



Madame Sarah Grand, 'Mayoress' of Bath

Colleen Denney

In 1896, Alfred Praga painted a half-portrait of Sarah Grand [fig. 1] which her son, Archie Carlaw Grand, gave to the city of Bath in 1943, the year of her death so that it could hang in Bath's Guildhall. It entered Bath's Victoria Art Gallery collection in 1984.¹ The city of Bath was interested in owning a portrait of Madame Sarah Grand because, in later life, she was Bath's Lady 'Mayoress' with the longest record of service. She took on this post under the mayoralty of Alderman Cedric Chivers who, as a widower, asked her to perform the duties that would normally fall to the wife of a Mayor. She held this position in 1922; and then from 1924-29. The Mayor died in 1929; ill-health in the last two years of his office meant that most of his duties fell to Grand. After his death, she was invited to stand for Mayor but she declined.² The purpose of this essay is two-fold: to use the acquisition of the portrait as a way of examining Grand's time as Lady 'Mayoress' of Bath; and, within that assessment, to address Grand as an advanced Victorian woman, known as the 'New Woman,' and how that title influenced her public presentation of self as Lady 'Mayoress'.

Sarah Grand was born Frances Elizabeth Clarke in Ireland in 1854 but moved to Yorkshire with her family after her father's death. At sixteen she married widower David Chambers McFall, an army surgeon. They travelled extensively before settling first in Norwich, and then in Warrington, Lancashire, where he retired as honorary brigade surgeon. She left him in 1890, moving to London to pursue her writing career. Her twenty-year-old son, Archie, also stayed behind. In London she collaborated with the publisher William Heinemann on her novel *The Heavenly Twins* (1893); due to its immediate success, he produced ten editions by 1923. This collaboration made Grand financially independent. She extended her writing career to journalism, lecture tours and, eventually, to the suffrage platform. She never returned to her husband, who died in 1898. While she had a strained relationship with her son, her stepsons often visited her in London. Archie came back into the picture when she moved to Bath. He pursued an acting career in Bath and elsewhere.

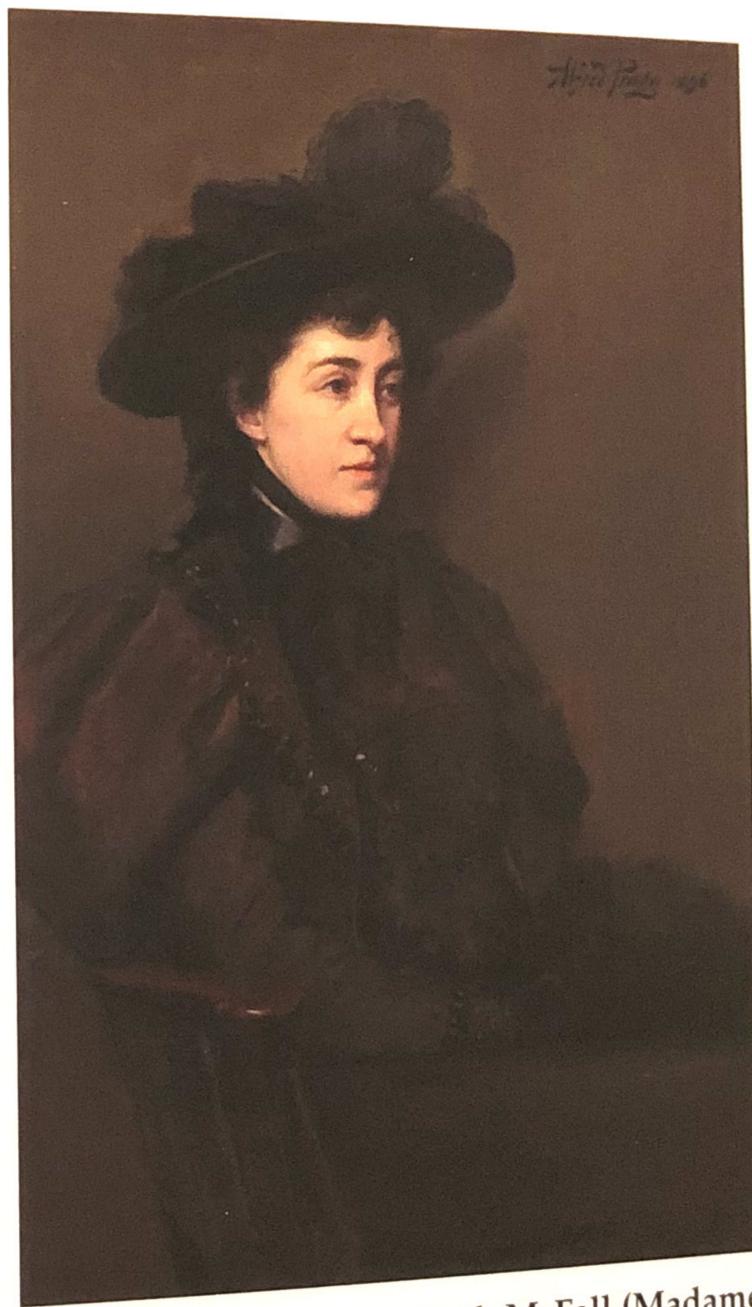


fig 1: Mrs. Frances Elizabeth McFall (Madame Sarah Grand 1855-1943), 1896 by Alfred Praga. Oil on canvas. Victoria Art Gallery BATVG.P.1984.47, Bath & North East Somerset Council

Facing: Detail from Madam Sarah Grand, Mayoress of Bath, 1925. Photograph by Lambert of Bath.

