“The Cycle of Success”

MENTORING IN SARAH GRAND’S MORNINGQUEST TRILOGY

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For

Rebecca Julia Delves, from whom we can all learn something,
and our Elizabeth Mary, who will undoubtedly lead a rebellion.
Acknowledgements

I would firstly like to thank Dr Helen Koukoutsis, Dr Anne Jamison and Dr Helen Basides for their constant support, patience, belief in this project, and belief in me. This project would not have been possible without them. I would also like to thank Dr James Gourley for his encouragement of higher-degree research while I was studying at an undergraduate level.

I would also like to mention Dr Alex Norman and Dr Jack Tsonis for their constant hard work and support throughout the Master of Research program. Additionally, to those I have shared the experience of completing a research degree with – Samantha, Chloe, Amanda, Rebekah, Taylor and Katelyn – I will never underestimate the support in shared experiences that came from having such a wonderful group of like-minded, intelligent and wise women to see me through this degree.

On a personal note, I want to thank my family, particularly my mum Debra, my sister Alia, and my nephew Matthew. Thank you for the coffee, the weekends by the sea to recharge, and encouraging me to keep going. To my extended family, Uncle Geoff and cousin Ben, for your belief in me and your inspiration, even if you didn’t know you were doing it. To Kathy for your positivity and undying support through what has certainly been an often challenging process. To the Vane-Tempest, Gallagher and Martin families for accepting me and welcoming me into your lives. To my dear friends Kelly and Alynda, thank you for understanding my constant postponements, unanswered
messages and sporadic involvement in our social calendars. And to my work family, your support saw me through.

Most importantly, to my dad, Ross, and my husband, Jeremy, you are my two biggest champions. There is no way I could have done any of this without you.
Statement of Authentication

The work presented in this thesis is, to the best of my knowledge and belief, original except as acknowledged in the text. I hereby declare that I have not submitted this material, either in full or in part, for a degree at this or any other institution.

(Signature)
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Abstract

Sarah Grand’s titular character, Ideala, is unconventional, outspoken, and a mentor to other women. Appearing in all three of Grand’s Morningquest narratives, Ideala is also immediately recognisable as a “New Woman”. Yet few studies have analysed Ideala’s critical role as mentor or her extended narrative across the three novels: *Ideala*, *The Heavenly Twins* and *The Beth Book*. Taking a fresh approach to the “Woman Question” and Grand’s understudied trilogy, this thesis aims to closely examine the cyclic pattern of mentoring; specifically, how Ideala becomes a mentor, how she actively mentors her own sex, and subsequently, how her protégés become mentors. Read as an organised whole, this thesis argues that Grand’s Morningquest trilogy is an intimate exploration of one character, Ideala, on a crusade to improve women’s rights in marriage and society, as well as to improve women’s opinions of each other. This thesis argues that Ideala is only a New Woman because she is a mentor to other women. By fixing the argument on Ideala’s relationship with other characters, this thesis invites the reader to reconsider Grand’s purpose in writing fiction for her nineteenth-century audience. Additionally, what emerges out of an analysis of the Morningquest trilogy is a comprehensive understanding of the female mentor as a central figure in Grand’s formation of the New Woman.
Introduction

“Women have never yet united to use their influence steadily and all together against that of which they disapprove.” (Ideala, 184).

I first met Ideala in late 2016. Much as the opening paragraphs of Ideala suggest, she impressed me, and she held me. Throughout my first reading of Sarah Grand’s Morningquest trilogy, I found her repeated presence familiar and comforting. I quickly became fascinated by her: who she was and what she was mean to represent. I asked myself why she was the way that she was, and what was she meant to be? How was she supposed to be read? She was fascinating, yet unreachable. Early in 2017, after writing a piece that centred around women’s support networks and the ways in which women banded together as a collective following the “Me Too” movement, I started to see Ideala in a new light. The reason she impressed me, and held me, is because that is what she is meant to do. I read her time and time again and found with each reading a deeper understanding of her character. She started to hold me even tighter and closer with each meeting. Ideala’s volition was increasingly comforting, and exponentially impressive. Most importantly, her strength, belief in and support of other women became an undeniable aspect of her character. Ideala is a mentor, both on the page and off it. She is an advocate for women, both textually and for readers like me. Despite this, she is often misunderstood and has escaped detailed critical attention. Given the global context of 2019, it became
increasingly apparent to me that the type of woman-to-woman support Ideala advocates for is as relevant today as it was when Sarah Grand wrote her.

While Ideala has been a delight to get to know, a deeply essential part of her character is that she is flawed. As a woman with countless questionable decisions behind her, reading Ideala as a character who not only makes mistakes but is deeply aware of her flaws and actively seeks to become a better version of herself has been nothing short of a personal awakening. If she can do it, then so can I. This kind of inspiration is demonstrative of Ideala’s purpose. I am but one reader. If she is capable of inciting such an emotional response in one, she is surely capable of a far greater impact on countless other female readers. I am also just one woman, taking the lessons Ideala has taught me and imparting them onto others. The potential, then, for Ideala’s message across thousands of women readers is unyielding.

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Sarah Grand, born Frances Bellenden Clarke, is more well known for her vibrantly argumentative New Woman polemic essays than her fiction. This is in spite of her personal desire to be known first for her fiction. She began writing initially to fund her separation from her husband, and her subsequent return to London. Over the course of her career, Grand published eight novels, several

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1 Grand, *Ideala*, 7; Ideala is presented first as “full of inconsistencies”.
2 Broomfield, "Eliza Lynn Linton, Sarah Grand," 264; Broomfield refers to an interview between Grand and William Heinemann, her publisher, in which Grand states she has a fear of writing polemically because it would, in her words, “ruin her work”. 

collections of short stories, and countless essays and reviews. Molly Youngkin, in her introduction to the 2008 Valancourt Classics edition of *Ideala*, notes that after the publication of *The Heavenly Twins*, Grand’s journalistic opinion was highly sought after by popular presses of the 1890s, though quite often her opinion garnered ridicule. Teresa Mangum points out in her 1988 study, *Married, Middlebrow, and Militant*, that Grand was often lampooned in caricatures designed to warn the public about the so-called dangers of the New Woman. However, Mangum argues that this parodying of Grand only solidifies her popularity in the literary world; if she was parodied, she was popular.

In 1901, Grand spent time abroad in America, speaking publicly on women’s emancipation. Closer to home, she was active among women’s emancipation groups, such as the Woman Writer’s Suffrage League and the Women’s Citizen’s Association. Additionally, Grand acted as vice-president of the Women’s Suffrage League and president of both the National Council of Women in Tunbridge Wells and the National Union of Women’s Suffrage groups. Her positions in these organisations are evidence of Grand’s desire for more for women in terms of independence and emancipation, and also that she believed strongly that a collective mindset would be crucial in the success of women’s emancipation.

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8 Youngkin, “Introduction,” x.
9 Youngkin, “Introduction,” x.
Evidence of this dates back to some of Grand’s earliest work. Before Ideala was published, Grand wrote several short stories marketed toward young female readers which centred around the influence of kind, gentle and encouraging support from a trusted female elder. Two short stories, “Mamma’s Music Lessons” and “School Revisited”, were published in Aunt Judy’s Magazine for Young People in 1878 and 1880 respectively. These stories provide the first indication of Grand’s belief that the next generation of women were in need of some form of guidance. Importantly, they centralise the figure of the mentor in Grand’s writing. The implicit focus on mentoring in these stories has not been overlooked. Ann Heilmann, one of the most significant Grand scholars of recent years, notes that both short stories “invest authority in wise and progressive female mentors”\textsuperscript{10}. These stories demonstrate mentoring relationships, particularly between an older mentor and a younger protégé. However, these mentors exist in traditional roles, such as mother and teacher. This is, perhaps, due to Aunt Judy’s Magazine being marketed toward a younger audience who would recognise both the mother and the teacher as figures to look up to. While these short stories mark the significance of the mentor to Grand’s writing, they do not allow space for what Florence L. Denmark and Deborah A. Williams refer to as the “cycle of success”\textsuperscript{11}. The cycle, they argue, is not only active mentoring but is hinged on teaching “the younger generation the benefits of not only having, but becoming, a mentor”.\textsuperscript{12} For the cycle to be successful, the protégé must then mentor another. Despite their focus on mentoring, there is no

\textsuperscript{10} Heilmann, \textit{New Woman Strategies}, 29.

\textsuperscript{11} Denmark and Williams, “Older Woman as Sage,” 262.

\textsuperscript{12} Denmark and Williams, “Older Woman as Sage,” 262.
exploration in Grand’s short stories of what the protégé does next, resulting in a sharp end to the cycle at the active mentoring stage.  

The first of the Morningquest novels, *Ideala*, was published anonymously and privately by Grand in 1888. The proceeds of this publication allowed Grand to return to England independently and to work toward turning writing into her career. The novel tells the story of Ideala from the perspective of an unnamed male narrator. Ideala is a young woman in her late twenties, who redefines her position in the world on her own terms. It tracks Ideala’s experience of a failing and abusive marriage and the loss of her only child, and contrasts what can happen when women consider themselves first and their husbands second. Importantly, the novel also details Ideala’s strong relationship with the narrator’s sister, Claudia, in whom Ideala often confides and is supported by. Youngkin notes *Ideala* to be the “story of a woman who develops a feminist consciousness as the result of an unhappy marriage to a man with a roaming eye and the tendency toward violence”. Youngkin further notes that while Ideala is not as well-known as *The Heavenly Twins* and *The Beth Book*, this is in part due to the novel being out of print for the majority of the twentieth century, despite its initial popularity. The novel was taken up by publisher E. W. Allen

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13 These short stories mark the first indication that mentoring and guidance were important to Grand. The cyclical nature of mentoring then may not have been realised by Grand herself at that stage.

14 Grand, *Ideala*, 44. When Ideala’s son dies, she is in her twenty-sixth year, with no further indications toward Ideala’s age.


and reprinted three times in 1889, indicating the novel gained significant attention from the reading public toward the end of the 1880s.17

*Ideala* establishes key details for the subsequent novels in the trilogy and most importantly the character of Ideala, who reappears throughout the trilogy in the role of mentor to the younger women of the later novels. Following the publication of *The Heavenly Twins*, *Ideala* was reissued by Henneberry under the author name of Sarah Grand, which readers recognised as the author of *The Heavenly Twins*. *Ideala* is a story of development. Youngkin notes that the novel demonstrates Ideala’s development of mind “under difficult conditions”.18 However, she also notes Grand’s intention in *Ideala*, stating:

Grand does not want readers to look for “perfection” in Ideala’s mind, but for how it goes through a “transitional process.” Still, by paying attention to this transitional process, which reveals all the flaws of the mind as it develops, readers can learn from Ideala’s experience and apply her experience to their own lives.19

From the outset, Ideala is supposed to act as a guide and a mentor. *Ideala* establishes this from the beginning and traces Ideala’s development into the position of mentor to the other women in the novel.

The second Morningquest novel, *The Heavenly Twins* (1893), was initially serialised as a series of three smaller novels of just two chapters each. It also

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notes Grand’s introduction of herself under the pen name of Sarah Grand. The novel intertwines the narratives of three young women, Edith, Evadne and Angelica. These three women, all of similar ages, experience their transition from girlhood to womanhood in different ways. Edith is representative of the dangers that existed for young women who entered into marriage ignorantly, based on a parent’s support of the union. In Edith’s case, this results in her descent into madness and eventual death from syphilis contracted from her adulterous husband. Evadne’s character represents the middle ground of autonomy. She does marry based on her parents’ encouragement, however she abandons him following their wedding and learning of his promiscuous past. At the insistence of her parents Evadne does return to her husband, though refuses to consummate the marriage. Angelica’s narrative, however, as one of the titular heavenly twins and Ideala’s protégé, proposes her own marriage on the condition that she can do as she likes. However, despite beginning the novel with a strong sense of autonomy, Angelica later submits to the dutiful role of wife after her reckless actions result in the death of her dear friend, the Tenor.

The publication of *The Heavenly Twins*, originally by Heinemann, saw Grand’s popularity as a writer skyrocket. Grand’s literary appeal only increased when, in the following year, the *North American Review* published her most well-known essay, “The New Aspect of the Woman Question”. This essay is

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considered to be the birthplace of the term “New Woman”, and from where the term gained entrance into the popular vernacular of the era. The essay, as Youngkin points out, pits the “Bawling Brotherhood” against the New Woman, arguing that woman’s intellectual abilities have been overlooked by the brotherhood “in favour of less intelligent women, whom Grand refers to as the ‘cow woman’ and the ‘scum woman’”. The essay establishes the New Woman not only as a reflective, thoughtful woman, who had remained silent too long, but also as a woman who “finally turned her thinking into action”. The original publication of the essay used the popularity of Ideala and The Heavenly Twins to promote Grand as the author, demonstrating Grand’s influence was gaining significant literary attention.

The Heavenly Twins, Grand’s most popular novel among readers and scholars alike, presents not only a series of problematic marriages through its women but also reveals the narrator of Ideala to be Lord Dawne, the twins’ uncle. Importantly, the novel sees a reappearance for not only Dawne but also Ideala and Claudia. The trio return, representative of the “New Order”, which is explained as the “outcome of their ideas”. The New Order the trio bring forward are movements for woman’s emancipation and the promotion of new ideas concerning once traditional gender roles. Importantly, Ideala and Dawne note that Angelica “will be one of [them]”.

27 Mangum, Married, Middlebrow, and Militant, 2.
30 Grand, Heavenly Twins, 489.
31 Grand, Heavenly Twins, 268.
The Heavenly Twins is representative of Ideala’s active mentoring of her protégé, Angelica. This thesis will analyse Ideala’s active mentoring of Angelica through dialectic inquiry and open-ended questions that guide Angelica’s independent thought. Angelica does become “one of [them]”. By the end of the novel, and while she herself is married, she becomes a worker for married women, helping them gain their own independence from patriarchal institutions.32 This outcome for Angelica is heavily influenced by Ideala’s own work with women and Angelica’s experience of seeing the damaging effects of unfaithful marriages in Edith’s death. The novel further marks Angelica’s own development stage, which she enters into following Ideala’s encouragement of independent thought.

In the same year as “The New Aspect of the Woman Question” was published, Grand also published “The Modern Girl”. In this essay, also published in the North American Review, Grand focuses on the controversial topic of how to appropriately raise young women. For Grand, they should be raised to be wiser, better educated and more adept at independence than their predecessors. “The Modern Girl” marks the first explicit indication that Grand believed the way to help girls was to provide them with suitable guidance. While mentoring had begun to emerge as a recurring theme in Grand’s novels, “The Modern Girl” showcases the problem Grand terms a “state of ignorance”.33 This ignorance among young women, she argues, is that society is insistent on

32 Grand, Beth Book, 404.
keeping them passive and complicit, particularly in regard to marriage. While Grand slanders the mother, claiming her responsible for her daughter's ignorance, Grand suggests that an alternative guide or helper is required. Grand argues that “how to help her is the question to which many of the large-hearted and thoughtful women of the present time give the most serious and anxious attention”. It is Grand’s suggestion of thoughtfulness that initiates the link between the New Woman and the concept of mentoring.

Youngkin argues that in “The New Aspect of the Woman Question”, “Grand not only declared that the New Woman existed but that she was a thinking woman, one who had been reflective for some time but had finally turned her thinking into action”. By aligning the New Woman as thoughtful, and one who wanted to help girls out of their “state of ignorance”, Grand outlines the concept of female support networks. These ranged from the types of mentoring outlined in her novels, where women actively help other women, to engagement in movements like Ideala’s New Order. While the novels explore the concept further, it gains traction in Grand’s essays, including “The Modern Girl” and “The New Aspect of the Woman Question”.

In 1897, three years after these essays were published, Grand published The Beth Book, also with Heinemann. The Beth Book is the final novel of the Morningquest trilogy and is believed to be semi-autobiographical. The novel

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follows Beth Caldwell from infancy, through her formative years and into another Grandian example of failed marriage, before detailing Beth's success as a writer and orator. The novel mirrors many of Grand’s own life experiences: the loss of her father at a young age, negative impressions left by an education she felt restricted by, and an unhappy marriage to a surgeon. Like Grand, Beth funds the separation from her husband with the income gained from her first anonymously published novel. Importantly, Ideala and Angelica both return in *The Beth Book*, each playing a key role in Beth’s own development and eventual personal success. Ideala guides Beth to be the best writer she can be, providing her with written feedback on her manuscripts before their publication. Angelica, initially hesitant of Beth, and reprimanded by Ideala for being so, becomes Beth’s closest confidante. 39 Angelica and Beth begin a friendship that sees Angelica support Beth through Beth’s separation from her husband, and Angelica’s encouragement of Beth’s public speaking career. The novel ends with Beth being successful at both writing and speaking, and living in a self-contained cottage on the Kilroy property.

*The Beth Book* marks a crucial aspect of the mentoring cycle in the Morningquest novels. The final novel explores the positive repercussions of what can happen when the protégé becomes the mentor, as Angelica does with Beth after being first mentored by Ideala. This important stage closes the “cycle of success” Denmark and Williams define. Further, while Ideala’s mentoring of Beth is vocationally based, Angelica’s mentoring comes from a place of

friendship. Angelica wants Beth to succeed because they are friends. Angelica’s support of Beth’s public speaking is demonstrative of the cyclical nature of mentoring: it needs to continue past the initial mentoring process in order to be successful. Further, it indicates that mentoring does not always have to exist between an older mentor and a younger mentee. Beth and Angelica are of a similar age. Their relationship is reminiscent of supportive female friendships Grand first explored between Claudia and Ideala in *Ideala*.

While the Morningquest novels have been acknowledged by many academic researchers as a trilogy, they were not initially marketed as such. Only recent scholarship has placed them together to form a larger narrative.\textsuperscript{40} The novels tackle difficult subject matter, as Teresa Mangum notes:

> The novels employ a range of narrative techniques and plots, but they share, in addition to the setting, a host of characters and an array of topical and thematic issues: the double sexual standard, the inadequacies of the marriage contract, the dangers of the separate spheres theory of gender relations, domestic abuse, venereal disease, prostitution, and women’s socialisation, psychology and rights.\textsuperscript{41}

While the collective narrative seeks to challenge traditional Victorian ideals, particularly marriage, motherhood and gender imbalances, the trilogy is a story of mentoring, and the possibilities that await women if they work together

\textsuperscript{40} Mangum, *Married, Middlebrow, and Militant*, 60.

