

Late-Victorian Polemics about Sexual Knowledge in Thomas Hardy and Sarah Grand

Koehler, Karin

English Literature in Transition, 1880-1920

Published: 01/01/2020

Peer reviewed version

[Cyswllt i'r cyhoeddiad / Link to publication](#)

Dyfyniad o'r fersiwn a gyhoeddwyd / Citation for published version (APA):
Koehler, K. (2020). Late-Victorian Polemics about Sexual Knowledge in Thomas Hardy and Sarah Grand. *English Literature in Transition, 1880-1920*, 63(2), 211-233.

Hawliau Cyffredinol / General rights

Copyright and moral rights for the publications made accessible in the public portal are retained by the authors and/or other copyright owners and it is a condition of accessing publications that users recognise and abide by the legal requirements associated with these rights.

- Users may download and print one copy of any publication from the public portal for the purpose of private study or research.
- You may not further distribute the material or use it for any profit-making activity or commercial gain
- You may freely distribute the URL identifying the publication in the public portal ?

Take down policy

If you believe that this document breaches copyright please contact us providing details, and we will remove access to the work immediately and investigate your claim.

Accepted for publication in *English Literature in Transition, 1880-1920*. Forthcoming in 63.1 (January 2020).

Karin Koehler

Late-Victorian Polemics about Sexual Knowledge in Thomas Hardy and Sarah Grand

This article explores the relationship between literary fiction and sexual knowledge in late-Victorian Britain. More specifically, it argues that, far from existing in a simply contextual relationship to the making and consumption of the period's literature, late-Victorian polemics about sexual knowledge were refracted in the content and narrative form of popular fiction. Despite the volume and diversity of Victorian publications offering sexual information and advice, historic states of knowledge remain a subject of conjecture.¹ It is unclear, or not clear enough, who accessed published sources, much less how people used them.² Likewise, as Helena Michie notes, information doubtlessly circulated through an "informal advice network," but archival evidence for such forms of knowledge exchange is limited.³ Conversely, we can readily trace what nineteenth-century writers, of fiction and otherwise, thought people, especially adolescent girls and unmarried women, *should* know about sexual matters and how, if at all, they should learn.⁴ Throughout the nineteenth century, what Eve Kosofsky Sedgwick describes as the "palpably sentimental privileging of ignorance as an originary, passive innocence," and the associated conceptualisation of knowledge as a corrupting force, furnished the dominant paradigm against which sexual discourses, fictional and factual, positioned themselves.⁵ Girls' access to sexual information especially was contested, and, as Kate Flint has shown, concerns about women's acquisition of improper knowledge shaped the writing, publication, and reception of fiction.⁶

By the *fin de siècle*, however, Anglophone literary culture staged more regular and open discussions about sexual education. It is now a truism to state that in the 1890s a growing number of writers, especially those associated with or identified as “New Women,” critiqued women’s sexual ignorance and demanded improved access to and control over knowledge.⁷ Yet, the specific ways in which different writers translate their arguments into narrative deserve further attention. Their aesthetic strategies reflect, and are shaped by, shifts and tensions in the trajectory of a wider public discourse, which was, in its turn, marked by the emergence, recently postulated by Beth Rodgers, of “adolescent girlhood [as] a distinct cultural category in late nineteenth-century literary and print culture.”⁸ Focusing on Thomas Hardy’s *Tess of the d’Urbervilles* (1891) and Sarah Grand’s *The Heavenly Twins* (1893), two bestselling novels with heroines who occupy the “borderland” between child- and adulthood, this essay considers how writers of fiction respond to issues of sexual epistemology in their plots and narrative methods.⁹

Two central assumptions form the basis for the argument. Following Sedgwick and Nancy Tuana, the discussion draws on an epistemological framework that understands knowledge and ignorance as, first, inherently plural – encompassing a “plethora” of “knowledges” and “ignorances,” of ways of knowing or not knowing – and, second, as states that are actively produced and maintained by a range of “supporting social causes,” including educational policy, socio-economic structures, and, central to the argument of this article, literary conventions.¹⁰ According to Nancy Tuana,

If we are to fully understand the complex practices of knowledge production and the variety of features that account for why something is known, we must also understand the practices that account for not knowing, that is, our lack of

knowledge of a phenomena or, in some cases, an account of the practices that resulted in a group unlearning what was once a realm of knowledge.¹¹

Victorian novelists were significant, sometimes self-conscious, participants in the processes of making and unmaking sexual knowledge(s) that Tuana postulates. The second assumption underlying this argument, accordingly, builds on Richard Menke's reading of Victorian novels as information systems, media which order and arrange information in order to shape their readers' knowledge of the world they inhabit.¹² Specific nineteenth-narratives, this essay argues, are designed and structured by their authors in such ways as to enable particular configurations of (sexual) knowledge and ignorance, with sexual ideology, epistemology, and aesthetics intersecting in complex and ever-shifting ways. As this comparative analysis illustrates, public advocacy for sexual instruction and female enlightenment took a variety of forms, which did not necessarily correspond to sexually frank or physiologically explicit aesthetics – partly due to literary conventions and informal censorship and partly because those writers who were most directly invested in promoting sexual education were also particularly concerned with regulating sexual pedagogy and its personal and social impact.

While Hardy's novel is informed by a radical endorsement of sexual knowledge, an almost naïve appeal, to borrow Sedgwick's phrasing, to "the redemptive potential of simply upping the cognitive wattage on any question of power," the narrative itself cannot, due to restrictions on aesthetic freedom, provide the enlightenment which it presents as vitally important. Grand's work, meanwhile, is characterized by a more careful consideration than Hardy's of *how* sexual information should be communicated, foregrounding the plurality of, and competition between, different kinds of knowledge and knowing.¹³ Although the increasingly permissive publishing culture of the *fin de siècle* enhanced the scope for artistic

frankness, then, Grand's scandalous *The Heavenly Twins* is formally defined by a self-imposed narrative reticence.

Before analysing and juxtaposing Hardy and Grand's texts in depth, it is necessary briefly to address the significance of W.T. Stead's "Maiden Tribute," a text which, according to Judith Walkowitz, "encouraged an explosion in the dissemination of 'sexual knowledge'."¹⁴ Published in the *Pall Mall Gazette* between 6 and 10 July 1885, these sensational articles about juvenile prostitution were written to support a bill for raising the age of consent from thirteen to sixteen. Given Stead's focus on redefining what constitutes a consenting adult, the issue of sexual education is central. The second part explains in lurid detail that many virgins sold into prostitution – including Eliza Armstrong, the girl Stead himself purchased to illustrate his arguments – are ignorant not only of the "remoter consequences and the extent to which their consent will prejudice the whole of their future life, but even the mere physical nature of the act to which they are legally competent to consent."¹⁵ For Stead, "It is one of the greatest scandals of Protestant training, that parents are allowed to keep their children in almost total ignorance of the simplest truths of physiology, without even a rudimentary conception of sexual morality," while those who continue to "silence the voice of warning" stand accused of being directly complicit in the ruin of British girls.¹⁶ Although it was extremely controversial, and although its consequences were by no means universally progressive, Stead's journalistic stunt expedited the raising of the age of consent in 1885.¹⁷ As one of many side effects, it also forced a broad section of the British public to reckon with the notion that sexual ignorance might be the greatest peril to, rather than the supreme charm of, the country's youth – a notion with particularly troubling resonance in the case of adolescent girls, whose liminal status between child- and womanhood troubled, as Rodgers stresses, prevalent ideas about "the relationship between innocence, sexual knowledge, and femininity."¹⁸

