maid?

VERENA Oh, don't!
 BASIL It's all right... it's all right... You know... I'm going to
 have to be... tremendously nice to you... all the rest
 of our days to make up for all this. Poor Verena...
 Come on, now.
 OLIVE Don't you understand? It's not that he loves you,
 but that he hates our cause. He wants to prove a
 man only has a whistle for a woman, for you, to
 come running. You're not even listening to me.

VERENA No, I am. I want you to say all this. I want to hear it. I want you to make me hate not him, but what I feel or him.

OLIVE Don't let's talk. Come and sit here beside me. Hold my hand.

GLOSSARY

one inch of odds – the slightest chance.

morbid old maid – a woman who refuses to marry. James's readers would have strongly supported Ransom's view of Olive as unnatural, but in more recent years her cause has been taken up by queer theorists and practitioners of gender studies.

6.5 Dr Prance.

Dr PRANCE Are you waiting for someone?

BASIL Why, Doctor Prance! I'm waiting for you.

Dr PRANCE Ah.

BASIL Let me help you.

Dr PRANCE Why, thank you, sir.

BASIL What do you hope to catch?

VERENA "The judge had no sooner taken his seat than the officer on the floor of the court called out 'Silence' in a commanding tone, upon which another officer in the gallery cried 'Silence' in an angry manner, whereupon three or four more ushers shouted 'Silence' in a voice of indignant **remonstrance**."

Miss BIRDSEYE Oh, don't stop. I am enjoying it. Well, go on. It's, er, "Mr Pickwick rang the bell", that's where we were.

VERENA "Mr Pickwick immediately rang the bell, and a coach having been procured, the four Pickwickians and Mr Perger ensconced themselves therein and drove to Guild Hall, Sam Weller, Mr Loveham and the blue bag following in a cab."

BASIL Don't you have to get back to the house?

Dr PRANCE I presume you don't know what it's like to be one of four women shut up in a small frame house. And Miss Birdseye doesn't need me. She's asleep a lot of the time now.

BASIL Does she ever wonder why I don't come up into the house? Have you never wondered?

Dr PRANCE I can't speak for Miss Birdseye, but I don't wonder, Mr Ransom. If I did, I'd never stop, this being the age of miracles... You should hear them, up there in the house. Getting ready for Verena's great appearance at the Music Hall. The Music Hall is a pretty big building. But I guess it's not so big as Miss Chancellor's ideas.

BASIL I'm surprised Miss Chancellor doesn't require more effort from you.

Dr PRANCE She's given up on me. She knows where I stand.

BASIL Where do you stand?

Dr PRANCE I guess the same place where you are. Only I don't matter, isn't that strange? They think women the equal of men, and yet they're a lot more excited when a man joins than when a woman does. What a pity it is that you can't say 'damn'.

OLIVE Yes.

GLOSSARY

remonstrance – strong or formal protest.

6.6 Miss Birdseye's Last Wish.

BASIL Hello. What?

VERENA Olive will die. It will kill her. I can't be with you today.

BASIL One hour! We said...one hour.

VERENA If you don't want me to appear in the Music Hall, you're going to have to kidnap me!

BASIL Oh, why sing in the Music Hall when you can sing for me?

Dr PRANCE Verena! Verena. Hurry, it's Miss Birdseye, get back to the house.

BASIL What happened?

Dr PRANCE Sir, it's Miss Birdseye.

BASIL Do we know what happened?

Dr PRANCE She asked to be buried here. It's the only thing I ever heard her ask for, for herself. This is a **queer** place to give it. And I'm a queer sort of messenger for that kind of thing as I don't cultivate the sentimental side. I have a message for you.

BASIL From Verena?

Dr PRANCE She says she can't meet you for a while, for three or four days. She wishes to be quiet and **think things over**, she says.

BASIL I understand.

Dr PRANCE Well, I don't. But that's no matter. I'm leaving, Mr Ransom. I have to get back and see my office-slate. I'd hoped we could go fishing again.

BASIL That would be a treat. But my place is empty in the city. I wouldn't have stayed so long for anyone but Miss Birdseye. Goodbye, Mr Ransom. And good luck.

Mrs TARRANT I thought Miss Chancellor would have invited us to stay for a few days.

VERENA She doesn't want to inconvenience you. I'll see you very soon in Boston. You're looking well, mother.

Mrs TARRANT I can't say I've been keeping perfect health. And the sea air would be very beneficial.

VERENA You have a new dress.

Mrs TARRANT I was afraid it might be a little too colourful for the melancholy occasion.

