TITLE PAGE

FROM SURFACE TO PSYCHE: PSYCHOLOGICAL REALISM IN VICTORIAN FICTION

by

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ABSTRACT

The study of Victorian literature has been supported by substantial scholarly work, including, but not limited to, the feminist approach presented by Gilbert and Gubar. This thesis combines the influence of nineteenth-century psychology in Victorian novels with contemporary scholarship to further conversations of women and gender studies. Further, it explores how psychological realism, the primary literary approach of the period, was used to challenge societal expectations of the nineteenth century. The thesis argues that Thomas Hardy and Sarah Grand create psychologically real characters to advocate for the unconventional Victorian woman, rather than to condemn her.

The main theoretical framework comes from nineteenth-century psychological texts, which serve as a lens through which to read Hardy's *The Return of the Native* and Grand's *The Heavenly Twins*. The four primary theories that support the thesis are James Crichton-Browne's "On Dreamy Mental States," Jean É Esquirol's "Monomania," John Abercrombie's "Philosophical, Local, and Arbitrary Association," and William James's "Habit." The inclusion of these psychological theories is not meant to diagnose or compartmentalize female characters, as is often the case with contemporary psychoanalytical approaches. Rather, the thesis argues that Hardy and Grand adapted familiar concepts of their time to challenge gender expectations in the nineteenth century. The project pairs Crichton-Browne's concepts of dreamy mental states and Esquirol's definitions of monomania to Hardy's novel, particularly to the character of Eustacia Vye. On the surface, she appears as a self-centered and mischievous character; however, when paired alongside ideas of dreamy mental states and monomania, it becomes apparent that Eustacia's motives are a result of coping with the entrapments of a patriarchal society. Additionally, the project contextualizes Sarah Grand's use of habit and association, as

recognized by nineteenth-century physicians such as Abercrombie and James, to understand how reoccurring images in the text provide Grand an outlet to challenge a male-dominated society and to express the confines of gender by anticipating concepts of performativity.

DEDICATION

"For if contemporary women do now attempt the pen with energy and authority, they are able to do so only because their eighteenth- and nineteenth-century foremothers struggled in isolation that felt like illness, alienation that felt like madness, obscurity that felt like paralysis to overcome the anxiety of authorship that was endemic to their literary subculture."

- Sandra Gilbert and Susan Gubar, *The Madwoman in the Attic*

To my literary foremothers.

This thesis would not be possible without your unyielding advocacy and determination.

Where would we be if you did not pick up the pen?

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TABLE OF CONTENTS

Introduction: In with the Old: The Value of Nineteenth-Century Psychology

Victorian literature and nineteenth-century psychology are difficult to separate as they greatly influence one another. Scholar Athena Vrettos states that the psychology from the nineteenth century included "a collection of works by writers who drew upon philosophy, social theory, evolutionary theory, physiology, neurology, alienism, and psychiatry. These writers also drew upon creative literature for insight into human behavior, motivation, and psychological development" (69). Victorian writers and psychiatrists alike were attempting to uncover the inner workings of the mind in order to understand morality and character development. With new scientific advances, especially with Darwin's theory of evolution, those living in Victorian society were doubting what they thought they knew, while seeking answers for the unknown. Scientific and technological advancements, alongside questions about marriage, gender, and education, presented significant challenges to the Victorians. As a result, the Victorians studied, tested, and tried many things as an attempt to figure out what was real and what was not. Telepathy and telekinesis, for example, were genuine areas of interest and study, although they are now recognized as pseudoscience.

In fact, the connection between psychology and Victorian literature runs so deep that we have evidence of several authors' curiosities and interests in the subject of psychology. Readers of Charlotte Brontë's *Villette* may easily recognize influences of psychology, as the character of Lucy Snowe is quite frankly obsessed with physiognomy (facial features and body language believed to be indicative of one's character) and phrenology (studies of the actual shape of the skull). Although physiognomy and phrenology became widely debunked by the late nineteenth-century, and therefore classified as pseudoscience, these theories were initially linked to science-based psychology (Taylor and Shuttleworth 4-5). Much like *Jane Eyre, Villette* is recognized as a

semi-autobiographical work, alluding to Brontë's own involvement with the theories of physiognomy and phrenology. Evidence for this is further solidified in the textual endnotes provided in the Modern Library edition of the text, stating the following: "[Brontë] refers to the pseudo-science of phrenology, which claimed to read a person's character by the form of her skull. Popular in the middle of the nineteenth century, phrenology was a great interest of Brontë's" (576). Not only do these concepts both blatantly and discreetly appear in Victorian fiction novels, but Victorian authors were aware, interested, and knowledgeable in such subjects.

The aim of the thesis is to recognize the value of nineteenth-century psychology and to contextualize how it functions in Victorian fiction novels. Clearly, many theories of the time were disproven, while others contributed to long-lasting stereotypes. It is no surprise that definitions of medical conditions and psychological theory were often targeted at women and non-Eurocentric characters. Hysteria, for example, is one of the most obvious and withstanding "conditions" that structurally aimed to displace women. Concepts of physiognomy—the ability to judge one's character on physical appearance alone—were especially driven by stereotypes. In fact, physiognomist John Caspar Lavater's foundations for the theory are rooted in sexist ideologies; he goes so far as to claim that "a woman with a beard is not so disgusting as a woman who acts the freethinker…" (17). Despite the problematic nature of the largely disproven theories and scientific texts (problems which should rightfully be addressed), there is an obvious influence of such ideas within Victorian fiction that cannot be separated or ignored.

While some authors used ideas of hysteria, physiognomy, and phrenology to stereotype and disparage marginalized groups, others were rhetorically savvy in their approach and inclusion of the ideas presented by physicians and philosophers. As this thesis argues, Thomas Hardy (1840–1928) and Sarah Grand (1854–1943) incorporate Victorian psychological ideas to

critique patriarchal standards of the nineteenth century, rather than to entrap their characters into a diagnosis that perpetuates gender constraints. Though Hardy's demonstration may be a bit more subtle than Grand's advocation for female independence, his work equally contributes to discussions of the "New Victorian Woman." As Talia Schaffer notes, male authors are not to be automatically ruled out when considering feminist and gender studies: "This definition [of the New Woman] allows us to include male writers like Hardy… who may have been indifferent or even inimical to feminist activism, but who employed these characteristically innovative techniques to depict strong women in their fiction" (733). My decision to include Hardy is intentional, as many of his literary choices suggest a desire for female liberation. Further, a close reading of these two particular texts will demonstrate how both Hardy and Grand took familiar psychological concepts of their time and flipped them upside down; rather than presenting readers with a conformist narrative, their texts suggest a desire, and perhaps even a demand, for progression. Considering both authors were writing during a time where women were not afforded many options, both legally and socially, Hardy and Grand's narrative choices challenge structures that worked to minimize women.

The approach to the thesis, then, is to pair pre-Freudian psychology from the nineteenth century with Victorian texts to further the scholarship of psychological realism. How does psychological realism work to disrupt societal standards and expectations—particularly those of women—despite the many issues embedded in nineteenth-century psychology? The two chapters in the thesis attempt to answer this question by combining modern scholarship with scientific texts published in the nineteenth century.

While contemporary scholarship will be added to close readings of the novels explored, especially to further the discussion on feminism and gender, the main focus directly looks back

to the historical texts presented in Jenny Bourne Taylor and Sally Shuttleworth's *Embodied Selves: An Anthology of Psychological Texts 1830 – 1890*. Nineteenth-century women were expected to be pure and faithful, passionate, but not overly emotional, selfless, and sacrificing. And sadly, it's safe to say these expectations still exist in the twenty-first century. Such expectations are consistent in both the "real world" and in the fictional. When women do not perform or adhere to such roles, they are transformed into witches, devils, demons, and quite literally anything associated with danger. While in certain circumstances psychology may work to perpetuate negative associations, the texts analyzed here negate that ideology.