If Stead's critique of ignorance was conceived primarily as part of a socio-political campaign, it also contained an implicit commentary on representational practices and aesthetic standards. The "Maiden Tribute" is a narrative as much as a polemic, and, at the moment of its publication, this narrative stretched to its very limits the contemporary consensus about what could be represented in reputable media outlets, whose readership might include girls and unmarried women. Crucially, Stead justifies the depiction of what one commentator describes as "a mass of disgusting details" as a moral duty, the necessity of which is made manifest by the "disgusting details" themselves.¹⁹ Put differently, the subject matter is unspeakable, yet it also contains within itself an imperative to defy aesthetic and social conventions and speak, since silence would allow the offensive practices that are being documented to persist and proliferate. A similar rationale underlies Hardy's resistance in *Tess of the d'Urbervilles* against literary conventions designed for the "protection of the young person."²⁰ Phillip Mallett argues that, while the novel "takes its meaning in part from earlier fictional treatments of the fallen woman," the "Maiden Tribute," a "piece of writing, still more scandalous than *Tess*, provides an equally suggestive context."²¹ Indeed, without replicating Stead's social purity stance, Hardy resumes the latter's thematic preoccupation with female purity, the intersections of sexual and economic exploitation, and, most pertinently, the nature of consent. Furthermore, like Stead, Hardy justifies the representation of sexual subject matter, albeit far less explicit than in the "Maiden Tribute," by suggesting that enlightenment, whatever its cost, must be considered preferable to the abuses facilitated by decorous silence and "innocent ignorance."

Hardy carefully establishes sexual ignorance as a central factor in his protagonist's fall and ensuing tragedy. The sixteen-year-old Tess Durbeyfield is sent to work on a poultry-farm, to supplement her family's precarious income and "claim kin" with her supposed cousin Alec d'Urberville. When she returns home four months later, unmarried but pregnant

with Alec's child, her mother says: "You ought to have been more careful, if you didn't mean to get him to make you his wife!"²² Tess's response signals that, though of consenting age, she was not, in fact, prepared to manage Alec's sexual advances. "How could I be expected to know?" she asks, "I was a child when I left this house four months ago. Why didn't you tell me there was danger in men-folk? Why didn't you warn me?"²³ Hardy's textual revisions to the novel notoriously render the circumstances of Tess's defloration gradually more obscure. Yet, the version most familiar to twenty-first-century readers, based on the 1892 one-volume edition, provides sufficient evidence to support Tess's claim of ignorance.²⁴ Immediately before their first sexual encounter, Alec asks, "Mayn't I treat you as a lover?"²⁵ Tess responds: "I don't know – I wish – how can I say yes or no when –."²⁶ Confronted with the complex configuration of emotional, physical, physiological, economic, and social considerations attached to this question, Tess cannot grasp fully what a "yes" or "no" might entail. She does not, since she cannot, give informed and, hence, meaningful consent.

In fact, Hardy's dialogue not only clarifies that Tess's lack of vital knowledge undermines her capacity for consent, it also pinpoints precisely why this is the case. Echoing Stead's narrative in "Maiden Tribute," Joan Durbeyfield keeps Tess ignorant about the nature and consequences of sexual intercourse, not out of delicacy but opportunism. She bargains with Tess's ignorance, hoping that her daughter's virgin innocence will turn a profit: "I thought if I spoke of his fond feelings, and what they might lead to, you would be hontish wi' him, and lose your chance."²⁷ Crucially for Hardy's construction of his protagonist as a "pure woman," Tess does not share her mother's opportunism. The naïve hope expressed by Hetty Sorrell in George Eliot's *Adam Bede* (1859), that her upper-class seducer "would want to marry her, and make a lady of her" (137), reverberates in Joan's speculation that Alec "[wi]ll marry [Tess], most likely, and make a lady of her."²⁸ Tess, meanwhile, more than once expresses unwillingness to marry her "seducer," and even seems oblivious – however

improbably – to her parents’ scheming for such an outcome. Thus, Hardy distances Tess from earlier protagonists who fall partly due to misguided expectations of marriage, consolidating the impression that ignorance rather than ambition or delusion triggers her downward spiral.

Significantly, it is Tess herself, not the novel’s narrator, who articulates both the fact and the damaging impact of her enforced ignorance. Thus, Hardy foregrounds the cultural double bind that silences women who challenge cultural prohibitions surrounding sexual knowledge.²⁹ As she leaves her employment in the d’Urberville household, Tess tells Alec, “I didn’t understand your meaning till it was too late.”³⁰ His response – “That’s what every woman says” – implies that the verbal assertion of ignorance already signals too much knowledge, too much understanding, for Tess’s words to be credited as genuine, a logic which replicates itself in critical responses, from Margaret Oliphant’s in 1892 to Philip Larkin’s in 1966, which dismiss Tess’s claims of ignorance as implausible.³¹ Tess protests, “Did it never strike your mind that what every woman says some women may feel?” but soon learns that her lived experience is irrelevant to men who invariably measure her against prior “expectations of female essence.”³² Alec perceives women as inherently corrupt and thus inherently knowing; for Tess’s future husband Angel Clare, as for many real-life contemporaries, the essence of true womanhood lies in innocent ignorance. Confessing her sexual history to Angel later in the novel, Tess stresses her past ignorance, remonstrating, “I was a child—a child when it happened! I knew nothing of men.”³³ Angel acknowledges that “she was more sinned against than sinning,” yet prior sexual ignorance does not excuse the irredeemable taint of current knowledge, so that “forgiveness does not apply to the case! You were one person; now you are another.”³⁴

Hardy’s portrayal of Tess’s suitors dissects the logic underlying contemporary attitudes toward female sexual knowledge: it is considered either integral or antithetical to “woman”’s essential nature; from both perspectives, though, sexual knowledge outside the

sanctioned framework of marriage appears as a form of deviance and a threat to the stability of socio-sexual relations. Hardy's disruption of this dominant ideological framework is twofold. First, echoing Stead, his plot appeals to the readers' sentiment and capacity for moral outrage, reinforcing the notion that sexual ignorance exacerbates girls' vulnerability to sexual violence and exploitation; second, as critics including Mary Jacobus, Rosemarie Morgan, and, more recently, from an ethicist's perspective, Marcia Baron have amply demonstrated, the narrative and its infamous subtitle – "A Pure Woman" – depart from Stead's social purity rhetoric, to make the considerably more radical assertion that sexual knowledge, even experiential knowledge, might not after all be integral to a woman's moral character, thus undermining the prevalent justification for restrictions on access to information.³⁵ For Hardy, these ideas were aesthetically as well as ethically significant.