Dr TARRANT We're anticipating great applause on the occasion of Verena's appearance at the Music Hall. Err...you've chosen a fine subject for her, Miss Chancellor. "A woman's reason". A very distinguished subject.

OLIVE We shall look forward to seeing you there.

Dr TARRANT And if in the meantime I might venture to...offer my assistance, whatever falls within my humble means...

OLIVE We shall certainly let you know.

Dr TARRANT Umm...Mrs Tarrant and I feel it is our duty to participate in the...um...coming triumph. Our sacred duty, as parents.

Mrs TARRANT Bye bye, dear.

VERENA Good bye, mother. Take care.

GLOSSARY
queer – strange.
think things over – reflect.

6.7 Ten Minutes.

BASIL Verena! Oh, Verena, I must see you today, even if it's only for ten minutes...

VERENA I can't...

BASIL Now you go on. You tell her. Go on!

VERENA I promised him ten minutes. You must believe me, Olive. My choice is made, you know that. You must believe me.

OLIVE What will you tell him?

VERENA That it's impossible. That I've thought it over and over and I can't, I can't, I can't.

OLIVE Ten minutes. That will give me time to finish my letter to Miss Peabody.

VERENA Mister Ransom...

OLIVE Verena! Hoo! Hoo! Hooo! Has Miss Tarrant returned?

Maid No, ma'am, not yet. It's getting late. I hope they took the boatman with them. That gentleman from the

OLIVE South don't look like he knows much about **handling** a boat.

VERENA I'm sure he'll take good care of her.

OLIVE Basil?

VERENA Verena! Verena!!

GLOSSARY
handling – operating.

PART 7 - THEATRE OF WAR.

7.1 Where is Verena?

BASIL I'm sorry to disturb you, I'd hoped for a moment I might see Miss Tarrant.

OLIVE Miss Tarrant has gone away. I took her to the **steamer** this morning.

BASIL Oh yes? Where is she going?

OLIVE I'm not sure I'm obliged to tell you.

BASIL Of course not. Excuse me for asking. It is much better that I should find her for myself.

OLIVE You won't find her.

BASIL No?

OLIVE No. I'm sure of it.

GLOSSARY
steamer – steam ship.

7.2 The Music Hall.

Official You there! What are you doing in here?

BASIL It's all right. I have a ticket for the lecture. For this seat here, C 1. I chose it so that I could have the best view.

Official The lecture isn't until seven o'clock this evening. Please, come back at that time.

BASIL Has the, ah...orator arrived? Perhaps I might have a **glimpse** of her.

Official No, sir, she isn't here.

BASIL I understand she hasn't been seen in a month, she's disappeared.

Official She will be here punctually tonight. You have my assurance. Will you please leave?

Mrs TARRANT It's nerves.

VERENA He's here.

OLIVE Don't let anyone in.

Guard Don't worry, Miss. There's no one's going to get in

OLIVE here.
Thank you.Calm yourself. This isn't like you at all, o be so nervous and morbid.It's more like me, we seem to have changed characters We're together, you and I.We're together, Verena. Trust me. **Lean on me.**

VERENA Could you ask the organist to play a little longer?
Dr TARRANT For Goodness' sake, keep playing!
Guard I guess you'd better be quiet.
BASIL Quiet? Is it possible to be more quiet than I am?
Guard I've seen crazy folks look a good deal like you.Now, I wouldn't lose the lecture if I was you. Why don't you go and sit around in the hall with the rest of the public?

BASIL This lecture won't take place.
Guard Yes it will.Soon as the organ stops. Why the devil don't it? Sir!

Dr TARRANT There's a lot of dollars out there waiting. That's a fact that should not be **overlooked.**

Mrs TARRANT I won't be able to bear it.My ankles are swelling up!
It's always that way...

OLIVE Go and speak to them.Will you speak to them?
Give her a few minutes? I'm here... I'm with you.

Dr TARRANT Ladies and gentlemen... I crave your patience for my daughter, Miss Verena Tarrant,who is with us, in close proximity...

OLIVE Nothing, Nothing.
Dr TARRANT ...waiting for the Spirit to descend,for the Call to come to her, to enable her...

OLIVE No one.
Dr TARRANT ... to bring you the message which you have all come here to hear. Is it any wonder that she is what she is? She was **nursed** in the dark seance rooms, **suckled** midst meditations, she has sat on the knees of somnambulists she has been passed from hand to hand by celebrated trance speakers
Angry audience member Go home!!

Dr TARRANT I myself... er... have not been lacking in a certain public notice, and while we are waiting, you might be interested to hear the report...