\textsuperscript{41} Mangum, *Married, Middlebrow, and Militant*, 60.
instead of against each other. Grand herself addresses this repeatedly throughout the novels, with comments such as: “we have preserved [the true spirit of God], and handed it down from one generation to another of our own sex unsullied; and very soon we shall be called upon to prove the possession of it.”

Grand gives repeated attention to women’s support networks. This is done with the view to emphasising that the criteria that would enable female emancipation is present, and emancipation itself is imminent. All that is needed is for women to be shown how to take advantage of these factors – in other words, mentored. Grand’s concept of the New Woman dictated that she be both an advocate for women and a mentor for women, to help, guide and support them.

Grand challenges traditional models of mentoring in Ideala’s character, who, despite being older than her protégés, does not occupy a traditional position. Denmark and Williams borrow from Kathy E. Kram’s definition of the mentor. Quoting Kram, they argue that mentoring refers to “a relationship between a younger adult and an older, more experienced adult [who] helps the younger individual learn to navigate the adult world.” They further note the mentor will “provide[s] the protégé with knowledge, advice, challenging opportunities, and support in the protégé’s career pursuits.” While Denmark and Williams focus on the professional benefits of female mentors, they do

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42 Grand, *Ideala*, 18: “the desire to do good is latent in all [women]; show them the way and it will make itself apparent.”
43 Grand, *Heavenly Twins*, 267; Grand, *Ideala*, 138–39: “if her opportunities and powers allow her to help others also, she should do what she can for them ... it seems to me that they are many and various, and that the great object of life for a woman is to help.”
44 Denmark and Williams, “Older Woman as Sage,” 263.
45 Denmark and Williams, “Older Woman as Sage,” 263.
provide analysis of the impact of mentoring on a woman’s personal life. Their definitions of mentoring are not limited to the professional world. Denmark and Williams note personal experience as a critical part of the development of the mentor, and how the mentor is then able to impart knowledge to their protégé.46 Their article provides an analysis on why cyclical mentoring works. They argue that “with their greater years of experience, mentors can help protégés to reap the benefits of their already established network of connections”.47 This thesis will use these definitions of the mentor to examine mentoring throughout Grand’s Morningquest trilogy. Further, it will borrow definitions from Grand herself in relation to the New Woman and the “Old Woman”.

Grand’s 1898 essay, “The New Woman and the Old,” notes that the Old Woman has “no notion of progress”.48 She further argues, comparatively, that the New Woman is acutely aware that “there is boundless better in men and women to be developed”.49 Grand’s reference to the development of the sexes links the New Woman directly to mentoring. If the Old Woman is incapable of progress, someone else must aid this development. This same essay claims that the “New Woman is progressing, and there are plenty to help and encourage her”.50 This indicates there were suitable guides, both men and women, available to lead and mentor the New Woman through her own process of becoming. By placing the New Woman directly in the line of not just progress

46 Denmark and Williams, “Older Woman as Sage,” 263.
47 Denmark and Williams, “Older Woman as Sage,” 263.
50 Grand, “New Woman and the Old,” 70.
but guided progress, Grand has solidified the New Woman not only as a mentor but also a protégé first, as the New Woman has been guided into her own position.

My analysis of the New Woman as a mentor aims to re-evaluate the way that both the New Woman and the mentor have been considered. It is important that Ideala does not typify the mentor figure, such as those explored in "Mamma’s Music Lessons" and "School Revisited". She is not a teacher, and while she has given birth, she is no longer a mother. This subverts the traditional maternal model of femininity. Similarly, she is a married woman who chooses to leave her husband, compromising a traditionally passive feminine role. These subversions are what make Ideala the most suitable person to mentor the young women of the Morningquest novels. As Denmark and Williams point out, “it is important that others in the field get a chance to experience similar successes and positive experiences, to create a cycle of success, to teach the younger generation the benefits of not only having, but also becoming a mentor”. Ideala’s experiences are typically understood to be devastating to a woman. Grand, however, positions Ideala’s negative experiences into the cycle of success. It is her experiences that prove her capable.

Conversely, most critical analyses of the mentor argue that a mentor’s positive experiences shape the capabilities of the mentor. Anthony W. Lee acknowledges, however, that the field of mentoring in literature is remarkably

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51 Denmark and Williams, "Older Woman as Sage," 262.
understudied. He claims that “while the accumulation of articles and shorter pieces on literary mentoring has been more substantial, the topic has hardly witnessed the outpouring of attention one might expect". Both Lee and Kathryn Margaret Sloan have conducted comprehensive studies of the mentor in both eighteenth- and nineteenth-century literature. Lee’s edited anthology *Mentoring in Eighteenth-Century British Literature and Culture* examines the eighteenth-century mentor through focused chapters on single authors and novels. The final chapter, written by Sloan, focuses on mentoring specifically in regard to Mary Wollstonecraft and Margaret Hays. Sloan’s chapter provides a solid foundation upon which to build a discussion of nineteenth-century understandings of the female mentor, particularly the way the female mentor shifts from traditional roles such as mother and teacher into more progressive roles, as evidenced in the character of Ideala. Sloan’s analysis of Wollstonecraft and Hays directs a trajectory of female mentoring, from pioneers of the concept, through conduct books, and into the realm of novels written for women, by women. Sloan provides valuable analyses of mentoring in fiction directly relating to British culture and society. However, both Sloan and Lee focus on traditional figures of mentors: teachers, tutors and governesses. This thesis aims to not only build on the critical analysis of the mentor but to also provide a new argument demonstrative of how mentors can, and often do, exist outside conventional mentoring positions, as exemplified by Grand’s fiction.

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Moreover, this thesis aims to present an expanded definition of the New Woman as Grand understood it. The concept of the New Woman is one which has garnered significant critical attention in recent years. Thanks to research conducted by the likes of Ann Heilmann, Teresa Mangum, Sally Ledger and Tina O’Toole, New Woman literature has found renewed attention in literary analyses.\(^5\) Ledger notes that the “New Woman was utterly central to the literary culture of the fin-de-siècle years.”\(^6\) However, the concept of the New Woman has remained an elusive one for researchers to define. Ann Heilmann suggests that this is, perhaps, because “the New Woman defined herself, positioning herself within the larger feminist movement, often tactically understating her radicalism, and generating a critical analysis of the patriarchy”.\(^7\) Many New Woman scholars, including Ledger and Mangum, align their definitions of the New Woman with the focused attributes outlined by Heilmann. These attributes, Heilmann claims, are “attributes like independence, courage, self-respect, knowledge, intellect, education, strength of body and mind, self-determination, and purposefulness.”\(^8\) These traits, while traditionally linked to femininity, were taken up by the New Woman in a tactical move, demonstrating themselves to be a non-threatening entity.\(^9\) Ledger notes the lasting impact of the New Woman, arguing that the New Woman’s influence spread to renowned mainstream twentieth-century feminist writers like

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\(^6\) Ledger, *New Woman*, 1.

\(^7\) Heilmann, “‘New Woman’ Fiction,” 200.

\(^8\) Heilmann, “‘New Woman’ Fiction,” 200.

Virginia Woolf.\textsuperscript{58} While Ledger’s claim does not directly relate to the mentor, her statement addresses the lasting impact of New Woman fiction on female writers well into the twentieth century. The message of New Woman writers at the fin-de-siècle was impactful enough to be taken up by the next generation of writers. Ledger has proven that the New Woman was as much a real-world mentor as she was a textual one.

For Grand, whose particular brand of feminism is arguably the social purist, the New Woman as a mentor had none of the traits the Old Woman had. Grand argues the Old Woman represents repressive tendencies, and that the “Old Woman cares only for others in so far as they have it in their power to add to her own pleasure of life”.\textsuperscript{59} The Old Woman, then, is too concerned with herself and how others will please her. She was a maintained and financially supported woman who disliked anything that challenged the status quo, particularly regarding her own pleasures. While the Old Woman’s lifestyle may have been pleasurable, Grand understood the challenges facing the New Woman in a world content with submissive women. The New Woman bred a new kind of pleasure, which was not dependent on what others could do for her. Instead, the New Woman cared for others, what she could do for them, and how she could act to benefit society as a whole. The New Woman welcomed progress, understanding the everchanging landscape of the times.\textsuperscript{60} Critically, Grand argues that the most prominent feature of the Old Woman was “disloyalty to her

\begin{itemize}
\item \textsuperscript{58} Ledger, \textit{New Woman}, 12.
\item \textsuperscript{59} Grand, “New Woman and the Old,” 72.
\item \textsuperscript{60} Grand, “New Woman and the Old,” 72.
\end{itemize}
own sex”. By this definition, Grand solidifies the New Woman as a one who supports and remains loyal to other women, regardless of differences in opinion, class or race. Grand’s emphasis on a community of women is demonstrated throughout her essays by her continued focus on the collective. Grand repeatedly uses collective pronouns like “us” and “we” when referring to women. The pronominal repetition demonstrates Grand’s belief that female collectivity was the most significant factor in the movement’s success.

In the Morningquest trilogy, Grand not only explores the mentor through an unconventional character who is recognisable first as a New Woman before she is a mentor, she also examines mentoring through the process of Denmark and Williams’ cycle of success. First, Ideala becomes a mentor, engaging in a process of development that sees her become suitable for the position based on her experiences. Ideala then actively mentors Angelica using traditional models of dialectic inquiry and encouragement of thought. Finally, Angelica becomes one of Beth’s mentors, completing the cycle. This three-part cycle is mapped onto each novel of the trilogy. *Ideala* marks Ideala’s becoming period. *The Heavenly Twins* then sees Ideala mentoring Angelica. The cycle completes itself in *The Beth Book*, with both Ideala and Angelica mentoring Beth through her own becoming period. This thesis will analyse these novels as a trilogy to demonstrate the cycle of mentoring in three successful stages: becoming a mentor, active mentoring, and finally, protégé-turned-mentor.

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61 Grand, “New Woman and the Old,” 70.
While critics have determined these novels form part of a much larger story, many focus their attention on one novel, or a singular theme. Examples of this are Jessica Cox's 2010 comparative article, “Gender, Conflict, Continuity: Anne Bronte’s *The Tenant of Wildfell Hall* (1848) and Sarah Grand’s *The Heavenly Twins*”, which compares the two authors’ presentations of women defying traditional models of femininity. Demetris Bogiatzis also chooses to focus on a single theme. His 2001 article, “Sexuality and Gender: ‘The Interlude’ of Sarah Grand’s *The Heavenly Twins*,” focuses on the presentation of gender through Angelica’s androgyny in a single chapter of the novel. While the work of these critics is valuable and intrinsically linked to an understanding of Grand’s thematic drivers, the extended narrative of the trilogy remains elusively outside of critical attention. More specifically, Ideala’s role throughout has escaped analysis. This thesis aims to analyse Ideala firstly as a female mentor who exists with the purpose of demonstrating to readers that they can not only change their own circumstances but can make a difference for future generations of women if only women support each other. This thesis also aims to demonstrate the nature of mentoring as cyclical and only successful when the protégé becomes a mentor herself. I aim to endorse female relationships in a constructive and critically supported way. Not only will this thesis demonstrate how important these relationships are, it will also address the possibilities hitherto of women supporting each other.

While much attention has been paid to the New Woman, the concept has not been tied so intrinsically to mentoring. Ideala is only a New Woman because she is a mentor. The crux of her textual existence is that she actively supports
and guides other women toward an independent end. This thesis will analyse the way the New Woman has been portrayed in existing scholarship and will demonstrate the importance of her as a mentor. Grand herself argues that the most prominent feature of Victorian women was disloyalty to her own sex. By stating this, Grand is suggesting the opposite to be true of the New Woman. Her defining feature is that she supports her own sex. Grand further notes that in the process of progress “there are plenty to help and encourage her”. Grand locates female support as her first argument, demonstrating the value she places on this trait. For Grand, a woman could not be considered New if she did not demonstrate support for her fellow woman. This is the underlining theme running through Grand’s Morningquest heroines. Ideala, Angelica and Beth are New Women because they support, encourage and guide each other through navigating their ways to independence.

The first chapter of this thesis will focus on Ideala, and the way Ideala becomes a mentor. It will analyse the way she begins the narrative as a flawed and often misunderstood woman, who by her own admission has a lot to learn. Ideala’s experiences are critical to her development. This thesis will analyse the way motherhood and marriage are subverted in order to provide Ideala with lived experience. This chapter will also explore the relationship that exists between Ideala and Claudia. Their textual relationship aids Ideala’s movement through her development as a mentor. Not only does Claudia understand Ideala

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62 Grand, “New Woman and the Old,” 70.
63 Grand, “New Woman and the Old,” 70.
in ways that often contradict Dawne’s narrative, she provides important support to Ideala in her difficult times.

Chapter Two will explore Ideala actively mentoring Angelica in *The Heavenly Twins*. It will examine the methods of mentoring Ideala employs when engaging with Angelica, primarily inquiry-based methods of questioning and encouragement of independent thought. This chapter will assess the way Angelica learns from Ideala to question patriarchal institutions, particularly that of religion. Further, this chapter will analyse intergenerational female relationships as they begin to emerge in the second of the Morningquest novels.

Finally, the third chapter of this thesis will focus on Angelica and Ideala’s relationship to Beth in *The Beth Book*. It will assess the way that both Ideala and Angelica appear in Beth’s narrative, each operating on a different level of mentoring. This chapter will again return to the figure of the New Man, and the way that he, too, has progressed throughout the trilogy into a clearly defined support figure for Beth’s literary success. Critically, this chapter will place significant emphasis on the cyclical nature of mentoring as the final and arguably most valuable stage of mentoring.
Chapter One: Ideala and Becoming

The first of the Morningquest novels, *Ideala* (1888), charts the titular character’s development stage of mentoring. The development stage is the first in the cycle of mentoring the Morningquest trilogy explores. Despite Ideala’s repeated presence throughout the Morningquest novels, her significance as a mentor has not been fully realised. *Ideala* is representative of Ideala’s becoming stage of mentoring. It traces Ideala’s experiences through a series of personal challenges that ultimately see her end the novel mentoring women. There are four significant experiences that influence Ideala’s development, particularly her relationships to institutions closely linked with women. These include her experience of marriage and motherhood, where her husband is violent and abusive toward her, and her son dies at a young age. Additionally, Ideala’s movement across the social boundary of class in caring for the poor also helps to situate her development. This chapter will also contain an analysis of Dawne’s character as a model for Grand’s New Man, who supports women without romantic attachments. Finally, Ideala’s relationship with Claudia is a critical part of her development. This relationship not only demonstrates the need for female support and friendship but also begins to indicate the need for mentoring to be cyclical: it is only through supporting other women that progress toward female emancipation and reform can be made.

In order to become a mentor, it is critical that Ideala occupy non-traditional spaces outside of typical feminine identifiers. Traditionally, mentoring positions for younger generations throughout the Victorian era came
from educators, parents and religious leaders. Grand, however, extends this concept through the figure of Ideala. Though Ideala’s position is non-traditional; she is not an educator, parent or religious leader – it is the non-traditional aspects of her character that make her the ideal mentor. More specifically, it is her failed experiences of traditional models of femininity that ensure her qualification.

While readers are introduced to Ideala with her appearance in the lives of Lord Dawne and Claudia, where it is noted she “slipped into her place almost unnoticed”, readers are given little information about who Ideala is. It is indicated that Ideala is older than twenty-six, though beyond this readers are given little information about her personal background. Instead of detailed character descriptions, Grand instead presents a recounted version of Ideala’s story as she traverses difficulties such as the death of her son and the challenge of separating from her husband in a time when divorce was not yet socially acceptable. I would suggest, however, that these intimations of Ideala’s earlier life play a vital role in the novel as it is these negative experiences which are seen to shape Ideala into her eventual position as a non-traditional mentor. Ideala’s backstory also crucially exposes her to the reader as a flawed woman, trapped by traditional models of femininity. Lauren Simek attests to Grand’s positioning of Ideala as such, arguing Grand’s novels “work to debunk traditional views of women as selflessly passive angels, demonstrating that

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65 Grand, *Ideala*, 44.
these views breed dangerous moral ignorance”. Importantly, while Ideala is selfless, given her repeated crossing of social boundaries in order to care for those who need it, she is not passive. It is Ideala’s refusal to remain passive that mark her as non-traditional.

From the beginning, Ideala’s story is presented as one of development. She is noted as flawed, and “full of inconsistencies”. Ideala is not perfect but is a character who develops and changes across the trilogy. In the preface to the novel, Grand establishes the importance of the developmental process: “but why exhibit the details of the process, you may ask. To encourage others, of course. What help is there in the contemplation of perfection ready-made? It only disheartens us.” By stating this, Grand is ensuring Ideala’s navigation of her circumstances display to Grand’s readers that they, too, can do what Ideala herself does over the course of the Morningquest novels – develop, change and overcome trials. Grand goes on to state that “it is only from the details of the process that anything can be learned”, suggesting that the details of change and growth are an important part of the learning process. Further, Grand herself notes, in a letter penned to an unnamed recipient, that “fiction is of little or no value to those who wish to know the world they live in. ... One real character, studied conscientiously, teaches more human nature than half the books.” Ideala, then, initiates a learning experience in the reader. Ideala is not just a character who will mentor other characters in the Morningquest trilogy. She is

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67 Grand, Ideala, 7.
68 Grand, Ideala, 5.
69 Grand, Ideala, 5.
70 Woman’s Signal, “Sarah Grand and Mr Ruskin,” 267.
supposed to function also as a mentor to Grand’s readers by presenting human nature in a realistic way – flawed, but eager to help.