Chapter One analyzes the character of Eustacia Vye from Thomas Hardy's *The Return of the Native* through two main concepts: dreamy mental states and monomania. James Crichton-Browne's "On Dreamy Mental States" explores momentary, dream-like reflections and visions that he believed were fairly common and mostly harmless—widely connected now to our ideas of déjà-vu. As an extension to Browne's theory, the chapter also pairs Jean-Étienne Esquirol's ideas of monomania, which focuses on the obsession of a singular idea that ultimately takes over one's mind. Rather than proposing that Hardy uses these concepts to trap Eustacia in the looming patriarchy, or to even diagnose her, the chapter argues that both psychological concepts are used to provide Eustacia with a sense of escapism—at least, as much as a Victorian woman *could* have been afforded at the time. The argument is supported through a chapter from scholar Athena Vrettos's *Somatic Fictions: Imagining Illness in Victorian Culture*, which largely argues that psycho-somatic illnesses in Victorian literature work as a construct to conform to traditional beliefs.

Chapter Two shifts to Sarah Grand's *The Heavenly Twins*, a relatively forgotten and lesser-read work, especially in comparison to other Victorian fiction novels written by women

(the Brontë sisters, Gaskell, etc.). Grand, most known for coining the term "New Woman," clearly includes traces of her own ideology in the novel. While the New Woman ideology is explored in the chapter, there is an emphasis on nineteenth-century associationist philosophy and concepts of habit. Primarily, John Abercrombie's definitions of association and William James's definition of habit work in tandem to express that reinforced thoughts and emotions, continuously contemplated in the mind, ultimately lead to habitual actions. Much like Hardy, Grand uses psychology to warn readers of the dangers of a patriarchy, to advocate for female knowledge and independence, and to rethink what we know about gender. The chapter fuses Grand's ideology, habit, and association to the contemporary theory of gender performativity, as acknowledged by Judith Butler. Once again, psychology is not included by Grand to entrap, to diagnose, or to stereotype the female characters of Evadne, Edith, and Angelica but, rather, to create a narrative that challenges gender constructs and traditional heteronormative marriage structures.

Hardy and Grand's novels, analyzed here, are threaded together with a seemingly invisible string. They both focus on psychologically real female characters and, moreover, craft *unconventional women*, or as Grand would call it, New Women. Additionally, both novels take place in a setting described as watchful—and we, as readers, must question what and who these fictional locations are watchful *of*. Lastly, both novels include scenes of cross-dressing. Though these factors may seem coincidental, the unifying connection of psychology presents us with a deeper reading of the novels. The rhetorically savvy Hardy and Grand use familiar psychological concepts in a way that does not contribute to a problematic message but, instead, challenges and advocates for topics considered taboo in the era.

Chapter One: Don't Discredit the Dreamer: Dreamy Mental States and Monomania in Thomas Hardy's *The Return of the Native*

> "The place became full of a watchful intentness now; for when other things sank brooding to sleep the heath appeared slowly to awake and listen." – Thomas Hardy, *The Return of the Native*

In the fictional land of Egdon Heath, often ominously illuminated by a burning fire on top of a hill, the character Eustacia Vye often feels lonely and full of dread. Eustacia admits the direct cause of her melancholy is the very place she lives, claiming that despite "the beauty in the scenery… it is a jail to [her]" (Hardy 96). There is a sense of enclosure and entrapment for Eustacia—especially in a location that is described as "watchful" (12). In *The Return of the Native*, Eustacia is an outsider in Egdon Heath, both physically and in spirit. As a woman from Budmouth who defies traditional characteristics, she finds herself rejected from the human-like heath, but she is unable to achieve her main goal of physically escaping. By exploring the phenomena of dreamy mental states and monomania, a new study of Hardy's character may be presented. While some readers condemn Eustacia for the demise of herself and others, this ultimately contributes to a reading that promotes the idea that nontraditional women present a danger to their society.

Applying concepts of dreamy mental states and monomania to the text, then, provide an understanding as to *why* Eustacia makes the decisions that she does. The influence of these two concepts are how Hardy *allows* her to escape her imprisonment—mentally, rather than physically. Undoubtably, Eustacia's encounters with dreamy mental states initially serve as a coping mechanism to make her feel less isolated, yet her dreamy state ultimately transforms into monomania, as her situation intensifies and the heath proceeds to imprison her. Although Eustacia uses the rhetoric of what the Victorians would have *perceived* as an emotionally hysterical woman, analyzing her character through the idea of dreamy mental states suggests that

Eustacia is not defective or diseased. Rather, her mental spaces allow her to express what many others experienced in the Victorian era: a longing for a better life.

Understanding nineteenth-century psychology in the context of Hardy's novel challenges the debilitating constraints specifically placed on women—particularly through the character of Eustacia. Scholar Athena Vrettos suggests many Victorians "attempted to understand and control their world through a process of physiological and pathological definition" (2). Her chapter "Body Language and the Poetics of Illness" specifically examines how medical illnesses were constructed to label, control, and compartmentalize women through an analysis of "the female body," and this very argument may be extended to the female mind, too (21). Vrettos shares that bodies were often seen as textual, something to be read and analyzed (21). Without question, the mind was also something to be studied with the hopes to create some sort of conclusive message to define and pigeonhole individuals to their gender identity. In fact, Vrettos claims that, for women in particular, Victorian medical diagnoses suggested "the entrance of the imagination into unlicensed channels created a state of imbalance, potentially depleting nervous recourses and thereby threating physical health" (25). Her reading of medical texts and what they suggest about the female body can be extended to the mind of Hardy's Eustacia. While dreamy mental states and monomania may have originally been applied to falsely diagnose and trap women, they are contextually used to *free* Eustacia. Imagination is primarily what Eustacia lives in, and indeed, this results in an "imbalance" of her mind. However, there is a threat to her *mental* health, which ultimately lends itself to the physical by the end of the novel.

Rather than condemning Eustacia, or even diagnosing her, Victorian psychology may provide a lens to better understand her motives. In summary, Hardy's *The Return of the Native* takes place in Egdon Heath, a fictional location reminiscent of many actual locations such as

Hardy's native Dorset. Clym Yeobright is the "native" alluded to in the title who willingly returns to Egdon from his highbrow, urbanized job as a diamond merchant in Paris. Clym's cousin, Thomasin Yeobright, is engaged to be married to Damon Wildeve—once an engineer born outside of Egdon and now the keeper of an inn located in the heath. Meanwhile, Diggory Vinn, the mysterious reddleman, expresses tender and sincere feelings for Thomasin but does not interfere with her marriage plans. Eustacia Vye, on the other hand, is a girl originally from Budmouth who now lives with her grandfather in Egdon, hates the heath, and yearns to move away. Eustacia and Damon form a close relationship—perhaps one that is too close. In fact, some readers classify Eustacia and Damon's sentiments and secret meetings with one another as an affair. Much controversy surrounds Eustacia, especially regarding her relationship with Damon, her otherness from the heath, and her unconventional looks. Ultimately, Damon pursues his marriage to Thomasin, and after hearing of Clym's success in Paris, Eustacia inevitably marries him instead. The plot is then driven by stealthy meetups by fire, Clym's abandonment of his mother for Eustacia, gambling, and ambiguous deaths. Hardy's novel, often regarded as a work of sensationalist fiction, illustrates many Victorian traditions. Simultaneously, influences of nineteenth-century psychology appear, especially through the character of Eustacia.

By beginning with the physical descriptions of Eustacia, readers may better understand Hardy's attempts to make a multidimensional female character, rather than a flat protagonist who submits to tradition. Scholar Lauren Walsh, in her introduction to *The Return of the Native*, informs readers that the initial serialization of Hardy's work was "accompanied each month by an illustration. The illustrator, in effect, gave physical identity to the characters on the page" (xiii). She continues to say that Hardy's desire for visual representation demonstrate his "investment" and display how he "interacted" with his characters (xiii). Like many Victorian

novels, such involvement contributed not only to realism but to *psychological* realism. While the plot may be considered realistic rather than idealistic, of equal significance is the realism expressed through the mind. Hardy's crafting of the character, quite literally inside and out, makes Eustacia's character complex—the inner workings of her mind are meant to complicate her actions. The drawings, accompanied by Eustacia's detailed physical appearance in the chapter "Queen of Night," further build the character's identity. She is described as someone with "the passions and instincts which make a model goddess, that is, those which make not quite a model woman" (Hardy 71). Already, readers gather that she defies expectations—a stark contrast from all other women in Egdon Heath. As Walsh phrases it, "Thomasin [… is] a more stable, more rational character" who is also "a woman of mediocrity" in her traditional values (xviii). Thomasin adheres to societal customs and dares not to question them, making her (and not Eustacia) the "model woman" of the nineteenth century. Not only is the inherent nature of each lead female character contradictory, but so too are their physical appearances. In the novel, Thomasin is described as having "a fair, sweet, and honest country face […] reposing in a nest of wavy chestnut hair" that lands her somewhere "between pretty and beautiful" (Hardy 43). Juxtapose this with Eustacia's physical characteristics: her fair skin is accompanied by "dark pupils" and hair so deep in color "that a whole winter did not contain darkness enough to form its shadow" (71). On the surface, such descriptions contrast the soft, warm, and light features of Thomasin to the hard, cold, and dark features of Eustacia.