PARDON Now, why in the name of Goodness don't she go on? If she wants them to call her, they've done it about enough! Now I have to go in for the Transcript.

Guard You can't go in for anything. I'm keeping this man out too.

STACKPOLE Henrietta Stackpole from the "Vesper".May I ask if you're a supporter of Miss Tarrant's?

BASIL I'm her greatest supporter, madam. You may quote me in the headline.

STACKPOLE Oh.How many times have you heard her speak before?

BASIL On several occasions.

STACKPOLE Do you think she has a message for men as well as for women?

Dr TARRANT A smaller hand and arm were next presented, dressed in a full flowing white illusion sleeve. Er... this was said to belong to Mr Plimton's sister, Mary. The **blossoms** were then distributed between Mr & Mrs Plimpton,each receiving a tiny bouquet from the hand of the spirit. The hand then waved an adieu.And,er... while doing so, the **slate** was projected by another hand,upon which were written the words Good Bye.

filer What are they doing in there? This thing has gone on far enough! If you don't open up this door, I'm going to smash it down!

BASIL Wait! Please.
VERENA I'll see you tomorrow if you'll only go away now. Let me go out there, it's only for an hour.

BASIL No, you're mine. You can't take an hour out of it.
filer Is anyone aware that every quarter of a second is worth five hundred dollars?

VERENA They can have their money back! Can't you give them back their money?

Mrs TARRANT Verena Tarrant,you don't mean to say you're going to **back down**?

VERENA Leave us alone. Leave us alone for a single minute. Just let me speak to him and it'll be all right.Olive... as soon as I saw you I was paralysed.I knew that if I tried to speak,I'd be the most dreadful failure. It isn't too late, let me go out there. Please. Where will we go? What will we do?

BASIL We shall take for the night train to New York.In the morning, we'll be married.

OLIVE I will take her place.
Mrs BURRAGE Are you going to speak? You can't go out there!

Ladies and gentlemen. Colleagues, and friends. Miss Verena Tarrant is unable to speak to us tonight. What I want to say to you is that when there is a great **cause**, the individual is **of no account**. You've come to hear... not the voice of one individual, however sweet, however harmonious, but the cry of all women, past, present and future, and like the great William Lloyd Garrison said in his fight against slavery, I say we will be as harsh as truth. As uncompromising as justice. On this subject, we will not think, or speak, or write with moderation. We will not excuse. We will not **equivocate**. We will not **retreat** a single inch. And we will be heard!

GLOSSARY

glimpse – look.

lean on me – use me as a form of support.

overlooked –

nursed – cradled (of a baby).

suckled – fed (of a baby).

blossoms – flowers.

slate – black surface for writing on.

back down – change your mind (about speaking).

cause – important matter.

of no account – unimportant, irrelevant.

equivocate – act or speak in an ambiguous way.

retreat – back down.

FILM TERMS

Film is illusion. First of all it gives us the illusion of movement, even though in reality each individual frame of the film is just like a static photograph. But when run together at the speed of 24 frames per second these static shots are transformed into what seems like our natural perception. You may have noticed that in early silent films the movement seems fast, jerky, in a word, unnatural. This is because the first cinematic apparatus was much slower (18 frames per sec.). The film 'jumped' from one frame to another, unable to capture the intermediate flow of natural movement.

Secondly, it gives us the illusion of continuity. To attain the sense of continuity and fluidity that a film gives us requires the assemblage of a large number of shots which are edited together in sequence for dramatic impact. There are many different types of montage, each of which has a different effect on our perception of and emotional response to the action.

Below is a list of some of the key terms in the grammar of film that will help you to understand how a film is assembled and how this process contributes to our understanding of it.

TYPES OF SHOT

Just as a sentence is composed of words, so a film is composed of shots.

Any *uninterrupted* piece of film is a shot. Of course the camera can be used in many different ways in terms of its distance from the action, its *own* movement independent of the action, its angle to the action, its focal length and so on.

Establishing shot – a shot that establishes the location of a film story or scene and which is usually placed at the beginning of a scene, giving a long, wide-angle view of an area to identify the location either generally or specifically.

Long shot – similar to the establishing shot in that it provides a wide-angle view of the area being filmed. However, the long shot is not necessarily used to establish a setting (e.g. a city like New York) through recognizable information (public buildings) but rather enables the viewer to perceive relative proportions with regard to the various elements in the scene. It may convey, for example, the relationship of characters to the environment in which they move. If a shot takes an unusually long wide-angled view it is called an "extreme long shot."

Medium shot - The medium shot generally focuses on the actors in the frame rather than the surrounding decor, showing them in full figure.