Ideala has ambition, but it is only through the process of her development that this is realised. Ideala navigates the rocky waters of marriage and maternity – institutions which were women’s singular identifiers – with some difficulty. However, instead of resigning herself to any perceived failures, she turns her experience toward a positive resolution. Ideala’s learning process is developed throughout the novel. Ideala herself contemplates her development, noting “I always feel as if I could do something – teach something – or help others in some small way with some work of importance. I never believe I was born to just live and die.” Here, Ideala is addressing her own hope for more in her life than existing solely as a woman in a failing marriage, with little direction outside of being a wife. Grand wanted her readers to consider this claim themselves, and to understand their own capacity for development. This was particularly true of Grand’s female readers, who, under a patriarchal system, are born to reproduce with little more wanted from them. Ideala’s suggestion that there was more to be done outside of this presents readers with an alternative in helping others be better by way of teaching.

The novel presents Ideala’s consideration of the learning she must undertake in order to help others. Ideala realises she first has to help herself. She knows she is in an unhappy marriage, and that she needs to become an active agent in her own life if she wants her life to be different. Ideala is aware

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71 Grand, Ideala, 32.
that development is a process, and that aspects of this development will not be pleasurable. Ideala states, "I am sure I shall be made to go down some great depth of sin and misery myself, in order to learn what it is that I have to teach." The dark imagery of this passage invokes religious undertones of Ideala’s rejection of traditional feminine roles. It could be viewed as Ideala’s decisions being akin to a sinner rejecting the light of God in favour of a sinful life motivated by selfish desire. The traditional feminine domestic roles were, after all, religiously motivated and supported. However, it also indicates a preparedness from Ideala to go through these difficulties. While she knows the process of becoming will be difficult, she is prepared to undertake the experience of learning in order to benefit others. This is a humanist approach where religion is rejected in favour of development of the self through reason and self-analysis. Further, Ideala admits to feeling unwanted and directionless. She questions how such a feeling can be turned into a positive learning experience, stating, “There are so many of us ... who have no object in life, and nothing to make us take it seriously.” Ideala clearly hopes to correct that feeling among women. She is being drawn to a position of helping. Specifically, she is being drawn to helping women find more in their lives than to just be a mother and a wife. Further, that in doing so, women will take their object in life more seriously, and work toward a better future for women.

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**Feminine Value Outside of the Traditional Paradigms of Marriage and Maternity**

Much of Ideala's strength to act on her feelings comes from her difficult experiences of the traditional institutions of marriage and motherhood. While the two institutions were considered primary identifiers for women of the time, many women did not experience them as idyllically as social prescriptions would have women believe. Maternity, in particular, became the singular identifier for useful women. Eliza Lynn Linton best describes the emphasis Victorians placed on maternity. One of Linton's better-known articles, “The Wild Woman”, notes, “Be it pleasant or unpleasant, it is not the less an absolute truth – the *raison d'être* of a woman is maternity.”74 Critic Tina O'Toole partly supports this claim, arguing that “in an imperial context, essentialist constructions of maternity went to the very heart of the empire-building project in the nineteenth-century.”75 The empire-building qualification that O'Toole indicates suggests that she questions whether the value placed on maternity was truly for the woman's benefit or was mere propaganda designed to ensure the British Empire's continuity, regardless of the consequences for British women. There is a bitter irony in the fact that British women were members of the British Empire, yet this status was seemingly considered secondary to their ability to produce offspring. The dissolution of Ideala's marriage emphasises the unpleasant experience of maternity some women experience. Linton's claim that even an unpleasant experience of maternity is the ultimate position for

75 O'Toole, *Irish New Woman*, 89.
women is undermined by Ideala’s experience. While Ideala does give birth to a child, he passes away due to diphtheria at six weeks of age. Ideala’s tragic experience calls Linton’s claim into question. By presenting an unpleasant experience of maternity, Grand is demonstrating the problematic nature of holding maternity in such high regard. If Linton’s claim was considered definitively, Ideala has lost her purpose for living. Claudia, however, presents the idea that a woman has a duty to herself first, even before she has a duty to her husband. The continuation of Ideala’s story following the death of her son is Grand’s way of suggesting to readers that a woman’s identity does not hinge exclusively on her maternity. Women were capable of so much more than the roles of mothers and wives allowed and further, women should feel free to explore alternative ways of demonstrating their social value outside traditional roles.

Grand’s argument that women had identities outside the conventions of wife and mother continue in the novel immediately following the death of Ideala’s son. Dawne’s narrative notes Ideala’s son as being the “long delayed hope of her life, which she had begun to believe was beyond hope”. However, once her son dies, Dawne notes Ideala “returned to her old pursuits, and no one ever knew what she felt about it”. The cause of Ideala’s son’s death is explained as being due to her husband’s jealousy of the attention that Ideala bestows upon their son at his expense. He demands Ideala stop nursing the baby, justifying this by saying that her nursing is aggravating her anxieties. This

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76 Grand, Ideala, 43.
77 Grand, Ideala, 44.
lack of interaction with her son causes Ideala’s anxiety to increase to the point that a doctor intervenes and agrees with her husband. The child dies within the week after Ideala “could not go to him” when she heard him cry. The reason why she cannot go to him is never explained. It is left to the reader’s imagination whether she is afflicted by anxiety or restrained by her husband. Dawne states that Ideala returns to her old pursuits following the death of her child, and her narrative continues with no further mention of her son. Importantly, this indicates Dawne’s lack of understanding of Ideala’s experience. In stating that no one knew how Ideala felt about it, Dawne trusts that she is fine. His gender has positioned him to not question Ideala’s wellbeing following such a life-changing event. Ideala does not disregard her son’s death but chooses to carry on rather than fall into a grief-laden depression. However, Dawne does note that following her son’s death, Ideala does become ill on several occasions, indicating she was grieving and Dawne failed to acknowledge it.

Dawne’s obliviousness to Ideala’s maternal grief speaks to Ann Heilmann’s argument on the problematic nature of Dawne’s narrative voice. Heilmann argues that Ideala is “a novel which highlights the difficulties even a strong-minded woman is apt to face when struggling free from male plots and paradigms”. However, while Dawne is Ideala’s narrator, Ideala does free herself from his masculine paradigms. Dawne thinks he knows and understands Ideala, but her real story is told outside of Dawne’s often misguided narrative.

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78 Grand, Ideala, 43.
79 Heilmann, New Woman Strategies, 29.
The decision to write Ideala's story from the viewpoint of an unreliable male perspective draws attention to the problematic nature of a society of men who were prepared to appropriate women's stories. Ideala’s development stage happens despite Dawne’s insistence that he understands Ideala like no other, proving that women could break away from male-dominated constraints. It also undermines the latent idea that men were superior and more knowledgeable. Dawne's authority is undermined by demonstrations of a certain intellectual arrogance about Ideala.

**Mentoring Through Mothering Ideals**

Ideala’s status as a mentor is forged in the fires of her struggles with marriage and maternity. Molly Youngkin notes of Ideala that she “is transformed from a woman who lacks consciousness about her own place in the world to someone who is committed to improving the lives of other women”.80 In her engagement with children who are not her own, Ideala demonstrates that maternal traits were not limited to women who were mothers. Mary Bradford-Whiting notes that the idealised figure of the nineteenth-century mother was “tender, constant and true, sympathetic alike in prosperity and adversity to her children”.81 Crucially, Bradford-Whiting’s analysis of the mother as sympathetic is significant to understanding Ideala’s actions. Ideala does not lose her ability to care as a result of the death of her son. This becomes apparent when Ideala is called upon to help the young, dying Mary Morris. A “tawdry, dishevelled girl”

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stops Ideala in the street, requesting that she comes to see Mary, who is gravely ill with scarlet fever.82 Despite not knowing the family, Ideala rushes to Mary’s bedside. Mary’s family note Ideala’s lack of fear and concern about her own health in spite of the high risk of contagion: “My! Aren’t you a game un! ... You ain’t afraid of catching nothing!” Mary herself asks Ideala if she is “not afraid to touch me”.83 Where others may have hesitated out of fear for their own health, Ideala responds with tender and sympathetic concern. Ideala responds to Mary, saying “I only wish you would let me do something for you.”84 Not only is Ideala demonstrating maternal compassion, she is indicating her desire to help Mary in her situation. This is intended to show readers the importance of sympathy and caring for your fellow human. Ideala rushes to support another in need, regardless of the significant risk to her own health. She cares, despite social classes and stigmas attached to the unwell. Heilmann supports this, arguing “social purity feminists thought ... women’s maternal, self-sacrificing nature secured the interests of the weaker elements in society and thus safeguarded the moral and social health of the nation”.85 Ideala’s actions in caring for Mary Morris are self-sacrificing. She demonstrates courage in an otherwise confined life by extending compassion to those in need. This indicates that although her husband’s dominance took Ideala’s maternity from her, maternal nature can be directed to others.

82 Grand, Ideala, 105.
83 Grand, Ideala, 105.
84 Grand, Ideala, 105.
Sally Ledger and Scott McCracken note that for the Victorians, notions of class, race and gender were considered a "critical holy trinity".86 Despite her position as an upper middle class society woman, Ideala regularly crossed class divisions. Dawne notes that Ideala “knew the poor of the place well, and took a lively interest in all that concerned them”.87 Ideala’s platonic relationship with Dawne is the final piece of Ideala's subversion of this critical holy trinity. Ledger’s own chapter in this collection, “The New Woman and the Crisis of Victorianism”, notes that of-the-day presentations showed the figure of the New Woman as distinctly bourgeois.88 That Ideala crosses social classes is not insignificant. It challenges the belief that the New Woman existed only among the bourgeois. She traverses, and helps, throughout different class boundaries. Ledger and McCracken’s introduction argues that in spite of Victorian anxieties surrounding the “holy trinity”, “the complex figure of the New Woman … acted as a signifier for social change and the break-up of cultural boundaries that had been so carefully erected earlier in the century”.89 That Ideala takes not just an active interest in people outside her own class but also puts herself at risk by helping Mary Morris is demonstrative of how class divisions were able to be broken down. Ideala’s interest in others is genuine and often daring in the way she enacts her displaced maternity. Her desire to help those considered lower than her is evidence that Ideala as a New Woman was active in breaking away traditional ideas which kept classes separated.

87 Grand, Ideala, 32.
88 Ledger, “New Woman and the Crisis of Victorianism,” 41.
89 Ledger and McCracken, “Introduction,” 5.
Equally critical to her development of a mentor is Ideala’s experience of marriage. Her husband, who remains unnamed throughout the narrative, is largely invisible. However, readers are made aware early in the novel that he is adulterous and abusive. Her husband’s tendency to spy through her letters and papers, opening and resealing them to hide his meddling, marks a lack of respect and is further evidence of his desire to control Ideala. While Victorian masculinity does present men with authority, often this did not concern matters relating to raising children. Ideala’s husband’s role in their son’s death marks a variation to traditional ideology. Grand has taken a typically masculine trait like authority and extended it into the maternal realm of breastfeeding and care for an infant. Ben Griffin states the second prescribed notion of Victorian domestic idealism to be “that a wife would happily submit to her husband’s wishes.” The first, Griffin argues, is that men would “use their domestic authority wisely”. Importantly, this notion of idealism has already been broken by Ideala’s husband in his actions toward his and Ideala’s son. Griffin further notes the separation of the spheres becoming an essential part of ensuring domestic peace. He argues that one “way of minimising any conflict was to assign men and women different responsibilities.” Grand presenting Ideala’s husband overstepping into the maternal, female sphere represents an extreme repercussion of masculine authority. Griffin further argues the “idea of unity referred not to a partnership of equals but to a couple united under one will –

90 Grand, Ideala, 76.
91 Griffin, Politics of Gender in Victorian Britain, 38.
92 Griffin, Politics of Gender in Victorian Britain, 38.
93 Griffin, Politics of Gender in Victorian Britain, 42.
that of the husband”. However, Griffin further notes that in spite of the separation of the spheres, “the father could take the child away [from the mother] at any time”. This degree of subordination indicates that the man had ultimate authority and ownership in a marriage. However, Grand presenting Ideala’s experience in relation to this absolutist degree of masculine authority draws attention to the problematic nature of subordination. It emphasises the danger of the practice, demonstrated by the death of Ideala’s son.

That Ideala stays with her husband is indicative of the Victorian ideal of marriage. In spite of his repeated abuse, Ideala remains with her husband and does not speak negatively of him. This speaks back to Griffin’s argument that women were totally subordinate to their husbands. However, she does ultimately choose to leave her husband. They separate, entirely due to Ideala’s refusal to stay with him once he becomes physically abusive. This act of volition operates to show readers that they, too, could leave an unhappy marriage if they chose to. Importantly, Ideala’s separation from her husband is portrayed as a catalyst for self-development rather than a catastrophic end. This is also true of Ideala’s response to losing her child. These two pivotal moments are channelled into building Ideala into the role of mentor.

When Ideala’s son dies, her feelings toward her husband are noted by Dawne: “I think as the milk slowly and painfully left her, her last spark of affection for her husband dried up too.” While she lacks affection for her

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94 Griffin, Politics of Gender in Victorian Britain, 46.
95 Griffin, Politics of Gender in Victorian Britain, 10.
96 Griffin, Politics of Gender in Victorian Britain, 46.
97 Grand, Ideala, 43.
husband, Ideala remains with him initially out of duty. However, when Ideala discovers for herself her husband’s indiscretions, seeing him with a barmaid on his knee, she confronts him. When she does this, his abuse moves toward physical, and he “in a sudden burst of rage, raised his hand and struck her”. Leaving her husband under such circumstances ensures Ideala retains narrative credibility. Her grief from losing her son and her suffering from physical abuse ameliorate any suggestion that she is immoral or flighty for leaving her marriage. Her experience of an abusive marriage challenges the institution of marriage and its sanctity. Marriage, just as much as maternity, was an institutionally glorified marker of a woman’s success. As Ledger notes, the “establishment’s desire to defend marriage as an institution was underpinned by a belief that, without conventional marriage and domestic arrangements, the social fabric upon which Victorian society was formed would begin to crumble”. However, Ideala’s marriage has crumbled due to her husband’s indiscretions and abusive behaviour. This adds another challenge to male-dominated paradigms. Grand is drawing attention to the failure of a ‘conventional’ institution that supports patriarchal indiscretion and maternal submission.

Ideala’s success and development take off after her eventual separation from her husband. Her experience of motherhood demonstrated to readers that they could exist and succeed without maternity. So too did Ideala’s failed

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98 Grand, *Ideala*, 76.
100 Ledger, *New Woman*, 12.
marriage. The freedom Ideala experiences after she breaks away from these traditional identifiers allows her to become an active agent in her own life rather than a passive participant. Grand herself addresses Ideala’s role in an article published by Woman’s Signal in 1894, stating that “Ideala is much more than a novel, it is the voice of a great-hearted woman speaking to her fellow-woman out of the very depths of her soul”. The article continues, “she cries to women to arise from the apathy from which the slothful solitude of surrender has bred in them ... she wishes to see every woman making herself a power in the land”. Ideala’s purpose is to act as an exemplar to Grand’s readers: to guide, and mentor, readers into action, specifically without the traditional male paradigmatic identifiers of marriage and maternity.

The Failure of Masculine Authority Figures

Ideala is told from an initially unnamed male perspective, later revealed to be Lord Dawne. Further, Heilmann argues Dawne’s narrative to be misguided due to his infatuation with Ideala. Heilmann claims of Ideala that “in structure and in content, Ideala is largely shaped by patriarchal parameters”. Heilmann further argues that by “choosing a male narrator for her novel, who, as one of the men in love with Ideala, even though he is too high-principled to tell her about it ..., Grand restricts the freedom Ideala can attain”. In contrast to Heilmann, Lauren Simek argues that it is in Dawne’s narration that Ideala grows

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101 Woman’s Signal, “Sarah Grand and Mr Ruskin,” 276.
102 Woman’s Signal, “Sarah Grand and Mr Ruskin,” 276.
103 Heilmann, New Woman Strategies, 11.
104 Heilmann, New Woman Strategies, 11.
105 Heilmann, New Woman Strategies, 45.
and is understood. While Simek, too, marks Dawne as unreliable and unaware, she argues that it is through his narration of Ideala's character that she is allowed the space to be read without misunderstanding. Dawne's masculine narrative does not confine Ideala. She breaks free of misunderstanding in spite of it.

Ideala’s narrative is largely told, competitively, by the gendered narrations of brother and sister. Heilmann concedes that while Ideala’s narrative is somewhat ruled by Dawne, he is consistently undercut by his sister, Claudia. Heilmann argues, “Lord Dawne’s authority is implicitly undercut by the ‘revisionary readings’ proffered by his widowed sister, Claudia, who acts as a female ‘corrective’ to his pronouncements on Ideala’s actions and frequently challenges his perspective.” Claudia’s narrative voice offers another level to understanding Ideala’s narrative. Heilmann is correct in establishing Claudia to be Dawne’s comparative voice of reason. However, as Simek argues, without Dawne, Ideala’s moral beliefs are often misconstrued. Dawne’s narrative acts as an interpreter to Ideala’s controversial claims. While Dawne functions to ensure Ideala is not misunderstood within the text, Claudia’s revisions ensure she is not misunderstood by the reader. Claudia is proving Ideala’s character to a reader who may read Ideala as “ignorant and judgemental”. Dawne and Claudia display two narratives which operate on two different levels of understanding. Given that Ideala functions as an exemplar both within the

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107 Heilmann, New Woman Strategies, 55.
world of the Morningquest novels but also to Grand’s readers, Dawne and Claudia ensure she is successful in both regards. The dynamic between both Heilmann and Simek’s arguments do not stand in opposition but rather demonstrate the complexity and effects of the narratorial devices Grand employs in the novel and makes them more apparent to readers.

While Dawne often struggles to comprehend Ideala’s actions or decisions, his conversations with his sister are enlightening. When Ideala writes to the pair following her own decision to move with her husband to an unnamed manufacturing district, Dawne and Claudia read the letter in two different ways. This displays the way their narratives work in tandem. Dawne takes the pleasantries of life Ideala describes as literal. However, Claudia argues that “Ideala is trying to hide herself behind these pretty trivialities ... I always suspect there is more wrong than usual when she adopts this playful tone and childlike simplicity of taste.”110 Dawne’s response contradicts his sisters, stating it “must be trying to have a friend who believes so little in one as you do in Ideala”.111 Claudia’s response of “Oh! How exasperating you are!” directs readers to the way in which Ideala is misunderstood by Dawne.112 Dawne’s narrative takes on not only the characteristics of misunderstanding in order to demonstrate how easily Ideala can be misread but also how misreading Ideala undermines the masculine authority of voice. Claudia, as the female narrator,
demonstrates covert authority and juxtaposes the resoluteness of Dawne's masculinity.