In one of the stranger turns of Hardy's fiction, Tess's complaint about her ignorance is later echoed by her seducer, now a temporary Methodist convert. Upon learning that Angel has left her, Alec melodramatically exclaims: "Scamp that I was, to foul that innocent life. The whole blame was mine. [...] what a blind young thing you were as to possibilities!"³⁶ His words directly recall the outraged language of the "Maiden Tribute," both in their claims about women's ignorance regarding the consequences of "seduction" and in their indictment of "the culpable refusal of mothers to explain to their daughters the realities and the dangers of their existence," which, as in Stead's articles, subtly shifts responsibility away from the male perpetrators of sexual violence.³⁷ "I say in all earnestness," Alec declares, "that it is a shame for parents to bring up their girls in such dangerous ignorance of the gins and nets that the wicked may set for them, whether their motive be a good one, or the result of simple indifference."³⁸ Despite their flagrant absurdity, the comments perform an important function by shifting the critique of sexual ignorance from the individual level, embodied in Tess's narrated experience, to a representative level, postulated by Alec through the use of

abstracting plurals (“parents,” “girls,” “the wicked”). The fact that Hardy draws on the authority of a male voice, especially one so compromised as Alec’s, in order for this shift from individual to public significance to occur is, of course, replete with irony.³⁹ Yet, in thus establishing the representativeness of Tess’s experience, Hardy not only reiterates Stead’s reconceptualization of sexual ignorance as a pervasive threat to Britain’s girls, he also prises open up a space for commenting on the ways in which this threat is produced and perpetuated by economic, social, and cultural institutions, from the nuclear family to the literary market.

Hardy was acutely aware of the connections between late-Victorian debates about girls’ access to sexual knowledge and contemporary debates about the state of fiction; arguably, he considered *Tess* to be an intervention in both. While composing *Tess*, and struggling with magazine editors’ rejections and censorship, Hardy contributed to a forum on “Candour in English Fiction,” published in the *New Review* in January 1890. In his frequently-quoted essay, he argues that

Life being a physiological fact, its honest portrayal must be largely concerned with, for one thing, the relations of the sexes, and the substitution for such catastrophes as favour the false colouring best expressed by the regulation finish that “they married and were happy ever after,” of catastrophes based upon sexual relationship as it is.⁴⁰

More specifically, he complains that the material conditions of literary production and consumption – periodical publishing and circulating libraries in particular – oppose a “well-nigh insuperable bar” to artistic integrity.⁴¹ While the arguments in “Candour” are primarily aesthetic, it is clear that, for Hardy, the imperative to write frankly about life as “a physiological fact” is also ethical. “[A]ll fiction should not be shackled,” Hardy asserts, “by

conventions concerning budding womanhood, which may be altogether false.”⁴² The most subversive part of this statement is relegated to the sub-clause. Hardy does not merely deplore that concerns about the purity of virgin minds and bodies unduly restrain artistic freedom, echoing earlier arguments like George Moore’s in *Literature at Nurse* (1885), he argues that fiction writers – and parents – may be doing “budding womanhood” an active disservice by withholding honest accounts of “the facts of life,” thus demonstrating a rather more sympathetic engagement with “concerns about the relationship between literary culture and the “daughters of today”” than Moore had some years before.⁴³ Indeed, as the plot that Hardy was trying to sell at this precise moment insisted, girls’ carefully cultivated ignorance helped to underwrite women’s entrapment in violent patriarchal institutions and ideologies.

When she complains about her mother’s failure to warn her against the “dangers in men-folk,” Tess – rather strangely – alludes to the reading of fiction. She asserts that “Ladies know what to fend hands against, because they read novels that tell them of these tricks” and complains that “I never had the chance o’ learning in that way.”⁴⁴ On the one hand, particularly when read in light of “Candour in English Fiction,” this statement has a satirical edge. These, Hardy implies, truly are the words of somebody who has read little modern fiction, since the average contemporary novel would not have yielded the vital knowledge that Tess lacked.⁴⁵ On the other hand, though, the remark is programmatic. Girls who read novels, it implies, really should learn “what to fend hand against,” since novels should offer a “sincere” and “conscientious” account of sexual desire and behaviours, thereby empowering readers to diagnose, and imagine alternatives for, the flaws and dangers inherent in current sexual conventions and institutions. Read together, then, “Candour in English Fiction” and *Tess* frame lack of “candour,” and the cultural mechanisms designed to suppress “candour,” as strategies of collusion, which perpetuate dangerous ignorance and the sexual injustices it

facilitates. Realism in the portrayal of sexual relationships, by contrast, emerges as both an artistic ideal and an ethical imperative.

Consistent with Hardy's contemporary statements about literary ethics and aesthetics, *Tess* presented "rather a venture into sincerity," though it is a "venture" that operates, ultimately, within the restrictions of Victorian publishing culture.⁴⁶ The novel does not, in a sense, display the "candour" which, as Hardy and others argued in the 1890s, was required to revitalise "English Fiction". Yet, although *Tess* shrouds the portrayal of sexual relationship in euphemism, it also self-consciously explores and critiques the ways in which external restrictions on aesthetic freedom contribute to the unmaking of sexual knowledge or, put differently, the production of sexual ignorance. Hardy's novel is radical, then, in the promotion rather than the provision of sexual knowledge. Accordingly, in spite of inciting some moral outrage, *Tess* achieved considerable commercial and critical success. If Hardy's own testimony can be believed, it even became a means of educating young women. In an 1892 letter to Edmund Gosse, Hardy proudly refers to "numerous communications from mothers (who tell me they are putting 'Tess' into their daughters' hands to safeguard their future) & from other women of society who say that my courage has done the whole sex a service (!)"⁴⁷ The reaction to *Tess* is symptomatic, then, of the mutually informing transformations of literary conventions and sexual politics now so firmly associated with the *fin de siècle* in Britain. But while Hardy's novel is clearly invested in a project of challenging the cultural idealisation and production of women's ignorance, numerous texts published in the immediately following years, under the banner of the New Woman, display a significantly more central and systematic engagement with questions of sexual epistemology and pedagogy. Emma Liggins rightly notes that "The furore over the sexual content of New Woman fiction [...] needs to be considered in the cultural context of the restriction on forms of sexual knowledge made available to women at the end of the century," restrictions which

were interrogated and undermined, one by one, in New Woman novels and stories.⁴⁸ And yet, while New Woman writers' advocacy for access to these different "forms of sexual knowledge" aesthetically corresponded to a movement toward greater candour, in Sarah Grand's *The Heavenly Twins*, the *succès de scandale* of 1893 and a quintessential New Woman text, apprehensions about the broader cultural and social implications of sexual pedagogy result in a new, largely self-imposed, aesthetic restraint.