Bath in Time - Bath Central Library Collection

The Heavenly Twins dealt with men's sexuality and venereal disease for the first time in literary history and attempted to exert a new code of moral purity. Grand knew about venereal disease through her husband's work as an army surgeon at a Lock hospital, a place where the government sent prostitutes who had contracted diseases. Her knowledge base also came from Josephine Butler's work on behalf of the repeal of the Contagious Diseases Acts in the 1870s and '80s. That legislation had punished the prostitute and treated her while letting her male clients go free.³

In 1893, when her novel was published, she made the bold move of changing her name to Madame Sarah Grand, in part to alleviate her husband's anxiety over being associated with her radical views. By the time of his death in 1898, she had completed her feminist trilogy, *Ideala: A Study from Life* (1888) which she had self-published before leaving Lancashire, *The Heavenly Twins* (1893), and *The Beth Book* (1897).⁴ Her writings established her as one of the key voices of feminist resistance to male profligacy. Grand asked, 'Why didn't the government treat the men?' She argued that such men eventually married and spread their disease to their wives and, inadvertently, to their children.⁵ With thinking like this, Grand became an overnight *succès de scandale*; but, in terms of the public self she presents in the Praga portrait and in other portraits of the 1890s [figs. 2, 3, 7], Grand wanted to counter such criticism. To write boldly about such a forbidden topic aligned her with the most radical aspects of a new feminist figure, the New Woman. In doing so, she risked the charge of trying to behave like a man.

Sarah Grand and the New Woman of the Victorian Period.

The New Woman of Sarah Grand's novels as well as the actual New Woman of the 1880s and 1890s could, if she were middle or upper-class, take advantage of the new benefits of education and live an emancipated life, free of marriage. She was also helped by the 1882 Married Women's Property Act, which gave women the right to keep their own earnings. Victorian society's anxieties over this New Woman were real and they escalated in the 1890s. This fear was soon explained in the 1901 census of England and Wales which showed the 'surplus' of women to be over a million. David Rubinstein argues that contemporaries blamed the imbalance on the appearance of the New Woman, despite high levels of male emigration that contributed.⁶ As a New Woman novelist herself, Grand came under continual scrutiny, finding herself at the centre of a gendered debate in which the New Woman acted as a symbol. This was so because Grand coined the term 'New Woman' in an 1894 essay where she said 'the new woman is a little above' the man and it was her duty to bring him up to her standard.⁷ Literary critics viewed this New Woman, and Sarah Grand as its major representative, as personifying the culture's anxieties hence posing a threat to its stability. The New Woman acted as a symbol for and catalyst of the cultural boundary-breaking that was occurring in terms of gender, race and class in the 1890s.⁸ Grand represented the New Woman's modern voice because she offered no easy solutions to the marriage question. Rather she attempted to 'subvert and redefine masculine values by exploring the complexities of women's lives' and her feminist stance meant she insisted on 'equal access to areas of masculine privilege - education, employment, legislation and government.'⁹ To do so was to challenge the status quo of Victorian womanhood. Teresa Mangum has argued that the New Woman novelists, and the New Women

alike, subverted this construction of the self-effacing, submissive wife, questioning the 'biological essentialism at the heart of ideal womanhood' such that '[t]he New Woman fiction emerged as one of the most powerful forms of resistance to this ideal.'¹⁰

The New Woman was doubly troubling. On one hand, she could be too full of rebellion to represent any real person; on the other, the culture, it seems, wanted her to be only a fiction because the ideals she represented posed such a threat to the gender structure. The New Woman was not a single, homogenous person; she often represented conflicting ideals at the end of the century. Some scholars have even gone so far as to suggest that the New Woman did not exist because she embodied too many contradictory ideals. The debate over her mirrors the arguments we still hear today over what constitutes a feminist. 'The New Woman was by sex identified; she was anti-maternal, or a racial supermother; she was oversexed, undersexed, or same manhating and/or man-eating, or self-appointed saviour of benighted masculinity.'¹¹ Like her contemporary feminist counterparts, Grand chose to espouse certain ideals and to reject others. She was a feminist who knew that there was a politics of difference; that the women's causes and stances that she defended were not identical to those of other feminists working in England.