This exchange between brother and sister typifies gender expectations of the Victorian era. While Dawne is happy to take Ideala’s letter literally, Claudia’s reading supports a more detailed examination of the ways in which women were repressed and silenced. Regarding the letter, Ideala’s repression of her true feelings suggests a lingering element of subordination. Griffin further points toward the emphasis the Victorians placed on marital “bliss”, which discouraged disagreement to keep husband and wife equally happy.113 This ensured that women were subordinate and never questioned their husbands in order to maintain social forms of peace within the marriage. Ideala’s letter, and Dawne's interpretation of it, speak to this ideal. While Claudia, who has lived as a wife, understands Ideala’s message, Dawne does not. Claudia’s reading presents Ideala’s letter as an effort from Ideala to maintain domestic social forms.

When conversation moves toward Ideala’s marriage, Dawne takes the patriarchal standpoint of a woman’s duty to her husband. He states that “Ideala won’t shirk her duty because it is hard and unpalatable”.114 This is again indicative of Dawne’s misunderstanding of Ideala’s actions. Dawne further notes that “it is contrary to her principles. She would think it wrong to disturb your mind for a moment because her own life is a burden to her. That is why she

113 Griffin, Politics of Gender in Victorian Britain, 41.
114 Grand, Ideala, 75.
always tries to seem happy, and is cheerful on the surface.”115 This demonstrates Dawne’s attempts to manipulate Ideala’s narrative. He believes he understands her in a way no one else can. However, Claudia’s responses, as Heilmann notes, are corrective of Dawne’s assumptions. Claudia questions her brother disparagingly, implying that he is incapable of comprehending the subtext of Ideala’s letter.116 While Dawne takes Ideala’s letter at face value, assuming Ideala will maintain her duty and principles, Claudia draws attention to Dawne’s inability to read Ideala correctly. By inference, Dawne’s reading of Ideala becomes obtuse. Claudia’s frustration with Dawne’s assumptions culminate in her questioning her brother about where a woman’s duty to herself starts and to her husband ends.117 Claudia’s opposition to Dawne supports Heilmann’s claim that Claudia’s correctives undercut Dawne’s narrative authority. Heilmann argues that “the disagreements between brother and sister function as authorial asides, alerting the reader to the degree to which the narrator constructs Ideala and shapes her story and opinions to his own liking”.118 It is in these authorial asides that Ideala’s true narrative is told. Dawne’s narrative is representative of an overarching patriarchal assumption that it knows best. Claudia, however, represents the reality.

115 Grand, Ideala, 75.
116 Grand, Ideala, 75.
117 Grand, Ideala, 75.
118 Heilmann, New Woman Strategies, 55.
Claudia and Appropriate Mentoring

The relationship between Ideala and Claudia is critical in demonstrating that one woman cannot succeed without the other. Without Claudia, Ideala’s narrative would be defined by Dawne’s misguided, patriarchal opinions, resulting in misrepresentation. By utilising dialogue in a way that contradicts Dawne’s narrative, Grand is ensuring readers are given a truthful representation of both genders and demonstrates the implications of male mentoring of female subjects. The problematic nature of men narrating women’s stories is highlighted by man’s lack of ability to see women as anything other than dutiful wives and mothers. If men were not able to see a woman’s full capacity they could not effectively mentor them toward alternatives to her social duty as wife and mother.

In Ideala’s becoming stage, her relationship to Claudia is critical. Their relationship is borne from the two women finding themselves in similar situations. However, while their positions are similar, they are not the same. Claudia is widowed and her position as dependent on Dawne is circumstantial and beyond her control. Ideala’s position is the result of her own agency. She chose to leave her abusive husband and has no family upon which to depend. Despite these differences in circumstance, the relationship between Claudia and Ideala is demonstrative of how when women who have experienced similar hardships lean on each other for support, both are better equipped for challenging traditional ideals. Ideala’s relationship to Claudia is what ultimately gives her the confidence to move forward. The friendship Ideala has with Claudia is supportive, and full of mutual understanding and respect. These
qualities of friendship are essential. Without Claudia’s consistent support, which often opposes Dawne’s ideas on Ideala’s conduct, Ideala would not succeed in breaking away from traditional institutions which keep her confined.

Claudia encourages Ideala to be her own person following the breakdown of her marriage. When Ideala is feeling particularly vulnerable, Claudia tells her:

Can you not become mistress of yourself again, and enter on a larger life which shall be full of love – not the narrow, selfish passion you are cherishing for one, but that pure and holy love which only the best – and such women as you may always be of the best – can feel for at all? [...] you would recognise, as we recognise, that your very expression of it is just as is given to it by every hysterical man or woman that has ever experienced it.128

Here, Claudia is encouraging Ideala to reconsider her position. She is suggesting that Ideala lives out of love for herself, rather than a feeling she still holds for a failed marriage. If Ideala truly loves herself, she will engage in charity, love, education and myriad other ventures that will facilitate further development of herself. Only then will Ideala be able to move forward. This move from Claudia, to encourage Ideala to live for herself, marks the importance of a sisterhood and shared experience. Claudia’s encouragement is the beginning of Ideala becoming a mentor.

128 Grand, Ideala, 88.
Ideala’s Transformative Trip to China, and the Realisation of an Active Life Working for Women

Ideala’s becoming moves into an enhanced state of growth following Claudia’s encouragement. Ideala leaves England, and ventures overseas with missionaries in China. When she returns, Dawne notices a change has taken place within Ideala, noting “she had a purpose now, and a future yet before her. She looked as women look when they know themselves entrusted with a work and have the courage and resolution to be true and worthy of their trust.”\(^{129}\) He further states that Ideala’s “goodness, with all the vitality of all goodness, had raised her again above the best”.\(^{130}\) Ideala promotes her experiences with Chinese women as being in part the reason for her change, noting that these women were educated and not supressed as English women are.\(^{131}\) The women she encountered have taught Ideala valuable lessons about womanhood in spite of the patriarchal paradigm of missionary work that sent Ideala to China. Of these women, Ideala states that the “elasticity of their nature is wonderful, and so is their desire to learn and improve themselves, and their unconquerable perseverance. Strength of character in its women is an element of greatness and a source of longevity in a nation.”\(^{132}\) Ideala’s comparison of the autonomy shown by Chinese women to the lack thereof in European women demonstrates how Ideala believes emancipation for European women can be accomplished. This argument stands in contrast to Ideala’s intention in going to China. Her trip was for the purpose

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\(^{129}\) Grand, *Ideala*, 166.
\(^{130}\) Grand, *Ideala*, 166.
\(^{131}\) Grand, *Ideala*, 172.
of missionary work, believed by the British Empire to benefit the uncivilised places in the world. She returns praising Chinese women and supporting the idea that anything can be learned from anyone, regardless of preconceived notions of class, race, or gender. She has been mentored by the Chinese women while she was supposed to be mentoring them. For Grand, what a person could learn from the experiences of another was critical. She understood that change and growth were universal, and until this was realised and the concept mirrored into action, progress would falter.

While Claudia does not immediately recognise the change in Ideala following her trip to China, when Dawne makes her aware of the difference in Ideala, he claims this “suggested new possibilities to Claudia”.133 Claudia then abruptly asks Ideala if she would return out of fear that she will in fact leave again. Claudia has realised that the change she encouraged in Ideala – to act first for herself so that she can then act for others – has happened while Ideala was away. Claudia is fearful that she will leave again without acting on what she has learned. If this happens then British women will not be the beneficiaries of Ideala’s development. Ideala responds that it “seemed to me that there was work enough left to do at home”,134 which allayed Claudia’s concerns. Here, Ideala’s experience of another culture has led her back to England to attempt to make changes at home. The work Ideala is referring to is actively working toward emancipative reform. It is a new level of commitment to the cause. She intends to take the experience of another class and race of liberated women into

133 Grand, Ideala, 177.
134 Grand, Ideala, 177.
her home country. It further suggests that reform is dependent on active
engagement from parties who wish to challenge old ideals.

Ideala’s world view has become wider than it was before, and again, her
experiences develop her capacity to mentor. Ideala’s experiences abroad
combined with her supportive relationship with Claudia position her as an
advocate for women’s rights. Her enhanced world view establishes her to lead
women toward a new future. Further, it is another example of how Grand
manifested Ideala’s experiences specifically to cross the boundaries of class and
race. Similarly to Ideala’s care of Mary Morris and her family, who are from a
lower social class than Ideala, her positive experience of an Eastern culture of
women is intended to demonstrate to Grand’s readers that prescribed social
and cultural boundaries hinder progress.

**Collective Effort**

In addition to her enhanced world views as a result of her visit to China, Ideala
returns with the awareness that true reform requires more than a singular
advocate. Ideala, after detailing her trip and newfound knowledge to Claudia,
then attempts to encourage Claudia to join her in enacting change. Claudia
remains hesitant, cautious of “Women’s Rights business, and all that”. Ideala,
however, addresses the need for a collective, arguing that:

> I propose to conquer fate. ... Fate itself is no match for one woman with a
> will, let alone thousands. ... Do you think women are less brave? No. When

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they realise the truth they will fight for it. They will use the weapons which nature has provided them: love, constancy, self-sacrifice, their intellectual strength, and will.136

Ideala is addressing the fate of the Victorian woman to marry and produce children. Ideala is suggesting a new way, where women together will challenge that fate. She is certain that once women realise there is more for them than such a fate, they too will challenge it. Further, Ideala is stating that it is the feminine qualities of love and self-sacrifice that will ensure women's success.

Ideala has realised her purpose, and the importance of the potential impact of women who support other women. She has realised the strength in women that a patriarchal society insisted on suppressing. Ideala, still encouraging Claudia, then states of the young women, that they have “been taught to expect to find a guide, philosopher, and friend in her husband ... But the probabilities are equal that he, being morally her inferior, will not be fit for it. ... To save her house and family, she must rebel, take the reins of government into her own hands and face life.”137 To Ideala, the idea that young women should look to their husbands to guide them is ignorant and detrimental. He will not suit the task, thus she must rebel. For such a task, only the support of other women who understand love and self-sacrifice will suffice. Ideala believes this is the best way to save society from the predicament it has found itself in, where marriages are abusive and girls are raised in ignorance. Ideala uses her own

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136 Grand, Ideala, 181.
137 Grand, Ideala, 182.
experience of marriage to substantiate her argument. She claims it was a daily battle to maintain her duty as a wife to an adulterous husband. She recounts the low thoughts she experienced, and the impact that it had on her overall wellbeing, marking the experience as a “battle” she endured and being unable to save herself from it.138 Ideala ends her recount with her desire to help: “if I could save another woman from all that!” 139 Ideala’s position has become obvious. She intends to be the guide who saves women from what would have been her own fate had she not had Claudia’s friendship and the experience of an alternative way of living thanks to her experience in China.

Ideala and Claudia continue to discuss the change for which Ideala is arguing, though Claudia remains unconvinced of Ideala’s plan. Claudia has had the benefit of Dawne’s support in seeing that she is looked after comfortably. Ideala, however, does not have this. Her position has much more at stake. Claudia indicates that she is concerned about the welfare of women who may join Ideala, questioning what would happen if women were to rise only to fall. Ideala answers that “she may fall ... yes. But you know if she does it is her own fault. She must know better.” 140 Claudia concedes that, perhaps, if women were taught to find adequate husbands, the matter would be resolved. Ideala’s answer, however, suggests that it is more important that women support each other:

138 Grand, Ideala, 183.
139 Grand, Ideala, 183.
140 Grand, Ideala, 183.
I thought for a long time that everything had been done that could be done to make the world better; but I see now that there is one more thing to be tried. Women have never yet united to use their influence steadily and all together against that of which they disapprove. They work too much for themselves, each trying to make their own life happier. They have yet to learn to take a wider view of things, and to be shown that the only way to gain their end is by working for every-body else, with the intent to make the whole world better, which means happier.\textsuperscript{141}

This statement from Ideala is crucial. It draws attention to the power of a collective group of women working for a greater cause, ultimately to the benefit of society as a whole. She is protesting the current state of oppression in which women have found themselves. Ideala argues that the only way to move forward is by supporting each other. It is no longer about individual success but collective.

In spite of Claudia’s hesitations, it is she who encourages Ideala to proceed. Ideala confesses to Claudia that she has doubted her ability to lead women in the ways she suggests are needed. Ideala says that she has been “sorely troubled about my own unworthiness”, though admits that “now I see things differently”.\textsuperscript{142} Ideala has realised not only her potential but the potential of women more broadly. Importantly, Ideala notes that as “long as we do not deceive ourselves by thinking we are worthy, and so long as we are trying our

\textsuperscript{141} Grand, \textit{Ideala}, 184.
\textsuperscript{142} Grand, \textit{Ideala}, 185.
best to become so, I think we may have some hope”. 143 The use of the word “trying” implies a process of becoming is involved. No one, male or female, is born worthy, and as long as the process is respected, there is hope. Claudia farewells Ideala with the request that she go and be “made worthy” 144. She adds, “if it were not so, Ideala, if everybody had to begin by being as good to themselves as they want others to be, there would be no good workers left in the world at all”. 145 Both Claudia and Ideala return to the notion of “work” in these statements, where the word implies active engagement with gender reform and women’s movements.

Claudia did not start her story being as good as she wanted to be and admits that hers is also a process of development. Importantly, Ideala has realised the need for an ongoing process of reform. She understands that constant personal growth, knowledge and willingness to adapt are critical to the success of reform movements. Claudia’s support of Ideala is critical to her success. She is telling Ideala to go, to influence others, but to never forget that progress is fluid and hinged on ongoing adaptability. While Claudia is reluctant to go with Ideala, she supports and encourages her. This support, in spite of their differences, evidences the way Grand wanted women to support each other: with respect and without prejudices.

143 Grand, Ideala, 185.
144 Grand, Ideala, 185.
145 Grand, Ideala, 185.
Ideala Becomes a Mentor

The next readers see of Ideala is in the last chapter of the novel, where she has begun her work and is acting as a mentor to other women. Ideala is admired by these women, who are keen to follow in her footsteps. Ideala is seen by Dawne in the final paragraph “gather[ing] the useless units of society about her, and mak[ing] them worthy women.” She is actively working to ensure that women see themselves as worthy participants in society and not defined by patriarchal parameters. Returning to the idea of worthiness mirrors Claudia and Ideala’s final exchange. Ideala has become worthy through her own experiences and is thus now capable of mentoring other women. Claudia’s support is reiterated in this chapter, where Ideala states about supporting other women, “do not stand in their way ... so not hinder them – above all do not stop them”. Even though Claudia did not go with Ideala, it is crucial that she did not stop her. Grand is addressing the tendency of women to obstruct other women, instead suggesting that supporting each other is the only way for their gender to move forward. While society questioned women’s movements, Grand saw that suppression of any kind hindered progress. This final chapter takes only a short section of the text. While Ideala’s becoming has progressed to a degree where she is actively mentoring other women, readers only get a small taste of it leading into The Heavenly Twins. Critically, the novel ends with Dawne noting Ideala’s “experiences have taught her to sympathise with every phase of feeling, and be lenient to every shortcoming and excess. Wherever she is you may be

146 Grand, Ideala, 187.
147 Grand, Ideala, 189.
148 Grand, Ideala, 188.
sure that another woman is there also ... and you may be equally as sure that she is leaning on Ideala.” This indicates women had found a solace and compassion in Ideala, and importantly that Ideala is guiding the women who are leaning on her. Dawne states of Ideala’s ending that “there is no kind of sorrow for which she has not found comfort, no folly she has not been successful in checking, no vice she has not managed to cure, and no form of despair which she has not relieved with hope”. This suggests the hope Ideala is enacting through mentoring is critical. Belief that a woman’s position could be alleviated in a way unique to their situation is what drives Ideala forward. Ideala has put herself in a position of guidance that sees women depend on her during their own phase of difficulty and becoming. Dawne’s statement that it is Ideala’s experiences that position her with the right qualities to help other women encapsulates the point of Ideala. Further, it suggests an awakening has happened for Dawne as well, finally seeing Ideala as she is. The shortness of the final chapter leaves readers anticipating more from Ideala’s story.

Ideala ends the first Morningquest novel leading other women toward something more. When she reappears in The Heavenly Twins, she is established as a mentor, and actively working toward change. When she meets Angelica, she has proven herself worthy. While Angelica is far from the “useless units of society” Ideala initially mentors, being born into an upper-class family in Morningquest, Ideala’s reappearance to help Angelica switches the focus to the

149 Grand, Ideala, 189.
150 Grand, Ideala, 189.
fact that the need for guidance is not restricted by class boundaries. Further, the time that passes between the novels indicates the furthering of the process of becoming that begins in *Ideala*.