Focused on the issue of venereal disease and heavily inflected by eugenic beliefs, Grand's novel constitutes just one voice in a polyphonic *fin-de-siècle* discourse surrounding sexual knowledge.⁴⁹ Despite its idiosyncrasy, though, the novel provides a useful lens through which to explore the wider debate, since, by staging recurrent discussions, typically involving women characters, about sexual knowledge, Grand's text acknowledges the diversity of contemporary views. Early on, for instance, Grand portrays an epistolary exchange between two mothers, Mrs Frayling and Lady Hamilton-Wells. The former rejoices that her daughter Evadne is "perfectly innocent" and "that at eighteen she knows nothing of the world and its wickedness," parroting the orthodox conflation of ignorance and innocence.⁵⁰ Her progressive correspondent contends that "what you call 'beautiful innocence,' and what I consider *dangerous ignorance*, is not a safe state in which to begin the battle of life."⁵¹ Grand's endorsement of the latter view is established at the outset, yet her narrative does not espouse a simple binary logic, whereby sexual ignorance is negative, causing suffering and disease, and sexual knowledge is positive, leading to health, happiness, and marital fulfilment. Instead, Grand foregrounds the tension between competing kinds of knowledge and different ways of learning, thereby complicating assumptions about the necessarily salutary effects of sexual enlightenment for girls and women.

A polemic passage about the upbringing of Evadne Frayling, one of three adolescent female protagonists, clarifies what is at stake:

Subjects were surrounded by mystery which should have been explained. An impossible ignorance was the object aimed at, and so long as no word was spoken on either side it was supposed to be attained. The risk of making mysteries for an active intellect to feed upon was never even considered, nor did anyone perceive the folly of withholding positive knowledge, which, *when properly conveyed*, is the true source of healthy-mindedness, from a child whose intelligent perception was already sufficiently keen to require it.⁵²

The focus here, and throughout the novel, rests on the “proper conveyance” of proper knowledge, and on illustrating how young people’s, especially women’s, lives might be damaged when information is acquired from the wrong sources or in the wrong contexts. In thus problematizing the provision and acquisition of sexual knowledge, though, Grand not only demonstrates her concern with the “welfare and moral wellbeing” of adolescent girls, she also inscribes, more or less subtly, her eugenic social agenda.⁵³ Specifically, her narrative expresses, and is shaped by, the fear that unwholesome knowledge might curtail the development of a healthy – which, for Grand, means procreative and marital – sexuality, suggesting how closely personal and public considerations were often intertwined in late-Victorian debates about sexual knowledge.⁵⁴

The first part of *Heavenly Twins* offers the perhaps most direct account of the acquisition of sexual knowledge in nineteenth-century fiction. When Evadne stumbles across “an old box of books” that “happened to contain some medical works,” she is fascinated, “and the lucid language of a great scientific man, certain of his facts, satisfied her, and carried her on insensibly.”⁵⁵ Her response to the medical tracts is effectively juxtaposed with her reaction, a chapter earlier, to works by Smollett and Fielding, which she interprets as

instructive yet improper. After reading *Roderick Random* (1748) and *Tom Jones* (1749), she writes in her commonplace book that “Such men marrying are a danger to the community at large,” concluding that “The two books taken together show well the self-interest and injustice of men, the fatal ignorance and slavish apathy of women; and it may be good to know these things, but it is not agreeable.”⁵⁶ By detailing her protagonist’s responses to these different kinds of reading matter, Grand establishes, first, that Evadne possesses sound moral and critical judgment and, second, that there is nothing inherently inappropriate in the content, presentation, or Evadne’s consumption of scientific material. In fact, such material is identified as preferable to the bawdy humour and loose morals of eighteenth-century novelists, recommended by her conservative father. Nevertheless, Grand’s plot goes on to show that Evadne’s unguided exposure to physiological information – received without requisite contextualisation and explanation – is not only insufficient but dangerous.

Lady Hamilton-Wells outlines to Mrs Frayling her belief that no woman should be “left to obtain her knowledge of the world haphazard from anyone with whom accident may bring her acquainted,” since “A girl must find out for herself if she is not taught, and she may [thus], in these plain-spoken times, obtain a wholly erroneous theory of life and morality.”⁵⁷ In Evadne’s case, the “haphazard” adolescent encounter with knowledge is simultaneously empowering and perilous. After she learns of her fiancé’s promiscuous sexual history on her wedding day, knowledge about the risk involved in intercourse with an “impure” man allows Evadne to “protect herself from her husband’s syphilitic body.”⁵⁸ But her story does not end there. Trapped (due to her partial ignorance) in a non-consensual, sexless marriage, and prevented by her husband from meaningful public activity, Evadne withdraws into the domestic sphere and develops a severe nervous disorder. More pertinently, her fragmented knowledge and distorted personal experience result in an excessively morbid outlook on sexuality and procreation, which jeopardises both her own and her future offspring’s health.

In order to appreciate fully the narrative significance of Evadne's "miseducation," it is necessary to recall, once more, how inextricably Grand's feminism is bound up with eugenic ideology and that, hence, her understanding of woman's role "cannot be severed from a biology determined by the reproductive function."⁵⁹ Angelique Richardson explains that, combining social purity and eugenics, Grand promotes "a new form of citizenship: civic motherhood," which requires women "not to sacrifice themselves to unsuitable men, but to the community at large."⁶⁰ According to this paradigm, women are charged with ensuring the nation's future prosperity by selecting partners who meet both the social purists' standards of morality and the eugenicists' standards of health. Furthermore, they are called upon to undertake the moral education of their own children as well as the nation's "child men."⁶¹ If Grand's work generally reconceptualises the performance of supposedly domestic duties as a public service, *The Heavenly Twins* specifically dramatizes how an inadequate sexual education renders individual characters, including Evadne, unfit to perform this work.

After her first husband's death, Evadne marries Dr Galbraith, a physician involved in treating her nervous disorder. Narrating the final part of the novel, Galbraith documents his endeavour to "rouse [Evadne] from the unwholesome form of self-repression which had brought her present state of mind" and "draw her from the dreary seclusion of her *Home in the Woman's Sphere*."⁶² He consistently measures Evadne's condition against an ideal that can readily be identified as Grand's: the publically engaged, socially active, and eugenically selective "mother of men."⁶³ Intermittent progress, however, alternates with renewed crises, culminating in Evadne's attempt to take her own and her unborn child's life. She justifies this action by alluding to the fear that, if she and Galbraith were to die prematurely, nobody would protect their daughter (she does, in fact, give birth to a son) against the risks of venereal disease; it would be better, she argues, to "both die at once."⁶⁴ This moment, while affirming the vital importance of knowledge, also furnishes the most striking illustration of

the risks Grand associates with its “improper conveyance,” as Evadne’s acute, unmitigated consciousness of sexual pathology and vice results in a perverse distortion of maternal feeling. Moreover, while the novel’s *denouement* shows Evadne settling into her private maternal role, it also stresses her ongoing refusal of public responsibility. This woman’s “ability to assert agency and fulfil the feminist ideal” have been damaged irretrievably, Grand implies, by the acquisition of an “erroneous theory of life and morality” in adolescence.⁶⁵ Her fate becomes a stark warning to the novel’s readers.

