

# REFLECTIONS OF REAL LIFE AND CHARACTERS IN *FALLING ANGELS* BY TRACY CHEVALIER

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by

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*To my husband and my family...*

## APPROVAL PAGE

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## **AUTHOR DECLARATIONS**

1. The material included in this thesis has not been submitted wholly or in part for any academic award or qualification other than that for which it is now submitted.
2. The program of advanced study of which this thesis is part has consisted of:
  - i) Research Methods course during the undergraduate study
  - ii) Examination of several thesis guides of particular universities both in Turkey and abroad as well as a professional book on this subject.

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## **ABSTRACT**

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### **REFLECTIONS OF REAL LIFE AND CHARACTERS IN *FALLING ANGELS* BY TRACY CHEVALIER**

This thesis discusses the situation of women, men, and children and reflects their different perception and fulfillment of social beliefs in England between 1901-1910. Each character is unique so that they experience and feel differently in terms of their own thoughts and feelings; however social conventions were strict during the era. In the novel, women characters Kitty and Gertrude differ from each other in terms of their different perception and practices about maternity and their fulfillment of the role of an ideal wife. Jenny and Mrs. Baker reflect the situation of working class women. Middle-class men characters, Richard and Albert portray men's experiences during that era while Simon's father portrays working class men. Maude, Lavinia, and Ivy May are examples of middle-class children who show what the girls of the society experience and feel while Simon is an example of working class children who shows what a working class boy experiences and feels during that era. With these realistic characters, Chevalier gives her readers a sense of real people and real life between 1901-1910 and supports the idea that each person is different.

#### **Key words:**

Social conventions, class, real life, perception, fulfillment, difference, uniqueness, mother, father, daughter, love affair, abortion, and suffrage movement.

## KISA ÖZET

Şakire SEVERDİM

Ocak 2015

### TRACY CHEVALIER'İN *DÜŞEN MELEKLER* İSİMLİ ESERİNDEKİ KARAKTERLERİNDEN VE GERÇEK HAYATTAN YANSIMALAR

Bu tez, İngiltere'nin 1901 ve 1910 yılları arasındaki kadınların, erkeklerin ve çocukların durumlarını inceler ve onların toplumsal inançları farklı anlayışlarını ve uygulamalarını yansıtır. Dönem esnasında her ne kadar sosyal âdetler sıkı da olsa, her karakter kendine has duygu ve düşünceler açısından farklı bir şekilde hissetmekte and yaşamakta özgündür. Romanda, kadın karakterler Kitty ve Gertrude annelik ile ilgili algı ve uygulamada ve ideal bir eş olma rolünü yerine getirmekte birbirleri arasında farklılıklar gösterir. Jenny ve Bayan Baker çalışan sınıf kadınlarının durumunu yansıtır. Orta sınıf erkekler Richard ve Albert o dönemdeki erkeklerin yaşadıklarını tasvir ederken Simon'ın babası da çalışan sınıf erkeklerini tasvir eder. Maude, Lavinia ve Ivy May toplumun kız çocuklarının ne hissettikleri ve yaşadıklarını yansıtan orta sınıf çocuklarına örnekler iken Simon ise o dönemdeki bir çalışan sınıf erkek çocuğu ne hissettiğini ve yaşadığını gösteren çalışan sınıf çocuklarına bir örnektir. Bu gerçekçi karakterler ile Chevalier okucularına 1901 ve 1910 yılları arasındaki gerçek yaşam ve gerçek insanlar hissini verir ve her insan farklıdır düşüncesini destekler.

#### Anahtar Kelimeler:

Sosyal âdetler, sınıf, gerçek hayat, algı, uygulama, farklılık, özgünlük, anne, baba, kız evlat, aşk ilişkisi, çocuk aldırma ve oy kullanma hareketi.

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## INTRODUCTION

### ***Falling Angels* by Tracy Chevalier and the Victorian Social Life**

*Falling Angels* is a postmodern historical novel that narrates a ten-year period from January 1901, the day after Queen Victoria's death, to May 1910, the death of King Edward in London. It reflects the social, economic, and political situations of the period from a realistic point of view. The novel generally focuses on two next-door families, the Waterhouses and the Colemans. While the Colemans belong to the upper middle class, the Waterhouses belong to the lower middle class. As a result of different social status, it is clear that these two families are different in terms of life style, ideas, social values, and expectations.

The novel tells the story one by one of each member of these families and reflects their inner life as well as their servants and a graveyard boy. Thanks to this fact, the author, Tracy Chevalier, shows us the characteristic features of not only the Victorian woman, but also the Victorian man, wife, husband, grandmother, girl, boy, and servant. Chevalier, beginning her career as an American historical novelist, goes into the depth of the Edwardian era and its social life by choosing the characters Kitty, Richard, Gertrude, Albert, Lavinia, Maude, Simon, Jenny, etc. so that each character becomes a voice or reflection of a group in Edwardian society. It is clear that each character seems a real identity of the period. That is to say, *Falling Angels* is a novel that describes the social reality and values of the period through its characters.

The characters Kitty, Richard, Maude, Jenny, etc. are examples of a wife, a husband, a daughter, a servant, etc. in Edwardian society, so the social structure and class system of the Edwardian period should be taken into consideration when the

novel *Falling Angels* and its context are analyzed. It is difficult to survey the novel without knowing the period and its general characteristics. For example, the Waterhouse family reflect family life that is wished for and expected by society. If we want to look into the family life of the era, it is clear that the Edwardian era was known as a period of prosperity, success, and values of family, morality, order in the family, and home. According to social values, real happiness and peace were sought inside the walls of a warm home:

Before marriage and afterwards, let [couples] learn to centre all their hopes of real and lasting happiness in their own fireside; let them cherish the faith that in home [...] lies the only true source of domestic felicity; let them believe that round the household gods, contentment and tranquillity cluster in their gentlest and most graceful forms; and that many weary hunters of happiness through the noisy world, have learnt this truth too late, and found a cheerful spirit and a quiet mind only at home at last. (Flanders 11)

In the ideal home, the members of the family had to obey the rules of authority for the peace of home. Patriarchy and authority hierarchy in society was clear: “[...] the hierarchy of authority was undisputed: God gave his authority to man, man ruled woman, and woman ruled her household – both children and servants – through the delegated authority she received from man” (13). Man had limitless power and was the head of the family and society:

The most important person in the household is the head of the family – the father... Though he may, perhaps, spend less time at home than any other member of the family – though he has scarcely a voice in

family affairs – though the whole household machinery seems to go on without the assistance of his management – still it does depend entirely on that active brain and those busy hands. (14)

In society, the main role of a woman was marriage and devotion to the man or reproduction and domesticity (Tosh 1). A woman's place was in the home, as domesticity and motherhood were considered by society at large to be a sufficient emotional fulfillment for females. In other words, the woman was expected to establish households with her ideal housewife skills such as cooking, washing, cleaning, weaving, etc. From a woman's diary, the stereotype of woman was:

How important a work is mine. To be a cheerful, a loving wife, and forbearing, fond, wise, thoughtful mother, striving ever against self-indulgence and irritability, which often sorely beset me. As a mistress, to be kind, gentle, thoughtful both for the bodies and souls of my servants. As a visitor of the poor to spare myself no trouble so as to relieve wisely and well. (Flanders 14)

The woman was responsible for the order and peace of home. She had to create a comfortable home for her husband and children. These responsibilities of a man and a woman were the ideal manhood and womanhood criteria in society. They were indispensable particulars of an ideal man and woman although they were not written rules. These thoughts affected the family; a wife and a husband felt these rules of ideal manhood and womanhood. In *Falling Angels*, both the Waterhouses and the Colemans reflect these social expectations differently. Gertrude and Albert Waterhouse behave more appropriately than the Colemans in terms of fulfilling the social conventions. While Gertrude knows her place in her home as a wife, Kitty

reacts against these social conventions and struggles to get rid of the social conventions about women's roles. On one hand, Gertrude is happy with her life in her domestic sphere. She takes care of her daughters, Lavinia and Ivy May, all day. While her husband works outside, Gertrude is interested in the household and remains at home. Gertrude's experience is in accordance with the social conventions. On the other hand, Kitty is different from Gertrude. She is not happy with her life although she has a better standard of living than Gertrude. She is jealous of her husband, Richard, in terms of his being outside. She is against the limitation of society and clear values of womanhood and motherhood. She is against being other, inferior, or secondary in a world created by male power. She is against being imprisoned in the home. She is against being "an angel in the house." As a result, she differs from other women in the novel in terms of her thoughts, beliefs, and life style.

Both Kitty and Gertrude call attention to the idea of separate spheres, which was an important concept during the era. It is clear that Kitty is against the idea of separate spheres in the society, while Gertrude accepts it. One of the social conventions is that a woman and a man belong to different separate spheres. According to this convention, woman and man were created with different natures, so they have their own peculiar features and roles. Susan Kent depicts ideal women as "inhabit[ing] a separate, private sphere, one suitable for the so-called inherent qualities of femininity: emotion, passivity, submission, dependence, and selflessness..." (Kent 30). They were the idealized qualities of women, and in social standards, "the man naturally governs; the woman as naturally obeys" (34). These man-made standards have imprisoned women in the home. The woman should behave according to social codes and order. As an angel in the house, she should

remain in her separate sphere, her home, and fulfill her responsibilities as a wife, mother, sister, and daughter, taking care of children, nurturing them, and serving her man.

