



# Sarah Grand and the Woman Question: Dialectical Progress and Hope

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## ABSTRACT

One of the staunch advocates of women's suffrage, Sarah Grand, expresses her hope in a better future for women in her novelistic and journalistic work. In her view, two contemporary types of individuals, here referred to as the New Woman and the New Man, play an essential role in engendering societal change that helps the woman's cause. Extensive literary criticism of Grand's oeuvre has identified the New Man in her later work. This essay establishes that as early as her *succès de scandale* novel, *The Heavenly Twins* (1893), and the articles published a year later, Grand conjoins the New Woman and the New Man to oppugn the Victorian doctrine of separate spheres and to underscore the progress of the women's suffrage. She paints the arduous path to progress through the New Woman's believable partners and advocates, adequate rather than idealized examples of New Men: Dr. Galbraith, Mr. Kilroy of Ilverthorpe, Dr. Shadwell and Mr. Price. Alongside these, Grand places three characters: Evadne Frayling, a potential suffragette who marks a regress from the advances of women's movement; Angelica Hamilton-Wells, a potential New Woman who gains a political voice by writing her husband's speeches; and Ideala, the New Woman, a model of behavior and harbinger of hope for the female readership. Drawing from Herbert Spencer, Matthew Arnold and Charles Darwin, Grand dismantles the typical Victorian ideas about woman and man to emphasize the importance of education in the lives of both. For women to achieve a personal identity, the New Man needs to support her to redefine, at least partially, the 'nature' of woman. Through her dramatizations of models of men and women who can bring about progress, Grand initiates her reader into the changes that can help the suffrage movement gain momentum and move forward.

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Now we come confidently forward to maintain, not that this or that was 'intended', but that there are in ourselves, in both sexes, possibilities hitherto suppressed or abused, which, when properly developed, will supply to either what is lacking in the other.  
– Sarah Grand, "The New Aspect of the Woman Question"

"While late Victorian feminist writers did not often emphasize the 'pleasures' of gender failure, they did frequently note its necessity for social progress," argues Tara MacDonald in *The New Man, Masculinity and Marriage in the Victorian Novel* (4). In their emphasis on the need for social progress, the author continues, Victorian writers reflect Olive Schreiner's idea that progress does not occur linearly, but with interruptions manifested as moments of regress (MacDonald 4). Walter E. Houghton had already put forth the idea that the Victorians had "a general notion of progressive development" (30), yet the forward movement of their frame of mind was not continuous (30). Within the larger discourse on discontinuous progress, late Victorians address the role(s) and condition of the woman both in journalism and in fiction, media through which they educate the readers and endorse change, which some of the Victorians would equate to progress. Never before had woman voiced her aspirations to (re-)define herself and her partner as she did at the end of the nineteenth century. Assertive, self-defining women made themselves heard and unveiled the problems deriving from the doctrine of separate spheres. Feminist writers of the time such as Sarah Grand encourage simultaneous women's and men's liberation, a breaking down of the gender biases, and in doing so underscore the unstable signifier of the word woman. A staunch advocate of women's suffrage, Grand writes on the Woman Question both in her journalistic work and in her novels. The most relevant example for this essay is her *succès de scandale* novel, *The Heavenly Twins* (1893). Dedicating her activism and writing to the attainment of suffrage, Grand opposes the patriarchal ideology that had deemed woman inferior and kept her uneducated. This essay will show that drawing from thinkers of the time such as Herbert Spencer, Matthew Arnold, and Charles Darwin, Grand conjoins the New Woman and the New Man in earlier works than criticism has identified, to delineate the progress of the feminist movement, with its moment of regress, to show both that women can achieve self-realization despite the devastating effects of the patriarchal society in which they live and that men can join the movement.

Critics who analyzed gender in late-Victorian literature and culture have made it a point to look at both men and women, pinpointing models of progressive characters. MacDonald, who draws upon Ardis and Jane Eldridge Miller, has already contended that "models of masculinity and femininity are best examined alongside one another" (6). Surprisingly, however, literary criticism of Grand's aforementioned novel has not placed the New Woman in conversation with the New Man, whom the novel promotes. I argue that in *The Heavenly Twins*, Grand conveys her vision of societal change by reassessing the value of man and woman through the dialectical development of the New Man in correlation to the New Woman. Through the novel, Grand casts doubt upon the roles which society had assigned women and men. In her writing, this distrust materializes through not only New Women but also New Men, who do *not* represent merely "figures of an ideal future" (MacDonald 166), as MacDonald asserts. Rather, they emerge as extant, adequate prototypes, albeit weak and at different dialectical stages, of men and women. To the twenty-first century reader, Grand's New Men may not appear as feminist, and yet they form a group of flawed yet convincing, progressive men who sympathize with the woman and support the Woman Question. The emerging women and men do not conform wholly to the strict gender roles which the Victorian patriarchy assigns them. Several important Victorian male authors reject the traditional interpretation of the human society as static. The three authors from whom Grand draws, Spencer, Arnold, and Darwin, publish startling considerations on the human development, culture, and evolution, respectively.