Moreover, the physical descriptions can be evaluated further when considering ideas of physiognomy: the study of facial features and body language that were believed to be indicative of one's character. As a contemporary audience, we must take physiognomy with a grain of salt. Simultaneously, we must consider how relevant the study was to the Victorians. John Caspar

Lavater, one of the founders of physiognomy, primarily categorized his study by reading the eyes and the shapes of facial features (particularly the forehead). Additionally, he notes physiological differences between the sexes. Interestingly, he claims "blue eyes are […] more significant of weakness, effeminacy, and unyielding than brown and black" (15). Further, he claims that "woman [is] smooth and soft," and that "man is most angular—woman most round" (18). Not only do these (now apparently outrageous) classifiers speak back to Vrettos's argument of the compartmentalization of women but they also provide further insight to Eustacia's features. Though brown and black eyes represent a strongness for *men*, this strength is not meant to be found in women. Eustacia's physical characteristics, associated with darkness and night, are a warning sign to her nature. Even her "goddess" description evokes the exotic, rather than the plain and simple appearances nineteenth-century women were supposed to have.

The darkness depicted in Eustacia's physical characteristics extends to her mentality. Hardy reminds readers several times throughout the novel that Eustacia is in a consistent state of dread, melancholy, and gloom. After the death of her parents, she was forced to move to the heath with her grandfather. Eustacia "hated the change; she felt like one banished; but here she was forced to abide" (73). As she finds no happiness in her situation, she often experiences "sudden fits of gloom" (72). She suspects that this mentality "was born in [her] blood," though she quickly reverts to blaming the "wild heath" for her loneliness and sadness (68). Not only does this deny the perception that women are innately more emotional and susceptible to sadness, but it also places the blame on the male-dominated society she lives in. However, such melancholic feelings do not numb the character of Eustacia, but rather intensify her passion to find a better life for herself. Such passions led Eustacia into what Victorian psychiatrist James

Crichton-Browne deemed dreamy mental states in his speech to the West London Medico-Chirurgical Society.

Crichton-Browne's 1895 speech, "On Dreamy Mental States," defined and explored the phenomena he believed was occurring in real life, though he himself acknowledged the literary influence of the concept. Crichton-Browne explicitly claims that "dreamy states […] have been experienced and recorded by many of our most eminent writers […and] it has been assumed that they are a universal human experience" (6). Much like topics of moral beliefs and religion, Crichton-Browne saw dreamy states being explored in fictional pieces as a means to relate, question, and learn from the experience. Further, Crichton-Browne believes the phenomena is covered in the works of authors, such as Hardy, to explore the commonality of dreamy states. This phenomenon happens to almost everyone, and for the *most part* is "innocent" —yet there are "many different kinds and that those that commence in reminiscence sometimes branch out into more elaborate manifestations" (8). While Crichton-Browne deems dreamy mental states as mostly harmless, he suggests they have the potential to become something larger, both in fictional characters and in the lives of real people.

Crichton-Browne admits that the sensation is difficult to describe, as it is something that may be experienced in a multitude of ways. The sensation "consists in an impression suddenly taking possession of the mind that the passing moment of life has been once lived before or must be once lived again" (4). While it was not a term at the time, the sensation he describes would more recently be referred to as déjà-vu. Dreamy mental states often make people reflect and reminisce on the past, usually brought on by a similar experience in the present but leaves no room to look toward the future. Too much time spent reflecting on the past, though, may become a dangerous thing. Crichton-Browne argues "that dreamy mental states […] which consist in

reading into the present some version of the past—are abnormal in their essence" (9). Despite the experience being common and momentary, he still comes to "the conclusion that dreamy mental states, although widespread, are by no means universal, and cannot with propriety be called normal phenomena" (7). It seems that Crichton-Browne is warning his listeners of the different levels of dreamy mental states—specifically in regard to how often one reoccurs to this mentality. Crichton-Browne furthers this thought by explaining when someone is experiencing a dreamy state too frequently, additionally "attended by fear, pangs, anguish, horror, or visceral disturbances," there can be physical harm applied on the body—some cases, he believed, leading to convulsions of epilepsy and heart palpitations (12). Hardy's character does not find herself in such physical conditions, though her mind is clearly fixed on previous ideas and experiences.

Crichton-Browne's contributions are not limited to the déjà-vu definition presented above, and in fact, it is not the most applicable approach to analyze Eustacia's character. Rather than experiencing a familiar state, Eustacia's experiences "branch out into more elaborate manifestations" (Crichton-Browne 8). The following is Crichton-Browne's explanation of the varied form of the phenomena:

> The victims of dreamy mental states, stiving to convey some notion of them, tell us that they consist in a feeling of being somewhere else—in double consciousness—in a loss of personal identity—in going back to childhood—in the vivid return of an old dream—in losing touch of the world—in a deprivation of corporeal substance—in the loss of the sense of proportion—in momentary black despair—in being at the Day of Judgment; and they supplement whatever phrases they use with the assurance that it is impossible to put into words such strange and incomprehensible visitations (9).

Dreamy mental states may include, but are not limited to, the thought / feeling of *I've been here before.* While this may be a factor, Crichton-Browne's observation alludes to the idea of physically being in one place while being mentally in another (momentarily). Double consciousness, in the context of Victorian psychology, is the mind's attempt to be in two places at once.

With Crichton-Browne's theory in mind, readers may contextualize Eustacia's dreamy mental state as one of the few opportunities presented to her. Since Eustacia struggles to enjoy her life in Egdon, there are several instances where readers may find her in a dreamy mental state in an effort to escape her surroundings. It is described that Eustacia's original desire was to be "loved to madness" and her "loneliness deepened her desire" (Hardy 74). Eustacia longs for love, especially since love provided a potential distraction from her detested living situation. In fact, Eustacia finds herself with a potential suitor—Damon Wildeve. There are several bonfire meetings in the novel between the two characters, in which Damon and Eustacia discuss their wild passions for one another in secrecy. Their relationship is the only thing Eustacia has to cling to, despite Damon's marital commitments with Thomasin. Eustacia's particular situation—both by being "the other woman" while simultaneously desiring love—initiates her experience with dreamy mental states. Eustacia "often repeated her prayers; not at particular times, but, like the unaffectedly devout… Her prayer was always spontaneous, and often ran thus, 'O deliver my heart from this fearful gloom and loneliness: send me great love from somewhere, else I shall die'" (75). Reflecting back to Crichton-Browne's theory, these repeated prayers can be understood as moments of realization for her, rather than a moment of hysteric manipulation; if she could acquire a partner who truly loved her, Eustacia believes her loneliness, derived from the heath, would be cured. More importantly, Hardy's portrayal of Eustacia's mental state is not

meant to contribute to the constructs pointed out by Vrettos but to reflect a desperate response to the limited choices offered to Eustacia in her repressive environment.