Traditionally, men were believed to be superior to woman. The woman was supposed to be obedient to the male authority as a daughter, a sister, a wife, and even a mother in her “cage” due to her physical and intellectual “weakness,” her so-called “effeminacy” in which reproduction was seen as an obstacle to intellectual growth and psychological maturity. Therefore, female reproductive capacity was seen as a weakness (Munich 266). Besides, Ruskin emphasized the man’s superiority to the woman:

Now their separate characters are briefly these. The man’s power is active and progressive, defensive. He is eminently the doer, the creator, the discoverer, the defender. His intellect is for speculation and invention; his energy for adventure, for war and for conquest... But the woman’s power is not for rule, not for battle, and her intellect is not for invention or recreation, but sweet ordering, arrangement, and decision. She sees the qualities of things, their claims, and their places. Her great function is praise; she enters into no contest, but infallibly adjudges the crown of contest. By her office and place, she is protected from all danger and temptation. The man, in his rough work in the open world, must encounter all peril and trial – to him therefore must be the failure, the offence, the inevitable error; often he must be wounded or subdued, often misled, and always hardened. (Vicinus 126)

The novel *Falling Angels* shows both the idea of separate spheres and the superiority of man over woman in society, also how this notion has changed because each woman and man character behaves and experiences it differently in terms of their

ideas and inner self. As an angel in the house, Gertrude and Kitty should have remained in their domestic sphere and fulfilled their role as a wife and mother, but Kitty does not fulfill the responsibilities of her role. While Gertrude accepts the superiority of her husband, Kitty does not accept Richard's superiority over her and it creates a conflict between her and Richard.

Another important issue in the novel is the situation of men characters such as Albert and Richard. They have been brought up according to strict social beliefs. It was believed that men were the unquestionable authorities of the home. Women or daughters did not need to think because their husbands or fathers decided what is best for them. The last word in the family belonged to the men according to social conventions. Under the light of these beliefs, men wanted to control both their wives and daughters. Albert is successful in holding the authority of his family in his hands, but Richard cannot. Throughout the novel, Richard sees himself as a desperate and weak man because he cannot control his wife. Actually, the cause of this feeling is the result of bringing man up as a unique power in the society from his childhood. When he cannot exercise his authority or he comes across a reaction from a woman, he feels weak. Richard experiences this emotion. Kitty ignores Richard's thoughts. Richard cannot keep his wife away from her friends in the Suffrage Movement. It causes Kitty's participation in the Suffrage Movement and her tragic death. Chevalier shows what a man experiences and feels when his wife supports the Suffrage Movement.

Another noteworthy thought in the novel is the idea of purity and morality both for women and men. The society emphasized moral values by insisting that women should be pure, especially upper- and middle-class women, to protect the foundation

of the family and to ensure the moral education of children. Also, for upper- and middle-class men morality was important. On the other hand, in the society of the period, prostitution and adultery were common, but this moral disorder was seen in the lower class. This thought also shows a clear class distinction in society. The lower class or the working-class lived in their exclusive world without passing the upper- or middle-class world. They remained largely separate. While the upper- and middle-class had a voice in the social and public world, the lower-class stayed out of the public world. The most important thing for them was to get their bread. Their lives were harsh, poor, and remote from the rich. As a result, immorality, wickedness, and prostitution were put on the shoulder of the lower-class, while purity and morality were associated with the upper and the middle classes. In *Falling Angels*, the situation is different. The members of the middle class, Kitty, Gertrude, Richard, and Mr. Jackson, become associated with moral lapse. Although Kitty is a married woman and has a daughter, she has a love affair with Mr. Jackson. Subsequently, her pregnancy and abortion damages Kitty's purity and goodness. When we compare Kitty with Jenny her maid, who also becomes pregnant as a result of a love affair, the two women react differently. While Kitty kills her child, Jenny gives birth to her child. As for Richard and Mr. Jackson, Richard forces Kitty to sleep with another man every New Year's to punish Kitty. This event reflects his poor morality as an upper-middle-class man and husband. Mr. Jackson's immorality is his love affair with Kitty. Mr. Jackson is a pious and moral man, but this fault harms his goodness.

Furthermore, *Falling Angels* shows not only immorality in the middle-class but also moral behavior of the working- and lower-class members of society, including Jenny, Mrs. Baker, Simon, and his father. Jenny and Mrs. Baker work at Kitty's



house as maid and cook. While they are in the center of a struggle for life, they also are interested in Maude, Kitty's daughter. While Kitty does not take care of her daughter, they become mother and friend to Maude. They like and protect her more than does Kitty. As for Simon and his father, Simon's father is a clear example of "working class fathers [who] were characterized as abusive drunkards incapable of normal husbandhood and fatherhood" (Tucker 71). He spends all day digging in the graveyard. He cannot give a better life to his family and his son, but he really values Simon. Despite his being an alcoholic, he is interested in his son and has a good time with him. Simon is a "dirty" working-class boy visually, but in his inner self he is a clean and good boy. He becomes one of the best friend of the daughters, Maude and Lavinia. When Ivy May is lost, he seeks and finds her. He helps Jenny when she conceals her pregnancy. While he is surrounded by wickedness, he protects his morality and goodness. In other words, Chevalier criticises the cliché of middle-class goodness and working-class wickedness.

Another important issue in the novel is the daughters and their relationship with Simon, their parents, and other people around them. From the beginning of the novel, the society has rules and norms about how a good girl should behave. Especially, Lavinia is a clear example of trying to be an ideal girl because the society had a huge effect on parents and children. In the society of the period, the parents try to bring up their children according to the social conventions, and the children try to behave according to standards acceptable to parents and society. As a result of the notion of separate spheres, girls and boys were brought up with different methods and fields of interest. According to this convention, a boy was supposed to be interested in riding, playing cricket, boating, etc., and he was supposed to have "a

sense of power, which act[ed] mentally as well as physically, enable[d] him to grasp difficulties, and master them” (Flanders 92) because he would have authority over a woman, a wife, a daughter, and a family in future. From his childhood, a boy was brought up according to the responsibilities he would have as an adult. In this way, a powerful and responsible man could develop. As for a girl, she was not brought up as free as a boy and was restricted because the society did not expect a serious profession from a girl. She was allowed little share of responsibility. The girl was raised with some certain ideal social and cultural aims, as Petrie (2000) stated in “Victorian Women Expected to Be Idle and Ignorant”: “From infancy all girls who were born above the level of poverty had the dream of a successful marriage before their eyes, for by that alone was it possible for a woman to rise in the world” (180), so the girl was educated according to these beliefs as a candidate to be an ideal lady. In addition, Peterson indicates the mentality of the society: “According to the received wisdom, the ladies cared for nothing but homes and families, their education was ‘decorative adornment’ and they submitted to fathers and husbands” (Vickery 389), so the girl was only to be interested in duties:

[...] A girl need not study science more than superficially. A mere acquaintanceship would render her “more companionable to men,” because luckily “it should not be necessary for her to *talk much*, even on his favourite topics, in order to obtain his favour. Knowledge is important only for a girl to be able “to listen attentively”; otherwise she would “destroy the satisfaction” which most men feel in conversing with really intelligent women. (Flanders 93)

Her education was just for satisfying her husband and father. She did not compete with a man with her education, because the “absolute power” was to be in the hands of men whatever she did. According to the social convention, the man should be superior to the woman, so the woman should not harm the power of man with her knowledge and education. In *Falling Angels*, both women and men characters have been brought up with this social thought about the difference between the girl’s and the boy’s education, so they try to bring their children up in terms of what they have learned. Especially, Gertrude and Albert educate their daughters in this way, but Kitty and Albert use several different methods while educating their daughter: and they bring Maude up by ignoring social conventions. The other child, Simon, is unable to get a good education because of his class. Therefore, each child is different as a result of various kinds of bringing up. Maude is more sensible than Lavinia and Ivy May.

*Falling Angels* reflects both the real social life of the Edwardian period and the fact that we all are unique and have our own thoughts, experiences, and inner life. According to our specific features, each person reacts to social conventions and beliefs. In this way, pluralism is one of the main focal points of the novel and it is presented with two methods. One of these methods is the portrayal of various kinds of women, men, and children. Chevalier demonstrates that a single self and type is impossible: there are different kinds of wives, daughters, husbands, etc. in the novel. The contrasts between Gertrude-Kitty, Albert-Richard, and Lavinia-Maude are clear examples that show differences among these people.

The other method is the use of twelve first-person narratives that are fragmented into chapters. Thanks to twelve first-person narratives, Chevalier lets the

readers experience the thoughts and feelings of more than one character. Husbands, wives, a grandmother, children, and also housemaids describe events from their points of view, which increase the reliability and different perspectives on events being heard from several characters. For example, the Suffrage Movement was an important event that affected women and society significantly in the Edwardian era. Chevalier describes this event from nearly all characters' points of view. It has a different meaning for each character. For example, it means a struggle for freedom and rights for Kitty, while it means a dangerous activity for Gertrude. For Richard and Albert, it is an unnecessary and frivolous struggle. With this method, Chevalier claims that each event, even an event that happened in the past, is interpreted independently and subjectively by each person.