Grand also rejects the static recommendations which the male society gave the woman, her major consideration in the novel being how to redefine the self against fixed societal prescription. She exposes the Victorian ideology that demanded adherence to the established gender spheres, whereby society denies women their freedom and contributes to their alienation and sometimes madness. In all her work on the Woman Question, Grand echoes Spencer's notion of progress as "not an accident, not a thing within human control but a beneficent necessity" ("Progress: Its Laws and Cause" 252), her interest in the woman's fate continuing to be an impelling one. In point of fact, such interest surfaces in several of her journalistic pieces, particularly in "The New Aspect of the Woman Question," "The Man of the Moment" and

“The Modern Girl,” published in *The North American Review* in 1894 in March, May, and June, respectively. In these writings, Grand frames the idea of progress in the women’s rights terms of what a year before she had called the “moral progress of the world” (*THT* 10), articulating it as a necessary step in both culture (borrowed from Arnold’s model of education) and evolution (borrowed from Darwin and Spencer).

One of the most obvious signs of progress, the positively rational New Woman, needs a benign companion, the New Man, whom Grand hails in “The New Aspect of the Woman Question” as “the man of the future” (272). MacDonald’s scholarship pivots around the contention that in the Victorian novel, the New Man is the New Woman’s romantic partner, but he is “best understood as the political ally to the New Woman, supporting and aiding her attempts at social and political liberation” (1). Whereas in later novels the New Man acts as a political ally, in *The Heavenly Twins* he has not yet reached this status. It is possibly on account of the want of male activists as political allies that criticism has not identified the New Man in this novel but in a later publication, *The Beth Book* (1897), through the character of Arthur Brock. In what follows, I explore several New Men in *The Heavenly Twins*, a main character and three episodic characters, all of whom exhibit characteristics of the better man, as portrayed by Grand in her article on the Woman Question: “the chivalry, the truth, and affection, the earnest purpose, the plain living, high thinking, and noble self-sacrifice” (“The New Aspect” 275). Two of the male characters play the role of good partners for the New Woman: the earnest Doctor George Galbraith, who tends to Evadne after her constricting marriage ends; and the chivalrous politician Mr. Kilroy of Ilverthorpe, who becomes the voice through which Angelica Hamilton-Wells, a New Woman, disseminates her political ideas.

Grand sets up Dr. Galbraith, Evadne’s doctor and later her husband, as a positive model of masculinity who acts with disinterested sympathy, benevolence and care, but distrusts the Victorian gender ideology only partially. Given the time’s progress in medicine, it is no surprise that Grand chose a medical man as a sign of progress, albeit small, in a society where most discourses maintain their conceptual boundaries unaligned with societal changes. Dr. Galbraith’s friends admire and respect him for his treatment of others, particularly of women. Among his friends are Lady Adeline, the twins’ feminist mother, and Lord Dawne, the twins’ feminist uncle and founder, together with Lady Claudia Beaumont and Ideala, of the New Order, “a sort of feminine *wehmgerecht*,” (Grand *THT* 181), a feminine criminal tribunal. Such endorsements, one can safely infer, are meant to assure the reader that Dr. Galbraith represents a good model of masculinity. In indirect free style, the text discloses the high regard which Lady Adeline has for Dr. Galbraith in superlative tones: “Dr. Galbraith was the man in the world upon whom she placed *the greatest* reliance” (Grand *THT* 57) (my emphasis). In contradistinction to Colonel George Colquhoun, Evadne’s first husband, who gains identity mainly through his charisma, the Doctor captures attention through his compassion, which leads to good deeds.

In his endeavor to achieve social betterment, Dr. Galbraith sympathizes with women not only as a medical man but also as a human being concerned about others, no matter their social status. Since his sympathy does not degenerate into sentimentality, he does not risk looking ‘feminine’ by the Victorian standards. His perception of woman’s suffering manifests in more than providing medical help when he rescues patients who cannot pay him, like the poor young woman and her baby lying on the footpath, who, Edith Beale accidentally finds out, was abandoned by her husband. More significantly, Dr. Galbraith articulates his sympathy for Edith, an ignorant young woman who contracted syphilis from her husband. As William Driscoll has submitted, Grand employs the metaphor of syphilis to examine the dangers which societal limitations place on women and the failures derived from not educating women about sexually transmitted diseases (2). Referring to Edith in a later scene, Dr. Galbraith tells Lord Dawne: “I would give anything that anybody could name...to be quite sure that she would pass into peace tonight” (Grand *THT* 120). Through Lord Dawne and Galbraith, Grand conspicuously celebrates the manliness associated with sympathy and care for the woman.

The narrator further encourages the reader to see Dr. Galbraith as an example of a good man. The most relevant place in the novel, at the beginning of Book VI, precedes Dr. Galbraith’s first-person narrative, the history of his relationship with Evadne. Here, the narrator elicits the readers’ trust by reviewing the Doctor’s qualities and flaws detailed up to this point in the novel, beginning with earnestness, and ending with self-discipline and a superlative description of his character:

But more interesting, perhaps, are the glimpses we get of Dr. Galbraith himself in the narrative, throughout which it is easy to decipher the simple earnestness of the man, the cautious professionalism and integrity, the touches of tender sentiment held in check, the dash of egotism, the healthy-minded human nature, the capacity for enjoyment and sorrow, the love of life, and, above all, the perfect unconsciousness with which he shows himself to have been a man of fastidious refinement and exemplary moral strength and delicacy, of the highest possible character. (Grand *THT* 203)

As evidenced by his own narrative and the narrator, Dr. Galbraith acts like a true gentleman, and the gentleman, James Eli Adams notes, “is distinguished by his lack of self-consciousness” (42). True to his nature, the Doctor exposes to the public gaze not only his wife-patient but also a possible model of husband-wife relationship based on encouragement, earnestness, care, love, and sympathy. It cannot be accidental that the Doctor looks like the New Woman’s companion in Grand’s journalistic writing, and this similarity would buttress the idea that Grand depicts him as a representative of the New Man rather than as “a potential New Man” (MacDonald 100).