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Chapter Two: *The Heavenly Twins* and Active Mentoring

The second of the Morningquest novels, *The Heavenly Twins* (1894) explores Ideala’s active mentoring stage. Ideala takes on a protégé, Angelica, and mentors her using a system of dialectical questioning to encourage Angelica’s independent thought. Ideala encourages Angelica to question religion and patriarchal constraints. Beginning specifically in conversation with a local member of the clergy, Father Ricardo, Ideala begins to encourage Angelica to think critically about the elements of organised religion she felt conflicted by. Ideala’s encouragement sparks Angelica’s development through critical inquiry. She learns to not only question specifically patriarchal institutions but to also promote healthier alternatives, including gender equality. A significant part of Angelica’s developing inquiry is her foray into androgyny, where she experiences the world the way men see it and becomes aware of vast inequalities. Similarly, Angelica’s understanding of marriage is shaken in witnessing the demise of her close friend Edith due to marrying a syphilitic husband. However, when Angelica’s actions lead to the death of her friend, Angelica questions her own reckless behaviour and promises herself to restrain from rebellious behaviour, conforming to traditional gender roles instead of challenging them.\(^\text{152}\) Importantly, however, Angelica does not conform entirely. She continues to write her husband’s political speeches, allowing her space to

\(^{152}\) Grand, *Heavenly Twins*, 551.
exhibit her views on gender in a safer, less rebellious way, and begins to work with women to help guide them out of unhappy marriages.153

*The Heavenly Twins* is made up of six smaller texts, each with a different focus. This includes the “Interlude” chapter, which tracks the relationship a young boy forges with a tenor who is new to Morningquest. This chapter is one of the two most studied sections of the Morningquest trilogy due to the boy being revealed as Angelica in disguise.154 The second most studied feature of the novel revolves around Grand’s handling of sexually transmitted diseases. While these elements are key arguments Grand explores through her novels, mentoring also has a critical role in the novel. In *The Heavenly Twins*, the second of the trilogy, Grand returns to supportive female relationships, demonstrated in the friendships between Edith, Angelica and Evadne. Ideala is introduced to Angelica through Dawne, who is the twins’ uncle. While Ideala’s role in *The Heavenly Twins* is minimal for such a large text, she influences Angelica in important ways. Ideala’s appearance and questioning of Angelica prompts Angelica’s own becoming stage. While Ideala and Angelica’s relationship does align with typical methods of mentoring in that she is an older woman imparting knowledge to a younger protégé, Ideala’s inquiry-based style of mentoring functions to promote critical thinking in Angelica.155 Ideala employs

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155 Denmark and Williams, “Older Woman as Sage,” 266. Denmark and Williams note that becoming a mentor typically means engaging with a mentee in ways that are open, accessible, provide encouragement and, most importantly, create opportunities for mentee success.
both methods of mentoring in tandem. Ideala is accessible and open, but also
encourages Angelica to seek her own conclusions.

The first Morningquest novel ends the first novels ends with Ideala
acting as a mentor to other women. In The Heavenly Twins, she begins
mentoring Angelica, using a style of critical inquiry and dialectical questioning.
Zarena Aslami suggests that “questions of female agency punctuate the
novel”.156 She questions female agency, asking “can the desire to know be
acquired in life? If so, how? And what can those who see through the myths of
sexual difference do to awaken other women?”157 While Aslami poses these
questions, The Heavenly Twins and the Morningquest trilogy do present an
answer by means of the act of mentoring. Aslami notes that as a novel, The
Heavenly Twins is a testament to women’s suffering but questions why women
“passionately consume fictions” that “confirm and maintain their suffering”.158
By viewing Ideala’s role in the text in the light of mentoring, however, readers
are offered an alternative to their suffering. Ideala’s dialectical questioning of
Angelica is designed to demonstrate that the desire to know can be acquired, if
it is harboured through appropriate means of mentoring. Ideala’s mentoring of
Angelica shows what can be done to awaken other women to sexual injustice.

For the female protagonists of The Heavenly Twins, navigating the
controversial subject of gender reform informs much of their narrative. The
novel is not only explicit in its focus on questioning the traditional masculine

156 Aslami, Dream Life of Citizens, 137.
157 Aslami, Dream Life of Citizens, 137.
158 Aslami, Dream Life of Citizens, 137.
and feminine roles, the relationships that exist between Ideala, Angelica, Evadne and Edith provide further evidence of Grand’s belief in supportive female relationships. Despite the heavy narrative focus on the twins, Ideala’s appearance proves fundamental in understanding her character. It is in *The Heavenly Twins* that Ideala begins to establish herself outside the confines of a male-dominated narrative structure. Teresa Mangum notes that in *Ideala*, “the main character fights to win her story away from a male narrator who would write her into the marriage plot regardless of her desires or the circumstances of marriage”. While Dawne’s descriptions of Ideala in the first of the trilogies are nothing short of idolatrous, in *The Heavenly Twins* readers are presented with an image of Ideala no longer skewed by the masculine gaze.

Grand uses *The Heavenly Twins* to explore the opposition to traditional and expected gender roles in the Victorian era. However, Ideala's revolutionary position is established as one that is disliked by the older men in the novel and revered by the younger women. This careful positioning demonstrates that while disliked and slandered by the traditionalists, Ideala is essential to the kinds of gender reform Grand spends much of *The Heavenly Twins* exploring. This is particularly evident in her engagement with Angelica, prompting her to reconsider the traditional gender roles within institutions like religion and marriage.

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159 Mangum, *Married, Middlebrow, and Militant*, 89.
Dialectic Questioning, Critical Inquiry and Religion

When Ideala first reappears in *The Heavenly Twins*, the young women of the novel are warned against following her due to her radical ideals. In particular, the older generations in the novel are quick to dismiss Ideala due to the way her ideas challenge the status quo, noting them as being “strongly opposed ... especially by those who either did not know or could not understand them.”

In particular, one of Ideala’s most significant oppositions comes from religious institutions and members of the clergy. Ideala clashes with Father Ricardo. His distaste for Ideala is based on her belief in systems of equality that the church refutes. Father Ricardo is also one of the older men who warns Angelica against Ideala, stating, “I do hope you will not be drawn into that set. They are sadly misguided.” The opposition Ideala receives marks her as dangerous. Further, it draws attention to the way that any type of disagreement from women will mark them as threatening to patriarchal institutions.

Ideala first mentors Angelica by questioning her about religion and the true spirit of God. In defiance of the conversation about religion happening around them, Ideala notices Angelica remaining quiet and begins to ask her questions about what she thinks. Ideala uses guiding questions such as “and so you are puzzled?” to encourage Angelica to think deeper about the way religion is being presented to her, specifically the morality of religion.

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162 Grand, *Heavenly Twins*, 489. The set Father Ricardo is referring to is Ideala, Dawne and Claudia.
Angelica describes being confused by her understanding of two older female relatives both believing different things, but still being religiously good. Ideala’s questioning initiates Angelica’s independent thought regarding religious patriarchy. Here, Angelica’s questioning of religion is demonstrative of the way educated classes were beginning to look at religion, and at masculinity more centrally. Ben Griffin notes that “these factors were inextricably intertwined with one another and combined to produce a noticeable shift in attitudes to marriage in the final third of the nineteenth century”.\textsuperscript{165} While Ideala’s instructive role in this conversation with Father Ricardo and Angelica is short, it is not insignificant. She outright vilifies the church for its representation of women, demonstrating the link between religion and gender and stating that the church

preach[es] the parable of the buried talents, and side by side with that you have always insisted that women should put theirs away; and you have soothed their sensitive consciences with the dreadful cant of obedience – not obedience to the moral law, but obedience to the will of man; for what moral law could be affected by the higher education of women?\textsuperscript{166}

Ideala’s argument is that the church limits itself by old ideals and belief systems that no longer work in a modern society. This is a claim that was echoed by Victorian society as textual errors were being uncovered in the scriptures of the

\textsuperscript{165} Griffin, \textit{Politics of Gender in Victorian Britain}, 111.
\textsuperscript{166} Grand, \textit{Heavenly Twins}, 266.
Bible itself. Centrally, she is concerned with the way the church endorsed systems of repression for women by restricting their freedoms. As Griffin notes, “when St Paul said that women ought to submit to their husbands, it was now possible to suggest that he was merely reflecting the social prejudices of his time”. Ideala’s “parable of the buried” is a New Testament allusion to the Gospel according to Matthew (13:44) which preached that hidden wealth has no value to anyone, especially God. This conversation not only serves as an example of Ideala’s standpoint on religion, it centralises her promotion of gender equality in opposition to the church. Further, this takes place while Angelica is present and active in the same conversation.

Toward the end of this encounter, Angelica says to Ideala that she wants “to know where the true spirit of God is”. Ideala responds to both Angelica and the Priest:

> It is in us women. We have preserved it, and handed it down to another of our own sex unsullied; and very soon we shall be called upon to prove the possession of it, for already ... I – that is to say woman – am a power in the land, while you – that is to say the Priest – retain ever less and less even of the semblance of power.

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167 Griffin, *Politics of Gender in Victorian Britain*, 115. Griffin argues that, as gender and religion are intertwined, a questioning of religion was a questioning of gender arguments. Further, he argues that public controversy surrounding the legitimacy of the doctrine forced “new ideas about domesticity and masculinity [to] emerg[e] that help explain why male politicians at last felt able to increase women’s rights”, 112.


Ideala’s response is that religion and morals come more from women than from the fable of obedience the church dictated. Ideala is addressing that there is already a system of mentoring that exists between women, particularly that of an older woman and a younger woman, where knowledge is passed down generationally. Ideala’s comment speaks to the underlying issue of religious patriarchy and gender reform. Reform could not happen unless women were sharing an understanding of the world with the next generation.

Outside of this conversation with Ideala, Angelica then undergoes her own transformation and development as a result of learning through Ideala’s encouragement to question what she finds religiously delimiting. Angelica’s own line of inquiry begins when she questions Ideala about the differences between various religions. Angelica is trying to understand how so many religious establishments can believe their way is the right way, particularly when she has found contradictory claims in her reading of different texts. Angelica, speaking to the “issue where conscious came into conflict with traditional Christian teaching”, 171 says to Ideala that she wants “to know how people can be so silly”. 172 Angelica is attempting to understand the differences between religious and social moralities. Ideala mentors Angelica toward her own conclusions. Angelica’s responses demonstrate an awakening about how religion can suppress and constrain a woman. Ideala’s open-ended, guiding questions support Angelica in purposeful, constructive development.

171 Griffin, Politics of Gender in Victorian Britain, 122.
172 Grand, Heavenly Twins, 263.
Ideala’s expertise in mentoring Angelica on religion stems from her own past discussions with a bishop and a lawyer in Ideala. When Ideala is consulting the two men about her failing marriage, she asks “if a thing can be legally right and morally wrong”. In spite of Ideala’s clear desire to understand if she can morally leave a legal union based on her circumstances, neither bishop or priest are able to satisfy her with a clear response. The bishop holds his belief that leaving a marriage would be morally wrong, and the lawyer maintains divorce to be legally wrong. This experience allows Ideala to question Angelica outside the confines of both institutions. Ideala has learned that ideals held by both are not always morally right and can encourage Angelica to consider this for herself.

Further, Ideala’s experience of separating from her husband provides her with the knowledge that religious morals are restricting of a woman’s freedoms. While Ideala’s questioning of Angelica is short, her doing so is what enables Angelica to make sense of the experiences she shares with her friends Edith and Evadne.

**The Woman’s Sphere and Men’s Indiscretions**

Following Angelica’s initial interaction with Ideala, she moves into her own stage of development. After Ideala’s prompting Angelica begins to question situations she finds problematic. Importantly, Ideala’s prompting of Angelica starts in the chapter entitled “Development and Arrest of Development”. She reaches the conclusion that a “woman must know that the future welfare of her own sex, and the progress of the world at large, depends upon the action of

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women now, and the success attending it”.174 This comment marks Angelica’s movement through her stage of development. As per Ideala’s development, Angelica’s is also described as being “a state of fermentation”.175 Presenting Angelica’s developing mind so similarly to Ideala’s is evidence that the two women are linked.

Outside of Ideala’s influence, the central focus of “Development and Arrest of Development” is both Angelica’s friendship with Edith and her continued questioning of religious institutions. The two title themes exist in contrast. While Angelica develops, Edith experiences the arrest of her own development after marrying a man who is unfaithful, and contracts syphilis as a result. Edith descends into madness, births a syphilitic son and eventually passes away. Due to the closeness of their friendship, much of Angelica’s development is sparked by Edith’s experience. Angelica and Edith visit a young woman they had earlier seen on the streets, only to discover the young woman named her child after his father – Edith’s own husband, Mr Menteith. The sickly nature of the young woman and her child indicate to Angelica and Edith that Menteith’s infidelity carries the significant weight of illness, and Edith’s own health begins to deteriorate. In seeing Edith’s swift descent into her own illness, Angelica questions her bishop, stating firmly that she has lost respect for institutions “who let Menteith miscreants loose in society to marry whoever they please”.176 Angelica’s subsequent loss of respect for the bishop is indicative

of the injustice she has seen first-hand in Edith’s marriage. Anna Maria Jones notes that Edith’s “spectacle of suffering” acts as a grounding basis “from which the other characters can build interpretations and formulate plans of action for their own lives”.177 Angelica is arguing that Edith’s marriage, where the very institution is held in such high regard that Menteith’s behaviour is overlooked and Edith and her child’s health suffer as a result of duty to that marriage, is not an adequate or appropriate system. Jessica Cox notes that Menteith’s disease is representative of morality, arguing that “it is not only diseases such as syphilis which threaten to contaminate the wives and children of dissolute men, but their immoral behaviour in general”.178 Marilyn Bonnell refers to Grand’s own claim that it was time for her to speak up about the injustice of the moral double standard where men “exercised what they felt to be their rights while women shouldered the burden of responsibility”.179 Bonnell’s argument draws attention to the double standard where a man could act as he pleased, while his wife remained constrained by institutionalised duty, exempt from arguments of morality.

Angelica then takes her argument to the question of the separation of the spheres. She tells the bishop that things “have gone wrong in the Sphere”.180 Specifically, Angelica is calling out the domestic sphere of marriage and motherhood, and the way it was sanctified by religious institutions as being an identifying and ultimate position for women to reach. Angelica continues to

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177 Jones, “A Track to the Water’s Edge,” 225.
178 Cox, “Gender, Conflict, Continuity,” 34.
180 Grand, Heavenly Twins, 302.
berate the bishop, stating that if “you had been able to manage the Sphere, ...
and regulate the extent of it, you would have been able to make it a proper place
for us to live in by this time”. 181 Angelica is directly addressing the problematic
nature of an institution that places duty above all else, and how damaging that
can be for society. Cox’s argument supports this, noting that “the licentious male
poses a significant threat to the figure of the dutiful wife and to the Victorian
child, and so to the next generation”. 182 Angelica is arguing that the church is
advocating immorality by allowing marriage to come before morals, to the
detriment of a modern society. Angelica then hints toward her own role in
gender reform, stating, “it may sound [like nonsense] to you at present ... but
there is a small idea in my mind which won’t be nonsense when it grows up”.183
Angelica is placing the blame for Edith’s demise directly onto the church. If the
church were respectful of true unions, they would not have allowed Edith to
marry an unfaithful man. Her argument that things have gone wrong is her
belief that the church has allowed it to become so by placing such an emphasis
on marriage as an ultimate position for women, often to the detriment of
women who did not know better. Angelica is drawing attention back to Grand’s
own belief that the ignorant state society kept women in was damaging.
However, Angelica has hope that she may be able to do something to help
women who find themselves in such a situation.

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182 Cox, “Gender, Conflict, Continuity,” 33.
Angelica’s development is in part due to Edith’s arrest of development. After she watches her friend suffer, she is unable to stay silent, or ignorant, and conform to what society believes her duty to be. Edith, after falling ill, states of her impending death that the “same thing may happen now to any mother – to any daughter – and will happen so long as we refuse to know and resist”.184

Edith’s demise, and Ideala’s prompting of Angelica’s independent thought, begins Angelica’s awakening. Edith’s statement that nothing will change as long as women stay ignorant becomes Angelica’s mission. She moves into a position of challenging institutions such as religion that insist on keeping women ignorant. Throughout the second half of the trilogy, Angelica endeavours to know more and actively resists in order to ensure no other mothers and daughters experience what Edith experienced. Ideala teaches Angelica to think deeply and question what she did not understand. Following the experience of seeing Edith’s deterioration, Angelica takes Ideala’s lessons of critical inquiry into action.

Toward the end of “Development and Arrest of Development”, the twins’ father, Mr Hamilton-Wells, announces that Angelica will be presented to society, while her brother Diavolo is given the choice of attending the Royal Military Academy at Sandhurst or continuing his education elsewhere.185 While she does not immediately rebel, knowing that doing so would be of no benefit to her position, she leaves on a walk where she encounters Mr Kilroy of Ilverthorpe, a childhood friend. Angelica then proposes marriage to Mr Kilroy, on the

184 Grand, Heavenly Twins, 304.
185 Grand, Heavenly Twins, 320.
condition that he lets her do as she likes. Cox indicates Grand’s subversion to traditional roles here, noting that Angelica’s proposal “reverses traditional gender roles”, while Angelica “continues to subvert tradition by writing her husband’s political speeches”. This undermining of convention marks an important moment in Angelica’s development and awakening. In proposing her own marriage, she is ensuring the union is entered into on her own terms. The decision is not an economic one made by her father, nor is the male party the one to make the engagement. Angelica’s proposal ensures her agency and autonomy remain her own within the institution of marriage.

**Dress and Gender Performance**

Ideala’s next interaction with Angelica comes when Angelica declares that she wishes to wear long dresses. Ideala and Claudia volunteer to take Angelica shopping to purchase the new dresses as until this declaration, Angelica had consistently been labelled as a tomboy. When Angelica debuts her new wardrobe that night at dinner, Ideala’s response is conflictingly noted as both grave and encouraging, “making her feel as if she were on the eve of something momentous”. Ideala’s response foreshadows Angelica’s actions later in the novel when Angelica, we are told, rushes “upstairs to her own room” and relieves “her feelings by tearing off her dinner dress”. This dramatic removal of her clothes – a sign of her refusal to conform to patriarchal prescriptions of

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187 Cox, “Gender, Conflict, Continuity,” 37.  
femininity – continues with Angelica’s “petticoats”: she kicks “off her white satin shoes, one of which lit in the mantlepiece, and the other on the dressing table”, and she tears “out her hair-pins” and flings “them about the floor in all directions”.\textsuperscript{191} This ceremonious removal of her dresses is symbolic, as is Ideala’s involvement. It alludes to Ideala’s own comment in \textit{Ideala} where she states that clothing should be healthy and beautiful.\textsuperscript{192} Ideala believed that healthy clothing in particular “is the alpha of all changes for the better. It is the beginning of wisdom for women.”\textsuperscript{193} Here, “healthy” means unrestricted. Ideala further notes that petticoats and corsets, which Angelica so violently removes, weighed women down and forced their bodies into unnatural shapes.\textsuperscript{194}

Ideala further likens restrictive clothing to the Chinese art of foot binding. She states that it is “wonderful how they endure the torture; but public opinion has sanctioned the custom for centuries, and made it as much a duty for a Chinese woman to have small feet as it is for us to wear clothes!”\textsuperscript{195} However, Ideala further notes that when “they are taught how wrong the practice is, how it cripples them, and weakens them, and renders them unfit for their work in the world, they take off their bandages ... I remembered that my countrywoman bind every organ in their bodies.”\textsuperscript{196} This draws attention to culturally prescribed notions of beauty, and the difference between Chinese women removing their bindings in order to function in the world and Victorian women

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\textsuperscript{191} Grand, \textit{Heavenly Twins}, 275. \\
\textsuperscript{192} Grand, \textit{Ideala}, 180. \\
\textsuperscript{193} Grand, \textit{Ideala}, 180. \\
\textsuperscript{194} Grand, \textit{Ideala}, 180. \\
\textsuperscript{195} Grand, \textit{Ideala}, 177. \\
\textsuperscript{196} Grand, \textit{Ideala}, 177. 
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who continue to bind their bodies in order to uphold their ideal beauty. Ideala commends Chinese women for enduring such torture for as long as they do, but her point is that these women shirk their duty when they realise the damage it does to their wellbeing. The intertwining ideas Grand is putting forward through Ideala’s character is evident in this textual example. For Grand, the corsets Angelica removes stand for both the oppressive and dangerous ideals of femininity. Angelica is refusing to conform to restrictive corsets, instead returning to her old, healthy, tomboyish clothing.