Under the light of these methods, Chevalier depicts a ten-year period during the Edwardian era by focusing on social and political realities. As an author going into the depth of the past from today, Chevalier gives new meaning and values to the events and people of the era with her characters and narrative style. This thesis will examine the events and the social conventions of the period, and how these conventions and norms are accepted and viewed differently in the characters' thoughts and feelings. Especially, I will analyze the role of being a woman, a man, a daughter, a mother, a husband, and a servant in the Edwardian era, and how they are experienced subjectively. For example, Kitty and Gertrude react to the traditional role of womanhood and motherhood differently: Gertrude fulfills her responsibilities while Kitty rejects them. This thesis will show that each person has a unique self and identity. However, in any society where there are many rules and conventions, individuals experience and live according to their own preferences. On one hand,

social conventions affect some people largely in a positive way, and they live according to these beliefs. On the other hand, social conventions affect some people in a negative way, and they react against these beliefs. In the following thesis, these two groups of people will be seen clearly in terms of their experiences.

## CHAPTER 1

### **An analysis of Women Characters in *Falling Angels***

The women characters in the novel consist of each age and class group. Kitty Coleman is a wife and mother from the upper-middle class. Gertrude Waterhouse is a wife and mother from the middle class. Mrs. Coleman is a traditional mother-in-law and grandmother. Jenny and Mrs. Baker are servants in the Coleman's house and are examples of working-class women. These five women characters represent different sides and qualities of women. While Gertrude is a wife and mother who is devoted to her children and husband, Kitty is a wife and mother who ignores her family and yearns for her female self and freedom. Mrs. Coleman is a woman who esteems the Victorian values and social conventions that she has been brought up with, and she directs her family in terms of these conventions. Mrs. Baker and Jenny are partially separated from the family life of the other women characters in the novel and represent women in difficulties when they are compared with Gertrude, Kitty, and Mrs. Coleman.

With these different women characters, Chevalier portrays the notion of each woman fulfilling her role and responsibilities. As a woman and writer, she focuses on differences of women characters in the novel and the real situation of women in the years from 1901 to 1910. Generally in her novels, she tries to show how far women have come. In an interview, she states that she is grateful to have been born when she was and adds she has more rights and opportunities than women in the past, even her mother ("Tracy Chevalier"). Chevalier, who defines herself as "an outsider [who] has an ability to look at something fresh and stirs up stuff" (Morel 74), reshapes women's situations in a new way in *Falling Angels*. She lets her women characters

speak and shows “a combination of openness, ambiguity, displacement and difference” (Hasan 4) as an outsider.

The two notable female characters of the novel, Kitty and Gertrude, are similar in that both live in London in the same neighbourhood during the early Edwardian period, but are different as women and wives in terms of their life styles, thoughts, and experiences. In other words, they are as close as next-door, but they are far away from each other. Both characters are wives and mothers and live in their private sphere, but they have huge differences in their different reactions to the accepted role of womanhood and social beliefs. While both of them are constructed as Victorian women, Kitty reacts against the traditional role of Victorian ideal womanhood while Gertrude tries to be an ideal woman. Differences in Kitty and Gertrude reveal multiplicity among women during the transition from the Victorian era to the Edwardian era.

The novel narrates a part of Kitty’s and Gertrude’s lives during the Edwardian era, a ten-year period. We see not only the new ideas of the Edwardian era, but also the effects of the Victorian era on both women. The transition from the Victorian period to the Edwardian era changes both women’s lives because in the Edwardian era, economic and social conditions changed, creating an environment where there was more social mobility. The situation of women, the issue of women’s suffrage, and women’s rights were among the important issues of the era. New ideas about the situation of women affected Kitty and Gertrude.

Both Kitty and Gertrude are constructed in terms of Victorian values and are expected to behave in terms of these doctrines. However, Kitty Coleman, who is a lazy housewife, is unhappy with her life although she has an understanding, rich

husband and a well-behaved daughter according to Victorian ideology. The reason behind her unhappiness is that she is different from the “ideal Victorian woman” in terms of idea, thought, and life style. She abandons the traditional role of womanhood of her society and tries to find her free, independent self in order to enter the world of politics as a defender of the Suffrage Movement at the end of the novel.

According to Gilles Lipovetsky, women are divided into three historical categories: “The first woman” is considered evil, dangerous and devious; so she assumes inferior roles. In middle age, “the second woman” becomes a united whole with “love.” With the passage of time, this concept of woman is turned into the Victorian ideal woman. This ideal woman is a good wife who makes her husband happy and a good mother who takes care of her children. Actually, these two types of women are both dependent on men. They are not free from men’s domination, but “the third woman” changes all of the perception of “men’s mastery over women”:

Unlike the two types of women before her, “the Third Woman” is independent and capable of making all the decisions that concern her without asking for men’s permission or support (an attitude that is perfectly rendered through the famous formula used in the pro-abortion campaigns, “my body, my choice”). (Ghentulescu 196)

“The third woman” is not attached to home, husband, and children. She is free and creates “a female self.” She is an individual, not a thing, and she maintains otherness in herself. Kitty reacts as an example of “the prototype of the modern independent woman, ‘the third woman’” (Alarcos 11). She is a bored and unhappy woman. Kitty’s unhappiness pushes her into loneliness and social isolation. She does not take



into account her environment and people. She does not talk too much even with her husband and daughter. She just reads and is interested in her garden. All of these facts cause her alienation and displacement among other women. From the beginning of the novel, the displacement and alienation of the character Kitty is obvious. In the novel, the Colemans and the Waterhouses go to a bonfire together on the Heath. While everybody around her is cheerful, Kitty is joyless. According to her words, she sees herself as “an odd creature” (Chevalier 68) because she is different from others in terms of behaviour and ideas. She feels as if there is “no comfortable place” (68) for her. She does not find a comfortable place in society. In this meeting, Gertrude is also there and sits down around the fire with a cheerful and peaceful smile “with an arm around each daughter” (68). She is happy with her family and shares the same feeling with other people around her, unlike Kitty.

If the life standards and advantages of Kitty are compared to other women, as an upper-middle class woman, Kitty has many possibilities that other women of the period do not have. Although she is aware of having a good husband and life, they are not enough for her:

I knew very well that I was lucky in many things: to have had an education and a liberal father, to have a husband who is handsome and well enough off that we can afford a cook as well as a live-in maid, and who does not discourage me from bettering myself, even if he is unable to give me the larger world I long for. (70)

She wants to go out of her cage to a “larger world” that belongs to the male. The social convention about separate spheres does not let her into this world because of

her sex. She wants freedom and equality with men. She wants to speak her opinion freely as an individual and to be valuable like Richard, her husband.

Kitty does not find what she expects from her husband. When they married, she thought he would change; she is disappointed (120). After being married a number of years, she is even more depressed and is desperate for something exciting:

I feel so flat this morning. [...] I secretly hoped that the change in the century would bring a change to us all; that England would miraculously slough off her shabby black coat to reveal something glittering and new. It is only eleven hours into the twentieth century, but I know very well that nothing has changed but a number. (5)

As an unhappy woman with social limitations, Kitty would like a change and newness in society. Thanks to this change, she hopes to find her free self and to be saved from the commonness of her husband, women, and society. Her yearning for change differs from other women in her society such as Gertrude. When Queen Victoria died in 1901, Kitty “was terribly excited to hear the Queen is dead” (16). While people were mourning, she was not sad. Gertrude and other people were dressed in black, no one went to work, schools were closed (377), but Kitty dressed in blue (8) and “despise[d] the sentimentality of the age” (68). By wearing a blue dress on the mourning day, she shows her difference from other people and her not being upset after the Queen’s death. She thinks that the Queen’s death is “a true change in leadership” (16). The reason behind her happiness with the Queen’s death is related to her ideas about women and their position in social life.

Queen Victoria was a major paradox in terms of gender ideology (Munich 265) because women were perceived as inferior to men and as the weaker sex who inhabited a separate sphere. However, as monarch, Victoria was socially and symbolically superior to every other citizen in Britain, all men being constitutionally considered her subjects, that was the main contradiction in the Victorian era, that was generally conceived as “oppressive domesticity, repressive prudery” (Vickery 386). As Munich points out, the accession of the Queen was a cultural dilemma and confusion at the top of the pyramid of authority due to her social roles as a devoted wife and mother. In the private sphere, Queen Victoria represented a kind of femininity, domesticity, motherhood, and respectability. Indeed, the Queen was the model of marital stability and domestic virtue, which was the ideal of Victorian society. As a compensation for her role paradox, Queen Victoria supported femininity and domesticity. In the fifteenth year after her accession, she stated, “I am every day more convinced that we women, if we are to be good women, feminine and amiable and domestic, are not fitted to reign” (Munich 267). Clearly, the separate spheres for men and women were accepted even though she was the queen of the nation. During her reign of 63 years, she emphasized the value of family and influenced the moral and religious notions of the era. She was the symbol of the Victorian ideal woman, an example of a faithful wife and a self-sacrificing mother. Such values are foreign to Kitty, so she is excited because she believes things will change after the Queen’s death. On the other hand, Gertrude feels sorry and reflects it, so that her daughter Lavinia shares her mourning deeply (Chevalier 19).