In creating Dr. Galbraith, Grand achieves a realistic example of progressive masculinity and conveys the challenges inherent in the inevitable process of transformation of the late-Victorian man and woman. In her view, the progress of the suffrage movement has several impediments resulting from the impact which the Victorian gender ideology has on people’s mind. Far from describing Dr. Galbraith as a perfect or an ideal New Man, Grand proposes him as a progressive man whom a potential New Woman accepts as husband. Some critics, like Anna Maria Jones, emphasize the Doctor’s worthy characteristics: he is “an enlightened man, a philanthropist, and an advocate of women’s rights” (233). Other critics, like Ann Heilmann, portray him as a contemptible character. While acknowledging that the Doctor departs in practice from the “real-life Victorian doctors’ punitive and invasive medicine” (70), Heilmann also finds disturbing similarities between him and the doctor in Charlotte Perkins Gilman’s “The Yellow Paper” (70). And yet, he is neither like the Colonel, who denied Evadne an active role in the socio-political matters of the time, nor like other professional men who “jeopardize the New Woman’s quest for...knowledge” (MacDonald 83). On the contrary, the Doctor encourages Evadne to become involved in the matters outside the home and make a name for herself “and an impression on the age” (Grand *THT* 203). Through Dr. Galbraith, the novel expounds the likelihood of a shift in gender relations, away from the assigned spheres – the political and economic sphere for the man and the home for the woman. Furthermore, his medical knowledge diverges from the Victorian gender narrative, and he distances himself from the traditional men and their description of the woman. With his help, Evadne frees herself from the languor that overwhelmed her during her marriage to the Colonel.

Indubitably, despite the progressive qualities based on which one would classify Dr. Galbraith as a New Man, he remains a product of his time and consequently a debatable? character. Heilmann has astutely and rightly argued his flaws, particularly his dissection of Evadne’s mind, ridden with phallic symbolism and his “telescopic appropriation of Evadne” (70). In her analysis of the novel, Heilmann perceives Evadne’s identity to be lost in the doctor’s notes. While I partially concur with Heilmann, I offer that these notes also function as written evidence of the insidious ways in which patriarchal men harm potential New Women. I maintain that through these notes the reader can also *find* Evadne, who is suffering not because of her biological makeup but because she lacks the necessary education and the social setting for it.

Another discussion centers on the Doctor’s belief in the woman’s role as wife and mother. Heilmann underscores the incompatibility of Galbraith’s sympathy for the women’s movement with his belief that to achieve mental health women require their “‘natural’ role as wives and mothers” (71). Grand’s essay “The Man of the Moment” may help reconcile these tendencies which the twenty-first century critic justifiably finds irreconcilable. Risking a reinscription into the clichéd Victorian gender narrative, Grand reassures her readers that the New Woman, on the one hand, and motherhood and wifehood, on the other, do not mutually exclude each other: “True womanliness is not in danger and the sacred duties of wife and mother will be all the more honorably performed when women have a reasonable hope of becoming wives and mothers of *men*” (“Aspect of the Woman Question” 274–275). Ironically, in her journalistic discourse Grand echoes, to a certain extent, Sarah Stickney Ellis’s *The Women of England: Their Social Duties and Domestic Habits* (1839), where the popular writer of Victorian conduct

literature adopts the accepted gender narrative: “The sphere of a woman’s happiness and most beneficial influence is a domestic one” (289). Again, it is difficult to harmonize Grand the feminist activist and public lecturer on women’s issues with Grand the compliant writer abiding by the patriarchal gender narrative, which traps woman in the domestic sphere. And yet, Grand’s statement offers a glimpse into the late-Victorian narrative discourses and the way in which the discourses of medicine and of gender influence the discourse of feminist journalism.

Grand’s view of wifehood and motherhood indicates the author, and consequently, her text, to be shaped by the culture from which she is trying to break free. The fact that she does not look beyond the conventional perspective on marriage does not alone obliterate Grand’s advocacy for women’s rights. Undeniably, although unequal partners, Evadne and Dr. Galbraith complement each other. Evadne provides Dr. Galbraith with a patient suffering from a nervous disorder caused by a type of diseased man whom society does not condemn and to whom it awards privilege and power to exclude and harm women. The Doctor’s sympathy for women who suffer because of diseased men (like Edith and Evadne), as well as his “philanthropic motives” (Grand *THT* 50) for practicing medicine, make Lady Adeline Hamilton-Wells refer to him as her brother’s “most intimate friend” (Grand *THT* 57). Dr. Galbraith provides Evadne with medical treatment, freedom to speak, and encouragement to become socially engaged. Nonetheless, what Evadne needs, and possibly what other potential New Women need, is healing—physical and mental—before they can rise socially and politically.