Yet, what particularly complicates the novel is Eustacia's awareness of Damon and Thomasin's arrangements. Be not mistaken—Thomasin is no hidden Bertha in an attic like we see in *Jane Eyre*. Eustacia's recognition of their engagement is where many readers find fault with her character, as her relationship with Damon does not necessarily come to an end. Hardy even explicitly writes Eustacia's "actions are [of] reckless unconventionality" (74). Hardy's description is not meant to blame her as a person but, rather, to critique societal constraints that *make* her unconventional. Eustacia's consuming thoughts and desperate desire to be loved results in her pursual of Damon Wildeve, yet she understands that he had commitments to marry another woman. Not only does this often lead readers to question her morals but Eustacia's interference of Damon and Thomasin's relationship is disingenuous—she is equally aware that Damon is by no means her soulmate. The novel describes Eustacia as "idealizing Wildeve for want of a better object" and even admits that she "should have cared nothing for him had there been a better person near" to free her from the "jail" of Egdon (76, 96). While Eustacia is fully aware that he is engaged to be married, she is not intentionally malicious towards Damon and his fiancée. Rather, Eustacia has resorted to dreamy mental states to free her from her solitude. By reminiscing on her previous life in Budmouth and fantasizing of being loved endlessly, Eustacia's mind fell into a dreamy mental state, ultimately making Damon a tool for escapism. Eustacia's actions were not necessarily harmful to herself or others; in fact, these dreamy states that she experienced on her "slow walks" brought a reprieve to her "depression of spirts" (76). While some may argue that Eustacia is motivated by selfishness, it is evident that she believed love could be her only escape from the solitude she endured. Even if Eustacia had intentions of

moving from the heath at this stage in the novel, that opportunity would not be afforded to her without a husband. Eustacia's resort to dreamy states relieves her sorrows by providing hope that she will be loved in her present state.

The fault in dreamy mental states, though, is the inevitable disappointment they bring—and unlike the beliefs of physiognomy, the unfulfilled pleasure of dreamy states has nothing to do with gender. Hardy's novel confronts popular psychological theories of his time, particularly in relation to women's sensation and emotion, and critiques them through Eustacia. As mentioned earlier, Crichton-Browne's definition of dreamy mental states suggests reoccurring but brief experiences of the mind. Eustacia, holding on to her past life in Budmouth, begins to fixate on the idea of escape. The same could be said of her husband, Clym: he has returned to Egdon to build a school and becomes hyper-fixated with his plan the longer he remains in the heath. Once again, Hardy is pointing out that dreamy states and monomania do not only occur to women, negating the idea of a defective or diseased Victorian woman. Both characters, regardless of their gender, are ultimately wishing for a better life.

Eustacia's unfulfilled desires, expressed through her dreamy states, become too large and too frequent—aligning with Jean-Étienne Esquirol's definition of monomania, as she now has a permanent adjustment of the mind. Esquirol, French psychiatrist of the nineteenth century, viewed monomania as a disease of the mind. Esquirol described the malady as a "delirium […that] is exclusive, fixed and permanent, like the ideas of a passionate man" (257). Once again, this definition is not exclusive to a gender; monomania could equally be contributed to Clym's professional desires and even Damon's obsession with money. Further, Esquirol claimed monomania begins its manifestations in "joy, contentment, gayety, exaltation of the faculties, boldness, and transports of feelings" and eventually becomes "sad, silent, timid and fearful; but

always exclusive and obstinate" (257). Essentially, the mind becomes overly focused on a single passion which in turn becomes the only motivation for the self. Esquirol believed that monomania was linked to society, as the influences of current events—Esquirol explicitly mentioning the "weakening of religious conventions" —caused delirium in monomaniacs (257). Esquirol also specified the difference in erotic monomania—a melancholy instead of a disease (258). Erotomaniacs were viewed as having a mental "disorder" sourced from "imagination only" in which an individual believes that another person, usually of a wealthier or higher status, loves them (258). Esquirol connects the branch of erotomania to monomania as a whole:

> Like all monomaniacs, those suffering from erotomania, are pursued both night and day, by the same thoughts and affections, which are the more disordered as they are concentrated or exasperated by opposition. Fear, hope, jealousy, joy and fury, seem unitedly to concur, or in turn, to render more cruel the torment of these wretched beings. They neglect, abandon, and then fly both their relatives and friends. They disdain fortune, and despising social customs, are capable of the most extraordinary, difficult, painful, and strange actions (258-259).

Here, there is a description of the hyper fixation of a single idea. While dreamy mental states would usually reminisce on a single idea, it was not the permanent focus of the mind. At the state of monomania, the individual will do what is needed to achieve the passion they are desiring, with little to no hesitation for their actions. Eustacia initially transitions into a state of dreaminess to escape her surroundings, but this dreamy state becomes her primary focus—leading her into an indefinite state of monomania.

As mentioned earlier, Eustacia finds herself in love with the *idea* of Damon, rather than Damon himself, speaking to a larger issue of the limited opportunities afforded to women. When

Clym returns to Egdon Heath, there is a transformation in Eustacia's mind. Her passing dreamy states shift into a permanent state of monomania. Before she even meets Clym, her focus of being loved to mentally escape her situation transforms into a fixation of actually leaving Egdon: "A young and clever man was coming into that lonely heath from, of all contrasting places in the world, Paris. It was like a man coming from heaven" (Hardy 112). The unobtainable escape from the heath has now come to Eustacia in the form of a savior. Before, her fantasized relationship with Damon was enough to suppress her loneliness and depressed thoughts. Love, for Eustacia, was at one time enough to cope with her situation. Now, Eustacia sees a future for herself through the promise of Paris. Although she knows very little about Clym, she is determined to do anything to get to Paris and out of the heath through him.

The first example of Eustacia committing "strange actions" —as Esquirol would phrase it—is when she plays the role of a Turkish Knight in the Christmas play, taking the role from Charley, a young boy. Eustacia dresses in costume and performs the lines for the role all with the intent to *view* Clym in the audience while she is on stage. Such behavior is out of character for Eustacia; though she is untraditional, Eustacia's solemness often makes her a reserved character. The drastic action taken here emphasizes her determination to leave for Paris through Clym. Once Eustacia and Clym meet, the couple immediately take interest in one another. However, this does not mean that everything goes according to plan for Eustacia:

> Now, Eustacia's dream had always been that, once married to Clym, she would have the power of inducing him to return to Paris. He had carefully withheld all promise to do so; but would he be proof against her coaxing and argument? She had calculated to such a degree on the probability of success that she had represented Paris, and not Budmouth, to

> her grandfather as in all likelihood their future home. Her hopes were bound up in this dream (Hardy 242).

Clym's return to Egdon Heath was out of his disinterest in Paris and the calling he felt to be back at home at the heath. Clym desires to build a school and settles on doing so in Budmouth. Though it is not Paris, it is at least Eustacia's hometown, which most importantly is away from the heath. However, as Clym acquires a visual impairment, he picks up the trade of being a reddleman—with no intention of leaving Egdon Heath in the near future. Eustacia is aware of Clym's intentions, but she believes that, through their marriage, she can change his mind. Her monomania makes her impulsive, as she is reaching for anything to get her away from the heath. Esquirol states that monomania is not linked to one direct cause: "How many are the cases of monomania, caused by thwarted love, by fear, vanity, wounded self-love, or disappointed ambition! This malady presents all the signs which characterize the passions" (257). Eustacia experiences all of the above. "Thwarted love" is a result of the predicament she finds herself in between Damon and Thomasin, and "fear" surrounds Eustacia—particularly a fear of never escaping Egdon. "Wounded self-love" is evident in the many passages discussing her isolation and sadness, which is then intensified by "disappointed ambition" in her marriage to Clym.

Egdon Health, detested by Eustacia, symbolizes a larger, watchful society that refuses to accept any unconventional woman. Eustacia feels the need to be anywhere other than Egdon and for good reason. Reflecting back to the first chapter, it becomes apparent that the heath is favorable to men and to those who were born and/or raised there. Clym is described as being healed by returning to the heath: "the healthful and energetic sturdiness which was his by nature having partially recovered its original proportions" (Hardy 209). Eustacia, both a woman and an outsider to the heath, is harmed by the environment. She is thought to be a witch by members of

the community, simply from a lack of understanding her character. She is described as a "lonesome dark-eyed creature…that some say is a witch" and is even stabbed by a member of the church (55-56). While Eustacia already feels alone at the heath, she must additionally deal with the perceptions of her: "Your mother [Mrs. Yeobright] will influence you too much; I shall not be judged fairly, it will get afloat that I am not a good girl, and the witch story will be added to make me blacker!" (209). The pressures surrounding Eustacia explain why she has no desire to stay and why she resorts to escapism through dreamy states and monomania. Scholar Diane Price Herndl notes that disease owes more to "political, economic, and social emphases rather than any 'realities' of actual illness" (213). Eustacia's dreamy state was meant to cope with her reality, and monomania filled her with a dream of leaving the patriarchal rule in Egdon. However, her monomania became so overpowering, it eventually led to her demise.