Unlike Kitty, the character Gertrude Waterhouse reacts as an example of “the common perception of woman as dutiful wife and a caring mother” (Alarcos 10). She

is known for her devotion to her family and her home according to the social convention that wishes Gertrude to behave as “an angel of the house.” In Victorian society, the notion of a perfect lady and of ideal womanhood was so important that the term, “the angel in the house” was used for the ideal woman. In a secular sense, the angel provided the home environment that enabled her husband’s and children’s well being in the world. Gertrude deals with her daughters and household at home. She is aware of her place in society and is untroubled by it. She does not judge social values like Kitty does, and the only thing she wants is to be an ideal woman based upon the acceptance of men’s superiority and women’s inferiority. The meaning of woman is defined by male dominance and power in society so that women are dependent and subjected. As Alfred Tenyson states in his poem “The Princess”:

Man for the field and woman for the hearth;

Man for the sword, and for the needle she;

Man with the head, and woman with the heart;

Man to command, and woman to obey; All else, confusion. (Casteras 43)

It was believed that there was a border drawn between man and woman, and if this line was crossed, there would be confusion. Not to cause confusion, man should order, and woman should obey. Love, housework, emotions were part of being a woman, and power and ideas were part of a man. These beliefs reflected patriarchy and masculine power and were accepted as a fact in the society, and were reinforced by law and religion. Gertrude is happy with her dependence on her husband Albert, and she obeys him. When they buy a house, she does not give her opinions about the house because her husband has already thought best, so it is unnecessary to tell him

anything about it. She “would not dream of criticising Albert’s judgement” (Chevalier 46) as a conventional wife.

Edith Coleman, Kitty’s mother-in-law is a traditional grandmother who “always speaks her mind” (9). It is clear that Mrs. Coleman and Kitty disagree on nearly everything and Mrs. Coleman is aware of Kitty’s different nature. Thus, she warned her son that Kitty would never be satisfied with her life or make her husband happy. From the beginning of their marriage, there is tension and dissension between the two women, but Kitty has learned how to cope with her mother in law. “At any rate I was relieved to have something to do with her. I always dread her visits, though it is easier than when I was first married. It has taken these ten years of marriage to learn to handle her [...]” (81). For example, the family behave according to how Mrs. Coleman wishes when she visits them. Before she comes, the portraits on the walls should be changed to the portraits that Mrs. Coleman has given Kitty and Richard as a wedding present. While Kitty does not like these “dark oil portraits of various Colemans from the last century or so [...]” (81), she does not want to dispute with her mother-in-law over the portraits. Also, the cook normally decides which meal she should prepare; however, when Mrs. Coleman visits, the cook “serves boullion rather than mulligatawny, a poached egg rather than an omelette” (83).

One reason why Mrs. Coleman has an indisputable effect on the Colemans is the idea of the “privilege of age” (79) as Richard has defined it. According to the society of those years, a grandmother and a grandfather had an important place in the family in the middle and upper class. The other members of the family did not dare to contravene decisions and ideas of a grandmother and grandfather because it was

believed they knew best for their family and their family name. They were esteemed. Mrs. Coleman had the advantage of the age of being superior. While Kitty, Richard, and even Maude are unhappy with her, they do not dare to oppose her, but sometimes Kitty expresses her own ideas freely. On one visit, Mrs. Coleman, who puts women in a submissive position as a result of what she has learned from her society and the ideas of the Victorian era, states that girls should learn only useful things like sewing and cooking or some pleasant things which make a man happy like playing piano. As an old way of thinking, she accepts that reading wastes time and “that won’t get a girl anywhere. It’ll just put ideas in her head” (78) and thinking or having ideas is a job for men. Kitty reacts against this thought by asking, “What’s the matter with a girl having ideas, Mrs. Coleman?” and Mrs. Coleman replies, “She won’t be satisfied with her life if she has ideas. [...] Like you” (78). This dialogue between Kitty and Mrs. Coleman shows that Mrs. Coleman is aware of Kitty’s discontent with her life: she sees Kitty’s ideas and intellectual side as a reason behind her unhappiness. If she does not read too much and does not have ideas, she might be happy with her life. Also, it is clear that Mrs. Coleman is strict about the notion of separate spheres and the difference between a girl’s and a boy’s education. However, Kitty does not understand the difference between a girl’s and a boy’s education. From childhood, she compared herself to her brother Harry; then she married and began to compare herself to her husband Richard. In her childhood, she did not go to school because according to social convention she does not need to use her head, so there is no need for a good education. To read and write are enough for her. Her father is responsible for thinking instead of her. She is just responsible for given duties and responsibilities from society. But Kitty is not a normal girl according to the social

values of that period. Each evening, her brother reviews with Kitty what he has learned at school in order to understand better, but this review encourages Kitty's thinking and self awareness (4).

Kitty has features that normally are attributed to men of that period. Kitty is interested in thinking and reading, a man's job, which Mrs. Coleman does not approve, and she enjoys "proper conversation" (4) with people. On the other hand, some other women of the period are not interested in reading or thinking, and their only conversation topic is their family. Kitty and Gertrude differ from each other in this way: Gertrude generally talks about her daughters and husband (113), not about social or political things, and Kitty is bored with it. While Gertrude lives in her domestic sphere and talks about the things in it, Kitty wishes to go outside of the domestic sphere and talk about it. This is evidence of how Kitty longs for a public world ("a man's world"). The understanding of separate spheres and the reaction against it by both Kitty and Gertrude is different. While Gertrude adopts the notion of separate spheres like Mrs. Coleman and accepts home as the safer place for women, Kitty feels like a bird in a cage, trapped in the home. She gets caught in the Victorian women's unequal condition in education, marriage, domestic, social, and political life. When she returns from her honeymoon, she is already dissatisfied with her lot (69-70). The fact that Kitty feels trapped in her home is clearly reflected by her own words:

He kissed me goodbye in my new morning room – which I had chosen to be at the front of the house, overlooking the street rather than the garden, so I could keep an eye on the world outside – and left to catch his train to work. I watched from the window as he walked

away, and felt the same kind of jealousy I had suffered when seeing my brother go off to school. When he had gone round the corner, I turned and looked at the still, quiet room, [...], and I began to cry. I was twenty years old, and my life had settled into a long, slow course over which I had no control. (70)

Kitty envies her husband. She is dissatisfied to “watch from the window” the world outside: the window is an obstacle between her and both her husband and brother, the men’s world. One can watch outside through a window but cannot interfere and be involved in it without opening and going beyond the window. The common situation of women in society was the same: women remain on the other side of the window in their homes and deal with their household, children, and family. They only control things in their homes, but the outside world was under the control of men. Kitty wishes to control herself and her life; on the other hand, Gertrude does not have a desire to control her life but feels safe in her home. According to Deverell, there is a connection between a bird’s willing acceptance of its cage and the acceptance of the role of women that the society forces on them. If a bird is happy to be under the dominion of an owner, its cage becomes a good place for it. If a bird is not happy to be under the dominion of a person, it seeks freedom, and its cage oppresses it (Shefer 439). In this light, Gertrude is happy under the dominion of her husband and with the role of women in her society, so she enjoys her domestic sphere, her home. On the other hand, Kitty is not happy under the dominion of her husband and with the role of women, so she does not enjoy home and feels trapped in it.

Another important example about how Gertrude and Kitty react to the notion of separate spheres differently is the use of the garden in the novel. Kitty spends



much of her time “working in the garden” (Chevalier 46). She is so talented and interested in gardening that Gertrude thinks that she has a man to help her, but she does not. On the other hand, Gertrude is not good at gardening and defines herself as “hopeless in the garden” (47) while she is successful in the house. She feels jealous that Kitty keeps her garden so nice. In reality, the garden “acts as a distancing liminal zone separating the house” (Alexander 858). When Kitty is in her garden, she separates herself from the home, the domestic sphere. Even if the garden is bordered and fenced, if it is compared to the house, it is not within closed walls and is unbounded and less controlled than a house. She takes a breath and feels free. Furthermore, gardening is productive and requires self-control (861). In the garden, one experiences the growing plants and holds the control of the garden in one’s hand. Gardeners shape gardens however they wish. In other words, the only place Kitty experiences productivity is in her garden when she has control without any help from her husband or other people. Her attachment to the garden shows how she longs for the public sphere, and her alienation from the inside of her house.

Another point that causes Kitty’s fall from the ideal role of womanhood is Kitty’s alienation from the house because of her deficient relation with the household and the employment of servants. According to social expectations for women, a wife “decided upon the household help required, drew up job descriptions, advertised, interviewed, hired, supervised, paid, and fired” (Langland 46). Speaking of Kitty, she is not interested in the household and is insufficient to organize the servants. She has a cook and a maid as an upper-middle class woman. She hires the cook, Mrs. Baker only because of her name. The maid, Jenny, is “more of a trial,” “incapable of speaking” and “insolent” (Chevalier 153) according to her mother-in-law, Mrs.