Medicine, the novel seems to communicate, or the medical professional, has the ability if not to dismantle the gender narrative, then to help restore the woman back to health. Dr. Galbraith may be perceived, as Ann Heilmann has described him, as a character whom Grand “resists the temptation to construct ... as a straightforward villain” (Heilmann 70) because he earnestly wants Evadne to recover and offers her a holistic treatment. I would reemphasize, as Heilmann did, his progressive medical practice, his consideration of the complete person and his search into the underlying causes of his patient’s symptoms. One can undoubtedly argue that Evadne remains safe in the end not because her husband is a doctor, but because he is a New Man, with all his flaws. She chooses to settle into a life of comfortable domesticity, and she does not end up in an asylum. The sympathetic Doctor, with professional industriousness, moral resolve and sexual constancy, does not appear as a feminist; yet the narrative elevates him higher than the patriarchal man, as a New Man, a helpful partner for the suffering woman of the time.

The author envisions the progress of the New Man occurring in small steps through the presence of minor characters who complement the New Woman. To weaken the credibility of the Victorian gender ideology, Grand creates several compelling male prototypes of worthy partners for the New Woman. Thus, *The Heavenly Twins* becomes not only “an important site of ideological experimentation for the New Woman” (MacDonald 3), but also the fictional space where the New Man enters into partnership and dialogue with the New Woman, and treats her as a peer. Three minor characters materialize as the New Man: the politician, the foreign man, and the medical man. One of the models of progressive masculinity, the atypical politician Mr. Kilroy of Ilverthorpe, differs from Vincent Hemming in Ella Hepworth Dixon’s “The Story of a Modern Woman”, characterized by MacDonald with “hypocrisy and hidden motives” (85). In the space of the novel the New Man Mr. Kilroy belongs to an alternative community in the service of the New Woman, whom he ventriloquizes. He is far from the Victorian ‘Mr. Kilroys’ who take actions to promote the woman’s cause. Several historical, contemporary male politicians or legislators supported women’s suffrage and advocated the rights of women to all functions and positions retained by men. Legislators like John Stuart Mill, John Bright, and Richard Cobden helped to make the women’s suffrage issue public to the English society. Mill, for instance, an unwavering supporter of the issue, helped to found the first British Women Suffrage Association. Also, a very prominent politician known for his efforts in another social justice issue, the fight for repeal of the Corn Laws, Cobden also supported women’s right to vote. His colleague, Bright, is one of the few men who voted, with hesitation but out of respect for Mill, on the latter’s “amendment admitting women to the franchise” (Vince 77). Cognizant of the male advocates of women’s rights, Grand promotes Mill’s name through Lady Adeline, who ‘mislays’ a copy of his *Subjection of Women* at Fraylingay for Evadne to read.

In contradistinction with the historical models of new masculinity, Mr. Kilroy strikes the reader with his silence and lack of initiative to aid the woman’s cause. Mr. Hamilton-Wells explains to Dr. Galbraith that his sixteen-year-old daughter needs the taciturn Mr. Kilroy in his capacity

of a listener: “She does not profess to find him interesting. But what she says is that she must talk, and he does for a target to look at” (Grand *THT* 95). She needs the man to be physically present and receive her ideas. Through the modal verb “must” the novel indicates that talking represents an essential or necessary action for the young woman. The New Woman needs to mind, or rather, to gain a political voice. Not only does Mr. Kilroy comprehend Angelica “better than anyone else” (Grand *THT* 175), but he also identifies her as a subject rather than object and, more importantly, the subject of his affection: “the only subject upon which he ever became poetical” (Grand *THT* 175). Unlike conservative men who see women as objects of desire or possession, Mr. Kilroy sees Angelica as an active participant in her story. Their relationship works well due to mutual respect and trust, their friendship remaining untainted by the complications of romantic love. A quiet type of positive masculinity, Mr. Kilroy lacks the eloquence necessary to profess his affection for his wife but is described by women as “a thoroughly nice man” (Grand *THT* 174) and by men as “an exceedingly good fellow” (Grand *THT* 174). Together with his patience, his excess of goodness brings him closer to the predecessor of the New Man, the Dickensian gentleman, a “female-inspired model of sexual constancy and patience,” in MacDonald’s terms (26). Angelica intuits that to circumvent the limitations caused by the Victorian gender ideology, she can communicate, for the time being, through the voice of a good man: “I hope you...let me write your speeches for you...You see I shall want a mouthpiece until I get in myself” (Grand *THT* 96). Grand highlights some opportunities which women in higher classes, like Angelica, had to participate in the political arena. A notable example captured here is by influencing men with political leanings and writing compelling narratives for them.

The author proves the unstable signifier of woman. Angelica pens her writing, which is outside of the patriarchal discourse, and gives her text to Mr. Kilroy, who reads it in Parliament as his speech. Through the woman’s writing that passes as the male’s speech, the text further undermines the Victorian gender norms. Like Dr. Galbraith and Evadne, Mr. Kilroy and Angelica find ways to complement each other: Mr. Kilroy extends Angelica her freedom while Angelica gives him a solid friendship without the ebullience of youth or sensuality, and written political speeches. In a partnership with the male politician, the potential New Woman can enact change indirectly.