The ways that Grand manipulated her own image and the way the culture constructed her, were at the centre of her masquerade of public self and reflected these contradictory ideals. In her portraits, she plays the part of a conservative, feminine woman who seeks to protect the lesser man (her husband and son) from embarrassment. Like other public women who were her contemporaries, such as the suffrage leader Millicent Garrett Fawcett, she fought resistance to her views by projecting a feminine stance. Her image practice reveals her public self, not her private one, just as it did for Garrett Fawcett who, like Grand, espoused her politics on public platforms and in other public forums.¹² Catherine Craft-Fairchild regards masquerade 'as the creation of an image or spectacle for the benefit of a spectator.'¹³ Both of these women embraced a kind of subversive tactic, viewing masquerade as the inevitable female disguise 'as submission to dominant social codes,' but at the same time as 'disruptive and as resistance to patriarchal norms.'¹⁴ Grand, as New Woman, resisted the dominant conversation but Grand as public



Photo Elliott & Fry, Baker Street, W.

Sincerely Yours
Sarah Grand

fig 2: Madame Sarah Grand c.1896. Photograph by Elliott and Fry.

Bath in Time - Bath Central Library Collection

figure in her portraits seemed to bow to such 'dominant social codes,' meaning that she, like Garrett Fawcett, created a shifting focus that allowed her to be in charge of her public presentation. We can see this shifting focus embodied in her portraits as Lady 'Mayoress' and, especially, in Praga's seemingly compliant public lady.

And, yet, it is more complex than that because Grand self-identified as a New Woman but she did not cross these borders without trepidation. When we look at her images for public consumption like the Elliot and Fry photograph [fig. 2] we see the way she sidestepped the manly stereotype of the New Woman by creating a soft-focus, romantic presence for her eager public. Here, as well as in Mendelssohn's photograph [fig.3], Grand made concerted efforts to resist the transgressive label by masking it with a cloak of femininity, the camera's soft focus



fig 3: Madame Sarah Grand, c.1896.
Photograph by H. S. Mendelssohn.
Bath in Time - Bath Central Library Collection

playing up her beauty. Grand reverted to an over-exaggerated feminine appearance in such imagery, in part, to compensate for her public role that not only identified her as stepping outside the bounds of femininity, but also, in her writings, challenged masculine patterns of philandering behaviour.

Yet she embraced the bicycle as a mode of transport, [fig. 4] and as a symbol of women's new-found freedoms, aligning herself with the key tenets of the New Woman's cause. She, like the suffragists, had to resist the damaging caricatures of the press, ones that positioned feminists as ugly harridans who, because cultural forces deemed that they lacked sufficient femininity, could not snare a man and hence agitated for their rights out of sheer unhappiness.¹⁵

While struggling to maintain an image of feminine respectability in her public presentation of self, Grand was aware of her position as one of the leaders who voiced the need for women's autonomy 'in everything from etiquette to employment.'¹⁶ The suffrage woman had to resist the media construct of the 'shrieking sister,' which identified her as a hysteric who could not

possibly vote rationally due to her excess of emotion. Like her, Grand had to soft-pedal her public image to downplay the extreme caricature of the New Woman that appeared in the press, and who herself was a 'wildly skewed, reductive media construct which did not represent the real lives and work of those people it purported to describe.'¹⁷ Of course not; like any stereotype, it reflected the dominant narrative of the patriarchal culture, one that had to defend its ideologies against powerful women who were moving forward in education, government, and in a renegotiation of the domestic sphere. Such a threat inevitably produced a backlash, and the media representation of the New Woman appeared to deflect and discredit the real causes for which women like Grand were fighting.

According to Teresa Mangum, Grand felt secure in creating, a 'feminist fantasy' in her novels.¹⁸ But she herself took a more middle-of-the-road feminist stance of 'liberal feminist personal rights philosophy.' Lucy Bland argues that she stressed 'a woman's right over her own person, her right to choose, and her claim to equality with men,' but she also embraced 'a changed standard of morality which not only demanded a change in male sexual behaviour, but also necessitated highly "moral" sexual behavior in women'¹⁹ As Barbara Caine asserts when examining the lives of feminists, we must determine the character's development of a 'feminist consciousness'.²⁰ Grand, in this context, articulated it through her politics and presentation of self. The portraits are the conduit through which she created this consciousness and hence informed her later appearance as Lady 'Mayoress' of Bath. How did her civic and urban identity stem from her previous career and how did she make use of that earlier career to tap into the historical precedent of the Lady 'Mayoress'? How did her role as part of the 'corporate body politic' extend or negate her more radical self of the 1890s?²¹ To ask these questions is to beg a further examination of the traditional structure of Bath society. A Lady 'Mayoress', if she wanted to pursue making a difference, had to move beyond a presence and practice that traditionally was construed as 'intermittent and ornamental.'²²



fig 4: Sarah Grand in Cycling Attire, 1896. Photograph by Richard Williams Thomas. Bath in Time - Bath Central Library Collection

Bath's Introduction to Madame Sarah Grand.