Coleman. Whenever Mrs. Coleman comes, they discuss the frivolity of servants. Nevertheless, Kitty does not discipline the maid. Mrs. Coleman detests Jenny and tells her that she “would show her the door in an instant” (163) if Kitty let her. But Kitty likes and keeps her. On the other hand, unlike Kitty, Gertrude is more interested in the household. Mrs. Coleman compares both of them, and adds that Gertrude is a better lady than Kitty (96).

Another important difference between the women characters Kitty, Gertrude, and Mrs. Coleman is their thoughts about Christianity and its practice. In society, it was believed that as the angel in the house, a woman or a wife was the devout one who kept the family on a Christian path. In the novel, Gertrude and Mrs. Coleman fulfill their role of the Christian faith of the era accordingly; however, Kitty searches for newness even in religion thanks to new aspects of the Edwardian era. The most important expression of religious differences is their thoughts about cremation, which come out when they visit a columbarium in the cemetery. Maude asks why it is called a columbarium. Mrs. Coleman chooses the word, “burned” rather than “cremation” while explaining it. Then, Kitty tells her thought about cremation and the fact that “[she] would like to be cremated” (85). Mrs. Coleman interrupts her: “Rubbish. [...] it’s un-Christian and illegal” (86). However, cremation was never illegal in England. It was an ancient activity and was practiced by many civilizations; but it was constrained by the coming of Christianity. During the nineteenth century, cremation began to be considered. The first columbarium was built in 1879 in Britain and in 1902, the early years of the Edwardian era, the Parliament passed the Cremation Act (“Tracy Chevalier”). While cremation is a legal practice, Mrs. Coleman sees it as “an offence to Christianity” (87) under the old way of thinking.

On the other hand, Kitty embraces the idea of cremation while it is a rare and new practice for her society. It is evidence of the effect of the Edwardian era on Kitty and also that Kitty is not only non-traditional but avant-garde.

Kitty, Gertrude, and Mrs. Coleman have not only their own understanding and perception of maternity but also the practice and fulfillment of maternity. During the years of the novel, “motherhood [was] the crowning achievement in a woman’s life” (Kent 33), but each woman had her own perception about motherhood and behaved according to this fact. Despite strict social conventions about maternity, it did not change a mother’s mind. The clear examples of this claim are Kitty’s, Gertrude’s, and Mrs. Coleman’s maternity. For a woman, motherhood was one of the most important duties in the community. Of all duties, Shefer has stated that women’s duties are to guide children, to be a companion of manhood, and to comfort old age in view of the role assigned to women:

[...] a young mother [...] leading her child tenderly along a woodland path, turning aside a mischievous bramble which besets his steps. In the second, we see a wife in the act of giving solace to her husband under a severe blow of affliction. The last scene of all that ends life’s strange, eventful history [...] is a dying father, sedulously watched and waited on by a daughter’s affection. (Shefer 8)

According to the social conventions, a woman was programmed for reproduction and motherhood, which was biologically her destiny; so her social role was determined in line with nature (Thurer 211). Therefore, the woman was marked for her biological duty to reproduce within society, and marriage showed the necessity of the subordination of woman to man. In addition, marriage was a sign of

a woman's maturity and morality, which needed to be reinforced by womanly virtue in the context of motherhood (Abrams 4). In the society, the assignment of childrearing was an obvious indication of a woman's inferiority to a man because no woman achieved her full position in society until she gave birth to a child attached to a legal father (Roberts 99). Therefore, a woman must be a mother to get confirmation and acceptance of her existence in society. As a sacred and honored position, women were led to fulfill the criteria of being an ideal mother. According to social norms, an ideal mother remained at home with her children and spent much of her time caring for and educating them. The woman remained with her children in her private sphere and she was not let into the public world because she had a much more important duty of bringing up children.

Each mother in the novel has been brought up with these ideas, which each mother experiences in a different way, and she reflects her opinions and experiences in a different way. For Kitty and Gertrude, middle class mothers, to be a mother has a different meaning and feeling. When Kitty's daughter Maude is born, Kitty feels trapped and disturbed; she does not enjoy being a mother:

Maude's birth was a shock from which I have not recovered. When I [...] first held her in my arms I felt as if I were nailed to the bed, trapped by her mouth at my breast. Of course I loved her – love her – but my life as I had imagined it ended on that day. It fed a low feeling in me that resurfaces with increasing frequency. (Chevalier 69)

According to Kitty, Maude's birth is a turning point in her life. Until that time, she shares some similarities with other women of her society: she has married, she has not worked, and she has remained in her private sphere under the control of her

husband. She has little difference from other women. A difference is that she does not have any children. This fact allows her to hope for the life that she yearns for, but Maude's birth lessens the possibility of her freedom and desires since she has to take care of Maude and spend much of her time with her, so she has to remain at home. As a result, she feels trapped and sees Maude as an obstacle to her desires.

On the other hand, unlike Kitty, Gertrude enjoys being a mother. Her daughters Lavinia and Ivy May give meaning to her life and she fulfills the necessity of her existence thanks to them. Like other traditional mothers of her society, she forgets her inferiority and passivity by dealing with children. She is like a girl who plays with her baby and spends her time unaware while caring for her daughters. Society has convinced her to remain at home and to care and educate her daughters according to social beliefs because she has a sacred duty, motherhood, so that her point of view coincides with social norms. Gertrude is a mother figure who disturbs Kitty in terms of her perception and acceptance of Victorian maternity. When they first meet, Kitty thinks of Gertrude as "one of those short women whose waists have been ruined by children [...]" (19) and criticizes her. Gertrude, however, enjoys maternity, which Kitty does not.

Motherhood is on the one hand a source of personal fulfillment and joy, and on the other hand a source of distress, depression, and anxiety as a result of differences in the understanding of motherhood among women (Arendell 1196). One mother feels joy and expectation, while another mother feels depression and horror. Both Kitty and Gertrude react differently and understand maternity differently. While Gertrude sees her daughters as a source of happiness and self fulfillment, Kitty sees her daughter as a source of problems and depression and is afraid of mothering. Her

fear and anxiety about maternity is seen clearly in her conversation with the doctor after Maude's birth. She says that she does not want to have another baby and wishes to learn how to avoid pregnancy from the doctor. The doctor has taught her (Chevalier 69). Kitty's refusing and avoiding maternity is the result of her anxiety about the loss of individual autonomy and agency, so a woman avoids maternity (Zerilli 111-12). Kitty does not want to lose her individual independence and self realization. She is afraid that another baby will limit her completely and she will lose her freedom. Her avoidance of having a child shows how for her, maternity is a problem, and she wants to control the possibility of conception. In the society of the period, birth control and abortion were illegal and wrong, so a woman could not protect herself from pregnancy, so the control was in the hands of her husband. Unlike Gertrude and most other women, Kitty desires to take control of everything about herself and her life, even pregnancy. While Gertrude accepts being under the control of her husband, Kitty rejects being under the control of her husband and wants to avoid pregnancy (Chevalier 69).

In addition to differences in understanding and feeling about maternity, Kitty's and Gertrude's relationship with their daughters is also different. Their thoughts and perceptions of mothering affect their response to their children. According to social convention, motherhood completed a woman; a mother should care for her children. Gertrude tries to be an ideal perfect mother by caring for her daughter alone. She does not have a nursemaid to help her because society has taught Gertrude her duty; and even her daughters are aware of this social duty. When Lavinia and Maude first meet, Maude asks her whether they have a nanny or not. Lavinia replies "We don't have any nanny. Mama [Gertrude] is perfectly able to look

after us herself” (11). There should not be a need of a nursemaid for a perfect mother according to society. It was always the woman who changed her life according to the needs of her children and her man: the woman relinquished her own wishes and sacrificed herself to create a haven, a home for her family (Owen-Smith 182).

On the other hand, unlike Gertrude, Kitty is not interested in her daughter Maude, and she has a nursemaid, Jenny, who takes care of Maude. According to her, she does not have any time to care for her, but she does not work and is not interested in the household. While she spends much of her time gardening and reading (Chevalier 46), she does not have any time for Maude. In fact, she is not interested in her because of her “black feelings” (71), so she neglects Maude. These black feelings are her thoughts about the fact that her daughter is an obstacle in her life and limits her self awareness, so she cannot be close to her own daughter. Maude is aware of this ignorance. For a time, Maude requests her mother to take her and Lavinia to the local cemetery where they play, but Kitty does not accept and tells her that she is busy. Maude reacts by saying that “She didn’t seem busy to me. She was just reading a book” (53), but she does not understand the real reason for her mother’s ignorance. Also, Gertrude and Lavinia notice Kitty’s neglect of Maude and her insufficient motherhood in terms of social norms. Both daughters are good friends and usually visit each other. When Maude comes to Lavinia’s home, Gertrude is interested and feeds them. On the other hand, Kitty is not interested in them and does not even notice them. Gertrude is curious about “what Kitty Coleman gets up to when they are at Maude’s. Mostly, she ignores them according to Livy, [Lavinia]” (113).