American medium shot – The American medium shot enables the camera to emphasize a figure or object in some detail. In this type of shot, a person is most typically shown from the waist up.

Medium close-up – typically films the actors from the chest up.

Close-up – a shot that provides a limited, magnified view of a character or object in a scene. The close-up usually implies a shot of an actor's face, though it can also be used to highlight other parts of the body.

Extreme close-up – a shot which enables the isolation of a particular detail of an image such as an eye.

CAMERA ANGLES

Frontal shot/side angle shot – the most commonly used type of shot, in which the camera looks directly onto the scene, either frontally or from the side.

Shot/reverse shot – a device often used in situations where two characters are conversing whereby the camera reverses its position to change from the point of view of one character to that of the other.

High angle shot - a shot in which the camera looks diagonally down on the action, indicating a privileged point of view.

Low angle shot – a shot in which the camera looks diagonally up at the action or characters.

Overhead shot – a shot in which the camera looks vertically down on the action.

High hat shot – An extremely low angle shot in which the camera is placed on a mount about 20cm high.

Onscreen space/off-screen space – refers to the portion of space visible within the frame as opposed to that which is not visible.

CAMERA MOVEMENTS

Tracking shot – a shot in which the camera and its mount are moved to follow

the actors or action. Tracking shots fall into several categories, depending on how the camera is moved. Forward tracking shot, reverse tracking shot, horizontal tracking shot etc. The invention of Steadicam, a mechanism that maintains the balance of a hand-held camera, in the late 1970s, completely liberated the tracking shot from any formal or directional constrictions so that it effectively became an actor in the film, rather than simply observing and recording the action.

Pan – a horizontal swiveling of the camera on its mount, as though someone were turning their head. With an extremely fast pan, called the 'swish' pan, the details in the frame become a blur, thus enabling a transition to another scene.

Tilt – a vertical swiveling of the camera on its mount, as though someone were looking up or down.

Crane/boom shot – a shot in which the camera is placed on a mobile crane, giving the impression of free movement in mid-air.

Arc Shot – a shot in which the camera moves in a circle around the scene

Zoom – a shot whereby the focal length of the camera is adjusted either to close-up on the action or to pull back from it.

SCRIPT PARAMETERS

Interior/exterior day/night

MONTAGE

Narrative montage – the most common form of montage in modern mainstream cinema whereby shots are edited together in some form of chronological order to reconstruct the semblance of events and structure the narrative flow of the film story.

Parallel montage – an editing structure that develops two or more narrative elements taking place simultaneously or within an approximately similar time period.

Accelerated montage – the speeding up of alternation between shots of two or more parallel elements so that these appear to converge (e.g. a chase sequence in which the alternation between shots of pursued and pursuer speeds up to indicate that the pursuer is catching up on his prey).

Conceptual montage – the cutting together of shots for the purpose of

creating meanings that exist only through the relationship established between these shots. Theories of conceptual montage were developed by early Russian filmmakers such as Sergei Eisenstein and V.I. Pudovkin who considered montage the very essence of film and sought to develop its expressive and metaphorical possibilities in their work.

Scene – a sequence, usually composed of a number of shots, whose duration when projected is equal to its fictional duration, as though it were in real time

Cut – a fast juxtaposition which normally signals the transition from one shot to another within a scene

Long take – a filming procedure whereby a scene or sequence is filmed in one shot without additional camera angles or editing procedures.

Fade to black – a slightly slower pause which usually signals the end of a sequence or scene.

Dissolve – an optical effect whereby a new scene appears just as the previous one is disappearing so that for an instant they appear to be superimposed.

GENERAL ACTIVITIES

LINGUISTIC ACTIVITIES

1. The PAST TENSE.

- a. Read carefully the whole script. Underline at least ten past tense forms throughout the text. Are they regular or irregular? Group them in:

Simple past
Past continuous
Past perfect

- b. Now for each verb try to find the infinitive form.
- c. Compare your verbs with other students. While you listen to them reading, add the verbs to your list that you don't already have.