Mr. Kilroy treats Angelica with respect and patience even when he realizes that the Tenor story is a fact, not a fiction. At first, he reacts chivalrously: he finds himself culpable for the circumstances that led to Angelica’s impersonating Diavolo to pursue the Tenor. By masquerading as Diavolo (that is, the ‘fallen angel’), Angelica evades the rules of propriety regarding female-male encounter and parodies the effeminate, dandyish type of masculinity which Victorians associated with the New Man. Moreover, she experiences sensuality while forming what Linda Dowling calls a “sexually disinterested friendship” (439) with the young musician. This relationship represents a central aspect of Angelica’s development, the Tenor’s death engendering her change: as Jones remarks, Angelica recognizes her selfishness and carelessness, and becomes “an activist of sorts” (230), writing her husband’s parliamentary speeches. Her revolutionary impetus is undercut by her exclamation to her husband: ‘Don’t let me go again, Daddy, keep me close. I am—I am grateful for the blessing of a good man’s love’ (551)” (Jones 230). Having heard of the Tenor’s death, Angelica contents herself with experiencing political and social power through her partner, the political New Man. After the traumatic experience of the Tenor’s unexpected death, Angelica has obvious psychological sequelae. Her anxiety weakens her energy, necessary for her to join the feminist movement, and writing in the safe space of the home becomes her therapy. Her husband does not represent a revolutionary revision of Victorian masculinity, yet he functions as a believable model of new masculinity, a better partner for the woman. Other New Men with episodic presence do not enter romantic relationships with women but they support or sympathize their cause.

The American minister Mr. Austin B. Price displays feminist outlooks and aligns himself with the women’s movement. First, the narrator introduces him as a trustworthy character through the attribute “distinguished” with reference to his work as a “diplomatist and man of letters” (Grand *THT* 71) and his work as humanitarian. Then, he voices his progressive views when he deems women’s demands sensible: “All that women ask is to be allowed to earn their bread honestly; but there is no doubt that the majority of men would rather see them on the streets” (Grand *THT* 77). Furthermore, he indicts men who curtail women’s freedom and hinder the

moral progress “by the criminal repression of women” (Grand *THT* 77). Despite such actions, Mr. Price sees the old ideals as threatened and echoing Spencer, contends that society has to give those ideals up and change “if we are ever to progress” (Grand *THT* 78). Joining the political with the linguistic, Mr. Price draws attention again to how unstable the signifier of the term woman is. Grand prefigures theorists of identity such as Judith Butler by describing the notion of womanliness as “a matter of sex” (Grand *THT* 78) rather than of “circumstances, occupation, or clothing” (Grand *THT* 78). Thus, the novelist opposes the Victorian ideology through which women are mainly what they do and what they wear, or in Judith Butler’s terms, the “specifically feminine” (*Gender Trouble* 7).

Grand verbalizes the Victorians’ sense of progress and advancement, which the sciences and inventions, together with the Industrial Revolution, had prompted. In a time when progress is seen as a masculine achievement, Mr. Price gives a bracing voice to a progressive notion of women as catalysts for progress: “I believe that women will save us. I do not fear the fate of other peoples. I am sure that we shall not fall into nothingness from the present height of our civilization, by reason of our sensuality and vice, as all the great nations have done, heretofore. The women will rebel. The women will not allow it” (Grand *THT* 79). A spokesperson for Grand, Mr. Price hopes that women will break free from the ideological confines and push society forward. She reemphasizes this notion of women as agents of change through Angelica, who tells Lady Adeline and Evadne: “The progress of the world at large depends upon the action of women now, and the success attending it” (Grand *THT* 224). The thoughts which Mr. Price ventriloquizes for Grand resurface in her essays, where she discusses progress in terms of women’s “awakening from their long apathy” (“The New Aspect” 271) and of possibilities “hitherto suppressed or abused” (“The New Aspect” 272). Grand’s journalistic writing resembles a manifesto through which the writer encourages women readers to rebel.

For progress to occur not only women but also men need to change, Grand intimates in “The New Aspect of the Woman Question,” where she foresees a hoped-for progress. She sees the New Man and New Woman as “better and stronger” (Grand “The New Aspect” 272). That is why she deems it is essential for the woman to teach man, who is, in terms of progress, in his infancy (Grand “The New Aspect” 273). Comparing men to children, Grand reverses the Victorian gender hierarch, infantilizes men and deepens the gap between the progressive women and patriarchal men, who have not adjusted to the time. In her teleological conception of the Woman Question, Grand establishes the aim of the suffrage movement: the education of men and women concerning their changing roles so as to engender moral progress, i.e., social and political opportunities for both men and women (“The New Aspect” 272). Grand obviously has in mind a betterment of the woman’s condition alongside the progress of the Victorian society. Historical Mr. Prices such as Thomas Joseph Walsh, a diocesan priest in Liverpool (Clark 30), and Herbert Vaughan, cardinal archbishop of Westminster (Clark 28), already help the suffrage movement: they voice their progressive view of women’s enfranchisement.