While Kitty tries to keep her self, she pushes Maude away and causes a lack of relationship between her and her daughter. Maude usually spends her time at

Lavinia's home with the Waterhouses (112). She seeks what she could not see in her mother in the relationship between Gertrude and Lavinia. One night, both families go on a picnic together. While Gertrude is standing "with an arm around each daughter" (68), Maude is standing next to Lavinia instead of Kitty. While Gertrude and Lavinia are laughing about something, Maude is sharing their laughter shyly. This makes Kitty feel upset:

At times it is painful to be with the Waterhouses. Lavinia may be bossy with her mother, but there is clearly affection between them that I cannot muster with Maude. [...I ought] to be with her more – read to her, help her with sewing, bring her into the garden with me, take her into town. (68-69)

Kitty compares herself to Gertrude and decides to be more interested in Maude. When they return from the picnic, Kitty wants to be close to Maude by holding her hand. Maude is startled by this behavior. Then she feels guilty because Kitty is sorry because of her reaction (69-70). For a while she holds her mother's hand; then she goes away. At that time, Kitty "was relieved" (71).

Another expectation of society from mothers is to bring up and educate their children in terms of social norms. Motherhood constitutes a woman's identity and exalts a woman's maturity and morality to fulfill her responsibility to educate her children as the idealized mothers of the society (Gordon, and Nair 551-52). According to social rules, a girl should be educated as a good housewife and a good mother; nothing else was needed. From the early years of her childhood, she was protected by her parents. After she married, she would be protected by her husband. She should accept her passivity and private sphere. She did not need to work or



educate herself because there was always someone else who would help her and think for her, generally her father or her husband. The main goal was to bring up a dependent and an inferior being who needed a husband to protect and to feed her. And the mothers should discipline and educate their daughters in this way:

Even a generous mother, who sincerely seeks her child's welfare, will as a rule think that it is wiser to make 'a true woman' of her, since society will more readily accept her if it is done. [...] The treasures of feminine wisdom are poured into her ears, feminine virtues are urged upon her, she is taught cooking, sewing, housekeeping, along with care of her person, charm, and modesty. [...] In brief, she is pressed to become, like the elders, a servant and an idol. (De Beauvoir 281-82)

Kitty and Gertrude react differently to this expectation in terms of their acceptance of social values and rules. While Kitty is unhappy with the inferiority of women and the superiority of men in society, she does not want to bring up Maude as an inferior and dependent girl or as a girl who remains in her private sphere with her mother. Maude is interested in science, which is generally accepted as a boy's field, and she usually goes outside with her father to watch the stars with the telescope (Chevalier 140). On the other hand, she is not good at sewing or cooking, which are actually much more important to learn for a girl according to society (285). While Kitty does not educate Maude according to social conventions or teach her how to be an ideal girl, other people around them are disturbed. One day, Kitty and Mrs. Coleman have a discussion about it. She is angry at Kitty for not educating her daughter in terms of the social norms, sewing, cooking, etc. Kitty defends Maude for reading rather than sewing. Mrs. Coleman, her mother-in-law, replies that a girl should learn only useful

things like sewing, householding or pleasant things like playing the piano, which will please a man like a traditional woman (285). Unlike Kitty, Gertrude tries to bring up her daughters according to social ideas about the discipline of girls. Her daughters spend their time with their mother at home, in the domestic sphere, which is the best and safest place for a girl. Lavinia and Ivy May help their mother about the household and in the kitchen (112). As a traditional mother, Gertrude teaches her daughters how to sew and cook, like an ideal girl, unlike Kitty.

As seen, each mother is different in terms of her feelings, thoughts, and perception, so their mothering and the practices of maternity differ from each other. According to their variable practices and perceptions of motherhood, their children are also different. On the one hand, there is Kitty, who is troubled with the place and perception of a mother in her society, and who reacts against society and brings her daughter up according to her thoughts and feelings about mothering. She presents a mother figure who is different from the traditional mother figures of society. On the other hand, Gertrude seems to agree with ideal maternity, and she educates and brings up her daughters according to the expectations of society. She is a traditional mother figure. Mrs. Coleman is also a traditional mother, so she does not agree with Kitty's motherhood and criticizes her.

Another important difference between Kitty, Gertrude, and Mrs. Coleman is the understanding and fulfilling of morality. The society of the period views women as moral guides of the family. Even as potential wives, women were expected to remain innocent and pure by concealing their "thought of love and sexuality" (Kane 9). While women fulfill their feminine duties, they also should protect their innocence:

Innocence was what he demanded from the girls of his class, and they must not only be innocent but also give the outward impression of being innocent. White muslin, typical of virginal purity, clothes many a heroine, with delicate shades of blue and pink next in popularity. The stamp of masculine approval was placed upon ignorance of the world, meekness, lack of opinions, general helplessness and weakness; in short, recognition of female inferiority to the male.

(Petrie 184)

Women were taught that they were asexual (Vicinus xiv). Sexuality did not belong to women and were “in the role of being the passive receptacle of male lust” (Miller 41). As a result, adultery in women was abnormal and unacceptable, but Kitty compromises the social convention and morality. Her adultery with Mr. Jackson, who is the superintendent of the local cemetery where both the Colemans and Waterhouses have grave plots, is the beginning of her immorality. The daughters of both families, Maude and Lavinia, like to go to the cemetery to play. One day, Kitty takes them there and meets Mr. Jackson. She falls in love with him because he is different from her husband Richard. She can do with him what she cannot do with her husband. They “talk about all sorts of things, about the world, and how it works, about God and how He works” (Chevalier 120). When she compares Mr. Jackson with Richard, she sees that unlike Richard, he is not handsome, prosperous, educated, and does not have a good family, but he does not make her feel “a lesser person” (120). Different from Richard, one of Mr. Jackson’s most important qualities that affect her is his being a “religious, truthful, principled, and moral man” (120). She reacts against social values and sleeps with Mr. Jackson easily:

The half-moon was still low in the sky, but above me stars had appeared, and I saw one fall, as if to remind me of the consequences in store. I had seen and felt the signs inside me that day, and I had ignored them. I had had my joy at last, and I knew I would pay for it. I would not tell him, but it would be the end of us. (144)

That day changed Kitty's life dramatically. As a result of her love affair with Mr. Jackson, she becomes pregnant, but she never tells him. She has to resolve the problem. The only way is abortion, but abortion was banned in the society of that period. Also, it was wrong in terms of morality (Sauer 91-93). She has an abortion without regard to the moral and legal aspects. She is deeply affected physically and psychologically. When she returns from the abortion, Gertrude's husband, Albert, sees her:

I looked up Swain's Lane and saw Kitty Coleman, walking along slowly with her head bowed, kicking at her skirts. I thought her a peculiar sight, given it was twilight and she was alone and didn't seem to be walking anywhere in particular. "Evening, Mrs. Coleman," I said, raising my cap. [...] She didn't seem to notice, though – she just stared at me like I was a ghost. I was taken aback by her appearance. Richard had mentioned she'd been ill and was not looking her finest. But it was more than that. Her looks were plainly gone, I am sorry to say. (Chevalier 175-76)

After her abortion, she has broken all her relationships with her family, garden, and outside and has turned into a silent loneliness. She is incapable of doing anything and she loses her strength and weight and her hair turns grey (181-82). Then, Gertrude

hears that she is ill and visits her. Normally, they do not like each other because both Kitty and Gertrude are aware of the differences between them. The differences on one side disturb the other. But now, Gertrude feels sorry “to see the lifeblood sapped from someone once so vital” (184) and wants to help her. Kitty replies:

I have spent my life waiting for something to happen, [...]. And I have come to understand that nothing will. Or it already has, and I blinked during that moment and it's gone. I don't know which is worse – to have missed it or to know there is nothing to miss. (186)

Kitty is just about to lose hope about finding her unique self and voice in society. While reacting against the unfair situation of women and the oppression of patriarchy over women, she has experienced a love affair and abortion. While Gertrude and other women try to obey the rules and doctrines of society, Kitty's wishes for equality and freedom by standing against the misconception that man is superior, and woman is inferior throughout history, which causes her immorality. However, society has strict principles or rules over individuals, but it is difficult to control the thoughts and feelings of individuals. They cannot put them in a definite and certain shape. While Gertrude remains an innocent, silent, and passive woman in her house from the beginning to the end of the novel, Kitty loses her purity, and experiences a love affair, an abortion, and loneliness.

During the Edwardian period, British women began to mature and question the patriarchal culture in which they lived and in which they sought their female emancipation and identity. Because of many limitations surrounding women, women rebelled against their subjection and unjust treatment. During history, women were usually in an inferior and dependent position, but especially in Victorian society, the

strict roles of women, which were defined by male power and a sharp notion of separate spheres for men and women, caused women's reaction against society and government in the Edwardian period.

It was a reaction against injustice. The laws did not protect women's rights: the laws were different for men and women. While a man maintained his divorce easily because of his wife's adultery, a woman had to prove adultery, cruelty, etc. Another problematic way of the laws was to give all control of the children to the husband. The mother did not have any right over her children. The father decided whatever he wanted without asking the mother's opinions. At work, the woman had a lower wage than the man. Inferiority of woman's wages was a reflection of the inferiority of woman. Furthermore, in marriage a woman's personal belongings became the husband's. Thus, the woman did not have even her own belongings. While the majority of the population were women, they did not have the right to vote to determine who will govern. Because of many restrictions and unequal practices surrounding women, women tried to form their voice in the society. The historical event, the suffrage movement for women's equality and the right to vote, occurred during this period (Turner 589-93).