The catalyst for this, interestingly, is Angelica’s brother, Diavolo. He refuses to see that Angelica, too, is growing up and that he could lose his sister to womanhood. Angelica’s interpretation of his disapproval is that he “think[s] the old days were over, and there had come a change now which would divide them”.197 Diavolo’s fear is based on him not wanting Angelica to conform entirely to prescribed notions of femininity, and her reaching maturity before him. Teresa Mangum draws attention to Angelica noting her brother will grow a moustache and “soon feel the pressures of adolescence”.198 At this stage of the novel, Angelica does not intend to lose the rebellious part of herself, stating to her brother that even though she may wear dresses she intends to be “just as bad as ever in it”.199 While Angelica’s position does eventually change, in this moment she is indicating that even though she may look the part, she does not intend on acting it. Mangum notes that after Angelica refuses to wear her new

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dresses, “Diavolo exasperatedly acknowledges the absurdity of the dress Angelica has outgrown,” and both twins accept the inevitability of growing up, where society will demand a “visible symbol of her femininity”.200

Angelica’s rejection of traditional conformities through dress is further amplified in the *The Heavenly Twins* chapter entitled “The Tenor and the Boy: The Interlude”. In this chapter, Angelica dresses in her brother’s clothes, poses as a young man and befriends a visiting Tenor. It is obvious that for Grand, women’s dress directly correlates to female oppression. Further, she believes turning away from restrictive clothing would play a significant part in gender reform. When Angelica poses as a member of the opposite sex, her clothing is described as “well-dressed ... but hung about him loosely”.201 Sally Ledger notes that binary gender reversal is a common theme for New Women writers. Ledger states the “putting on of ‘masculine’ attributes ... was thoroughly characteristic of the textual New Woman”.202 Grand, however, takes this one step further, with a literal putting on of masculine dress. In considering the “Interlude” chapter as a narrative break from the reader’s “painful attachments to the three heroines”, Jones suggests that “the narrative encourages us to read the Boy not as Angelica, but as her twin brother Diavolo up until the very end of the ‘Interlude’”.203 However, Demetris Bogiatzis seconds Ledger’s claim, noting of Grand’s narrative morality in comparison to other nineteenth-century writers that she “was content to challenge gender boundaries, and hence implicitly impugn

203 Jones, "Track to the Water’s Edge," 230.
contemporary mores, without scandalizing her readers by explicitly propounding alternative theories of gender”. While Grand does challenge gender boundaries, readers are not initially made aware that The Boy is Angelica in disguise. Her identity is only revealed later in the chapter. When it is revealed, it is justified in a way that does not aim to unsettle the reader. Angelica explains her actions as they were her own attempt to see the world as a man would and details the lessons she has learned as a result.

Angelica’s explanation for posing as male is directly related to the freedom she feels through the clothing. She states that she “had the feeling, never actually formulated into words, but quite easy to interpret now, that if I broke down conventional obstacles – broke the hampering laws of society, I would have a chance [of successfully posing as a man]”. Angelica then describes how her decision to act as a man had been fuelled by her desire for freedom and to see the world as men see it. However, she notes that due to being female, “I knew I should be insulted, or at least hindered, however inoffensive my conduct; and so I prepared this disguise”. She then comments on the safety she felt in the disguise, stating that “when I dressed myself and put on that long ulster, I saw the disguise would pass and felt pretty safe. But isn’t it surprising the difference dress makes?” Angelica also notes that “having once assumed the character, I began to love it; it came naturally; and the freedom from restraint, I mean the restraint of our tight, uncomfortable clothing, was

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204 Bogiatzis, “Sexuality and Gender,” 49.
207 Grand, Heavenly Twins, 452.
Bogiatzis notes that “Angelica’s decision to masquerade as a boy is principally inspired by her yearning to confront challenges and experience pleasures that constituted an exclusively male preserve; in support of her actions, she states the familiar point that social restrictions reinforce rather than stifle desire for the proscribed activity.” Angelica’s cross-dressing enables her to see the advantages that women were missing out on. This, then, ensures she is better experienced to work toward reform. The underlying suggestion is that Ideala is already aware, or at least suspects, that Angelica will refuse the dresses she shops for, particularly when Ideala’s earlier comments on feminine dress being detrimental are considered.

Ideala’s position as a shopping partner for Angelica when she chooses the dresses is also evident of her awareness that Angelica was destined for more. While Claudia, too, accompanies the pair, assisting Angelica in the purchase of the clothing she so quickly tears off, Ideala has knowingly put Angelica into clothing she would refuse. Bogiatzis notes that Angelica’s “transgression undeniably constituted an egregious breach of decorum and was naturally perceived as a threat to the status-quo, even more so because her disaffection flew in the face of her beauty and elegance.” He adds that Angelica’s refusal to wear feminine dresses is a breach of feminine codes of decorum. Her removing them is dramatic; part of her outfit even catches fire. She is described repeatedly in The Heavenly Twins as being undeniably

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208 Grand, Heavenly Twins, 456.
210 Bogiatzis, “Sexuality and Gender,” 54.
feminine, both beautiful and elegant without even trying to be so. Her violent rejection of conforming to the prescribed role of femininity that these physical traits meant is more critical than if she was described as plain. There is something much more offensive about a typically pretty girl refusing her femininity than a plain girl doing the same. It allows Angelica to still be considered female, where if she were plain her gender role would shift toward the masculine.

**Intergenerational Mentoring: The New Woman and the Modern Girl**

*The Heavenly Twins* is where the argument for intergenerational, supportive female relationships begins to be explored. While many of the women in *Ideala* were of the same generation, *The Heavenly Twins* sees a notable difference between the older generations and the younger. Grand’s support suggests an awareness that women needed other women to support each other through the difficulties of a society transitioning into modernity. Ideala is introduced to Angelica through Dawne, who is Angelica’s uncle, indicating Ideala is generationally older than Angelica. Later in the trilogy, Angelica and Ideala both encounter Beth in *The Beth Book*. When the three women meet, it is indicated Angelica is older than Beth, though not by much. These relationships represent three distinct aspects of mentoring: first Ideala becomes a mentor, then she actively mentors Angelica through dialectic inquiry and critical thought, and finally Ideala and Angelica mentor Beth. In this final stage Angelica moves from the position of mentee to the position of mentor.
In spite of the generational differences between these women, the relationships that form are supportive. Grand’s article “The Modern Girl” further argues that women require supportive guidance in order to move adequately into the next generation. Sally Ledger importantly notes that Grand’s novel sits “caught, like the New Woman of the 1890s herself, between the old and the new”.211 “The Modern Girl” analyses the question of: “What are we to do with our girls?”212 Grand theorises that, due to the lack of appropriate mothers, young girls of the time were being held in a state of ignorance. She repeatedly holds responsible the “society mother”, or the mother who is more intent on marrying her daughter off to an appropriate husband than listening to her desires.213 Jessica Cox further addresses this issue, noting that in the novel “both Evadne and Edith’s families fail to warn them of their prospective husbands’ licentious pasts”.214 While the society mother, demonstrated in Evadne and Edith’s respective mothers, is an example of Grand’s intentionally satirical response to her critics, she does propose an alternative. “The Modern Girl” claims that young women are in need of guidance, specifically the guidance of an appropriate confidante. This needed to be an older, honourable woman, in whom the modern girl can confide. Grand’s overarching question of how to help points toward inciting action. Grand asks the question, but she also answers it with instruction. She advises that readers “consider them, respect the needs of their nature, and do not require them to conform to the exigencies of the day

212 Grand, “Modern Girl,” 43.
214 Cox, “Gender, Conflict, Continuity,” 32.
before yesterday”. By presenting an answer, Grand inspires readers into real-world action. As Anna Maria Jones advocates, Grand’s writing “provides a venue for its readers to experience their own (in-process) conversions”. For Grand, writing and reading were revolutionary acts, offering readers “the possibility of activism through reading”.

“The Modern Girl” argues for an older woman, adequately prepared as Ideala is, to guide the younger generation into the next stage of reform. Grand’s presentation of Ideala and Angelica’s relationship in this way is intentional. Ideala is an older, honourable woman, positioned as such to guide Angelica. Angelica’s development in “Development and Arrest of Development” is representative of how such guidance can lead to real-world action. Angelica is the modern girl, the one who with the right kind of support will lead the next generation into a non-conformist future. Angelica’s actions toward her own marriage demonstrate this. Grand’s ideal New Woman, Ideala, is the mentor who will guide the next generation of women in their revolt against the traditional, institutional and damaging duty women were expected to blindly acquiesce to. Further, this premeditated positioning of Ideala and Angelica aligns them with their roles in The Beth Book. Importantly, however, Angelica submits to the role of dutiful wife. Following Angelica’s interactions with The Tenor in “The Interlude”, Angelica renounces her rebellious escapades. “The Interlude” ends with The Tenor’s death, due in part to Angelica’s actions. He

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215 Grand, Modern Girl,” 43.
216 Jones, “A Track to the Water’s Edge,” 223.
217 Jones, “A Track to the Water’s Edge,” 217.
dies, following an illness he procures after saving Angelica from drowning in a river. The realisation of the role she played in his death forces Angelica to turn away from her rebellion to become a proper wife to Mr Kilroy, as noted by Jessica Cox. However, Jones argues that it is Angelica's leaving behind of her reckless behaviour that allows her the space to become an activist. Jones argues that “whatever activist potential Angelica does possess comes not with her entering her aestheticized fantasy space with the tenor, but in leaving it behind”.

In another Grandian example of alluding to most reform work being done beneath the surface, Angelica is no longer referred to by her first name: she becomes Mrs Kilroy of Ilverthorpe. Her married title becomes her main identifier until later in the trilogy when she begins her interactions with Beth and switches almost exclusively back to Angelica after Ideala reprimands her for her behaviour toward Beth. Angelica then realises how inconsistent she has been and works toward correcting herself by supporting Beth appropriately.

Grand is known for allegorically naming her characters to represent their narrative identities, with Angelica and Diavolo just one example, positioning the twins as opposites. That Angelica loses her given name to her married name is not insignificant. Switching her main identifier represents a loss of identity following The Tenor's death. It is representative of the way in which strong-minded women often lose themselves to patriarchal institutions. It is equally representative of the problem of marriage constituting property, as is further

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218 Cox, "Gender, Conflict, Continuity," 32; "When [Angelica’s] escapades lead to tragedy; however, she eventually accepts the role of dutiful wife."
219 Jones, "Track to the Water's Edge," 230.
evidenced by Angelica’s repeated references to her husband as “Daddy”. This is highly indicative of the marital dynamic that undoubtedly exists to keep Angelica subordinate. Grand touches on this later in *The Beth Book*, before Angelica reappears. Beth “keep[s] her maiden surname for her father’s sake, and also because she could not see why she should lose her identity because she had married”.220 This contrasts with Angelica’s loss of her own.

The problem of women, names and identity has been critically analysed by many, though most famously by Betty Friedan in *The Feminine Mystique*. Friedan’s chapter "The Crisis in Woman’s Identity" begins by analysing the way women lose themselves to patriarchal definers such as “Tom’s wife, ... Mary’s mother”.221 While Friedan’s analysis is grounded in feminist theory of the 1960s, the crisis of identity existed long before Friedan thought to critically analyse why women often define themselves first by their married or maternal relationships. As the Victorians placed so much importance on marriage and motherhood, it was perhaps inevitable that when Angelica married she would become identified exclusively by that relationship. However, the other female protagonists in Grand’s Morningquest novels do not lose their first name as their identifiers. Evadne and Edith both remain as such, despite their marriages, and Ideala’s surname is never revealed. Friedan refers to this confusion of identity as a woman’s “role crisis”.222 She argues the same to be true in the 1960s as it was in the Victorian era: that young girls were able to grow up

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221 Friedan, *Feminine Mystique*, 53.
222 Friedan, *Feminine Mystique*, 57.
playing like their brothers, only to have their agency removed when they were, unpreparedly, expected to be women. This is the same experience as that of Angelica. While she enters into her marriage on her own terms, she experiences a Victorian role crisis where she is expected to become something new to her. However, her role crisis is appearance based. Externally, she is Mrs Kilroy, maintaining to the outside world that she has become a dutiful wife. However, Angelica silently moves into the role of writer for her husband’s political speeches, indicating that her role crisis is only a crisis in that she cannot identify herself as the writer of her husband’s speeches and instead must remain a silent underwriter. That she is only referred to again as Angelica following her first interactions with Beth and subsequent reprimanding from Ideala in *The Beth Book* is indicative of an awakening from the crisis.

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223 Friedan, *Feminine Mystique*, 57.
224 Jones, “Track to the Water’s Edge,” 230.
Chapter Three: The Beth Book and the “Cycle of Success”

The final Morningquest novel, *The Beth Book* (1897), shows the importance of mentoring as a cycle of success. The novel marks a return for both Ideala and Angelica, each playing important roles to the titular Beth Caldwell. Ann Heilmann argues that *The Beth Book* is Grand’s most important novel due to the full realisation of Beth’s character as a successful writer and orator by the end of the novel. While Heilmann notes that Beth’s success across both mediums “suggests that feminism bridges the gap between art and life, aesthetics and political activism”, it is significant that Beth only reaches her successes in both speaking and writing due to the influence of Ideala and Angelica. Further, Beth’s success is in part due to her friendship with Sir George Galbraith, a self-aware representation of Grand’s New Man figure. Beth’s success as a writer and orator hinges upon these relationships, particularly the kinship Angelica builds with Beth. In *The Beth Book*, Angelica moves from the position of mentee into supportive mentoring and friendship roles with Beth. It is this passing on of lessons learned that allows Beth to succeed as an orator and a writer. Mangum’s chapter “The Woman of Genius as a Wife” argues that *The Beth Book* “portrays a female writer and orator who not only succeeds in escaping many of the constraining Victorian roles for women but who takes up as her mission finding a message, a voice, and a form that will inspire others to fight for women’s

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Taking Mangum’s claim as the premise of this chapter, I argue that *The Beth Book* is Grand’s most important work due to its presentation and exploration of the crucial stage of cyclical mentoring, and also due to its clear inspirational aim that readers take up the fight for women’s rights.

When Ideala reappears in *The Beth Book*, she is introduced to Beth through Sir George Galbraith, who is a friend of Beth’s and Evadne’s second husband. Beth confesses to Sir George that she wants to write; more specifically, that she wants to write “for women, not for men.” Upon hearing this, Sir George offers to pass Beth’s writing along to Ideala, “to give you her opinion, which is really worth having, and she says she will with pleasure. You must know her. I am sure you would like her extremely.” Ideala’s introduction to Beth is based on Ideala being positioned to help Beth with her writing. This places Ideala from the outset as a vocational and artistic mentor to Beth’s writing. In contrast to Ideala’s first introduction to Angelica as someone to avoid, here Ideala is introduced to Beth with the indication that her opinion is worth having, establishing her with a degree of useful expertise which will aid Beth’s success as a writer.

**New Men, Old Men, and Vocational Mentoring**

Sir Galbraith, who is supportive and friendly to Beth, stands in contrast to Beth’s husband, Dr Daniel Maclure. With the exception of Dawne, whenever Grand introduces a male character he fits neatly into archetypal qualities of oppressive

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227 Mangum, *Married, Middlebrow, and Militant*, 150.
masculinity. For instance, with the exception of Dawne and Galbraith, men such as Father Ricardo and Angelica’s father warn the young women of Morningquest against Ideala. It is not coincidental that the men Grand regarded as New Men in her fiction are supporters of Ideala. Sir George respectfully presents Ideala as a helper and acknowledges her strengths. Conversely, Maclure is quick to judge Beth’s friendship with Galbraith, believing Galbraith to be “philandering after” her.\(^{230}\) Maclure’s obvious jealousy and desire to keep Beth from Galbraith, and Ideala by association, are symbolic of a last attempt of the old or traditional ways attempting to hinder change and progress toward reform. By doing so, Maclure is actively attempting to keep Beth from something that could threaten the status quo he is comfortable with. Further, as Mangum notes, this is Daniel’s attempt to distract Beth from his own questionable behaviours, which include vivisection, involvement in quarantining prostitutes and philandering.\(^{231}\) Beth’s refusal to abide by her husband’s demands signals the transition from old to new. It establishes Beth as a woman who not only refuses to submit but understands the way society can change if women only stood up for themselves more.