If Evadne’s story problematizes a conception of sexual knowledge as inherently beneficial, the second, interwoven strand of the narrative vehemently confronts readers with the dangers faced by girls raised in complete ignorance. Edith Beale grows up in a family whose “great object” is to “keep their own minds pure.”⁶⁶ “[F]itted by education to move in the society of saints and angels only,” she is even more completely incapable than Evadne of navigating her emerging sexuality.⁶⁷ In fact, in an exact reversal of Evadne’s situation, she consents to marry and consummate the marital bond despite being cautioned (by Evadne) about her suitor’s sexual history, because she lacks the physiological knowledge required to comprehend the information. She is even encouraged to marry Sir Mosley Monteith by her mother, who declares: “I think, when people make *quite* sure beforehand that they love each other, they are safe—even when the man has *not* been all that he ought to have been.”⁶⁸ Since the Beale women fail, or refuse, to understand that sexual morality and physical health are inextricably linked, subscribing to a romantic notion of love’s transformative power, Evadne’s warning that “the stigma is in the blood” goes unheeded.⁶⁹ Edith subsequently contracts syphilis, develops insanity, and dies; one son survives but remains sickly and frail. The uncompromising bleakness of this thread seems to imply that some knowledge, however “improperly conveyed,” might be preferable to none at all. Yet, formally speaking, this strand

of the narrative bears a particularly clear imprint of Grand's concern with "wholesome" knowledge provision.

Meegan Kennedy points out that, although venereal disease is central to the plot of *The Heavenly Twins*, "to suppress the 'improper' transition of clinical detail, common in naturalism, Grand's novel must displace its analysis of the unsavoury syphilitic male onto a more socially acceptable recapitulation of that too-familiar figure of the hysterical female."⁷⁰ She charges Grand with inconsistency, arguing that the rejection of physiological candour, and of naturalism *à la* Zola specifically, "contradict her other endorsements of the sexual education of women."⁷¹ Arguably, though, Grand's privileging of the "'proper conveyance' of knowledge" over "realist truth-telling" is wholly consistent with the remainder of the novel, as well as with her non-fictional pronouncements on the subject of sex education.⁷² While Kennedy is undoubtedly right to note that Grand's "reserve around the decaying body of the syphilitic male" reactivates "oppressive stereotypes about women's intellectual and emotional stability," the emphasis on female hysteria and nervous disease in *The Heavenly Twins* does not simply signify an "inadvertent" recourse to "traditional, even destructive, Victorian tropes of womanhood."⁷³ In fact, the decision to avoid "pathological naturalism" and instead foreground Edith's mental decline is carefully linked to the later portrayal of Evadne's nervous breakdown, so as to signal that complete ignorance and "improperly conveyed" knowledge produce virtually equivalent, equally disastrous, results. If Edith's "ignorance of her husband's disease [...] contribute[s] to her own 'unfitness'" for maternity, Evadne's distorted knowledge likewise renders her "unfit" for eugenic motherhood.⁷⁴ By omitting both Edith's death scene and any description of her husband's syphilitic body, Grand meta-textually suggests that any novel, even her own, would be as inappropriate a source of physiological information as, say, *Tom Jones* – or the medical tracts that furnish Evadne's education. The narrative withholding of physiological detail thus directly correlates

to the implied argument that sexual knowledge, if “improperly conveyed,” might compromise girls’ physical and mental health and, accordingly, that of the nation.

For all its insistence that sexual knowledge should “come wholesomely,” Grand’s novel never clarifies how a “wholesome” education might look. While Grand indicates that her third protagonist, Angelica Hamilton-Wells, benefits from being raised by a mother who, in Naomi Lloyd’s words, “resists the conventional alignment of femininity, spirituality, and sexual ignorance,” she neither shows how Lady Hamilton-Wells instructs her daughter, nor does she present Angelica’s trajectory as unproblematic.⁷⁵ Angelica marries a decent man, with whom she lives in amiable respect, but she recoils from marital sexuality. The episode in which she cross-dresses as her twin brother Diavolo and builds a Platonic friendship with the enigmatic church tenor suggests a more pervasive sexual reticence. When the tenor discovers the “boy”’s true identity, he also learns that, rather than romance, Angelica sought “the delight of associating with a man intimately who did not know I was a woman” and “the benefit of free intercourse with your masculine mind undiluted by your masculine prejudices with regard to my sex.”⁷⁶ Perhaps in spite of itself, the narrative invites sympathetic identification with Angelica’s resistance against coercive heteronormativity. Yet this character, too, must be understood in light of “Grand’s commitment to a eugenicist vision of social uplift,” which renders Angelica’s aversion to “all coarser pleasures,” including heterosexual intercourse, fundamentally problematic.⁷⁷ Grand refuses, in this otherwise more optimistic plotline, to attenuate her warning against “improperly conveyed” knowledge, implying that even well-intentioned instruction might fail to direct sexual impulses into “proper” channels. If Angelica’s upbringing shields her from suffering such as that experienced by Edith and Evadne, it still fails to render her “fit” for “civic motherhood” and meaningful feminist activism.

Grand's journalism provides a clearer picture than her fiction of how, in her view, sexual knowledge should be imparted, and thus helps us account for the aesthetic strategies in *The Heavenly Twins*. Contributing to a *New Review* symposium titled "The Tree of Knowledge" in 1894 (discussed in more detail below), Grand directly echoes the central premise of *The Heavenly Twins*, stating that "The risk for young people is not in the knowledge itself, but in the way in which it is acquired."⁷⁸ She goes on to specify that "The safest and most sensible system is to make their own natural propensities a part of their regular education and to have physiology taught as a matter of course, proper principles being inculcated at the same time."⁷⁹ For Grand, then, sexual education needs to come early and in a matter-of-fact manner, to prevent the risk of misunderstanding, mystification, or romanticization.⁸⁰ In another article, titled "The Modern Girl" (1894), Grand furthermore clarifies that instruction ought to be tailored to the character and maturity of individuals rather than follow a general, one-fits-all template. "Those who undertake the education of girls should be able to decide when the right time comes to impart it," she writes, elaborating that some "would never get over premature revelations," whereas others are "so precocious that they seem never to have had an age of innocence, and it is necessary to speak to these at once and plainly."⁸¹ In keeping with these views, Grand resisted, or rather modified, earlier arguments for literary candour.