The main goal of the suffragists was to convince male lawmakers to extend democracy for women (McCammon and Campbell 57). They formed organizations and unions such as the Women's Social and Political Union in 1903 to defend women's rights. Overall in England they conducted meetings, rallies, and marches to announce their voice to the government. As citizens and voters, women wanted to participate in the society directly as independent, not indirectly as wives and mothers through a dependent position (Mayhall 175). Until that time, women were forced to

remain in their private sphere under the dominion of men. They had sacred duties like giving birth, nurturing, and bringing up children, but they were not ones who would define the rules of the society and did not have rights to choose people who would form rules about women and society.

In terms of women's enrollment in higher education and employment in law and medicine, which were generally accepted men's jobs, some women were aware of the fact that man and woman could have separate duties in the same sphere, but their true place was together (McCammon and Campbell 66). These women were much more educated than others and were generally upper or upper-middle class. While upper-class and educated women struggled for women's right to vote, other women were against the suffrage movement because the society taught women their role as wife and mother so they did not understand the struggle for equality or rights. Their acceptance of men's superiority did not let them participate in the suffrage. While the suffragists tried to propose "women's visibility" (Mayhall 176) in society with protests, marches, and political action, other women were angry at them for breaking down the order of society.

In *Falling Angels*, these two types of women in the suffrage movement are clearly seen. While Kitty, who has read a lot and is more educated than other women like Mrs. Coleman and Gertrude, supports the movement, Gertrude and Mrs. Coleman see the movement as unnecessary and dangerous (Chevalier 107). They try to avoid it. As middle class women, Kitty, Gertrude, and Mrs. Coleman live under the protests and actions of WSPU and the Suffrage Movement; but they are not very aware of the struggle of women. Gertrude is intentionally not interested in it since she is one of a group of women who insist their place is at home, and who accept the

superiority of men. On the other hand, the situation is different for Kitty. After her love affair and abortion, she loses hope for freedom and self awareness in the society and the male dominant world because she has forfeited her purity and beliefs while she longs to be independent and to find self identity. Her desires cause mistakes that she regrets, like her abortion. After this harsh experience, she gives up her relationship with her family and other things, like the garden where she has spent much of her time, and she is buried in silence and loneliness. Eventually, Gertrude succeeds to take Kitty out from her loneliness and silence by persuading her to go to a public library opening with her and her daughters (188). Both Kitty and Gertrude come accross a protest of the Suffragettes at the opening of the library, and for the first time they meet Caroline Black with her noisy laughter. She is a suffragette who manages “a long-running battle with various sceptical gentlemen about the subject of votes for women [...]” (192). While Kitty and Gertrude meet the Suffragette at the same time, they react to her differently. It is a clue about how each woman will be affected by the movement and how much each woman will support it.

While Miss Black is speaking, people around her take a few steps back and leave her alone. Only Kitty and Maude remain beside her (193). Although Kitty and Gertrude go there together, they are not together. While Kitty is beside Miss Black with a smile on her face for the first time in months (194), Gertrude watches what is happening from a distance with “a look of horrified sympathy” (193). Both women define their place and distance to the movement by being beside Miss Black or not being beside her. Kitty is aware that nothing will be the same. She nearly loses hope, but now she has a chance to meet Caroline Black:



Her laughter rang out like a clarion call, sending a jolt up my spine that made me open my eyes wide. I had thought it was another foggy, muffled day, but I looked around for the source of the laughter, I discovered it was one of those crispy, windy autumn days I love, when as a girl I wanted to eat apples and kick at dead leaves. (195)

Her meeting Caroline Black brings Kitty to her senses and her hopeless, unhappy days remain behind according to Kitty. She gains power to struggle for her self identity and awareness, but in the end of the novel, her meeting with Caroline will take many things from her. The “apples” mentioned above, remind us of the apple of Eve. Like Eve, Kitty is deceived. Eve eats the apple to get knowledge and is thrown out of heaven. Kitty wants to eat the apple to get her freedom, but her eating the apple will cause her tragic death in the end.

Kitty becomes a friend of Miss Black and joins in the WSPU. Kitty ignores her family’s unpleasant attitude against suffrage and continues to keep in touch with Miss Black. One day, Mrs. Coleman sees Kitty and Miss Black talking about woman’s suffrage at home and she is disturbed by it. She defines the subject as “intolerable” (214). As a traditional woman, Mrs. Coleman is fond of the social convention that a woman does not need to vote because her husband is “perfectly capable of doing so on her behalf” (214). As a result, she is angry at Kitty because of her dealing with the suffrage movement and she tells Kitty not to concern herself with political parties. Instead, she should concern herself with her home according to Mrs. Coleman (215).

Unlike Kitty, Gertrude shares the same opinion with Mrs. Coleman. When Lavinia asks her mother to participate in the march, Gertrude declares her thoughts

about the right to vote: "I am sure whoever you marry will be quite capable of deciding for you whom to vote for" (290). Also, she is afraid of woman's suffrage. Normally, Kitty did not arrange At Homes before, but she begins to arrange them after she has participated in the WSPU and invites Gertrude. When Gertrude enters the room, she is surprised:

I must say it was the loudest At Home I have ever attended. Everyone was talking at once, and I am not sure anyone was actually listening.

But I listened, and as I did my eyes grew big and my mouth small. I did not dare say a word. The room was full of suffragettes. (223)

Gertrude keeps silent against the suffragettes and does not understand the change in Kitty. Kitty is actually pulled out of her bad mood, and she is not her old self. She is much more radical and "in an excited state, her eyes glittering, her cheeks flushed as if she were at a ball and had not stopped dancing once" (225). Kitty seems to be totally involved in it. Kitty is so absorbed in the organization because she thinks that she is working for a meaningful goal and suffrage will rescue her from the walls of her home. Not only Kitty, but many women thought that suffrage was not a struggle for the right to vote, but that it would finish the isolation of women at home and give a chance to women to be outside the home (Caine 537-38). Kitty is one of these women. Before the suffrage movement, she is interested in her garden and reading at home. After joining the suffragettes, she is never at home in the afternoons and comes home late. She goes to the meetings and talks about politics all the time. She even buys a bicycle to participate in all the activities of the WSPU and works for it. One day, Gertrude sees her drawing on the pavement about the meetings and rallies and she crosses her road. She does not want to see Kitty or the activities of the

suffragettes because she does not share the same opinions as Kitty. She finds what Kitty does as dangerous (Chevalier 226).

As a wife, Kitty's involvement in the suffrage movement gradually makes the relationship between her and her husband Richard, worse. He does not share Kitty's opinions about suffrage, but Kitty is so obsessed with the suffrage movement that she cheats on Richard to reach her goals. Normally, she does not take him into her bed. After the suffrage movement, she does. As a result, Richard thinks that everything is normal and there is no problem in their marriage. For a while, she succeeds to deceive and control Richard. Day by day, Kitty's activities become more intense. Richard notices how Kitty is involved in suffrage and tries to dissuade her from her activities, but he cannot. One day, Kitty and other suffragettes try to enter the House of Commons when they go to Parliament Square. She is arrested and sentenced to six weeks. For the first time, Richard is deeply aware of Kitty as an activist. He discusses with Kitty her lowering him and the family name (241). Nevertheless, he has hope that their life will return to normal after she learns "her lesson" in prison (267). However, he is disappointed when he visits Kitty in prison. She has no intention of stopping her struggle although she loses weight and looks unhealthy (264). On the contrary, she tells Richard that the prison has made her "a rod of iron" (267) and that she is much more powerful for her cause. Richard tries to persuade her to fulfill her role as wife and mother, but Kitty replies, "nothing [she has] done in [her] little life has had any significance whatsoever until [she] joined the WSPU" (268).

Kitty ignores not only her role as a wife, but also as a mother. Previously, she neglected Maude by gardening and reading; after her involvement in suffrage, she

ignores and neglects Maude for the cause. She is not at home and seems to forget Maude's existence, so Maude is generally with the Waterhouses. Gertrude accepts Maude as "her third daughter" (226). She is surprised at Kitty's neglect and feels sorry for Maude: "it is peculiar that one daughter can have a mother who pays no attention [...]" (226). As a traditional mother, she does not agree with the cause. According to Gertrude, she should care for her daughter instead of joining the meetings. The most important thing should be her daughter, but Kitty sees her struggle as the most important thing. The reason for this is that Kitty sees her fight for suffrage as "something on Maude's behalf" (276). If they win this fight, Maude will have much more than her mother according to Kitty.

While thinking her fight is for Maude, Kitty tries to involve Maude in suffrage. She wants to take Maude to the meetings and the office of the WSPU. Generally, Maude does not want to go, so Kitty bribes by offering ice-cream after the meeting (276). Also, she uses Maude for the sake of the movement. When she is arrested, Maude worries about her mother and is frightened. As a mother, she should console Maude. Instead, she tells Maude to collect money for a campaign of the WSPU. After this conversation, Maude feels sorry and is angry at her mother (243). After prison, Kitty is not discouraged; on the contrary, she is much more involved in suffrage and begins to plan a huge march that will be held in June with her friends. She spends all her effort on this march by organizing a place, finding speakers, and getting permission from the government. According to Kitty, it will be "not just a battle – an entire war" (275). While Kitty becomes an activist, Gertrude avoids the activists and the suffragettes (290) according to what her husband wishes from his wife.