Rather than offering blind obedience, Beth refuses to abide and threatens to damage Daniel’s reputation. When Daniel threatens Beth in return, her reply is that “when you speak in that way, you show an utter want of knowledge in my

\(^{231}\) Mangum, *Married, Middlebrow, and Militant*, 147. “Beth marries a doctor, then she learns he is a vivisectionist, an administrator involved in the quarantining of prostitutes, and a philanderer. His career isolates Beth from respectable society and, and she teeters on the brink of a nervous breakdown until Evadne’s husband, Dr. Galbraith, now ambiguously positioned as a healer, sympathiser to women, yet medical manager of women, befriends her and encourages her ambitions as a writer.”
character. If I will not allow you to insult me, and bully me, and bluster at me, it is not likely that I will allow you to insult my friends. If Sir George Galbraith’s visits are to stop, I shall tell him the reason exactly.”232 Beth’s responses to her husband’s demands for her acquiescence are determined and display resoluteness that she will not be ruled in such a way. Jenny Bourne Taylor notes the centrality of the Morningquest novels to marriage debates at the time, stating they “played a central role in the ongoing debate on the nature of marriage as an aspect of the wider oppression of women”, noting that the late 1880s and 1890s saw a resurfacing of marriage debates as “fundamental questions”.233 Grand again subverts this oppression in Beth. Beth is her own free agent, refusing to acquiesce. Typically, readers had been presented with idyllic narratives of grand romances. Grand gives readers a new prescription of femininity, one that is strong and carried with volition.

Galbraith, after hearing of Dan’s jealousy, opts to stay away from Beth. However, even though he maintains his distance, he still offers Beth support. Galbraith’s “interest in her and his desire to help her” increases with their physical distance.234 Galbraith continues to ensure that Beth receives Ideala’s feedback on her writing in spite of this distance. Ideala’s feedback on Beth’s writing then becomes more important to Beth than Galbraith’s belief in her writing. Ideala “thought even better of [Beth’s] prospects than [Galbraith] did. Ideala ... wrote warmly on the subject and Sir George sent her letter to Beth.”235

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Here, Ideala’s mentoring of Beth is vocational: Ideala gives Beth feedback in order to better her career prospects. Ideala’s mentoring of Beth in this portion of the novel is done through letters, which provide feedback on Beth’s writing. By providing Beth with this feedback Ideala is not only ensuring Beth has a network of support to guide her toward career success but also ensures she does not feel isolated in her endeavours.

Reprimanding the Unsupportive Woman

The most notable of Ideala’s appearances in *The Beth Book* comes following her first face-to-face meeting with Beth. Despite their ongoing written correspondence, when they first meet, Ideala and Beth are not properly introduced by the ladies they are lunching with. Beth is, unknowingly, positioned by the ladies as an outsider. The women are aware of the true nature of Beth’s husband’s employment and are quick to judge Beth for supporting him.236 When Beth opposes the opinions of the women she is with, Beth leaves, embarrassed to have spoken out of turn. The ladies of the set, Mrs Carne, Lady Fulda, Mrs Orton Beg and Mrs Kilroy (Angelica), quickly respond to Beth leaving with judgement. Only then is it revealed to Ideala that the woman she has been corresponding with is Beth. When Ideala asks why she was not properly introduced to Beth, Mrs Carne answers that she “never dreamt you would care to know her”.237 Mrs Carne argues that Beth “was not in the least interesting...

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and I am sure she doesn’t look attractive”, Ideala responds with disappointment in the women’s behaviour:

You are to blame for that, all of you. ... I know how it has been. She is sensitive, and you have made her feel there is something wrong. You have treated her so that she expects no kindness from you, and so, from diffidence and restraint of tenderness, her face has set hard into coldness. But that is only a mask. How you treat each other, you women! And you are as wanting in discernment, too, as you are in kindness and sympathy. ... How can you expect her to be interesting if you take no interest in her?  

Here Ideala provides the most valuable piece of information readers are given in the novel regarding Grand’s views on supportive female relationships. Ideala’s reprimanding of the set, and specifically Angelica, not only marks the full realisation of Ideala’s purpose but also marks a complete illustration of Grand’s belief in women supporting women as an essential part of gender reform. Ideala, who is typically always positioned outside groups of society women such as this, points directly to the problem of such groups, referring to them as something different from herself in stating, “you women!” This draws attention to Ideala’s role as a reformer, as she is saying society women are responsible for the demise of female support. Literary reformers like Grand saw that women would not achieve anything if they continued to judge their female counterparts

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for differences that should be celebrated. Heilmann argues that New Women fiction “was more than a literary response to the social changes brought about by the Victorian women’s movement: it constituted, and conceived itself as, an agent of social and political transformation.” 240 For Grand, change and transformation meant that women needed to support other women, as is evidenced in Ideala’s reprimanding of the older women of the Kilroy set.

Ideala continues to remark on her disappointment in the women, arguing that if Beth “had been in a good position, everybody would have found her as singularly interesting as she, without caring rap for our position, has found us.” 241 This comment reinforces ideas first prescribed in Ideala: that her social position does not make Beth a less important or a less valuable member of society. As West argues, given that at this time “women were considered merely conveniences: they were useful for housework or copulation”, Ideala’s comments are significant. 242 Not only is Ideala stating that Beth’s value is not dependent on her social position, she is once again drawing attention to the fatal flaw of women, their failure to support each other, when they, for whatever reason, are positioned in typically “better” situations.

The older women of the Kilroy set are arguably representative of the Old Woman, who Grand explores through her consideration of intergenerational female relationships. While arguing that Beth’s understanding of language eludes men, Heilmann points toward a problem that operates for the Old

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240 Heilmann, New Woman Fiction, 4.
241 Grand, Beth Book, 408.
242 West, “New Woman,” 56.
Women as much as it does for men. Heilmann notes that “the torchbearers of patriarchy are reduced to a pantomime of linguistic prostration”. Both the Old Woman and the traditional men in *The Beth Book* are unable to process Beth’s command of language. Heilmann notes Beth’s brother Jim is reduced to “a battery of bad-tempered grunts”, while her Uncle James merely blinks, caught off guard without comprehension of reply. As the Old Woman aligns with patriarchal paradigms, she is reduced by Ideala’s reprimanding.

Angelica, however, as a younger woman, feels remorseful of her actions toward Beth. She states, “you make me feel ashamed of myself, Ideala, ... I ought to have known. But I could think of nothing in her but that horrible business. I shall certainly do my best now, however, when we return from town, to cultivate her acquaintance, if she will let me.” While Angelica has realised the error of her ways, Ideala’s reprimand of her evidences Ideala’s displeasure that Angelica has lost herself in her marriage and fallen under the influence of women who shame other women. Morgan Fritz notes that “the complicated problem of establishing trust, cooperation, and unified purpose between an unequal female pair” is a salient feature of “the female orator novels”. Fritz further notes that the force of such purpose either exposes the lack of support or “offers the hope of a deep-seated connection that metaphorizes the potential of a widespread women’s movement”.

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245 Grand, *Beth Book*, 408. The “horrible business” Angelica refers to here is Beth’s husband’s regular practice of vivisection.
have deep connections, Grand’s novels indicate the potential for large-scale women’s movements. This exchange between Ideala and Angelica is evidence of Grand’s use of this prominent feature. Grand has taken a defining feature of female orator fiction, in which *The Beth Book* is categorised, and subverts it by re-establishing trust and unity between Ideala and Angelica to ensure readers are given hope, as Fritz explains. By traditional standards, Angelica is positioned higher than Ideala because she is married. However, she has broken the trust Ideala worked to establish with her in *The Heavenly Twins*. Ideala’s reprimand reminds Angelica of their unified purpose in supporting other women. Angelica may be positioned in a higher station by societal standards, but Ideala is the one who is morally superior. Grand has drawn attention to the complicated nature of mentoring. It can be difficult to navigate. While Ideala has remained committed, Angelica has not. In this moment, their mentoring relationship is at risk of failure. However, as Angelica sees the error in her ways, she recommits to the relationship. This, too, is further evidence of Grand’s argument that presenting a perfect ideal of femininity is detrimental to progress. Angelica’s faltering supports the notion that progress toward reform is based on ongoing development rather than assumed predestined perfection.

Angelica actively works to rectify her behaviour by seeking out Beth to apologise and offer her friendship. Importantly, this point in the novel is where Angelica becomes identified again by her first name rather than her married name of Mrs Kilroy, implying that Angelica has stepped back on an equal footing with Ideala. When Beth and Angelica’s friendship sparks, Beth notes that there is good in both men and women. Angelica responds, stating, “Oh, I’m thankful to
hear you say ‘men and women’ ... Let us help one another. Any attempt to separate the interests of the sexes, as women here and there, and men generally, would have them separated, is fatal to the welfare of the whole race.” This supports Grand’s argument that gender reform was for the betterment of both sexes. Angelica also speaks directly to the women’s movement, which, importantly, Ideala and Dawne noted Angelica would be part of when they claimed she would be “one of us”. Angelica states that “this woman movement is towards the perfection of life, not towards the disruption of it”. Angelica mirrors Ideala’s earlier comment that “women are their own worst enemies just now”. This suggests that the women failing to support each other is what is disrupting society. If they were to support each other rather than being their own “worst enemies”, as is Ideala and Angelica’s message, society would only benefit. Ideala’s influence on Angelica becomes evident as she, too, has become someone for Beth to look up to. This contrasts claims made by Nathalie Saudo-Welby, who argues that The Beth Book “demonstrates that the allies are virtually non-existent and that it is well nigh impossible to overcome the obstacles”. Beth does have allies, and she does overcome her obstacles both by her own volition and as a result of the guidance from her allies.

While the Morningquest novels are littered with terrible examples of masculinity, it is important that reform engages men in a way that will also make them better. Norma Clarke notes that New Woman writing was less about

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248 Grand, Beth Book, 429.
249 Grand, Beth Book, 429.
250 Grand, Beth Book, 430.
251 Saudo-Welby, "Narrational Authority," 47.
raising women to be superior to men than raising men to a woman’s higher level. She further notes that women “were not to do this individually ... they were to do it by unifying together with other women”. Angelica further notes of the need, stating that men and women should “help one another. Any attempt to separate the interests of the sexes, as women here and there, and men, generally would have them separated, is fatal to the welfare of the whole race. ... As if we were not utterly bound up in one another, and destined to rise or fall together!” Angelica’s comment that men and women depended on each other for mutual success in the betterment of society is evidence that reform needed to operate beyond just women. Further, it clarifies the importance of characters such as Dawne and Galbraith, who are not examples of nineteenth-century toxic masculinity. Their role is to support the collective group of women that is finally seen to band together in Beth.

Ideala’s relationship to Beth as a fellow writer is important. Ideala questions Beth in much the same way as she questioned Angelica in The Heavenly Twins: encouraging her to challenge things she did not understand. When Ideala sees Beth alone, she approaches her and questions her in open-ended ways, designed to make Beth think. For example, Beth’s responses, are more detailed than Angelica’s. Where Angelica’s answers promoted her own thought, Beth’s answers are considered, suggesting that she has, to an extent, undertaken her own processes of learning, which Ideala aims to enhance. When Beth attends a meeting with Ideala, described to her as “a meeting of the new

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252 Clarke, “Feminism,” 96.
253 Grand, Beth Book, 429.
order which Ideala had founded ... Beth was one of a semi-circle of ladies who sat on the platform behind the chair. There were subjects of grave social importance under discussion, and most of the speaking was exceedingly good, wise, temperate and not wanting in humour.”

This establishes Ideala’s success in building a larger female support network, one which has a voice and is similar in nature to the bluestockings or the Coffee Shop meetings popular at various times in both the Victorian era and later in the twentieth century. Given that, as Heilmann argues, the absence of female bonding “reinforces patriarchal power structures”, Grand’s inclusion of a female group in this way subverts these power structures. It also demonstrates that these networks were instrumental in gender reform as they allowed women safe spaces to discuss ideas. Ideala has established her “new order”, and in doing so contributes to the culmination of her narrative arc. Ideala has become a fully supportive mentor to women and is actively working toward gender reform, with female support networks acting as the backbone of her success.

While in attendance at this meeting, Beth is encouraged to speak, delivering a speech entitled “The Desecration of Marriage”. As Beth had recently separated from her husband, she speaks about marriage with regard to the failure of hers. While Beth’s speech is not documented, the women’s response to her is. Beth is initially confused by their response, however Ideala reassures her that the eruption of noise from the crowd in attendance is

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cheering, not jeering. Beth’s successful speech signifies that she, along with Ideala and Angelica before her, has moved through her own becoming stage due to the fact that the audience cheers her, rather than jeers. Saudo-Welby, however, argues that Beth “is not a spokeswoman for women’s emancipation” due to her speeches not being documented within the novel. However, as her speech is met with cheers from the women at the meeting, it seems more evident that Beth does succeed as a spokeswoman for women’s emancipation. Similarly, it marks success for Ideala’s mentoring and work toward reform. She has brought women together in a safe place to discuss ideas temperately, and in a supportive environment. Ideala’s arc has built the platform upon which the younger women in the novels stand to reach their full potential.

**Men, Women and the Argument for a Collective**

The importance of man and woman united in the women’s movement is a significant part of Grand’s argument for gender equality. Angelica’s earlier statement regarding perfecting of life rather than a disruption of it marks an interconnection between the Morningquest novels and the type of criticism Grand herself had been receiving in the popular presses at the time. As Mangum notes, Grand and the figure of the New Woman were lampooned by cartoonists, parodied in *Punch Magazine* and consistently presented in satirical and threatening ways. By emphasising that the women’s movement was as much for men as it was for women, and that their aim was not to disrupt life as the

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Victorians knew it, Angelica is supporting the counter-argument that the New Woman was not threatening.

The ladies’ conversation then moves into a discussion of what the collective “us” is to do next. Importantly, the women are planning their next move toward emancipation. Importantly, Beth, beginning to find her voice, points out that “discussion is not enough ... we should experiment. It is very well to hold opinions and set up theories, but opinions and theories are alike valueless until they are tested by experiment.”260 Here, Beth is saying that women need to mobilise the ideas they are discussing if they want their movement toward gender reform to be successful. Angelica supports Beth’s claim, adding that Beth’s statement “is very true, especially as applied to women – if they are ever to advance”.261 Heilmann notes that novels produced at the time *The Beth Book* was published often fell into the category of the “feminist protest novel”.262 She further notes that this type of novel became intrinsically linked “to an organised women’s movement”.263 The discussion taking place in this scene links to a collective mission between the women in the novel as well as hinting toward reader action, suggesting that merely reading protest novels was not enough unless the reader then herself protested. While Saudo-Welby is somewhat dismissive of Beth’s successes, she does note that Grand’s use of collective pronouns such as “us” and “we” “brings together the women who had the courage to make things change in the second half of the nineteenth

century’. Given that the heroines of the trilogy all refer to the collective of women of which they are a part, Grand has demonstrated her women to be active change-makers in gender reform.

Angelica then speaks directly about the movement. Her argument is complex, suggesting that reform is only possible if women set their differences aside and work collectively for the greater good of society. Angelica states:

Women ... don't follow their leaders loyally and consistently; and they have little idea of discipline; their tendency is to go off on side issues and break up into little cliques. They are largely actuated by petty personal motives, by petty jealousies, by pettiness of all kinds. One amongst them may arise here and there, and do something great to honour them all; but they do not honour her for it – perhaps because something in the way she dresses, or some trick of manner, does not meet with approval of the majority. Women are forever stumbling over trifling details. To prove themselves right pleases them better than to arrive at the truth; and a vulgar personal triumph is of more moment than the triumph of a great cause. In these things they are practically not a bit better than men.

Angelica here is drawing attention to the way women fail when they do not work together. She is saying, like Beth, that until women work collectively toward a common goal, they will not achieve their purpose. Angelica and Beth’s

264 Saudo-Welby, "Narrational Authority," 49.
265 Grand, Beth Book, 430.
arguments are supported by Mrs Orton Beg, who adds that knowledge and understanding will eventually lead to an awakening among women. Taylor supports this notion, arguing that educating women on “the reality of marriage” underpinned much of the early feminists’ response to the institution, and was believed to be a way out of the predicament of unworthy unions. The women are detailing the way that, when they work together, they will succeed.

This conversation also indicates that Mrs Orton Beg has changed her own way of thinking. After Beth’s first encounter with Mrs Orton Beg at lunch with the Kilroy set, Beth’s impression of her was that she did not like her. Beth questions Angelica about this, and Angelica responds, stating that “we all want you ... if you will forgive our first mistake with regard to you, and come out of yourself and be one of us”. Angelica’s comment operates in two ways. First, she encourages forgiveness from Beth for the Kilroy set’s behaviour toward her. Second, she promotes confidence in Beth to be herself, without hesitation, because she will be accepted for who she is. Additionally, Angelica points out that Mrs Orton Beg has changed her ways after hearing of Edith Beale’s disastrous marriage, and subsequent death in The Heavenly Twins. Mangum notes that Edith’s contraction of syphilis “serves a metaphoric function; it becomes an infectious metonym for the moral illness Grand attributed to the ruthless, irresponsible, destructive exploitation of women.” Mrs Orton Beg’s change in opinion after witnessing Edith’s demise is indicative of the way that

267 Grand, Beth Book, 428.
268 Mangum, Married, Middlebrow and Militant, 91.
knowledge functions for progress. Undoubtedly, Mrs Orton Beg had been demonstrating such a moral illness as Mangum notes, where the moral illness of man is paralleled in women, but on different terms. However, knowledge and understanding of how Edith’s marriage had failed her has enlightened Mrs Orton Beg. The only way out of the social equivalent of a parasitic infection is a change in understanding. This small interaction implies hope. Things in Morningquest were changing, much in the way Grand hoped the real world would as a result of the ideas she formed in her novels. The Old Women were beginning to understand the problematic nature of their ignorance. The New Women were active in women’s movements to ensure that women of their generation and the next would have a better future.

During their lunch, Mrs Orton Beg encourages Beth to speak openly and frankly, as this “is what you will find yourself called to do among us.” The use of the collective “us” supports the claim that she, too, is now part of Ideala’s following. Beth admits that she has only just begun to realise that speaking openly about what concerned her was a necessity, stating, “I have just begun to know the necessity for open discussion ... I do not know how we can arrive at happiness in life if we do not try to discover the sources of misery.” This realisation comes with a further admittance that Beth does not think herself worthy to discuss matters besides that which men and women openly discuss on proper occasions. Beth’s claim indicates that she is aware that she is still

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processing new knowledge, only now realising the repression and propriety of "proper occasions".