These questions are crucial if we try to position ourselves as those Bath citizens who knew none of this history in 1922 when Grand moved to Bath from Tunbridge Wells with her friends, Rachel Mary and William Tindall. Quakers about her age, they settled at Crowe Hall on Widcombe Hill with Grand as their permanent guest. When that house burned down in 1926, she moved into 7 Sion Hill Place with her sister Nellie, a retired nurse; meanwhile the Tindalls rebuilt their home and remained close friends. When Bath was bombed in 1942, Grand left Bath and died a year later at The Grange in Calne, Wiltshire.

The city of Bath into which Grand immersed herself is revealed in a guidebook description of the 1920s: 'Bath has its value as a health resort, particularly to invalids in the winter time; for the air is peculiarly sweet and fresh, and the encircling hills protect the city from cold winds. It is justly claimed that scarcely any other English town is graced with suburbs so

bracing as these air-swept heights.²³ She had entered a resort town that was somewhat on the decline but which entrusted itself to its alderman and councillors for protection and charity.

In 1922, at the age of 68, Grand received an offer from Cedric Chivers to be his Lady 'Mayoress'. Many years separated her from her work on suffrage platforms, but as Grand's biographer Gillian Kersley explains: 'In a close-knit society like Bath, Mr Chivers would have met Sarah at social gatherings, and her grace, charm and past experience on any platform would have marked her as an invaluable consort.'²⁴ It is ironic that a woman so famous would be unknown in this 'close-knit' culture, but not surprising, especially since her novels were out of print at that time. The only thing she had written while in Bath was an appreciation of the city as a newcomer for the local paper.²⁵ But the journalists began to do their work, calling her 'Madame Sarah Grand, the Distinguished Novelist,'²⁶ one journalist for the *Glasgow Herald*

exclaiming: 'Who knows but a new work of fiction may result, and a new Jane Austen rise in Jane Austen's city, one hundred years after the first.'²⁷

Grand did not know what was in store for her. Alongside Chivers, she would experience the longest running Mayoralty in Bath's history, reason enough to find her portrait hanging in the Guildhall. She stepped into the position naively, stating: 'I feel that, as Mayoress, I am just taking the responsibility for the little things that are not suitable for the Mayor to do, and that a woman ought really to do. The Mayoress is a sort of *aide-de-camp* to the Mayor.'²⁸ Such sentiments are a far cry from her former agitation for women's rights. Yet they show how cognisant she was of the



fig 5: Mayoress Madame Sarah Grand posing on the Bandstand at Royal Victoria Park with the Mayor Cedric Chivers and others, 1920s.

Bath in Time - Bath Central Library Collection

conservative presentation she would have to create as Lady 'Mayoress'. This statement declares that she saw gender roles as traditional ones, but it is more likely that she was masking her true feelings. Grand was always diplomatic, able to speak both to conservative and liberal audiences on women's issues in a way that would not alienate them. This statement may reflect the old Sarah rising to the moment. But, it may reveal her understanding of the role of Lady 'Mayoress' as nothing more than that 'intermittent and ornamental' one. In one respect a Lady 'Mayoress' was like the Lady Bountiful, performing the duties expected of her, based on her gender and class. The work she was doing as 'Mayoress' was similarly charitable and hence it was work for which she needed to project an image of a proper, deferential lady. Also, according to Helen Meller, some educated women in England played up their biological essentialism of the nurturing role to create more visible positions of power for themselves in their communities.²⁹ Grand's statement suggests that she saw such a nurturing role as a similar place of power.

In addition, she became Mayoress at a powerful time for British women. In her political aspirations she was part of a new force of womanhood that acted on the new-found opportunities of leadership and citizenship. County and borough councils opened to women in 1907 with Elizabeth Garrett Anderson becoming the first woman mayor in her home town of Aldeburgh; local government was becoming a significant employer of women.³⁰ During Grand's time as Mayoress, there were at least three women councillors for Bath. Meller remarks:

'Undertaking "good works", caring for the poor of particular urban localities or whole cities and encouraging support for the wholesome influences, especially cultural activities such as music, literature and art, were socially acceptable roles for women.... It offered social status and gave women a public role that could be defined as citizenship. . . which became a loaded word, imbued with a meaning covering both concern for the public sphere and altruistic concern for society's well-being.'³¹

Grand's career as Lady 'Mayoress' included many social highlights that reflected such 'cultural activities,' ones for which she had to act as elegant hostess, as well as perform the role of charitable lady, such as:

'Apart from entertaining the Sanitary Engineers from seventeen countries, organized by the League of Nations, opening Bath's first Lending Library . . . and donating pictures to brighten the classrooms of local schools, the Mayor and Mayoress welcomed 250 doctors to a BMA Conference when the city became, in gaiety and colour, like a scene from the Arabian Nights. Balls and banquets, fairy lights and roses all over the Abbey churchyard and the Roman baths; concerts, plays, processions: all this was enjoyed as much by the citizens as by the visitors.'³²



fig 6: Mayoress Madame Sarah Grand and Mayor Cedric Chivers at a Ceremony at the Pavilion, Sydney Gardens, Bath. 1920s
Bath in Time - Bath Central Library Collection