Yet, the death of Eustacia is a relatively progressive decision of Hardy's, as it is not an attempt to revert the character, nor to use mental illness as a way to displace women. Near the end of the novel, Eustacia has a moment of suicidal thought:

> It was a brace of pistols, hanging near the head of her grandfather's bed, which he always kept there loaded…Eustacia regarded them long, as if they were the page of a book in which she read a new and a strange matter. Quickly, like one afraid of herself, she returned downstairs and stood in deep thought. "If I could only do it!" she said. "It would be doing much good to myself and all connected with me, and no harm to a single one" (Hardy 330-331).

At this point in Eustacia's mind, any escape, Paris or not, is better than living in her misery. She reflects that "she had used to think of the heath alone as an uncongenial spot to be in: she felt it now of the whole world" (345). Rather than suggesting dreamy mental states and monomania

caused her suicidal thoughts, the text proposes a sad but realistic realization: nineteenth-century society did not have any place for women like Eustacia. In a last attempt to leave, Eustacia and Damon plan to run away together—the ultimate reflection of both her dreamy state and her monomania colliding. However, as Eustacia has a "sudden recollection" that she did not have enough money for the journey, along with the "humiliation" of being known as a fled mistress, she begins to moan and wonder around in agony (349). Eventually, Eustacia and Damon are *both* found dead from drowning in the weir. Hardy's ending challenges the typical Victorian novel that concludes with either the death or the marriage of the female protagonist. Regardless of one's interpretation of Damon's death—did he leap in to save Eustacia, or did he die by suicide?—Hardy refuses to let this moment contribute to gender standards. It is not the unconventional woman who dies alone; therefore, it is also not only women who experience detrimental effects from patriarchal rule.

Egdon Heath, often referred to as a character itself, represents the watchful, demanding, and controlling society of the nineteenth century—a message that will be expressed tenfold in Chapter Two of this thesis. Egdon, "a place perfectly accordant with *man's* nature" does not have any space for a woman like Eustacia (13, my emphasis). While "the people changed" who lived and entered the heath, "Egdon remained" (14). With an impending sense of loneliness and sadness, mainly due to the unchanging traditions of the land, she resorted to dreamy states and monomania. Near the close of the novel, Thomasin reflects on Egdon Heath, claiming it is "a ridiculous old place; but I have got used to it, and I couldn't be happy anywhere else at all" in which Clym replies "Neither could I" (389). Emphasizing once again the opening of *The Return of the Native*, Egdon Heath is a place that rewards those with health and happiness if they are

male or if they are traditionally from there—leaving no room or acceptance for outsiders or unconventional women.

Even after Eustacia's death, readers are left eerily uncomfortable knowing that a child, named after Eustacia, will live and remain in the heath's grasp. Thomas Hardy does not use nineteenth-century psychological concepts to compartmentalize the character of Eustacia but, rather, to condemn the structures that made her resort to dreamy mental states and monomania. Patriarchal structures, especially in the nineteenth century, afforded no opportunities for independence or escape for women. Eustacia resorts to dreamy states and monomania because there was nothing else available for her. Thus, Eustacia's dreamy states are not internal escapes and do not work against her character. Rather, her experiences serve as a testimony to a woman's yearning for agency in a world that offers her very little.

Chapter Two: Launching the New Woman and Anticipating Gender Performativity: Sarah Grand's Use of Habit and Associationism in *The Heavenly Twins*

> "In these latter days, however it began to appear as if the supremacy of the great masculine idea was at last being seriously threatened, for even in Morningquest a new voice […] had already been heard, not *his*, the voice of a man; but *theirs*, the collective voice of humanity […]" – Sarah Grand, *The Heavenly Twins*

The bell chime, heard throughout all of Sarah Grand's fictional location of Morningquest, is the first thing readers are exposed to in the proem of *The Heavenly Twins*: "From the high Cathedral tower the solemn assurance floated forth to be a warning, or a promise, according to the mental state of those whose ears it filled…" (Grand xxxix). The message is either a *warning* or a *promise*—allegedly based on the *mental state* of the person listening to the chime. As Grand masterfully builds her novel, readers question if it is actually one's mental state that determines the message. Though Grand incorporates psychological ideas of her time, an examination of how she *uses* Victorian concepts of habit and association informs readers that the chime is more specifically a warning to any unconventional nineteenth-century woman in Morningquest and only a promise to those who uphold patriarchal beliefs. Grand's ability to contextualize habit and association in her novel not only provide her an outlet to challenge a male-dominated society but to also express the confines of gender by anticipating concepts of performativity.

Grand's text, on the surface, is the embodiment of a traditional Victorian novel by its length alone, yet the ideas expressed within her text are truly ahead of her time. The novel follows three central female characters named Evadne, Edith, and Angelica. Evadne is a young woman, who at nineteen-years-old, advocates for the importance of education. Simultaneously, she marries the character Colonel Colquhoun, who she later learns has an unvirtuous past. To uphold her reputation, she remains married to Colquhoun but refuses to consummate their marriage. Alternatively, Edith is presented as innocent and unknowing in a way that contrasts

with Evadne's activism but only because Edith does not know any better. She is deliberately withheld from sexual knowledge, which ultimately leads to the birth of her syphilitic child, and tragically, both the loss of her child and herself. Lastly, Angelica is one of the twins alluded to in the title. She is mischievous and intelligent, just like her brother, Diavolo. However, the older Angelica becomes, the more she begins to understand that different opportunities are presented to her and her twin brother based on gender alone. Spanning over six hundred pages, Grand weaves the three young women's stories together to comment on traditional ideas of education, sexual knowledge, marriage, and gender roles.

Though these ideas were quite progressive for the time, the ending of the novel is where Grand seems to retract all the work she has done. Grand spends hundreds of pages advocating for her concept of the New Woman, but by the end, she reverts her main female characters; Edith tragically dies, Evadne regresses into a sickly and child-like state, and Angelica is transformed into an obedient wife. Understandably, the ending leaves many readers feeling dissatisfied—is Grand revoking what she stands for? While it may appear that way, scholar Talia Schaffer reminds us of the following:

> New Women had trouble imagining an ending. They could depict the moving distress of a woman entrapped in a loveless marriage that stymied every attempt at self-expression. They could show how social and familial pressures left women no option but marriage, no matter whether or not they were suited to the marital state. But what they could not do, very often, was imagine an alternative (743).

Despite their advocacy, authors like Grand may not have been able to envision a society that provided women with a resolved ending. Because of the impossibility of reaching an ideal conclusion (i.e. one that ends with a fully free, independent female heroine), Schaffer claims that

characters "boomerang" back to the very state they were attempting to escape from (743). Schaffer's observation is a fair explanation for the ending, but this may be further developed by examining habit and association in the context Grand would have been familiar with. Habit and association offer a new understanding of Grand's character developments (or rather, the reversal of character developments).

While Thomas Hardy's *The Return of the Native* suggests the various harms of a patriarchal society in the nineteenth-century, Sarah Grand's approach in *The Heavenly Twins* is far less subtle in her critique of English society. Before we begin to understand habit and association, we must also contextualize Grand as an author. Without question, Grand's novel takes several risks. Not only did she originally publish the novel herself but her authorial pseudonym is quite different than what we may traditionally expect. As Gilbert and Gubar point out, many female authors of the nineteenth century had to either "suppress her work entirely or publish it pseudonymously or anonymously" (64). Born with the name Frances Elizabeth Bellenden Clarke, Grand took on a feminine pseudonym, rather than a masculine one, when publishing *The Heavenly Twins.*

Grand fully expresses her ideas about women's rights underneath a feminine name to support the beliefs she upheld, demonstrating utter bravery on her part—but such bravery came with the cost of self-publication. Approaching the novel from a contemporary lens may incline readers to praise Grand for her groundbreaking concepts of non-traditional marriages, women's education, the request for consistent standards among genders, and the overall desire for female independence. When we consider the time of publication, however, it becomes evident that such ideas were taboo during her time. Grand's messages are not discreet in the text either, as it might be found in other Victorian works. In *Jane Eyre*, for example, there is a desire for female

independence and education, but Brontë's approach is far more reserved. Grand, however, boldly writes the following: "I see that the world is not a bit the better for centuries of self-sacrifice on the woman's part and therefore I think it is time we tried a more effectual plan. And I propose now to sacrifice the man instead of the woman" (80). The sentence here, spoken by Evadne, is one of many expressions that transparently defies expectations for Victorian women. New Woman novels differentiate themselves by "us[ing] their fiction to agitate for immediate social reform" (Schaffer 737). While the central debate regarding a woman's place and role during nineteenth-century England was popular at the time, such blatant expression, especially from a woman, was uncommon and not often supported. Nonetheless, Grand went forward with self-publication after "a three-year hunt for a publisher for *The Heavenly Twins*" despite being told multiple times "not to publish the controversial novel" (Senf xxxi). Though there was hardship in publishing, Grand's novel ended up being "enormously popular" during the time of its publication, although it yielded mixed critical reviews (Senf xxxii). Grand's dedication to get the novel published equally represents a desperation to get her message out to a wider audience, which is yet another reason of why we must look further into her complicated, regressive ending.