Through Sir Shadwell Rock, Grand suggests that the catalysts for progress are medical men who have a different perspective of women than the one imposed by Victorian ideology and treat them holistically. As in the case of Mr. Price, Grand builds trust in Sir Shadwell, naming him “the best specialist for nervous disorders” (Grand *THT* 210). Additionally, a trustworthy peer, Dr. George Galbraith, describes Sir Shadwell as “a man of taking manners to begin with, sympathetic, cultivated, humane” (Grand *THT* 235). Naturally, Sir Shadwell heralds moral progress on account of the medical men who can bring about societal balance by extending visibility and legitimacy to women as subjects, thus assuaging their suffering: “I suppose eventually morality will be taught by medical men, and when it is much misery will be saved to the suffering sex” (Grand *THT* 234). Being convinced that tradition is not sustainable any longer, Sir Shadwell places morality in the hands of medical men and advocates that the findings in medicine should dictate ethics rather than tradition. Sir Shadwell is one of the few men who speak about the need to aid women in the novel. In “The Man of the Moment,” Grand notes the hopeful prospect of the men who may join the woman’s movement: “There is happily nowadays an ever-increasing number of men on whom we can rely; but there are more who are not to be relied upon in this matter” (620–621). Although she apprehends the possibility of regression (or ebb), she regards it as only a temporary state. As a medical man, Sir Shadwell notices suffering in women, particularly in Evadne, at Dr. Galbraith’s request, the inevitable regression in the patients echoing a regression in societal perceptions.

Through *Evadne*, the novel illustrates not only the discontinuous progress of the Woman Question but also the effects which the stronghold of patriarchy has on some of the women who desire change but are not mentally ready for it. Instead of distancing herself from the old ways, as the New Woman does, *Evadne* ebbs toward the sphere assigned to her by the Victorian gender narrative. For her, the path to progress has many obstacles and frustrations. Indeed, she has a *penchant* for learning and access to books. Before her first marriage, she exhibits great exegetic acumen, interpreting texts critically, yet possibly because she does not benefit from a formal education, she ‘misreads’ Colonel Colquhoun. Her qualities and advantages notwithstanding, *Evadne* marks a regression in the women’s movement. She fails to become an activist not because she lacks education but because she secludes herself and distances herself from the movement. In her depiction of *Evadne*, Grand confirms the validity of two of Arnold’s arguments in *Culture and Anarchy*. One is his statements that through the liberal model of education culture holds the promise of saturating the mind and ennobling the spirit. The other is that perfection is not attainable in isolation: “The individual is required, under pain of being stunted and enfeebled in his own development if he disobeys, to carry others along with him in his march toward perfection, to be continually doing all he can to enlarge and increase the volume of the human stream sweeping thitherward” (Arnold 461). Arnold defines education as a social endeavor meant to contribute to bettering both the individual and society. As seen in the novel, Grand has the same view, that education is fundamental to women’s emancipation but insufficient if the woman does not join the suffrage movement.

To progress, the New Woman has to remove ideological blinders and to oppose those who preclude change and whom Grand labels “the man of the moment” in her essay with the same title. One of the quotes preceding Book I, “Childhoods and Girlhoods,” renders Darwin’s agreement with Francis Galton that “education and environment produce only a small effect on the mind of anyone, and that most of our qualities are innate” (Grand *THT* 9). This idea inhabits the mind of Mr. Frayling, *Evadne*’s old-fashioned father, a person “ignorant of the moral progress of the world” (Grand *THT* 10), who cants on the subject of the woman’s sphere: “Women should confine their attention to housekeeping...It is all they are fit for” (Grand *THT* 11–12). Not only Darwin but also most nineteenth-century scientists take for granted women’s inferiority, which for them represents proof of evolution by natural selection. Through his misogynistic statement, Mr. Frayling attests membership with the Bawling Brothers, the topic of Grand’s “The New Aspect of the Woman Question,” appearing as a Brother who is “satisfied with the cow-kind of woman as being most convenient” (270). In a century known for its Darwinism, the men formed by the accepted Victorian gender narrative authenticate their masculinity through a treatment of women as inferior beings and their contention that woman should remain in her sphere. It is not surprising that Mr. Frayling makes scandalous statements concerning the woman’s lack of mental ability, her having “no brains” (Grand *THT* 12) and resembling “a parrot in her mental processes” (Grand *THT* 12). As Carolyn Burdett notes, late-Victorian middle-class women joined the movement of social transformation and “found in the languages of evolution new and powerful ways to articulate their aspirations” (2). To thwart both Mr. Frayling’s statements and Darwin’s assertion, the narrator (and implicitly the author) gives a Spencerian counter-claim: it is as a result of heredity that *Evadne* has a faculty sufficient to enable her to acquire knowledge easily, teach herself advanced mathematics, and think critically.

Her critical thinking skills enable her to save *Diavolo*’s life when she presses on his femoral artery and prevents him from bleeding to death before the doctor arrives. The narrator ponders that her father’s limited and contradicting informal lectures make her strengthen her critical thinking (Grand *THT* 12). Grand borrows from Spencer, a Lamarckian who thinks that acquired characteristics are transmitted to future generations, and the adaptations that permit a generation to survive are transmitted to the succeeding generation, thus equipping them with superior capabilities: “Both the law and the cause of progress, which, from lack of evidence, can be but hypothetically substantiated in respect of the earlier forms of life on our globe, can be actually substantiated in respect of the latest forms” (“Progress: Its Law and Cause” 249). Following the Spencerian paradigm, the narrator states that “For generation knowledge is acquired, or, rather, instilled by force in families, but, once in a way, there comes a child that demands instruction as a right; and in her own family *Evadne* appears to have been that child” (Grand *THT* 9). According to Spencer, hereditary transmission pertains both to psychological and physical traits and characteristics acquired by parents via education can be inherited by their



children (252). Alluding to the notion of hereditary transmission of such characteristics, Grand says of Evadne: "It was as if she only required to be reminded of things she had learnt before" (THT 9). Therefore, Grand portrays Evadne in Spencerian terms: she is developing unbeknownst to her father out of a necessity rather than as an accident of evolution.