Lady Bountiful or no, such elaborate events spoke to her great success alongside Mayor Chivers, their imposing appearance reflected in photographs that document various civil ceremonies [figs. 5 and 6]. Chivers was a munificent man who had had a financially lucrative career in book-binding. His personal dedication to the city knew no bounds, first as an Alderman, then embarking on the longest running Mayoralty Bath would experience. But matched with Chivers philanthropic attitude, one reflected in the above events and hence implied in the role he expected of Grand, we have to keep in mind Grand's passionate

commitment to causes. Beyond the usual round of civic duties, involving official dinners, opening bazaars and flower shows, the 1927 *Evening Standard* reported, for example, that she was 'one of the rare examples of a literary light to whom social sovereignty in civic life appeals . . .' At the time she was President of the National Women Citizens' Association and worked with the Church of England Temperance Society.³³ Yet she was capable of using her reputation as a writer to forward such causes, a case in point being the book of Grand's quotations, edited by her admirer, Gladys Singer-Biggar, that raised funds for the Mayoress Fresh Air Fund for poor city children.³⁴ Grand's public images reveal this ability to appeal to many audiences whose ideals might, at times, conflict with each other. Most prevalent in this regard is the Praga portrait itself.

The Praga Portrait, 1896.

When Grand became Lady 'Mayoress' of Bath, she began an intense friendship and correspondence with Singer-Biggar, who provides a record of the Bath portrait [fig. 1] when she first saw it at the 1927 Autumn Exhibition of the Bath Society of Artists:

'Your portrait . . . there is a distinctive quality about it which is arresting-you must always have stood out in a crowd-but not with quite the still power you exercise today'³⁵

The portrait's inclusion at this exhibition of local artists is somewhat unusual,³⁶ the Director of the Victoria Art Gallery, Reginald W. M. Wright, having asked Praga to exhibit the work, hoping to sell it to a Bath resident.³⁷ Prominent Bath citizens then worked with Wright to get up a subscription to buy the portrait in order to present it to Grand in recognition of her role as Lady 'Mayoress' of Bath.³⁸ In the event, however, Chivers bought it so that he could give it to Grand himself.³⁹ She asked the Gallery to house the painting but her family objected. It appears that her son Archie kept it, since he was in possession of it when he presented it to the city of Bath in 1943. His decision was probably based on a long-standing tradition of giving portraits of local politicians to the city so that they could hang in the Guildhall.⁴⁰

This information suggests that Bath citizens approved it as an appropriate representation of their Lady 'Mayoress'. Praga said of the sale to Chivers: "It would be very gratifying to me to know that my portrait of Mme. Sarah Grand had found a permanent home in the City of Bath with which she is so actively and honourably connected."⁴¹ He was aware of Grand's success as Lady 'Mayoress', otherwise he would not have tried to sell the work.⁴²

It is somewhat ironic that we have a portrait of Madame Sarah Grand from 1896 that honours her as 'Mayoress' in the 1920s. There was talk of a painted portrait of her as Lady 'Mayoress' but no painting has emerged.⁴³ There are, however, several photographic portraits of her as 'Mayoress', one in which she wears the elaborate chain of office that the Mayor had created for her [fig. 7]. The photograph reveals her regal bearing and her ability to wear this new mantle literally. Singer-Biggar reported one of her appearances as 'Mayoress': 'A woman I spoke to at the Memorial said: "And Madame Sarah Grand - Oh! She's a grand lady!" So you see you live up to your adopted name all right!'⁴⁴

The Praga portrait reveals the conflicting sides of the New Woman, Madame Sarah Grand, which, in later life, made her successful as a crowd-pleasing Lady 'Mayoress'. Grand's scholars readily admit that she is hard to pin down ideologically and she herself admitted her own contradictions. As Ann Heilmann explains, 'In her effort to mediate between her traditional and progressive female audiences, Grand feminised the feminist, impressing on her readers that, however 'modern' her views might be, [she] felt at home with the latest fashion and was, in fact, the standard-bearer of stylishness.'⁴⁵ Grand's careful self-presentation and self-promotion to two women's markets was mirrored both in Praga's portrait [fig. 1] and in Thomas's cycling picture [fig. 4], in which she appeared in a very in-style gown with leg-of-mutton sleeves, beaded detailing and a large, feather-filled hat. While she was very conventionally dressed, in the height of fashion, the reason she was being painted and photographed was because of her sensational reputation. Her scandalous representation was reinforced by her interest in cycling, a real mark of the New Woman, and by having her portrait done, it was a sign of her arrival in society. But there was another side to sitting for one's portrait. As Jill Ker Conway explains, 'The mere act of sitting down to write an autobiography broke the code of female respectability, because doing so required a woman to believe that her direct experience, rather than her relationships with others, was what gave meaning to her life.' Similarly, for a woman to collude in the act of portrait-making of a public self, meant that she walked a dangerous line in relation to respectability, that she, like her autobiographical sisters, was involved in a 'conscious act of rebellion.'⁴⁶ Grand committed such an act by leaving her husband and changing her name. Praga's portrait symbolizes that significant revolt hence it is puzzling to witness the Bath citizenry embracing this portrait of Grand as symbolic of her being one of their own. A woman politician, like a radical woman writer, was new on the horizon and subject to numerous discourses about a woman's proper place. Yet, it seems Grand and Praga's goal was to counter such discussion through a conservative presentation of a well-dressed, demure, attractive lady.