Readers and Writers

While many of Grand’s heroines were avid readers and writers, Beth is the most prolific of the women. Outside of Ideala, Beth is the only other female character who makes a living out of writing. While it is noted that Ideala writes poetry, the specifics of her other literary work are not detailed in the trilogy. Beth’s writing, however, has a purpose in that she aims to write specifically to give her readers hope. She states, in a conversation with Galbraith, “The work that lasts is the work that cheers. Give us something with hope in it – something that appeals to the best part of us – something which, while we read puts us in touch with fine ideals, and makes us feel better than we are.”

Interestingly, Galbraith’s reference to works that cheer speaks to Beth’s “Desecration of Marriage” speech, which receives cheers, not jeers, from Beth’s audience. Beth extends her literary vision by saying:

I would rather have written a simple story, full of the faults of my youth and ignorance, but with some one passage in it that would put heart and hope into some one person, than all the brilliant barren stuff. And I’m going to write for women, not for men ... Men entertain each other with intellectual ingenuities and Art and Style, while women are busy with the

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great problems of life, and are striving might and main to make it beautiful.272

These comments from Beth are significant in understanding the link between reading, writing, the New Woman and, more importantly, the figure of the mentor. Not only has Beth readdressed the theme of the flawed woman, she is saying that a text that gives women hope is one of their best defences in success. Further, she is saying that she is going to be the one to write it.

Much like Ideala and Angelica, Beth’s youth is one full of rebellion and self-discovery. Hers is as much a story of development as those of Ideala and Angelica. However, Beth has discovered the way in which to spread the message of reform further – by writing it. She is suggesting that one small passage in a book can be enough to give the reader hope. Beth wants to write to inspire women. If women are presented with texts demonstrative of hope, and being better for the good of society, they will actively take these lessons into their own lives. Beth’s statements about books, readership and hope addresses the way books can operate as mentors for women who may not know anyone willing to provide them with guidance. The hope Beth refers to is the changing of individual and collective circumstance. This is true of readers that exist textually inside the world of Morningquest, but it is also Grand’s subtle way of indicating to her own readers that these novels are meant to give them something for which to hope and aim.

Beth understands that a reader’s experience of a novel is important. She knows that there is a degree of kinship found between reader and author, developed over a reader’s interpretation of a novel. Of her own reading experience, Beth is noted to have “felt a strange kindred with them; she entered into their sorrows, understood their difficulties, was uplifted by their aspirations, and glorified in their successes.” This is indicative of the way novels can make their readers feel as though they are part of the author’s world. She is describing reader experience that transverses from page to reality. Beth’s mimetic response to novels is a critical part of her development into a successful writer. It is further noted that Beth feels more at home with novels and writers than she does with “the petty people about her,” indicating the power of the written word in developing a reader’s reality. This influence is described as having “delighted her when she found in them some small trait or habit which she herself had already developed or contracted ... Under the influence of nourishing books, her mind, sustained and stimulated became nervously active.” Mangum notes that in The Beth Book, “Grand focuses on the sources of inspiration that are available to the female artist, particularly those that shape her personal history.” Beth’s relationship to books, reading and writing shape her history as sources of inspiration. When Beth finds herself trapped in an unhappy marriage, she regularly borrows books from the library and reads without her husband’s knowledge... It is the kindred feeling Beth

273 Grand, Beth Book, 389.
274 Grand, Beth Book, 389.
275 Grand, Beth Book, 389.
276 Mangum, Married, Middlebrow, and Militant, 152.
277 Grand, Beth Book, 388.
finds in her reading that gives her hope something will change in her situation, "which should bring her up out of all this and set her apart eventually in another sphere".  
It was books that gave Beth comfort in the belief that she would one day be removed from the domestic sphere in which she was so unhappy. In giving Beth such a strong relationship with books, Grand demonstrates that these supportive and inspiring textual relationships are an essential part of a young woman's development. Additionally, she proves that this type of inspiration and guidance is readily available, even to women who may not feel supported.

Beth's relationship to reading and writing is central to her success toward the end of the novel. By the time *The Beth Book* concludes, Beth is a published author and a successful orator. She, like Ideala, has separated from her overbearing husband, and has made her own way in the world. Critically, while Angelica and Ideala continue to work for the cause of women's movements, Beth is reaping the benefits of their labour. Ideala notes that she wants more for Beth than working with women as she does. She further states that while the women working for women's movements are responsible for bringing about change for their sex, Beth is in a position to benefit from those changes. Mangum notes that Beth's success depends on her independence. She notes that this independence is marked by a freedom from both the male literary establishment and literary journalism.

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first novel, Beth finds her own voice “strong and pure” and “unconsciously ceased to follow in other people’s footsteps, and struck out herself boldly”. She no longer depends on hope in other writers’ words as she has written her own for other women to find hope in.

In publishing her first novel, Beth encounters Arthur Cayley Pounce, a literary critic representative of the male literary establishment. When Beth challenges his ideas about literature and women, he threatens to ruin her career. However, Beth’s novel is published anonymously, and Cayley Pounce praises it as “a new light of extraordinary promise on the literary horizon”. Cayley Pounce’s review indicates that a woman’s voice is valuable. Further, it draws attention to the way women would often be silenced by men. By publishing anonymously, as Grand herself did, Beth destabilises the literary establishment. That Ideala and Angelica’s mentoring of Beth ensured her success is a testament to the power of women supporting other women. Beth ends the trilogy independent of male influence. She is successfully supporting herself through her own writing and speaking engagements. Beth would not have reached that level of success without Ideala’s vocational mentoring of her writing, and Angelica’s supportive friendship and encouragement of her public speaking. Beth’s achievements are demonstrative of the power of the cycle of mentoring where women pass on their knowledge and support to other women for the greater good. Mangum notes that Beth’s connection to other women “is not an isolated success ... her relationships with other women pinpoint the first

task of the fledgling nineteenth century female artist”. Norma Clarke supports Mangum’s claim, stating that Beth’s success in finding her freedom comes, in part, from “a community of like-minded souls who encourage her, help her develop her ideas, discuss the position of women at great length and eventually support her in her new career as a magnetic public speaker and activist in the women’s movement”. Importantly, Grand ends the novel with an indication that Beth, too, will continue to support other women to reach their full potential. The novel states that once Beth settles into her success, she “even began to work again, but rather with a view to making herself useful to her friends than to satisfy any ambition or craving of her own”. This indicates that Beth will use her success to lift women up and inspire them to do the same.

The real-world ramification of a trilogy of novels that shape the cyclical nature of mentoring was that women began to take up the ideals presented in these texts. Mangum notes the link, stating of The Beth Book that the “novel constructs a portrait of turn-of-the-century literary culture, and, after depicting Beth’s triumph in that world, it then fantasizes an expansion of literary middlebrow feminist culture beyond the boundaries of print and into the public, ‘political’ world”. This expansion of triumph into real world scenarios further attests to Grand’s emphasis on what the novel was capable of inciting. While it may have been a fantasy for Grand at the time of writing, the novels do encourage readers to turn that fantasy into a reality. Beth’s success becomes a

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285 Mangum, Married, Middlebrow, and Militant, 155.
286 Clarke, “Feminism,” 101–2
287 Grand, Beth Book, 537.
288 Mangum, Married, Middlebrow, and Militant, 147.
demonstration of what women were capable of. Further, Beth’s story becomes one of hope that women everywhere will discover their own potential.
Conclusion

Contemporary journalist W. H. Stead notes the success of Grand’s fiction, stating that she “stepped with the heroism of forlorn hope, carrying with her a bomb of dynamite, which she exploded with wonderful results”.

The results Stead is referring to is the way Grand’s fiction aided in enacting change. Grand believed in the power of novels as a medium of inciting real-world action. While Ideala goes on to mentor other characters in the Morningquest trilogy, she was also intended to act as a mentor for Grand’s readers. Grand notes this importance in an 1898 essay published in *Fortnightly Review* titled “Marriage Questions in Fiction: the standpoint of a typical modern woman,” that “it may be a poem, it may be a passage in an otherwise worthless book, a paragraph in a paper, or a chance to remark, to which we owe our individual awakening.” Here Grand is addressing the importance of the written word in influencing change. Grand herself notes that this “would seem to be the reason people are so often asked to name the source from which help came, and more particularly the books which have been epoch-making in the history of the development of their minds – the formation of their ideas.” For Grand, the role fiction plays in forming ideas is critical.

Grand’s belief in the power of words is further explored in “Marriage Questions”. For Grand, it was not always the popular titles that were the most

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290 Grand, “Marriage Questions in Fiction,” 78
influential. Grand believed that often it was the unsuspecting novels which were set to cause greater impact:

The kind which make no immediate stir upon their appearance, but gradually work their way from hand to hand, are read with reflection, temperately discussed and make a lasting impression. The influence of these, spreading as it does, beneath the surface insidiously, becomes a power for good or evil before it is suspected of being anything but one of the run of the ordinary of ephemeral productions which come, flash for a moment in newspaper notices, find their way into circulating libraries, are taken up for a little and then forgotten for the next on the list.292

Novels, while influential, had the power to enact a vision quietly and unassumingly beneath the surface, where it could grow, develop and build without detection by a society insistent on condemning change more generally and gender reforms specifically. Books could encourage evil, as evidenced in the publication of certain parts of the Bible that Grand challenges throughout the Morningquest trilogy, exampled by her exploration of the parable of the buried talents in *The Heavenly Twins*. Importantly, however, books were also capable of inciting good. The theme of action beneath the surface is sustained throughout Grand’s trilogy, as it is addressed here. However, in “Marriage Questions”, Grand says words that spread quietly and unsuspectingly are capable of both good and evil. The deciding factor in the success of a novel in one direction or the other is

reader reflection, and the temperate discussion of ideas. Novels that encourage
such thought, rather than simply dictating ideals taken up too quickly and
without consideration, however, are more a power for good.

Grand also addresses the “staying power” of fiction. It is not ephemeral
like the periodical presses Grand was apt to publish in. A well-written novel had
the power to carry on through generations, ensuring its ideas and themes could
be taken up by readers many years after it was written. Mangum argues that
Grand’s novels “demonstrate the power of fiction to participate in dynamic
processes of social change and remind us that literature as well as law has
created the political contexts in which we find ourselves today”. 293 This
argument emphasises that despite evading critical attention for much of the
early twentieth century, Grand’s novels, and literature more broadly, has
influenced the world in ways greater than initially understood. Grand herself
returns to the idea of epoch-making books in the same “Marriage Questions”
essay, arguing, “The epoch-making book, of the kind which is not recognised for
what it is all at once, is generally a book of more solid literary qualities than its
slower companion, which immediately appeals to the popular taste, and this is
one reason for its slower, surer career.” 294 She further notes, “It is the finer
minds that first appreciate it, and they, as it were, teach it at their leisure to such
of us are capable of instruction.” 295 Grand is not only arguing that books have
significant potential to influence but that within them lies the power to

293 Mangum, Married, Middlebrow, and Militant, 35.
influence, or mentor, readers and companions of readers. The figure of the "finer mind" is taken up by Grand's heroines, Ideala, Angelica and Beth, who all serve to demonstrate to readers what is possible when women support each other.

The ideas manifested in novels did have the power to enact change, provided that the reader was able to take the ideas into their own lives and use their lessons for good rather than evil. Grand also addresses the importance of reading material which the reader may not necessarily agree with. This is an idea explored in Ideala and Claudia's relationship. Grand argues that reading is an essential part of the growth of humanity.296 Claudia’s support of Ideala into a world of reform she did not entirely agree with is demonstrative of the importance of reading and understanding ideas. It leads to greater understanding, knowledge and, most importantly, acceptance of a belief system quite different from the reader’s own. The preface to Ideala addresses this, with Grand claiming, “We hate and despise in our ignorance, and grow weak; but love and pity thrive on knowledge, and to love and pity we owe all the beauty of life, and all our highest power.”297 She further claims objection to be a “miserable state, and a dangerous one, because it stops our growth by robbing us of half our power to love”.298 Grand understood that knowledge was power. Not only that it was power but it also led ultimately to a greater good. What readers

297 Grand, Ideala, 6.
298 Grand, Ideala, 6.
would do with it would lead to real-world mentors, using knowledge, understanding and acceptance as central to the imparting of their ideas.

Mangum notes that the New Woman, as she was portrayed in fiction, became a “character, a set of demands, and a model for female readers”, who "expanded into the nineteenth-century imagination by introducing what we would now call feminist issues and feminist characters into the realm of popular fiction". Critically, for Grand’s brand of New Woman fiction, these feminist characters were mentors. The influence that literature had on real-world action is noted outside of New Woman studies. New Woman literature is no different. The reason it was ridiculed and considered lowbrow was because the ideas these novels presented challenged the traditional Victorian standard of normalcy. New Woman scholarship is a growing field of exciting research, suggesting the impact of these books was far greater than earlier criticism understood it to be. Even in early academic studies of the New Woman, critics “continued the tradition of degrading them”.

Importantly, and conversely to the claims made by Angelique Richardson, Megan Kennedy and Andrea L. Broomfield, Sarah Grand’s Morningquest trilogy could and did enact real-world change. *Ideala*, *The Heavenly Twins* and *The Beth Book* all function together to give readers an encouraging demonstration of how to be more than patriarchal society mandated. Mangum notes that Grand’s novels, and *The Heavenly Twins*

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300 Aslami, *Dream Life of Citizens*, 135.
301 Aslami, *Dream Life of Citizens*, 134-35. Aslami notes this “second wave of critics ... argue that Grand’s novel features containment strategies that maintain the status quo of gender, class, sexuality, and racial norms, or they implicate its feminist rage within a market economy where scandal and sensation sell”.
in particular, “emphasize the necessity for women to learn to critique their culture if they want to resist it or transform it.”\textsuperscript{302} Arguably, then, these novels operate prescriptively, to give women readers an understanding of the problem of patriarchy and propose ways in which readers can work to transform it – by supporting each other through their personal turmoils.

Central to Grand’s presentation of the New Woman as a mentor is the fact that it is absolutely essential for these female support networks to continue on. The novels do not intend to end with the next generation but rather continue to grow as more and more women link arms with each other in support and take the concept even further. Taylor notes this important point in her introduction to \textit{The Beth Book}. Taylor states, “\textit{The Beth Book} evolves out of \textit{Ideala} and \textit{The Heavenly Twins}, just as Beth herself draws strength from Ideala and Angelica Kilroy. It also exceeds them, just as Beth’s story concludes – unlike those of so many fictional New Women – with success, happiness, even romance.”\textsuperscript{303} This ending, of success and happiness, demonstrates that mentoring must be cyclical if it is to be of any true value. While Ideala and Angelica end \textit{Ideala} and \textit{The Heavenly Twins} respectively with a degree of success, Grand’s social purist style of feminism still believes in happiness found through traditional institutions. However, that degree of happiness would only be found if women gained more control of their own lives, as Grand examples in the Morningquest novels. Each of Grand’s heroines, Ideala, Angelica and Beth, expand on each other’s strengths. Beth has found her voice by the end of the

\textsuperscript{302} Mangum, \textit{Married, Middlebrow, and Militant}, 90.
\textsuperscript{303} Taylor, “Introduction,” 9.
novel and is actively using it to spread her message of emancipation to other women, suggesting that while her story concludes, her message does not. Further, Beth ends with success, happiness and a hint toward real romance. Mangum notes that women writers like Grand, who presented an ideal that challenged typical Victorian representations of women, contributed more to the fight for women’s rights than they have previously been given credit for. Arguably then, Grand’s novels were not just an invitation for readers to join the fight but also a model on which to base their actions. Clarke, too, notes this, stating that the “popular novels of the 1890s which articulated women’s grievances and suggested feminist alternatives had considerable impact and are a vital part of our heritage”. These novels worked because they represented the reality of women’s situations outside of the idyllic. The Morningquest novels gave readers hope that society could change for the better.

This thesis has explored Ideala’s role throughout the trilogy and the importance of mentoring as a cyclical process. Additionally, it has placed supportive female relationships centrally in determining the success of women’s reform movements. The two concepts as they relate to the New Woman are intertwined. First, a woman could not be a New Woman if she was not supportive of, and supported by, other women. Additionally, she could not be a New Woman if she did not act as a mentor for the next generation of women. This thesis has aligned the New Woman concept with these two factors of successful reform through its analysis of three stages of mentoring: becoming

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304 Mangum, Married, Middlebrow, and Militant, 2.
305 Clarke, “Feminism,” 104.
a mentor, active mentoring and protégé turned mentor, demonstrating the
cyclical nature of the mentoring process. As is still the case with feminist
movements, the work of current generations is primarily done to benefit the
next. The passing on of knowledge and understanding from woman to woman is
the key factor in the success of mentoring. The cyclical nature of female
mentoring relationships ensures the progress of reform movements throughout
generations to come. It safeguards future generations against regression into
patriarchal control. Further, it highlights the importance of caring for your
fellow human. Much of Grand’s feminist arguments were based heavily in the
betterment of both men and women, for the greater good of society. Perhaps
now, more than ever, these lessons are vital to the betterment of the current
global climate, not limited to feminist studies but also relevant to newer areas of
unrest, including marginalised groups of LGBTQI communities and racial
divisions.

By considering Grand’s work through the lens of female mentoring we
are able to rethink who the New Woman was. This allows space for further
research to be done in both the fields of both New Woman studies and women’s
studies. Additionally, this thesis opens new avenues of thinking within the realm
of New Woman research as well as extending the ideas presented into new
fields of study, such as the importance, relevance and success of female
homosocial bonds and mentoring. While the scope of such projects lies outside
the parameters of a thesis such as this, I have endeavoured to engage with texts
in new ways, which opens exciting possibilities for literary studies and
understandings of late nineteenth-century feminist literature. Further, it
considers mentoring outside of traditional understandings. This thesis has demonstrated that the scope of successful mentoring lies greatly outside of these limitations. Mentoring between women specifically is a critical part of the success of women’s rights and the gender reform movement. The fight starts and ends with the figure of the mentor.
Bibliography