In an 1898 article on "Marriage Questions in Fiction," Grand writes:

The old custom was to give young people nothing to read that would "unsettle their minds". [...] Now we go to the opposite extreme. Young people are allowed to read pretty much what they like. They wander without a guide through mazes of modern fiction, crude stuff for the most part, written by people whose own ideas are often only the degenerate echo of other writers whose work they have not half

digested. Nothing could be more unwholesome than this kind of indiscriminate browsing, following upon the disastrous folly of an education which has ignored the vital questions most of us have to answer sooner or later, as we work out the problems of life for ourselves.⁸²

Grand is not inherently opposed to realistic portrayals of sexual matters, then, but she worries about adolescents' "indiscriminate browsing [...] without a guide," a phrase that evokes Evadne's juvenile reading practices in *The Heavenly Twins*. Ideally, Grand suggests, answers to the "vital questions" would be provided before young people start to experience and navigate sexual desire – and before they begin to read about it in fiction. Following an adequate sexual and moral education, adolescent readers could "digest," analyse, and evaluate literary representations of sexual themes, distinguishing between realism and romance, and between wholesome and degenerate portrayals. At present, though, they are almost universally deprived of such an education and, hence, more likely to suffer than to benefit from reading fiction that allows them to glimpse, without fully understanding, the "facts of life." Grand, as suggested above, acted upon these theories by practicing a form of artistic self-censorship, obeying voluntary restrictions in her treatment of sexual physiology and pathology. Hence, *The Heavenly Twins* straddles a central contradiction between, on the one hand, a recognition of the empowering potential of sexual knowledge for girls and women and, on the other hand, an awareness that the free, unregulated proliferation of sexual information might create not just knowledge but multiple, competing *knowledges*, thereby undermining the, in Grand's view, imperative need to inculcate moral and physical principles that lead to healthy procreative choices. Instead of contemplating *whether* adolescents should receive a sexual education, Grand shifts the parameters of the debate, foregrounding

questions about how teaching should occur and how much, and what kind of, information might be suitable.

While Grand's eugenic views were not necessarily representative of late-Victorian discourse, she was not alone in her concerns about the relationship between cultural consumption and the production of sexual knowledge. As briefly hinted above, in 1894 the *New Review* published a symposium entitled "The Tree of Knowledge," which collected the views of fourteen celebrities – including Hardy and Grand, as well as Eliza Lynn Linton, Walter Besant, Hall Caine, Frances Willard, Israel Zangwill, and Max Nordau – on the following questions: Should young women receive physiological and anatomical knowledge prior to marriage? How, if so, should they be instructed? And should they be informed about the sexual history of their intended husbands? Excepting Lynn Linton, who found the subject "wholly unfit for public discussion," the contributors to "The Tree of Knowledge" favour premarital sexual instruction, but they display considerable disparity of opinion about the details.⁸³ One single response champions literature as a pedagogical source. Hermann Adler, Chief Rabbi of the British Empire, declares that "no necessity exists for a mother to disclose to her daughter those facts of which during her childhood she has been kept ignorant," because "Maidens will in the course of nature, by their reading, nay, even by the study of the Bible, with its chase outspokenness, gain all the knowledge which is needful to protect them from evil."⁸⁴ Others advocate more factual, methodical approaches. While Walter Besant suggests that "a certain amount of physiology" and knowledge about "all the functions of the body" should be imparted "by special teachers," Hardy envisages "a plain handbook on natural processes, specially prepared" and "later on, similar information on morbid contingencies," adding that this should be given to "innocent youths" as well as maidens.⁸⁵ Most contributors, including Juliette Adam, Lady Henry Somerset, and Frances Willard, enthusiastically endorse education, without however offering a precise outline of how it

might be managed. Generally speaking, the arguments and suggestions collected in the symposium reveal a certain perplexity on the part of their authors. The solution to the problem of sexual ignorance remains elusive because, while these writers promote “knowledge” in the abstract, they shy away from formulating and advocating concrete, specific “knowledges” and pedagogies.

Max Nordau, author of the influential *Degeneration* (1895) and a trained physician, anticipates, in reverse form, Grand’s argument in “Marriage Questions in Modern Fiction” (1898). He locates responsibility for sexual instruction with parents, and warns that, if early teaching on “biogenesis” is withheld, girls become more vulnerable to the corrupting effects of degenerate art and literature. “Unless she is an absolute idiot,” Nordau writes, a girl’s

attention will be constantly solicited by emotional and physical phenomena, the scene of which is her own organism; and if no satisfactory explanation of what is going on within her body and mind is offered, her imagination will make frantic efforts to satisfy her craving for enlightenment; and its wild fictions, based probably upon morbid art, detestable literature, suggestive plays, and inconsidered drawing-room and table talk, will certainly defile the mental purity of the poor girl in a far more alarming way than any physiological teaching ever could do, even if it is clumsy or brutal.⁸⁶

Whereas Grand suggests that the lack of adequate sexual education warrants artistic circumspection and parental control over reading matter, Nordau claims that direct, even “clumsy or brutal,” instruction has become imperative, since there is no other way to protect girls against the dangers of reading “detestable literature.”⁸⁷ What stands out in both arguments, though, is the fact that earlier Victorian concerns about the “unfortunate effects of

reading fiction,” especially the fear that novels might destroy “the innocence of our children, the maidenliness of our maidens,” are supplanted by the more modern, familiar anxiety that young people might be *mis*-educated, developing the *wrong* kind of sexual knowledge through their inevitable exposure to contemporary culture.⁸⁸ The most fervent supporters of sexual education, it seems, worried most acutely about tensions between approved sexual epistemologies, represented by parents, teachers, and doctors, and the competing, potentially damaging, bodies of knowledge that emerged in the process of adolescents’ imaginative engagement with fiction.

Thomas Hardy’s *Tess of the d’Urbervilles* explores the issue of sexual ignorance in the context of a broader critique of contemporary sexual politics and their aesthetic ramifications. Hardy self-consciously identifies how the very literary conventions by which his novel must abide perpetuate dangerous ignorance, thus adding an ethical dimension to contemporary arguments against literary prudery. By establishing a causal relationship between sexual ignorance and her suffering, the novel conveys an unequivocal endorsement of knowledge. It appears untroubled by the possibility that knowledge, too, might prove damaging. Grand is equally preoccupied with the role of literary culture in the making and unmaking of sexual knowledges, but her central concern with the “improper conveyance” of knowledge causes her to embrace a more restrained aesthetic and argumentative stance. “The Tree of Knowledge” symposium confirms that anxieties about the relationship between cultural consumption and sexual knowledge resonated throughout fin-de-siècle literary culture. As this comparative reading of Hardy’s and Grand’s work has shown, they had a profound impact on the content and form of fiction.

¹ On Victorian sexual advice literature, see Lesley Hall and Roy Porter, *The Facts of Life: The Creation of Sexual Knowledge in Britain, 1650-1950* (New Haven; London: Yale University Press, 1995).

² See Dara Rossman Regaignon, “Anxious Uptakes: Nineteenth-Century Advice Literature as a Rhetoric Genre,” *College Literature* 78, no. 2 (2015): 139-61.

³ See Helena Michie, *Victorian Honeymoons: Journeys to the Conjugal* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2006), 120.

⁴ For a survey, see Claudia Nelson, “‘Under the Guidance of a Wise Mother’: British Sex Education at the Fin de Siècle,” in *Maternal Instincts: Visions of Motherhood and Sexuality in Britain, 1875-1925*, ed. Ann Summer Holmes and Claudia Nelson (Basingstoke: Palgrave Macmillan, 1997), 98-121.