Scientists of the time, like Darwin, had created the totalizing story of women's inferiority based on their smaller skulls, which they equated with smaller brain capacity (54). According to tradition, as the superior member of the family, Mr. Frayling can arrogate his patriarchal authority to maintain woman in a subservient state. He does so by denying his wife her right to see her recalcitrant daughter. Upon hearing the news of Evadne's estrangement from her husband, that is, her refusal to abide by the Victorian adjuration to the woman to suffer and not to move, Mr. Frayling explains it by way of two reasons which the gender narrative affords him: madness and the negative effects of reading on the woman's mind. He cannot conceive that his daughter becomes physically inaccessible to a (diseased) husband as a means of self-protection. Like many negative male authority figures, he first thinks of locking Evadne in a lunatic asylum, trying thus to solve a social problem as if it were a mental one. Grand alludes to the Victorian narrative of the mad woman and decides a better fate for Evadne, most likely because her contemporaries already knew that asylums were dehumanizing institutions that resembled prisons.

Since for Mr. Frayling madness represents an undisputable fact, he concludes that Evadne's education altered her mind and as a result, she formed unrealistic expectations of men. Kate Flint has written extensively on the Victorian and Edwardian fears about women reading in *The Woman Reader, 1837-1914*. Grand dramatizes this fear through Evadne's father, who assumes that women identify with the fictional characters uncritically and internalize potentially harmful fictional experiences. Thus, by the standards of the Victorian society the innocent mind of the woman had to be protected from harm from the corrupting force of books by the men in the family or the governess. Evadne has no such 'protection' and yet she does not become a fallen woman like Madame Bovary. For Evadne, reading becomes a means of learning without a mentor since as a woman she does not have access to the formal education a man would have, and a means of escape from a dull existence.

Evadne's intelligence puzzles her first husband, Colonel Colquhoun, who does not confine her freedom of choice as long as her actions do not damage his social image. The libertine colonel does not adhere to the radical group of Victorians who regard reproduction as the only reason to marry. He even quietly respects his wife's decision not to consummate the marriage but tries his predatory, almost mesmeric powers on her. *Prima facie* the Colonel's failure to seduce his wife has its roots in Evadne's disgust with his libertinism. Yet, her sexual withdrawal represents her reaction to a psychologically threatening situation, her desire for self-preservation. Upon learning about his promiscuity, Evadne thinks of Colquhoun as a man of the moment, with no character, as "a common creature, of no ideals, deficient in breadth and depth" (Grand "The Man of the Moment" 627). Through Colquhoun, the novel maps a model of undesirable, specious masculinity, teaching women not to settle for an objectionable man who refuses to progress with the time. Unmistakably, Evadne has the capacity to become a catalyst for change and moves forward up to a point. Commenting on women's progress in "The Man of the Moment," Grand traces it from emotion to cognition: "Feeling was her guide at first...Now she knows" (623). Evadne follows the path which Grand traces: she first responds emotionally to Colonel Colquhoun, and then acquires knowledge about his character.

Evadne eventually makes a logical decision, which is a high-level cognitive process that considers the changing environment. At first, the ingenuous Evadne mistakes Colquhoun's reserve for a means of elevation, which she finds attractive. As soon as she learns that his reserve is a mere strategy to hide his libertine past, she rejects him. To keep her marriage arrangement with the Colonel, Evadne must not to express her feminist stance publicly, which for her entails her withdrawal from society. Thus, in Jones' words, she lets "her remarkable intellect atrophy" (232). When she gives up reading, Evadne takes a palliative measure: she burns the books "with repulsive incidents in them" (Grand THT 133) to fend off intense emotions which threaten to disturb her mind and instead takes to sewing to calm down; in other words, she buries herself in the domestic sphere. By silencing herself and refusing to engage even in the act of reading, Evadne brings about an excruciating sense of isolation, and fails to gain independence and transform into a New Woman. Her breaking point occurs when she wants to help Edith Beale,

when she “descends into madness” (Fritz 463). As Morgan Fritz states, Evadne’s hysteria aids Grand’s argument that intelligent women who do not use their gift “will have their intellectual potential transformed into hysteria” (463). Evadne suffers from a mental breakdown because she is unable to decide who she is. Her story unveils the injustices of the patriarchal society and warns the female reader about the probable perils brought about by women’s repression of their intellectual energies and withdrawal from the social sphere.