2. REPORTING VERENA'S FEMINIST SPEECHES.

When you recount a speech, you have to go **from direct speech** (i.e. the actual dialogue) **to reported speech**. Try to report the following fragments from Verena's speeches using verbs such as say, tell, exclaim, remark, warn etc. Remember to change tenses, pronouns, possessive adjectives as well as TIME and PLACE expressions, if necessary:

- a. "The light, the tide, is rising."
- b. "I hear a calling. Calling for help."
- c. "Uncounted millions have lived, only to be tortured. To be crucified. Ages of oppression have rolled over them. But the day of their delivery has dawned."
- d. "This is the only sacred cause. This is the great, the just revolution. It must triumph."
- e. "It will be the greatest change the world has seen. And the names of those who have helped to show the way and lead the squadrons will be the brightest in the tables of fame."
- f. "If this is the best they can do by themselves, they had better let us come in a little and see what we can do."
- g. "We couldn't possibly make it worse, could we?"
- h. "There is a brutal element in the world which tramples down the feeble and treads down the weak."
- i. "The world is drenched in blood...".

- j. "I'm only a girl.A simple American girl."
- k. "There are some things that I feel. They are in my ears in the stillness of the night."
- l. "The especial genius of women I believe to be intuitive in function,spiritual in tendency,electrical in movement."
- m. "We require simply freedom. We require the lid to be taken off the box in which we have been kept for centuries."
- n. "We are the heart of humanity."

3.RELATIVE CLAUSES.

Link the two sentences with a relative pronoun.

- a. Verena Tarrant came from Boston.Boston was traditionally a very puritanical city.
- b. Verena was a girl with extraordinary oratorical gifts. She deployed them to fight for women's rights.
- c. Olive Chancellor was a mature woman.She was fascinated by Verena.
- d. Olive organised a number of activities.The rich Mrs Burrage offered to finance them.
- e. Basil Ransom had rigid views concerning society and women's place therein.Olive was annoyed about them.
- f. Basil fell in love with Verena.She had mixed feelings about marrying him.

4. VOCABULARY.

HAVEYOU GOT A GOOD MEMORY?

a) Try to fill in the following fragments of dialogue with the appropriate word.Remember that only one word for each gap is required.

- 1.
OLIVE Our fight isagainst those that want to keep women in anposition.
BASIL Oh,I'd change my position for yours any day. That's what I said to myself as I sat there in yourparlour.
- 2.
BASIL I beg your pardon.Are you acquainted with the? I mean the renowned Mrs. Farrinder. Has she convinced you that women are superior to men?
Dr. PRANCE I guess I know more about women than she does.

I'm aPrance is the name.
BASIL I'm Basil Ransom.Hello.
Dr. PRANCE Men and women are all theto me. There's room forin both sexes.Neither of them is up to the standard.

3.
OLIVE I want toyou.I felt that as soon as I heard you speak last night.There's so much I want to ask you.

VERENA Well,I can't say much,except when Father has worked on me...

OLIVE I don't care anything about your father.

VERENA He's wonderfully

OLIVE It isn't your father and it isn't your mother. It's only you,just as you are. Will you be my friend? My friend of friends? Forand ever?

4.
VERENA Well,they certainly teach you to talk.
GRACIE We don't want to talk at all. We want to
VERENA You should listen to Olive Chancellor. She knows much more than I do and she hasideas. Go and talk to her.

GRACIE But we want to hear you...

VERENA I can't do anything with a audience...

BURRAGE Well,Gracie here is a host in himself... Everyone in the University wants to hear you. We are sunk in ignorance and

VERENA Oh,I didn't realise that you were Harvard University...

5.
BASIL "Woman of the 19th".
Miss BIRDSEYE Verena Tarrant spoke on that subject at the last.....

BASIL Does she speak... often?

Miss BIRDSEYE She raises her voice a good deal in places around – like Framingham and Billerica.It's as if she were gatheringnot to break over Boston like a wave...

BASIL What a greatshe isn't speaking somewhere tonight. Tomorrow I have to return to New York.

6.
 VERENA Olive's told me about you. That you're a greatto our movement.
 BASIL If you regard me as an enemy, it was very kind of you to me.
 VERENA A great many gentlemen call. Everyone's so interested. In our work, I mean.
 BASIL You know, this is where I ought to have been. I should have liked to study here.
 VERENA You can't expect me to speak with much admiration of an institution in which the doors are to our sex.
 BASIL Well, do you advocate a system of education in common?
 VERENA I advocate equal, equal opportunities, equal privileges... so does Miss Chancellor.
 BASIL Oh. I thought what she wanted was a different inequality – simply to turn out the men altogether.

7.
 OLIVE I feel it. All of the time. Night and day. I feel it here. As one feels a upon one's honour. I know how it is for you. How exposed to men you are. Many would gladly stop your mouth by kissing you.
 VERENA Olive, you know what you asked me once to you?
 OLIVE Hmm?
 VERENA I will promise now. I'll take any vow you want.
 OLIVE I hope with all my heart you'll never marry – but not because you promised me. I would rather trust you without. You'll often be asked to marry. I never will. Don't promise. But don't me.