⁵ Eve Kosofsky Sedgwick, *Epistemology of the Closet*, updated edn with revised preface (Berkeley: University of California Press, 2008), p. 7. See Nelson, ‘British Sex Education’, 112-13. Also see Deborah Logan, *Fallenness in Victorian Women’s Writing: Marry, Stitch, Die, or Do Worse* (Columbia: University of Missouri Press, 1998), p. 18. This conclusion can be derived both from Victorian celebrations of “innocent ignorance,” and from the protests against ignorance discussed in this article.

⁶ On Victorian and Edwardian anxieties about female reading, see Kate Flint, *The Woman Reader, 1837-1914* (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1993).

⁷ See, for instance: Nelson, “British Sex Education;” Jane Eldridge Miller, *Rebel Women: Feminism, Modernism, and the Edwardian Novel* (London: Virago, 1993), p. 15; Sally Ledger, *The New Woman: Fiction and Feminism at the fin-de-siècle* (Manchester: Manchester University Press, 1997), p. 197.

⁸ Beth Rodgers, *Adolescent Girlhood and Literary Culture at the Fin-de-Siècle: Daughters of Today* (Basingstoke: Palgrave Macmillan, 2016), p. 1.

⁹ Rodgers draws attention to the centrality of the “borderland” as a metaphor in late-Victorian discourses of adolescent girlhood throughout *Adolescent Girlhood*. In particular, see pp. 1-5.

¹⁰ Sedgwick, *Epistemology of the Closet*, p. 8; see Nancy Tuana, “Coming to Understand: Orgasm and the Epistemology of Ignorance,” *Hypatia*, 19 (2004): 194-232 and “The Speculum of Ignorance: The Women’s Health Movement and Epistemologies of Ignorance,” *Hypatia* 21 (2006): 1-19.

¹¹ Tuana, “Coming to Understand,” 194-195.

¹² Richard Menke, *Telegraphic Realism: Victorian Fiction and Other Information Systems* (Stanford, CA: Stanford University Press, 2008).

¹³ Sedgwick, *Epistemology of the Closet*, p. 7.

¹⁴ Judith R. Walkowitz, *City of Dreadful Delight: Narratives of Sexual Danger in Late-Victorian London* (London: Virago, 1992), 125; also see Lucy Bland, *Banishing the Beast: English Feminism & Sexual Morality 1885-1914* (London: Penguin, 1995), xvi. Bland argues that “One of the more positive effects of the ‘Maiden Tribute’ articles and the subsequent campaign for the age of consent bill was that women felt to some degree empowered to speak on issues of sex.”

¹⁵ W. T. Stead, “The Maiden Tribute of Modern Babylon.—II,” *Pall Mall Gazette*, July 7, 1885, 1.

¹⁶ “Maiden Tribute.—II,” 2; “Maiden Tribute.—IV,” *Pall Mall Gazette*, July 10, 1885, 6.

¹⁷ For an extensive discussion of the “Maiden Tribute,” which problematizes his journalistic methods and the wider impact of the articles, including a proliferation in “obscene publications” and increasingly repressive laws to regulate homosexual practices, see Walkowitz, *City of Dreadful Delight*, Chapters 3 and 4.

¹⁸ Rodgers, *Adolescent Girlhood*, 22

¹⁹ J.T. Levett, “Public Feeling on the Subject,” *Pall Mall Gazette*, July 9, 1885, 5; William A. Cohen notes that Stead cultivated an “attitude of self-righteous piety” to justify “sensationalising reporting as a duty,” all the while never losing sight of his primary objective: selling newspapers. See *Sex Scandal: the Private Parts of Victorian Fiction* (Durham; London: Duke University Press, 1996), 11. On the pornographic implications of “Maiden Tribute,” see Greta Wendelin, “A Rhetoric of Pornography: Private Style and Public Policy in ‘The Maiden Tribute of Modern Babylon’,” *Rhetoric Society Quarterly* 42, no. 4 (2012): 375-96, <http://dx.doi.org/10.1080/02773945.2012.704120>

²⁰ Katherine Mullin, “Poison More Deadly Than Prussic Acid: Defining Obscenity After the 1857 Obscene Publications Act (1850-1885),” in *Prudes on the Prowl: Fiction and Obscenity in England, 1850 to the Present Day*, 1st ed. (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2013), 28.

²¹ Phillip Mallett, “‘The Immortal Puzzle’: Hardy and Sexuality,” in *Palgrave Advances in Thomas Hardy Studies* (Basingstoke: Palgrave, 2004), 187.

²² Thomas Hardy, *Tess of the d’Urbervilles*, ed. Simon Gatrell and Juliet Grindle (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2008), 94.

²³ Hardy, *Tess*, 94.

²⁴ On the development of the novel, see J.T. Laird, *The Shaping of Tess of the d’Urbervilles* (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1975) and “New Light on the Evolution of *Tess of the d’Urbervilles*,” *Review of English Studies* 31, no. 124 (1980): 414-35, <http://www.jstor.org/stable/513875>.

²⁵ Hardy, *Tess*, 78.

²⁶ Hardy, *Tess*, 78.

²⁷ Hardy, *Tess*, 94.

²⁸ George Eliot, *Adam Bede*, ed. Carol A. Martin (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2008), 137; Hardy, *Tess*, 52.

²⁹ To provide an illustrative example of this double bind, the campaigners against the Contagious Diseases Acts were disparaged by one contemporary commentator for their demonstrated knowledge of “one of the most

disgusting subjects that could occupy the minds of women.” See “Current Politics,” *Saturday Review*, October 17, 1874, 448. Their sexual knowledge, then, was perceived to undermine the validity of their campaigns.

³⁰ Hardy, *Tess*, 89.

³¹ Hardy, *Tess*, 89. See Margaret Oliphant, “The Old Saloon,” *Blackwood’s Edinburgh Magazine* 151, no. 917 (1892), 467 and Philip Larkin, “Wanted: Good Hardy Critic,” *Critical Quarterly* 8, no. 2 (1966), 176.

³² Hardy, *Tess*, 89; Patricia Murphy, *Time is of the Essence: Temporality, Gender, and the New Woman* (Albany: State University Press, 2001), 104.

³³ Hardy, *Tess*, 251.

³⁴ Hardy, *Tess*, 248.

³⁵ Mary Jacobus, “Tess’s Purity,” *Essays in Criticism* 26, no. 4 (1976): 318-38; Rosemarie Morgan, *Women and Sexuality in the Novels of Thomas Hardy* (London: Routledge, 1988); Marcia Baron, “Rape, Seduction, Shame, and Culpability in *Tess of the d’Urbervilles*,” in *Subversion and Sympathy: Gender, Law, and the British Novel*, ed. Martha Nussbaum and Alison LaCroix (Oxford; New York: Oxford University Press, 2013), 126-49.