Despite the popularity of the novel after release, *The Heavenly Twins,* alongside the idea of the New Woman, became a lesser-known, and almost forgotten, work. Schaffer explains "… the rediscovery of New Woman writers was part of the feminist work of the 1970s," particularly through the works of literary critic Elaine Showalter (737). Showalter's book, *A Literature of Their Own: British Women Novelists from Brontë to Lessing,* examines the development of female literary traditions and, in doing so, reintroduced Grand's work to English studies. Showalter made it a goal to go "beyond the famous novelists who have been found worthy, to the lives and works of many women who have long been excluded from literary history" (35). While

scholarship exists about *The Heavenly Twins* and Grand, particularly in regard to New Woman ideology, marriage, and sexual education, it is still minimal today—especially when compared to commentary focused on other Victorian novelists (the Brontë's, Dickens, Eliot, etc.).

Additionally, both the difficulty of publication and the feminine challenges discussed within *The Heavenly Twins* speak to the anxieties of female authorship as defined by Gilbert and Gubar. Though Grand is actually never mentioned in their chapter "Infection in the Sentence: The Woman Writer and the Anxiety of Authorship," she is equally a part of the conversation. Gilbert and Gubar express that the predominantly male "precursors incarnate patriarchal authority […and] they attempt to enclose her in definitions of her person and her potential" (48). Such anxieties about patriarchal literary authority speak not only to Grand's position as a female author but to concepts in the novel itself. Perhaps the only way to get this work published was to strip away female autonomy and ideas of progression at the very end, or as Schaffer mentions, there was no possibility of an alternate resolution. A close examination of the text also contributes a third factor, one where Grand relies on nineteenth-century ideas of habit and association to regress her characters in order to support a message that a patriarchal hierarchy consists of unbreakable influences.

Grand, much like Hardy, uses Victorian psychological concepts in her novel to build psychologically realistic characters. *The Heavenly Twins* consistently engages with ideas of association and habit throughout the text. To best understand how Grand used these concepts, it is important to understand how habit and association were defined and perceived in the nineteenth century. Physician John Abercrombie, in *Inquiries Concerning the Intellectual Powers and the Investigation of Truth*, claimed "the influence of association" was connected to "memory" (77). To develop this theory, he categorized association into three separate types:

"natural or philosophical association," "local or incidental association," and "arbitrary or fictious association" (77). Despite the separate classifications, Abercrombie explains the one consistency among all forms of association:

> The principle on which they depend, is simply the circumstance of two or more facts, thoughts, or events, being contemplated together by the mind, though many of them have no relation to each other except conjunction. The strength of the association is generally in proportion to the intensity of the mental emotion; and it is likewise in a great measure regulated by length of time, or the number of times, of which the facts have been contemplated in this connexion (77).

Truthfully, nineteenth century associationist theory is not far off from our modern definition of association; the more two things are connected in the mind with emotional attachment, the more difficult it becomes to separate two distinct ideas. Of the three categories, Abercrombie's idea of natural/philosophical association is the most applicable to Grand's text. In the latter two categories, mentioned above, Abercrombie explores how association can be either be based on physicality and a person (local/incidental) or as an attempt to connect something "we wish to remember" with something deeply familiar and unforgettable to us (arbitrary/fictious) (79-80). His first classification of association, however, is directly connected to ideas of habit. Abercrombie makes the distinction that "natural or philosophical association takes place when a fact or statement, on which the attention is fixed, is, by a mental process, associated with some fact previously known, to which it has a relation" (78). Such fixed associations, Abercrombie states, is often "influenced in a very great degree by previous mental habits" (78). What's especially important to note here is the emphasis of the *previous*. Prior knowledge and

experience, especially when that "fact" or experience is encountered and engaged with frequently, will create philosophical associations.

Grand uses the symbol of the bell chime to critique the limits and constraints placed on women in her exploration of the various responses to the chime. In fact, the full verse of the chime is repeated twelve times in the text. As mentioned earlier, Grand begins the novel with the notorious ring, signifying just how much control there is in Morningquest in regard to gender. Grand includes an image of a musical staff, with the following words attached to the illustration: "He, watching over Israel, slumbers not, nor sleeps" (xxxix). The words connected to the tune of the chime are a fragment from a Bible verse found in the book of Psalms. Therefore, "he" contextually signifies the Christian God. Though the line from Psalms may comfort Christian believers, Grand's use of the verse, out of its biblical context, sends an eerie message in her novel. Scholar Maura Dunst argues the chime is "an expression of patriarchal ideals [which] functions as a litmus test of the character's level of indoctrination into the patriarchy" (353). The chime, repeated multiple times a day for the characters within the book and read several times by readers, serves as a consistent reminder to all characters that "he"—both the patriarchal society and the image of God as male/masculine—is positioned in a spot of power and control at all times. This chime serves as an association itself, connecting the ideas of masculinity to dominance and authority. Therefore, this repeated connection of "he" and "watching" brings feelings of comfort and reassurance to some characters and distress to others.

It is no coincidence that Grand depicts a sense of dread after female characters have heard the bell. Early in the text, after "the last reverberation of the last note had melted out of hearing, Evadne sighed: then she straightened herself, as if collecting her energy, and began to speak" (76). While sighing may sometimes be a result of relief, Evadne's body language

suggests this is a sigh of exhaustion, frustration, or perhaps a mix of the two. Rather than slouching in relief, Evadne perfects her posture to continue her conversation, unironically, about her marriage to Colquhoun. The bell just so happens to ring after Evadne's aunt asks about her marital status, in which the clock "seemed to be listening, seemed to be waiting" for this very moment (76). Evadne's sigh and repositioning of her body is a result of the patriarchal watchfulness occurring in Morningquest. By association, Evadne is reminded that a higher "He" is watching and listening to her at all times. Pair this, then, with Angelica's grandfather's response to the chime: "It was the habit of the old duke to listen for it hour by hour, and while it rang, he, and those of his household who shared his faith, offered a fervent prayer […]" (147). Here, Grand suggests a pleasant anticipation for a communal prayer, signified by the sound of the chime. Rather than experiencing a singular sense of dread like Evadne, Grand depicts the bell as a spiritual moment to look forward to each hour.

In fact, many women feel a sense of unease when the sound encompasses Morningquest—it is not just Evadne. During one of its many mentions, after Edith has discovered the devastating news of her syphilitic baby, the chime "rolled through the room […] to each listener with a different effect" (293). Grand further writes the chime "awoke Dr. Galbraith from a train of painful reflections; it reassured the bishop; and it made Angelica fret for Diavolo remorsefully" (293). Dr. Galbraith is relieved from his concerning thoughts, and the bishop is *reassured* by the message. Meanwhile, Angelica *frets* for her brother. She experiences a sense of worry and guilt upon hearing the chime, while both Dr. Galbraith and the bishop find relief in the message. While the biblical associations may be providing a sense of relief to Dr. Galbraith and the bishop, so too is the association that a male-dominated society is ruling over Morningquest.