8.
 BASIL Wait! Please.
 VERENA I'll see you tomorrow if you'll only go now. Let me go out there – it's only for an hour.
 BASIL No, you're You can't take an hour out of it.

9.
 Mrs BURRAGE Are you going to speak? You can't go out there!
 OLIVE Ladies and gentlemen, and friends. Miss Verena Tarrant.....to speak to us tonight. What I want to say to you is that when there is a great cause, the individual is of no account. You've come to hear not the voice of one individual, however, however harmonious, but the cry of all women, past, present and future, and like the great William Lloyd Garrison said in his fight against, I say we will be as harsh as truth. As uncompromising as justice. On this subject, we will not think, or speak, or write with moderation. We will not excuse. We will not equivocate. We will not retreat a single inch. And we will be

b) Now, in pairs, check your answers and act out the dialogues.

5. AN INTERVIEW WITH VERENA TARRANT.

a.
 Student A - Imagine you are a very conservative and patriarchal journalist.
 Student B - Imagine you are Verena.
 Write down 8 questions and answers for an article to be published on women issues. Remember you are at the end of the 19th century!
 b.
 Now act out the interview in front of the class.

6. WRITING A SPEECH TODAY.

Imagine you are an activist from the feminist movement today. You have to take part at an International Conference and give a speech about the women condition in your own country.

a) Write a list of five major things that have improved in this century regarding the condition of women.
 b) Now list five things that, according to you, still need to be changed.
 c) Now compare your list to that of another student. Try to agree on a common speech and make notes.
 d) Now deliver your speech and debate with other students.

BEFORE YOU WATCH

1. What do you know about the suffragettes? Ask your teacher for information.
2. What do you think are the main aims of the feminist movement?
3. Have you seen any other films by the director James Ivory?
Which of the following elements do you think are most typical of Ivory's films:

suspense formal balance psychology tension
immobility action dialogue humour
excess sentimentality eroticism existential despair

AFTER YOU WATCH

1. Analysing a scene.

Now choose a scene to analyse...

Using a screenplay box, note down all the steps of the scene, including types of shot used, background noises etc.

e.g THE MUSIC HALL.

Shot sequence	Camera direction	Setting	Description of the action	Soundtrack
7.2.1	Low angle establishing shot.	Exterior: night; outside the Music Hall.	Crowds mill about, a horse-drawn carriage draws up outside the building.	Sounds of murmuring voices, horses, hooves.
7.2.2	High angle long shot.	Interior: angled view of the stage.	People begin to take their seats.	Sounds of voices plus organ.
7.2.3	Reverse long shot.	Reverse angle view of the audience.	People take their seats.	
7.2.4	Medium long shot.	The stage.	Several figures mount the stage and take their seats on the podium.	

2. DECALOGUE of WOMEN'S VOICES.

A. Read carefully the following quotations taken from famous women philosophers and writers and tick the ones you find more interesting.

1. "I suppose this is what you would call unwomanly; but I have got into a habit of expressing myself. It doesn't matter to me, and you may think me unwomanly if you like." - Kate Chopin, *The Awakening*, 1899.

2. "To say what one thought – that was my little problem – against the prodigious Current; to find a sentence that could hold its own against the male flood." - Virginia Woolf, *A Room of One's Own*, 1929.

3. "I was thinking, 'You don't know anything about me. I don't care anymore'. It was like letting go and falling back into water and seeing yourself grinning up through the water, your face like a mask, and seeing the bubbles coming up as if you were trying to speak from under the water..." - Jean Rhys, *Voyage in the Dark*, 1934.

4. "The man of today did not establish this patriarchal regime, but he profits by it, even when he criticizes it. And he has made it very much a part of his own thinking. One must blame the system, but at the same time be wary of men, and not let them take over our activities, our potentialities." Simone De Beauvoir, *Interview*, 1972.

5. "The silence in women is such that anything that falls into it has an enormous reverberation. Whereas in men, this silence no longer exists..." - Marguerite Duras, *Interview*, 1975.

6. "Woman must write her self: must write about women and bring women to writing, from which they have been driven away as violently as from their bodies – for the same reasons, by the same law, with the same fatal goal. Woman must put herself into the text – as into the world and into history – by her own movement." - Hélène Cixous, *The Laugh of the Medusa*, 1975.

7. "Woman is traditionally use-value for man, exchange-value among men. Merchandise, then." - Luce Irigaray, *This Sex which is not One*, 1977.

8. "Man proposes, and woman is disposed of" - Angela Carter, *The Sadeian Woman*, 1979.