³⁶ Hardy, *Tess*, 334.

³⁷ Stead, “Maiden Tribute.—II,” 2.

³⁸ Hardy, *Tess*, 334.

³⁹ The device recalls and, arguably, obliquely satirises Stead’s sensational intervention in the social purity campaigns that had been fought and led by feminists for decades previously. Alec’s brief evangelising spell, too, suggests an allusion to Stead.

⁴⁰ Hardy, “Candour in English Fiction,” *New Review*, January 1890, 16-17.

⁴¹ Hardy, “Candour,” 17.

⁴² Hardy, “Candour,” 20.

⁴³ Beth Rodgers, *Adolescent Girlhood*, p. 24. As Sally Ledger notes, Moore’s motivation was misogynist; he sought to promote a “remasculinized ‘new realist’ fiction,” to counter women’s increasing literary influence. See Ledger, *The New Woman*, 178-179.

⁴⁴ Hardy, *Tess*, 97.

⁴⁵ Ann L. Ardis offers a useful overview of arguments against the perceived “deadening effect of censorship on the British novel” in the 1880s and 1890s in *Modernism and Cultural Conflict, 1880-1922* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2002), 48.

⁴⁶ Hardy, *The Collected Letters of Thomas Hardy*. Vol. 1, ed. Richard Little Purdy and Michael Millgate (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1978), 255.

⁴⁷ Hardy, *Collected Letters*, Volume 1, 255.

⁴⁸ Liggins, “Writing against the ‘Husband-Fiend,’” 179.

⁴⁹ See Nelson, “British Sex Education,” for an overview of different arguments and their ideological bases.

⁵⁰ Sarah Grand, *The Heavenly Twins* (Ann Arbor: University of Michigan Press, 1992), 39.

⁵¹ Grand, *Heavenly Twins*, 41. Original emphasis.

⁵² Grand, *Heavenly Twins*, 23. My emphasis.

⁵³ Rodgers, *Adolescent Girlhood*, 12.

⁵⁴ Numerous critics have explored Grand’s enduring but conflicted commitment to marriage. Ledger foregrounds “Sarah Grand’s all too conventional stance towards marriage and sexual politics,” while Teresa Mangum highlights the “interplay between conservatism and reform” that characterises Grand’s work. Ledger, *The New Woman*, 1; Teresa Mangum, *Married, Middlebrow, and Militant: Sarah Grand and the New Woman Novel* (Ann Arbor: University of Michigan Press, 1998), 137. Grand herself was unequivocal in her support of marriage, and repeatedly noted that “marriage should be made a more not less sacred institution.” Grand, letter to F.H. Fisher, 26 October 1894, in *Sex, Social Purity, and Sarah Grand, Volume 2: Selected Letters*, ed. by Ann Heilmann and Stephanie Forward (London; New York: Routledge, 2000), 44. Yet as Mangum and Ann Heilmann demonstrate, Grand’s fictional plots are more ambivalent about marriage than her journalism might suggest. See Heilmann, *New Woman Strategies: Sarah Grand, Olive Schreiner, Mona Caird* (Manchester: Manchester University Press, 2004), 65.

⁵⁵ Grand, *Heavenly Twins*, 21.

⁵⁶ Grand, *Heavenly Twins*, 20.

⁵⁷ Grand, *Heavenly Twins*, 41.

⁵⁸ Ledger, *The New Woman*, 114.

⁵⁹ Angélique Richardson, “The Eugenization of Love: Sarah Grand and the Morality of Genealogy,” *Victorian Studies* 42, no. 2 (2000): 229.

⁶⁰ Richardson, “Eugenization of Love,” 230.

⁶¹ Grand, “The New Aspect of the Woman Question,” *The North American Review* 158, no. 448 (1894): 273.

⁶² Grand, *Heavenly Twins*, 645-6.

⁶³ Grand, “The Modern Girl,” *Temple Magazine* 2 (1898): 323.

⁶⁴ Grand, *Twins*, 665.

-
- ⁶⁵ Molly Younkin, *Feminist Realism at the Fin-de-Siècle: The Influence of the Late-Victorian Woman's Press on the Development of the Novel* (Columbus: Ohio State University Press, 2007), 47
- ⁶⁶ Grand, *Heavenly Twins*, 156.
- ⁶⁷ Grand, *Heavenly Twins*, 159.
- ⁶⁸ Grand, *Heavenly Twins*, 234. Original emphasis.
- ⁶⁹ Grand, *Heavenly Twins*, 156, 226.
- ⁷⁰ Meegan Kennedy, "Syphilis and the Hysterical Female: The Limits of Realism in Sarah Grand's *The Heavenly Twins*," *Women's Writing* 11, no. 2 (2004): 259-60.
- ⁷¹ Kennedy, "Syphilis and the Hysterical Female," 265.
- ⁷² Grand, *Heavenly Twins*, 272.
- ⁷³ Kennedy, "Syphilis and the Hysterical Female," 259.
- ⁷⁴ Liggins, "Writing Against the 'Husband-Fiend'," 177.
- ⁷⁵ Naomi Lloyd, "The Universal Divine Principle, the Spiritual Androgyne, and the New Age in Sarah Grand's *The Heavenly Twins*," *Victorian Literature and Culture* 37 (2009): 128.
- ⁷⁶ Grand, *Heavenly Twins*, 458.
- ⁷⁷ Anna Maria Jones, "'A Track to the Water's Edge': Learning to Suffer in Sarah Grand's 'Heavenly Twins,'" *Tulsa Studies in Women's Literature* 26, no. 2 (2007): 229; Grand, *Twins*, 476.
- ⁷⁸ Grand, "The Tree of Knowledge," *New Review*, June 1894, 680.
- ⁷⁹ Grand, "Tree of Knowledge," 680.
- ⁸⁰ See Richardson, "Eugenization of Love," 242.
- ⁸¹ Grand, "The Modern Girl," *The North American Review* 158, no. 451 (1894): 709.
- ⁸² Sarah Grand, "'Marriage Questions in Fiction': The Standpoint of a Typical Modern Woman," *Fortnightly Review* 63, no. 375 (1898): 380-81.
- ⁸³ Eliza Lynn Linton, "Tree of Knowledge," 682.
- ⁸⁴ Hermann Adler, "Tree of Knowledge," 676.
- ⁸⁵ Walter Besant, "Tree of Knowledge," 676; Hardy, "Tree of Knowledge," 681.
- ⁸⁶ Max Nordau, "Tree of Knowledge," 682.
- ⁸⁷ He anticipates a similar, much more elaborate, argument for sexual education by the social purity feminist Ellice Hopkins in *The Power of Womanhood: or, Mothers and Sons* (London: Wells Gardner & Co, 1899)
- ⁸⁸ Debra Gettelman, "The Victorian Novel and Its Readers," in *The Oxford Handbook of the Victorian Novel*, ed. Lisa Rodensky (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2013), pp. 111-128 (p. 111); "The Tree of Knowledge," *Saturday Review*, March 4, 1876, 298.