The interlude of the novel, titled "The Tenor and the Boy," is a pivotal moment where Grand provides the space for one of her characters to boldly express detestation for the chime, which ultimately breaks the associations seen in the prior examples. While many female characters find discomfort and discontent in the chime, they must not speak against it—but Angelica is given the ability to do so. In fact, Angelica expresses a deep hatred towards everything it represents:

> I have been trying to say something all evening, and now that beastly chime has gone and made it impossible […] I hate it. I loathe it. It is cruel as eternal damnation. It is condemnation without appeal. It is a judgement which acknowledges none of the excuses we make for ourselves. I wish they would change it. I wish they would make it say 'Lord, have mercy; Christ, have mercy upon us' (436).

Angelica's monstrous descriptor of "beastly" and the visual of "damnation" breaks the masked Godly implications of the chime. The hourly reminder of being watched is sinister, but nobody has been able to say so until this point of the novel. Rather than adhering to the association she is supposed to, she unveils the hellish atmosphere that women must live through in Morningquest.

Yet, what is equally important to note in this passage is the setting in which Angelica is able to express such thoughts and how it is one of the earliest attempts to acknowledge gender as a performance. While Angelica is speaking the lines above, she is disguised as her twin brother. In this way, the novel provides male-presenting Angelica a space in which she can express her thoughts about the chime's meanings and associations. Not only does her physical appearance allow her to be in the public male sphere but she is also free to express her feelings instead of suffering in silence. However, what contributes back to ideas of association is who she is speaking to and the response she is given. This particular section of the book, referred to as an

interlude, breaks away from the main plot. Grand centers around "the Boy" (i.e., Angelica in disguise, playing one of her mischievous tricks) and a young adult man with a mesmerizing voice, who is referred to as the Tenor. The Tenor becomes infatuated with Angelica and confides in who he suspects is her twin brother—but as the Tenor inevitability finds out, it is Angelica in disguise.

Further, the relationship between The Tenor and the Boy contributes to ideas of gender expectations. The two form a close relationship, and one that is often studied for the "homoerotic overtones as the Tenor is enraptured by the Boy's prettiness and femininity" (Bogiatzis 48). While this topic was also considered taboo for its time, once again proving the risks Grand took, the Tenor's reaction to the "Boy's" feelings about the chime is of equal importance. The Tenor simply ignores the remark; instead of commenting on the chime, he leaves the room silently, then returns with a suggestion of going out for some exercise (Grand 436). However, previously in the chapter, the Tenor notes that "the chime failed of its effect for once […] Hitherto, it had always been a comfort and an assurance to him, but tonight, for the first time, it was fraught with some portentous meaning" (416). The Tenor, who had begun to think of the Boy with "sweet associations" of "the beautiful still night; with the Tenor's far off ideal of all that is gracious and womanly […]" suggests a homoerotic relationship between the two (405). As Bogiatzis points out in their analysis, this newfound relationship "underscores the absence of an adequate vocabulary […] that would have enabled him to name and explore his sexual drives" (48). While the Tenor is unable to name his feelings, the distress from the chime reinforces that what he is experiencing conflicts with his prior obedience to Morningquest's heterosexual and patriarchal standards. Arguably, the Tenor's avoidance of the Boy's disgust for the chime both encourages him to suppress his feelings and to abstain from questioning the functions of the society that he is

accustomed to. In this way, readers see that Angelica's appearances is what gives her the freedom to speak her mind. However, when her mind questions the patriarchal society, there are limitations to what is acceptable—even when presented as a man. Physically, she is conforming to a masculine role, but mentally she expresses ideas that are harmful to the society that best benefits her disguise. Grand's detail here is significant, as it further proves that gender is simply a performance of habit for both men and women in the text.

Notably, a male-presenting female character also appears in Hardy's *The Return of the Native*, signifying the power found within gender performance. As mentioned in Chapter One, Eustacia, attempting to secretly capture a glimpse of the returned Clym Yeobright, performs the role of a Turkish Knight in a play. She expresses how she may "get boy's clothes" to replace her dress in order to suit the role (Hardy 128). Though her performance is doubled (by presenting as male and by taking a role in the play) she does so for the very same reason as Angelica—to escape the confines of their feminine appearance. Both male-presenting Eustacia and Angelica acquire a sense of agency through how they dress, and further, each of these moments signify the depths of association between male image and power.

Association figures strongly in the text, but so does nineteenth-century concepts of habit. Just as the two are closely related in Grand's novel, the concepts are frequently in conversation with one another in psychological studies of the time. Even Abercrombie mentions mental habits in his conceptualization of association, and the relationship between the two concepts may best be understood by nineteenth-century philosopher and psychologist William James. James published the book *The Principles of Psychology* in 1890, in which he dedicated an entire chapter to the concept of habit. In his introduction, he claims "all living creatures" are "bundles of habit" (3). Perhaps the most influential idea in his publication is the concept he refers to as

plasticity: “the possession of a structure weak enough to yield to an influence, but strong enough not to yield all at once” (3). For James, habits illustrate the brain's malleability, showing that behaviors, once consciously controlled, can become automatic and ingrained with repetition.

Further, James explores the relationship between habit and association, as they often influence one another. James explains that “we find ourselves automatically prompted to *think, feel,* or *do* what we have been before accustomed to think, feel, or do…” (24). Not only does this directly relate back to some of Abercrombie’s beliefs on association but it reflects association as defined by Victorian philosopher George Henry Lewes: “old associations, old beliefs, are not to be displaced” (88). Though it was acknowledged that the brain was capable of adapting and changing over time, the associations that individuals become accustomed to—culturally or otherwise—remain ingrained in the brain. Such strong imprints reinforce habits, that when repeated, may deepen associated ideas. Habit, to James, is also how we are kept “within the bounds of ordinance” (51). In James’s context, the “bounds of ordinance” are described at the class level—meaning each economic class should stay within their own classification. James’s idea is equally applicable to gender roles of the Victorian era though, as sphere ideology enforced the idea of women belonging to the domestic sphere, whereas men were expected to be in the separate, public sphere. With the background on habit and associationism, it becomes evident that associations are often a result of the habits we perform and grow accustomed to and vice versa. This, then, creates a loop in the brain that is difficult to break, as both habit and association become stronger the more they are practiced and contemplated. When applying these Victorian psychological concepts to Grand’s novel, it becomes increasingly clear that Grand is using habit and association to emphasize the various harms of a patriarchal society—which in turn launched her concept of the New Woman forward.

Undoubtedly, the patriarchal society works to benefit most of the male characters in *The Heavenly Twins*, which can further be explored by studying character habits. Just as Grand uses the repeated symbol of the chime, she also repeats certain habits to comment on male power and authority. Through habit and association, men feel a sense of security in themselves but simultaneously are becoming fearful of the ideas of the New Woman. As Schaffer notes, the New Woman was something to be feared, and soon, images of "threateningly unattractive, aggressive figure[s]" of women began to appear in nineteenth century (731). Alongside the conflicted feelings of the Tenor, Evadne's husband Colonel Colquhoun is depicted as curling his "blond moustache" in several areas of the novel. One mention of this habit that is particularly striking is found towards the beginning. As he is twirling his "big blond moustache" in conversation, Colquhoun finds himself "thinking quite as much about his moustache as about his wife. It had once been the pride of his life, but had come to be the cause of some misgivings; for 'heavy moustaches' had gone out of fashion in polite society" (Grand 101). Colquhoun's moustache reminds him of the power found in masculinity, yet his mind is beginning to *associate* the fear of women's liberation with the fear of moustaches going out of style. When first introduced to the marriage terms set by Evadne, Colquhoun exclaims "She's worse than mad. She's clever. You can do something with a mad woman […] but a clever woman's the devil" (103). A free-thinking and self-directed woman is a threat to many during this time, and Colquhoun goes as far to associate such traits to the devil. Further, as seen throughout literature, women are often associated to the biblical story Eve: "'It was a woman, my boy,' the duke said solemnly, 'who compassed the fall of man'" (Grand 261). Eve's desire for knowledge is often seen as weak and sinful, making knowledgeable women something to fear. As Colquhoun's marriage to Evadne is not traditional in the slightest, he habitually returns to his moustache for

comfort and a sense of security to hold on to the society that benefits him best. Additionally, this habit is yet another act of performance meant to invoke ideas of masculine authority.