If we are tempted to think such an intention is inaccurate, we need only review Grand's views on women's dress in relation to advanced ideas in 1893:

'We women would have had the suffrage long ago had not, unfortunately, some of the first fighters for it - some of the strong ones - been unprepossessing women... These two or three were held up everywhere as an awful warning of what the whole sex would become if it got the suffrage, . . . [T]he phrases most commonly employed to damage the cause are altogether significant of this: "The shrieking sisterhood," for instance. . . If you just saw them. Their dress! Their manners! If women are to look like that when they get the suffrage, then defend me from it!"⁴⁷

Grand desired to win over the conservative flock and to appear to be on their side when, in fact, she was heavily on the side of suffrage. We have already seen her calculated words along the same lines upon her election as Lady 'Mayoress' of Bath. She was a diplomat extraordinaire in this regard. Such diplomacy was necessary for any public political figure and one reflected in her portraits where she walks a fine line between conformity and resistance.

Grand's view of the New Woman was

'one who, while retaining all the grace of manner and feminine charm, had thrown off all the silliness and hysterical feebleness of her sex, and improved herself so as to be in every way the best companion for man, and without him the best fitted for a place of usefulness in the world.'⁴⁸

We could not have a better argument for her desire to become Lady 'Mayoress'; 'usefulness' could be construed by conservatives as her wish to be charitable, by radicals to challenge the limited roles of women in her culture. Such contradiction was already well in place in her position as New Woman. As Lucy Bland explains:

'The 1890s contributed an important heritage to early-twentieth century feminism; it also raised issues of contradiction which still leave present-day feminists uncertain and confused. Can sexual "freedom" ever be an equivalent freedom for women as for men? In demanding equality, and declaring our "sameness," how are women to argue simultaneously for recognition of *difference*: our different procreative capacity and our different experience of sexuality?'⁴⁹



fig 7: Madam Sarah Grand, Mayoress of Bath, 1925. Photograph by Lambert of Bath. Bath in Time - Bath Central Library Collection

This dilemma is embedded in the various Sarah Grands before us in these images. A proper lady seated for her portrait [figs. 1 and 3], represented her difference, while her cycling acumen, combined with her dress of proper lady [fig. 4], symbolised the forced conflation of Bland's attributes: her *difference* was signalled in her dress, while her desire for the same sexual freedom a man had is explicit in the cycle itself and her active engagement in the sport.

But, further, her very efforts to maintain the fashionable attire of a proper lady signal her difference from men, her different experience of her sensuality and sexuality, her pleasure in clothes and her simultaneous understanding of those clothes as markers of conservatism which a public would read and approve. This careful sartorial regard made her acceptable, even though she lived at a time when a woman politician was still suspect. This self-

scrutiny made her popular and contributes greatly to her lasting legacy, one readily evident through the purchase and display of the Praga portrait for Bath.

But wasn't Grand taking significant risks by presenting her public self in a feminine guise? Ellen Lambert argues, 'in feminist thinking, from Mary Wollstonecraft in the late-eighteenth century, on down to Naomi Wolf in the late- twentieth century, beauty has been associated with

women's traditional powerlessness.'⁵⁰ However, Grand's beauty seemed to be more in alignment with her feminism, her celebration of her beauty and the media's response to it serving to counter the disreputable attacks against her. Key examples are the images here, all of which create a compelling feminine image. She was in good company, such as that of Millicent Garrett Fawcett and Emmeline Pankhurst who, while they undertook more radical feminist work, equally sought a safe, feminine guise to deflect criticism from their suffrage causes.⁵¹

Grand's goal was to protect women from profligate men; dressing like a woman, appearing womanly, worked in her favour to get people to listen. And those efforts translated well when she presented herself as Lady 'Mayoress' of Bath. Grand took the stance that dressing well was somewhat of a political act, her body and her adornment of it the most visible statement of her desire to masquerade as a more conservative woman than her feminist politics would suppose. Her clothing became her armour, a way to disarm her critics, who often noted her considerable charm, a characteristic we have seen followed her in her later role as Lady 'Mayoress'. She was in constant masquerade, seeking to deflect criticism by playing up her femininity. As I have discussed, while Grand was the woman who created the New Woman, she also invented a new self to go with that creation, Madame Sarah Grand. She helped to popularise the New Woman in literature, but she became her in real life. At the same time, she was obsessed with dressing appropriately so as not to gain adverse attention. It was her ability to keep her audience off-guard that kept her in the limelight, a purpose revealed in the visual images she has left us.

Some information in this essay first appeared in Colleen Denney, *Women, Portraiture and the Crisis of Identity in Victorian England: My Lady Scandalous Reconsidered* (Ashgate, 2009). I thank Ashgate for allowing me to reproduce the material here.