9. "Let us hope that the left hand, that of darkness, of femaleness, of

‘primitiveness’, can divert the indifferent, right-handed, ‘rational’ suicidal drive that, unchecked, could blow us into acid rain in a fraction of a millisecond.” - Gloria Anzaldua, *Borderlands/La Frontera*, 1987.

10. “I suggest that feminists and other critical intellectuals today cultivate a nomadic consciousness. The nomadic consciousness combines coherence with mobility. It aims to rethink the unity of the subject, without references to humanistic beliefs, without dualistic oppositions, linking instead body and mind in a new set of intensive and often intransitive transitions.” - Rosi Braidotti, *Nomadic Subjects*, 1994.

B. Now compare your choice with that of other students. Which do you agree with? Which do you find more debatable?

UNDERSTANDING THE FILM

Part 1 - A STAR IS BORN.

- 1) How would you describe the relationship between Olive and Basil?
- 2) What is strange about the way Verena begins her speech? Why might this be ironic considering its content?
- 3) What effect does the presence of Doctor Prance have on our perception of the proceedings?
- 4) What is Basil’s purpose in citing the example of Helen of Troy?
- 5) What was Olive’s real motive in inviting Basil?

Part 2 - THE GETTING OF WISDOM.

- 1) What is Verena’s explanation for her ‘special qualities’?
- 2) What does Olive wish Verena to renounce?
- 3) What is the purpose of the sequence of readings and quotations?
- 4) What is one of Olive’s main complaints about society’s treatment of women?
- 5) From the letter he dictates what can we gather about Ransom’s character?
- 6) What is Mrs Luna’s opinion of Verena?
- 7) What is the reason for Pardon’s interest in Verena?
- 8) Why does Olive not want Verena to speak for the Harvard students?

For Discussion.

1. Speaking of the renunciation necessary to be an activist, Olive quotes from Goethe’s *Faust*. What do you know about the idea of the Faustian pact?
2. How do you think Olive’s invocation of it here might affect the way we perceive the relationship between the two women? Is such a renunciation of one’s personal life, in your view, ever justified?

Part 3 - ‘TIS THE CHASE THEY SEEK.

- 1) How does Ransom win over Miss Birdseye?
- 2) What is Ransom’s reason for his opposition to Olive’s ideas?
- 3) Why does Ransom feel uncomfortable in the chapel of Harvard college?
- 4) How does the fact of Burrage being a collector affect the way we perceive his interest in Verena?

Part 4 - THE WEDNESDAY CLUB.

- 1) What do you think Mrs Burrage means when she says, “a girl like Verena makes her own standards”?
- 2) What kind of place is the Wednesday Club?
- 3) How would you describe the character of Mrs Luna?
- 4) What does Ransom think of Verena’s speech?

For Discussion.

1. Listen again to Verena’s speech. Do you think there is any substance in what she says or is all just empty rhetoric?
2. What do you think might be the reason for juxtaposing it with Mrs Luna’s conversation with Ransom?

Part 5 - THE GREAT PURSUIT.

- 1) What ‘offer’ does Mrs Burrage make to Olive?
- 2) What does she think of Olive’s friendship with Verena?
- 3) What does Ransom claim is the reason for Verena’s commitment to the cause?
- 4) Why does Verena want Olive to take her away?

For Discussion .

1. Comment on the effect of the parallel montage between Olive’s interview with Mrs Burrage and Verena’s conversation with Basil Ransom.

Part 6 - A SUMMER RETREAT.

- 1) What is the reason for the gathering of women?
- 2) How did Ransom know that Verena was staying there?
- 3) Why is Ransom happy?
- 4) What is the reason for his visit?
- 5) How do we know that Verena doesn't really care about the movement?

For Discussion

Do you think that Olive's vision of the drowned Verena is a fear or a repressed wish? Give reasons for your answer.

Part 7 - THEATRE OF WAR.

- 1) Why does Verena refuse to go on stage?
- 2) What is Pardon worried about?
- 3) Why does Olive tell the guard not to let anyone into the dressing room?
- 4) Why does Basil not want Verena to speak?
- 5) What is the audience's response to Olive's speech?

For Discussion.

1. Compare Olive's speech at the end with those of Verena. Which do you think is more substantial?
2. Comment on the role of the church organ, which we see at the beginning of the film and then again in the final scene. What metaphorical significance might it have?