Another woman with strong intellectual drive, Angelica flaunts a strong sense of personal independence and as Jones comments, a strong yet unfulfilled “revolutionary” potential. Through the unconventional Angelica, the narrative indicates progress, an idea which Grand resumes in her essay “The New Aspect” (275). Angelica also has access to education, in which she excels, being superior in learning capabilities to her twin brother, Diavolo. Although at times she becomes a silent observer, she clearly understands the status quo of women. Angelica aids Grand in her plan to increase the readers’ awareness of the need not only to educate women on the effects of syphilis, a taboo at the time, but also to grant them and their children protection. Shaken after her stay with Edith, Angelica complains to Diavolo that no law safeguards women from the dangers to which husbands may expose them at a time when there was no cure for syphilis and the British society kept its silence on the crisis. Edith’s fate, her painful physical and mental degeneration and death, is presented, as Maura Dunst states, “in no uncertain terms as the result of patriarchal sexism” (Dunst 354). Opposing the cultural idealization of women’s sexual ignorance, Grand does what Karen Koehler mentions a growing number of authors in the 1890s do: she not only critiques “women’s sexual ignorance” (212), but also participates in “the process of making and unmaking sexual knowledge(s)” (212) and demands “improved access and control over knowledge” (212). Hope, Angelica declares, derives from the fact that some men, emergent models of masculinities, participate in the feminist movement: “All the manly men were helping women now, including Uncle Dawne and Dr. Galbraith” (Grand *THT* 118). Since the two men take active part in the suffrage movement, the narrative indicates their awareness of the constrictive and detrimental effect of various discourses on women.

Earlier in the novel, one of the feminist characters, Mrs. Malcomson, refers to religious discourse as a means to create a vertical rather than horizontal relationship between men and women in her address to Rev. Basil St. John: “You have curtailed our grand power to resist evil by narrowing us down to what you call the ‘Woman Sphere,’ wherein you insist that we shall be unconditional slaves of man doing always and only such things as shall suit his pleasure and convenience” (Grand *THT* 72). Mrs. Malcomson alludes to the duties which religion assigns the wife—to procreate and be submissive to her husband. Also, she demonstrates her cognizance of the woman’s mind when she names “dissatisfaction” (Grand *THT* 72) to be her first sign of thought. Grand puts forth the same idea a year later in “The Modern Girl,” where she turns a critical eye to women’s awareness of change: “Although women are becoming conscious that some great change is taking place in their position, they are as yet unaware of the nature of it” (707). Angelica has an idea that society has limited her to childbearing and being a housewife and, intuiting that Mr. Kilroy will go into Parliament, she asks him to become her mouthpiece until she finds a voice herself and even proposes to him: “Marry me!...Marry me and let me do as I like” (Grand *THT* 123). In her proposal, Angelica sets important boundaries through which she asserts her independence: while she will perform the role of the wife, she also wants to act as a decision maker. Thus she, points to one possible path toward progress, that is, a non-romantic relationship between the New Woman and her partner, wherein the woman has independence.

Angelica acts as a potential New Woman, the partner of a politician. In Spencer’s terms, she adapts to the conditions of her social existence—a modern girl, who exists in a world of progress but has limitations. Consistent with her statements in the novel, Grand voices her unwavering belief in progress in the article on the modern girl: “There is no doubt, however, that the modern girl has been caught by the rising tide of progress, and will be borne along bravely” (“The Modern Girl” 713). One way in which the woman can gain a voice, the narrative seems to imply, is by having a partner with an active political role in society. Ideala, the apotheosis of the New Woman in the novel, notices Angelica’s potential to become the catalyst for change prior to the girl’s marriage, when she expounds upon people’s need to belong to all churches, since all profess to be the real one, in order to be saved, and contends that her mother believes in morality rather than in religion. Ideala tells Lord Dawne self-assuredly: “Angelica will be one

of us” (Grand *THT* 103), foreseeing her as part of a new wave of New Woman. Due to this wave, Grand envisions a society that is approaching brighter and better days (“The Man” 621). Upholding Ideala as a positive role model and harbinger of hope into a better future, Grand aims to educate women, especially the ‘modern girls’, and encourage them to join her and the New Men on the path of progress.

Grand’s exposition of progress has its flaws, but her texts share her vision of societal change as well as her belief in the ubiquitous presence and the great strides of the New Woman and the New Man. While she admits that the development occurs slowly, Grand unequivocally sets forth a possible gamut of New Women and the New Men shaping in a significantly transformative time, the *fin de siècle*, when women are trying to (re-)define themselves and their partner. In *The Heavenly Twins*, the author presents models of failed New Woman, potential New Woman, and New Woman alongside benign models of New Men and their complex interactions with conservative individuals. Indisputably, these progressive men emerge as convincing through their flaws and their lingering partial connection with the Victorian gender ideology. Through her journalistic writing and through *The Heavenly Twins*, Grand illustrates progress, inspiring her readers to question their assigned gender roles and predefined image of themselves; most importantly, she seeks to correct misconceptions regarding the woman, ultimately initiating her reader into the changing roles of *both* women *and* men, i.e., into the Woman Question in correlation to the Man Question. Radically challenging the Victorian gender narrative, she draws attention to an imperative concern in social progress, the need to educate, safeguard and empower women, and evokes hope for a brighter future.

## COMPETING INTERESTS

I, Maria Granic, have no competing interests. I conducted the research included in my paper titled “Sarah Grand and the Woman Question: Dialectical Progress and Hope,” take fully the responsibility for my claims, and have authority over my manuscript preparation as well as over the decision to submit the manuscript for publication.

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