Notes

1. I thank Katharine Wall, Collections Manager at the Victoria Art Gallery, Bath, for help with this information (E-mail from Katharine Wall to Colleen Denney, May 17th 2010). On the gift of the painting see the correspondence held in the Victoria Art Gallery, Bath.
2. Gillian Kersley, *Darling Madame: Sarah Grand and Devoted Friend* (Virago Press, 1983), p.125.
3. See Lucy Bland, 'The Married Woman, the "New Woman" and the Feminist: Sexual Politics of the 1890s,' in *Equal or Different: Women's Politics 1800-1914*, ed. Jane Rendall (Basil Blackwell, 1987), pp.141-164.
4. On her life and publications see Joan Huddleston, *Sarah Grand [Mrs. Frances Elizabeth McFall, née Clarke]: A Bibliography* (Department of English/University of Queensland, Victorian Fiction Research Guides I, 1979); and Kersley, *Darling Madame*. See also Jane Eldridge Miller, 'McFall, Frances Elizabeth Bellenden (1854-1943),' *Oxford Dictionary of National Biography* (Oxford University Press, Sept. 2004) www.oxforddnb.com/iew/article/39086, accessed October 15th 2010, where, however, she inaccurately claims that *The Heavenly Twins* was the first New Woman novel. Many authors had written them in the 1880s and early 1890s, but none of them had addressed the issue of venereal disease.
5. See Huddleston, *Sarah Grand*; and Kersley, *Darling Madame*.
6. David Rubinstein, *Before the Suffragettes: Women's Emancipation in the 1890s* (Harvester Press, 1986), p.12, and p.12 n. 1.

7. Sarah Grand, 'The New Aspect of the Woman Question,' *North American Review* 158 (1894), p. 271.
8. Linda Dowling, 'The Decadent and the New Woman in the 1890s,' in *Reading Fin-de-Siècle Fictions*, ed. Lynn Pykett (Longman, 1996), pp.47-63. See also Sally Ledger and Scott McCracken, 'Introduction,' in *Cultural Politics at the Fin-de-Siècle*, ed. Sally Ledger and Scott McCracken (Cambridge University Press, 1995), 1; and Sally Ledger, 'The New Woman and the Crisis of Victorianism,' in *Cultural Politics*, 22-44.
9. Marilyn Bonnell, 'The Legacy of Sarah Grand's *The Heavenly Twins*: A Review Essay,' *English Literature in Transition 1880-1920* 36 (1993), p. 472; 469. This debate is also prevalent in Jessica Cox, 'Gender, Conflict, Continuity: Anne Brontë's *The Tenant of Wildfell Hall* (1848) and Sarah Grand's *The Heavenly Twins* (1893),' *Brontë Studies* 35 (March 2010), pp. 30-39; and, in terms of fuelling the debate, see Andrea L. Broomfield, 'Eliza Lynn Linton, Sarah Grand and the Spectacle of the Victorian Woman Question: Catch Phrases, Buzz Words and Sound Bites,' *English Literature in Transition 1880-1920* 47 (2004), pp. 251-72.
10. Teresa Mangum, *Married, Middlebrow, and Militant* (The University of Michigan Press, 1998), p. 2.
11. Lynn Pykett, Foreword, in *The New Woman in Fiction and in Fact*, ed. Angelique Richardson and Chris Willis (Palgrave, 2001), p. xii. The authors of this volume argue that the New Woman did not exist but rather was a media construct only.
12. See Colleen Denney, "'Voiceless London": Millicent Garrett Fawcett's Embodiment of the Common Cause, or, Resisting the Scandal of the Platform,' in *Women, Portraiture and the Crisis of Identity*, pp. 125-178.
13. Catherine Craft-Fairchild, *Masquerade and Gender* (Pennsylvania State University Press, 1993), p. 7.
14. Kathleen Woodward, "'Youthfulness as a Masquerade,' *Discourse* 11 (Fall-Winter 1988-89), p. 125.
15. See Lisa Tickner, *The Spectacle of Imagery* (Chatto and Windus, 1987 / University of Chicago Press, 1988); and Deborah Cherry, *Beyond the Frame* (Routledge, 2000).
16. Talia Schaffer, "'Nothing but Foolscap and Ink": Inventing the New Woman,' in *New Woman in Fiction and in Fact*, p. 39.
17. Schaffer, "'Nothing but Foolscap and Ink,'" p. 49.
18. Mangum, *Married, Middlebrow, and Militant*, p. 7.
19. Bland, 'The Married Woman,' p. 164.
20. Barbara Caine, 'Feminist Biography and Feminist History,' *The Women's History Review* 3 (1994), p. 256.
21. See Rosemary Sweet, "On the Town," in *Women and Urban Life in Eighteenth-Century England*, ed. Rosemary Sweet and Penelope Lane (Ashgate, 2003), p. 25.
22. Sweet, "On the Town," p. 25.
23. Cited in Barry Cunliffe, *The City of Bath* (Yale University Press, 1987), p. 167.
24. Kersley, *Darling Madame*, pp. 124-125.
25. *Bath & Wilts Chronicle*, May 27th 1922, cited in Kersley, *Darling Madame*, pp. 125-126.
26. *Bath & Wilts Chronicle*, October 20th 1922, cited in Kersley, *Darling Madame*, p. 124.
27. *Glasgow Herald*, January 3rd 1923, cited in Kersley, *Darling Madame*, p. 124.
28. *Bath & Wilts Chronicle*, October 20th 1922, cited in Kersley, *Darling Madame*, p. 126.
29. Hellen Meller, 'Gender, Citizenship and the Making of the Modern Environment,' in *Women and the Making of Built Space in England, 1870-1950*, ed. Elizabeth Darling and Leslie Whitworth (Ashgate, 2007), pp. 13-32.
30. See Patricia Hollis, ed., *Women in Public 1850-1900: Documents of the Victorian Women's Movement* (George Allen and Unwin, 1979), pp. 228, 272-274.
31. Meller, 'Gender, Citizenship,' p. 14.