ANSWER KEY

LINGUISTIC ACTIVITIES

2. REPORTING VERENA'S FEMINIST SPEECHES.

- a. Verena said that the light and the tide were rising.
- b. She claimed she heard a calling for help.
- c. She stated that uncounted millions had lived, only to be tortured and to be crucified. Ages of oppression had rolled over them. But the day of their delivery had dawned.
- d. She said this was the only sacred cause. That it was the great, the just revolution and that it had to triumph.
- e. She exclaimed it would be the greatest change the world had seen. 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.
- f. She added that if that was the best that men could do by themselves, they had better let women come in a little and see what they could do.
- g. She said that they couldn't possibly make it worse.
- h. She said that there was a brutal element in the world which trampled down the feeble and treaded down the weak.
- i. She exclaimed that the world was drenched in blood.
- j. She admitted she was only a simple American girl.
- k. She said that there were some things that she felt and that they were in her ears in the stillness of the night.
- l. She added that she believed the special genius of women to be intuitive in function, spiritual in tendency, electrical in movement.
- m. She stated that women required simply freedom. They also required the lid to be taken off the box in which they had been kept for centuries.
- n. She said that women were the heart of humanity.

3. RELATIVE CLAUSES.

- a. Verena Tarrant came from Boston which was traditionally a very puritanical city.
- b. Verena was a girl with extraordinary oratorical gifts which she deployed to fight for women's rights.
- c. Olive Chancellor was a mature woman who was fascinated by

- Verena.
- d. Olive organised a number of activities (that) the rich Mrs Burrage offered to finance.
 - e. Basil Ransom had rigid views concerning society and women's place therein, which Olive was annoyed about.
 - f. Basil fell in love with Verena, who had mixed feelings about marrying him.

4. VOCABULARY.

1. directed/ inferior/ comfortable
2. lioness/ doctor/ same/ improvement
3. know/ magnetic/ ever
4. listen/ wonderful/ small/ prejudice
5. Century/ convention/ strength/ pity
6. enemy/ receive/ closed/ rights
7. stain/ promise/ fail
8. away/ mine
9. colleagues/ unable/ sweet/ slavery/ heard

UNDERSTANDING THE FILM

Part 1 - A STAR IS BORN.

- 1) They don't like each other very much. There seems to be a great deal of tension between them. Ransom seems somewhat amused by Olive's earnestness.
- 2) She seems to come out of a trance induced by her father. The rational nature of her discourse is undermined by the idea of its having a paranormal source. The role played by her father who 'starts her up' like a machine seems in marked contradiction to the idea of the liberation of women.
- 3) In her own quiet way Dr. Prance is already liberated. She is an autonomous woman who speaks her mind, but does not feel the need to align herself with any movement. Thus her presence puts in question the necessity of a 'movement' for the liberation of women.
- 4) His purpose is to show that women are always the cause of men's actions, that they have the real power, and that if men are destructive it is because of women.
- 5) She wants to match him with her sister, Mrs Luna.

Part 2 - THE GETTING OF WISDOM.

- 1) She says that it is all due to her father.
- 2) She wishes her to renounce falling in love, getting married and having children – in short all the things society considers the province of a woman.
- 3) Its implicit purpose is to show Olive as a privileged and exceptional member of a sex to whom such learning is denied.
- 4) That women cannot go to university.
- 5) That he has extremely traditional and conservative ideas about the structure of society.
- 6) She considers her vulgar and empty-headed and thinks that her involvement in the women's movement is simply a way of attracting men.
- 7) He sees her as having tremendous commercial potential, since she appeals to men as well as women.
- 8) She doesn't want her to become a performing monkey for the amusement of men.

Part 3 - 'TIS THE CHASE THEY SEEK.

- 1) He posits himself as a possible convert and supporter of the movement.
- 2) He thinks she wants to put women above men.
- 3) It commemorates the Union soldiers who died during the Civil War in which Ransom fought on the Confederate side.
- 4) It becomes potentially insidious, as though Verena were a rare creature he wanted to put in a box.

Part 4 - THE WEDNESDAY CLUB.

- 1) Like most of what Mrs Burrage says, it has a double meaning: on the surface she considers Verena to be capable of transcending her social class, but it also refers to her belief that Verena is infinitely malleable and can be shaped according to the needs and tastes of genteel society.
- 2) It is an exclusive cultural salon where the fashionable society of New York go to hear about the latest ideas.
- 3) She is highly manipulative and extremely bitchy. She is the kind of spoiled girl who is used to getting her own way and becomes uncivil when she doesn't.
- 4) He considers it an exquisite entertainment but does not take what she says at all seriously.

Part 5 - THE GREAT PURSUIT.

- 1) She offers her support for Olive's movement in exchange for