The moustache imagery does not stop with Colquhoun, however. The character Sir Mosley Menteith, Edith's husband, habitually clings to his moustache for a sense of power and security. His similar character trait of "giving the corners of his little light moustache a twirl on either side" is also frequently repeated, especially when he is talking to Edith (163). Much like Colquhoun, Menteith's habit tends to be evoked when he is nervous. Edith, unaware that her husband has syphilis, ultimately contracts the venereal disease. Once news has gotten out that Edith has birthed a sick baby, alongside acquiring her own syphilitic fever, Menteith "tried to inspect his father-in-law coolly, but his hand was somewhat tremulous as he raised it to twist the ends of his little light moustache" (301). His shaking hand represents not only his shame but the fear of instability being presented to his authority and reputation. Nothing about this repeated habit between the two characters is coincidental. In fact, both Colquhoun and Menteith have had sexual relationships outside of their marriages. Evadne, aware of sexually transmitted infections and diseases, refuses to consummate her marriage with Colquhoun. Edith, unaware of Menteith's past, is unable to avoid her fate of contracting illness. Regardless, it is evident that Grand purposefully created two unvirtuous men to critique the social standards placed on nineteenth-century women. Further, the habitual need to touch their moustaches symbolizes their need to cling to the patriarchal authority that *allows* them to get away with acts that would be punishable outside of their gender.

The repeated habits and associations that are connected to gender—such as Colonel Colquhoun's habit of stroking his moustache and the associations connected to the bell chime—anticipates the concept of Judith Butler's gender performativity. Butler, philosopher and scholar,

argues that "gender is in no way a stable identity or locus of agency from which various acts proceed; rather, it is an identity tenuously constituted in time – an identity instituted through a *stylized repetition of acts*" (519). Arguably, this "repetition of acts" connects back to Victorian ideas of habit and association. The more the roles are connected in the mind, the stronger the repetition of acts become. Butler further claims "gender […] is real only to the extent that it is performed. It seems fair to say that certain kinds of acts are usually interpreted as expressive of a gender core or identity, and that these acts either conform to an expected gender identity or contest that expectation in some way" (527-528). With an emphasis on the scene of Angelica disguised as her twin brother, readers may see how her performance of the opposite gender allows her certain freedoms she is unable to have otherwise. Furthermore, this idea explains that the ingrained habits and associations explored in the novel are solely acts of performance—a performance that may bring validation and reassurance to the male characters and one that may launch ideas of the New Woman further through Grand's female characters.

Grand is mostly known for coining the phrase "the New Woman," which she directly addresses outside of *The Heavenly Twins*. Grand clearly outlined the state women had been forced to live in and what she hoped would progress. Grand compares the man to an infant, in which the new woman must help the "child-man […] with infinite tenderness and pity" (273). Not only does this expertly flip the infantilization often associated with young women and their suitors but suggests an alteration in the habits and associations that have been ingrained in the mind. Grand explains the uprising of the New Woman as such:

> Women were awaking from their long apathy, and, as they awoke, like healthy hungry children unable to articulate, they began to whimper for they knew not what. They might have been easily satisfied at that time had not society, like an ill-conditioned and ignorant

> nurse, instead of finding out what they lacked, shaken them and beaten them and stormed at them until what was once a little wail became convulsive shrieks and roused up the whole human household. Then man, disturbed by the uproar, came upstairs all anger and irritation, and, without waiting to learn what was the matter, added his own old theories to the din, but, finding they did not act rapidly, formed new ones, and made an intolerable nuisance of himself with his opinions and advice. He was in the state of one who cannot comprehend because he has no faculty to perceive the thing in question, and that is why he was so positive. The dimmest perception that you may be mistaken will save you from making an ass of yourself (271).

Out of a deep desire for women's education, Grand further expresses these ideas in her novel. In a conversation between Evadne and Colquhoun, the fear of women's education is explored. Colquhoun wishes Evadne "had never been taught to read and write" as she would then have "no views to come" between them (Grand 341). The relationship between Evadne and Colquhoun directly reflects a husband who angrily relies on "his own old theories" to express his disapproval of newfound female agency.

Further, there is a recognition that it is nearly impossible to change one's habits, despite signs of progression. Evadne responds to the wishes that she would forget her husband's unfavorable past, stating "A wife cannot feel as I do. And you—you would not change. Or at least you would only change your habits; the consequences of them you will carry to your grave with you, and I doubt if you could ever change your habits once for all" (Grand 344). An interesting connection furthering the struggle of changing men's habits and associations is the consideration of the Victorian's thoughts on John Locke's "tabula rasa." Referring back to Lewes's explanations of association, he claimed the mind "is no tabula rasa: it is not a blank

sheet of paper, but a palimpsest" (91). Traces of the previous habits and associations may still remain, despite the brain's malleability. Even if habits are broken, Evadne recognizes the *consequences* will never fully be erased. Gender, which has been assigned to us at birth for centuries, may be society's largest and deepest embedded association. Viewing Grand's narrative style as anticipatory of Butler's theory of gender performativity allows readers to recognize how Grand's work critiques and destabilizes rigid gender roles before Butler theorized them explicitly. Much like how the Tenor did not have the language to express his feelings for the Boy, Grand could not fully conceptualize the ideas of performativity, but they were still present during her time.

While *The Heavenly Twins* helped progress Grand's concept of the New Woman, she also explored early ideas of gender performativity through the habits and associations connected to her characters. Grand's novel attempts to answer the "New Woman Question" or the 'Marriage Question" to slowly introduce women into the public sphere of liberation and education. Repeating symbols, as well as the thoughts and actions of characters, demonstrate that gender is indeed a social construct put in place to maintain a male dominant society. The transformation of Evadne and Angelica, alongside the demise of Edith, highlights the dangers of social constraints. While it is true that Grand may have ended *The Heavenly Twins* with a co-dependent Evadne and a subdued Angelica because no other end was tangible during her time, it is of equal significance that the fate of each character is connected to habit and association. It is not the New Woman that is to be feared but, rather, the societal values Morningquest is founded on. As Carol Senf writes in the introduction to the text, "Grand's novel will undoubtedly encourage us to question today's social institutions in the same way Grand questioned the institutions of her own day" (xvii). By applying these concepts to Grand's text, we may not only

better understand her approach to the narrative, but we may further question what habits and associations have persisted throughout time—especially in regard to gender.

Conclusion: Expanding Feminist and Gender Studies Through Nineteenth-Century Psychology

The combination of feminist, gender, and pre-Freudian psychological studies and theories merge together in this thesis to bring new insights to Victorian fiction novels—particularly those that include elements of psychological realism. Thomas Hardy's *The Return of the Native* largely follows the character of Eustacia. His creation of making an unconventional female protagonist was not to contribute to negative stereotypes of women, nor to suggest that her unconventionality was a fault of hers. Instead, the combination of modern scholarship (Vrettos) and nineteenth century psychological texts, I argue, are contextualized to blame the lack of opportunities and to critique the unacceptance of non-conforming women during the era. Similarly, Sarah Grand's *The Heavenly Twins* relies on association theory and concepts of habit not to warn readers of the New Woman but, rather, to point out the dangerous consequences of fundamentally patriarchal societies.

A thesis examining feminism and gender in the context of Victorian literature cannot go without an acknowledgement of the highly influential concept of Coventry Patmore's *The Angel in the House*. First recognized as a concept in the poetry of Patmore, sphere ideology (public versus private) and the ideal women were explored. Famously, Virginia Woolf metaphorically kills the angel in the house years later. It goes without saying that Thomasin would have been the "angel in the house" in Hardy's novel, as she starkly contrasts Eustacia's New Woman tendencies and desires. In the same vein, Edith, purposefully left innocent, is Grand's "angel." With more space, the inclusion of Patmore and other Victorian poets could be highly influential to studies of psychological realism, alongside responses to Patmore (like Woolf's).

The Return of the Native and *The Heavenly Twins* are only two of many Victorian literary texts that rely on psychological realism. My decision to pair Hardy and Grand, outside of their thematic parallels, also comes from a consideration of the fewer pieces of scholarship published about these works in comparison to other Victorian novels. Much like the inclusion of poetry, we should also consider texts that include the supernatural or the monstrous: how would a blood-sucking vampire contribute and challenge the conversations about psychological realism? Though pre-Freudian psychological theory is often overlooked in Victorian studies, this thesis hopes to unlock the significant value of pairing nineteenth-century psychology to keep challenging our own predominately patriarchal society in the twenty-first century.

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