32. Kersley, *Darling Madame*, p.131.
33. *Evening Standard* (October 3rd 1927), cited in Kersley, *Darling Madame*, p. 132.
34. Printed locally as *The Breath of Life: A Short Anthology of Quotations for Days and Months, from the Works of Sarah Grand*. See Kersley, *Darling Madame*, pp. 195-197.
35. Gladys Singer-Biggar to Sarah Grand, November 9th 1927, Sarah Grand Papers, Bath Central Library. See also the Sarah Grand correspondence, Victoria Art Gallery, Bath. I would like to thank the staff at the Bath Central Library and the Victoria Art Gallery, Bath, for sharing these materials with me. Thanks also to Colin Johnston, Principal Archivist at the Bath Record Office, for his assistance.
36. E-mail from Katharine Wall to Colleen Denney, May 17th 2010.
37. Director of the Victoria Art Gallery, Reginald W. M. Wright to Alfred Praga, March 24th 1928; Alfred Praga to Reginald W. M. Wright, October 26th/27th 1927, Sarah Grand Letters, Victoria Art Gallery, Bath.
38. Thanks to Nicky Sugar and Colin Johnston at Bath Record Office who, though they searched, found no evidence of the subscription fund. This could be due, in part, to the fact that the Mayor's office files were salvaged for re-use during WWII (E-mail from Nicky Sugar, Assistant Archivist, Bath Archives, to Colleen Denney, December 21st 2010).
39. Sarah Grand to Mr. Colterell, May 14th 1930, Sarah Grand Letters, Victoria Art Gallery, Bath.
40. E-mail from Katharine Wall to Colleen Denney, May 17th 2010. There is no record of the portrait in Grand's will, so it appears the portrait was already in her son's possession at the time of her death. See Kersley, *Darling Madame*, pp. 334-335; and *Copy Will and Grant-Frances Elizabeth McFall Otherwise Sarah Grand*-probate 1943, Principal Probate Registry, England.
41. Alfred Praga to Director of Victoria Art Gallery, Reginald W. M. Wright, March 29th 1928, Sarah Grand Letters, Victoria Art Gallery, Bath.
42. We don't know, however, who commissioned the work in the first place. It was certainly not Grand herself, otherwise it would have been in her possession rather than being up for sale.
43. Reginald W. M. Wright, Director of the Victoria Art Gallery, to Alfred Praga, March 27th 1928, Sarah Grand Letters, Victoria Art Gallery, Bath, England: 'I have learnt that there is a project underfoot for the painting of a fresh portrait of Madame Sarah Grand as "Mayoress of Bath." ... [T]his matter is in hand ...'
44. Gladys Singer-Biggar to Madame Sarah Grand, November 13th 1928, Sarah Grand Papers, Bath Central Library, Bath.
45. Ann Heilmann, ed., *Sex, Social Purity and Sarah Grand* (Routledge, 2000), p. 5.
46. Jill Ker Conway, *Exploring the Art of Autobiography* (Vintage Press, 1999), p. 87.
47. *Humanitarian*, 1893, 3, pp.87-93, cited in Heilmann, *Sex, Social Purity and Sarah Grand*, p. 26.
48. Sarah Grand, 'The New Aspect of the Woman Question,' *North American Review* 158 (1894), p. 271.
49. Bland, 'The Married Woman,' p.141.
50. Ellen Zetzel Lambert, *The Face of Love: Feminism and the Beauty Question* (Beacon Press, 1995), pp.14-15; cited in Elaine Showalter, *Inventing Herself* (Cambridge University Press, 2000), pp. 321-322.
51. On Garret Fawcett see Denney, "'Voiceless London,'" and on Pankhurst see June Purvis, 'A Pair of Infernal Queens? A Reassessment of the Dominant Representations of Emmeline and Christabel Pankhurst, First Wave Feminists in Edwardian Britain,' *Women's History Review* 5 (1996), pp. 259-80.