Kitty's involvement in suffrage and her quest for more rights and equality causes her dramatic death. While her main goal is to create equality between her and her husband, and to create her independent identity in the society, she enters into a war which will bring about her end. In the morning of the great march in Hyde Park, which was really held in 1908, Kitty wears "a short green tunic belted in the middle, little green boots, and a green and purple cap with a white feather in it" (299) like Robin Hood, to celebrate her redemption both from prison and from the control of men. This march is a turning point in her freedom according to Kitty:

For most of the march I felt as if I were walking through a dream. [...]

Nor could I really see anything. I tried to focus on faces along the route but they were all a blur. [...] What I did feel sharply was the sun and air on my legs. After a lifetime of heavy dresses, with their swatches of cloth wrapping my legs like bandages, it was an incredible sensation. (301)

Kitty is clearly happy in giving up the traditional way of dressing. According to her, she gives up her responsibilities to society that are on her shoulders as a wife and mother by taking off her heavy clothes. With her new clothes, she feels she has a new self and new identity, unlike the mothers and the wives in society. As McElvaine states, the boyish look includes short clothes that hide a woman's female side and makes her look like a man (261). Kitty's new dress hides her female inferiority. After a while, a loud noise frightens the crowd, and Kitty's horse kicks her in the chest. Although Kitty is seriously injured and remains "breathless" (310), she refuses to leave the march. Her stubbornness to remain there and participate in the struggle is the cause of her death: when she arrives home at the end of the day, a

doctor announces that Kitty is dying because of internal bleeding, which upsets Maude and makes Richard furious.

While Kitty is on her deathbed, she continues her struggle by saying to Maude, “as long as you become something, I don’t mind what it is. Except perhaps a wife” (311). Although she is dying, she is working for her cause. The event that brings her to her deathbed is the result of her perception and understanding of being a wife and a mother, so she suggests that Maude not become a wife. Kitty affects Maude in a different way, however. From the beginning of Kitty’s involvement in the suffrage movement to the end, all these sorrowful experiences cause Maude’s hatred against suffrage and Miss Black (194) because they changed her mother: they completely destroyed the relationship between daughter and mother. Before the march, she avoids her mother and her friends because they always talk about politics and suffrage. While she is helping her mother at home to serve tea or cake, she tries not to hear what they are talking about. Kitty continues to manipulate Maude. For the march, the suffragettes sew banners; and Kitty enlists Maude to sew banners although she is just a child (277). It is not important for Kitty. While she goes to the meetings, Maude struggles to sew banners. At the Waterhouses, Maude wishes to get the attention from Mrs. Waterhouse that she cannot get from Kitty. Unlike Lavinia, she is unhappy with her life and has anxiety about the future. While Lavinia dreams of getting married and having children who look up to their mother, Maude does not want to marry or have children as a result of experiencing Kitty as a mother (236). Kitty is unaware that Maude wishes to avoid marriage because of Kitty’s bad mothering, not because of supporting Kitty’s cause.

Kitty is sorry for not being in a close relationship with her daughter and for ignoring Maude her entire life, and she dies alone without her husband or her daughter. It is too late to correct anything. Kitty defines her relationship with her daughter:

All her life Maude was a presence at my side, whether she was actually there or not. I pushed her away, yet she remained. Now I was holding on to her hand and I did not want to let go. It was she who had to let go of me. When she did at last, I knew I was alone, and that it was time for me to depart. (330)

Kitty dies for her desires and her cause. Until her involvement in the suffrage movement, she always describes her unhappiness with life and reflects this situation to her daughter and her husband. She thinks that she finds the meaning of her life by participating in suffrage, but her participation makes her an activist who ignores her daughter and her husband. She uses them for the sake of the movement. According to her, her struggle is for Maude, but she never asks what Maude feels and wishes. She is unaware of Maude's expectations and thoughts.

Like Kitty, Gertrude also experiences tragedy over losing her daughter, Ivy May, although she avoids suffrage and its results. Gertrude does not go to the march but she cannot prevent her daughters' participation with Maude. Ivy May is lost in the crowd (312) and then Simon finds her dead body in an alley (223). Gertrude feels guilty for her daughter's death because on that day she pretended to have a sprained ankle so as not to take the daughters to the march (344), but she cannot tell the truth to anyone. The tragedy for Kitty and Gertrude is different. Kitty has no hope to return and compensate for her mistakes, but Gertrude has hope. She loses Ivy May,

but later she has a boy, Georgie. She cannot bring back Ivy May, but she tries to forget her sorrow by having another child. Gertrude continues to live with her family happily and tries not to let suffrage affect her home. Kitty brings about her own tragic end through the suffrage movement as a result of her search for her freedom and her identity. Kitty leaves Maude and Richard alone.

In *Falling Angels*, there are also the lower class or working-class women although the middle-class women are at the center of the story. Jenny, the maid, and Mrs. Baker, the cook, are clear examples of working-class women of the period in terms of both showing the real situation of the lower class women and what they experience in the novel. They are not lucky like Kitty, Gertrude, and Mrs. Coleman. They have to work to get their bread and they are not the angels of their houses. Instead, they have to work as domestic servants, maids, and cooks in other women's houses. While both Jenny and Mrs. Baker are in the same class, they differ from each other in several ways.

Jenny is not happy with her life as a maid. She usually complains about working conditions and about Kitty, her lady:

I were none too pleased to be running errands for the missus, I can tell you. She knows very well how busy I am. Six in the blooming morning till nine at night – later if they've a supper party. One day's holiday a year apart from Christismas and Boxing day. And she wants me to take back books and pick up fabric – things she can very well do herself. Books I've no time to read myself, even if I wanted to – which I don't. (63)



While she does household duties at home, she does not want to do duties outside the home like taking back Kitty's books to the library. Then, she begins to take the daughters, Maude, Lavinia, and Ivy May to the cemetery. At first, it angers her, but then she has a love affair with a worker there. This visit to the cemetery makes it fun for her, but she is aware it will be "a right nuisance" (107). After a while, she gets pregnant by one of the cemetery worker, but she hides it from everybody because if the Colemans learn the situation, she might lose her job. Kitty does not notice Jenny's pregnancy, but Mrs. Coleman, who normally does not like Jenny, is aware and she tells Kitty:

Probably more. I always knew that girl would come to no good. I never liked her – far too insolent. You could see just by looking at her. And she sings as she works – I can't abide that in a servant. I expect the man will not marry her, and even if he does she can't possibly remain here. You don't want a married woman and mother in that position. You need a girl with no attachments. (153)

Until that time, Kitty and Mrs. Coleman usually discuss Jenny. In every condition, Mrs. Coleman states her dislike of Jenny, but Kitty ignores Mrs. Coleman's thoughts about Jenny. This time, Kitty cannot oppose Mrs. Coleman and Mrs. Coleman dismisses Jenny. However, Kitty has an agreement with Jenny about her coming back after she gives birth if she gives an address of a midwife for abortion. The important point is Jenny's comment about abortion. While both Jenny and Kitty share the same "predicament" (168) that they do not want an unplanned pregnancy, their reaction about abortion is different. As a lower class and unmarried woman, it is difficult to have a baby without a father for Jenny because she cannot raise her child,

but Jenny thinks abortion is sin and refuses to kill her baby (163). She refuses to have an abortion and she lets her baby be born. On the other hand, Kitty kills her baby. It is an example of Jenny's character and morality over Kitty's. Normally, morality and power belong to the middle and upper class more than the lower class. Jenny's refusing abortion is an example of goodness of the lower class. Actually, it shows that good deeds or morality are not defined by class.

Another example of goodness in the working-class women in the novel, Jenny and Mrs. Baker are only servants of the Colemans, but they are like members of the family. While Kitty is not interested in Maude, Jenny and Mrs. Baker take care of her like a mother. Maude likes them very much. She generally spends her time in the kitchen with Mrs. Baker when Kitty deals with the suffrage movement. When Mrs. Coleman dismisses Jenny, Maude is sorrowful. Her coming back makes Maude happy. Also, Jenny prevents the letter that Lavinia has written about Kitty's abortion to Richard because she wants to protect Kitty and the family. They are so interested in Maude that Kitty gets a promise from Jenny to protect Maude (348).

Working-class women were affected by social events like the suffrage movement between 1901-1910. The suffrage movement was generally supported by middle- and upper-class women and was accepted as their struggle. Generally, the working class women remained outside the movement, because working-class women did not understand that the movement would give them a better life since they lacked many of the social benefits of middle- and upper-class women, so they stayed away from the struggle. A discussion between Jenny and Miss Black show how lower-class or working-class women were not interested in the struggle. Miss

Black tries to encourage Jenny to support the movement and she wants to learn Jenny's thoughts about woman's suffrage:

"Tell me, Jenny," Miss Black said, "what do you think about woman's suffrage?"

"Well, we all suffer, don't we?" I said carefully, not sure what there was to say.

"No, I mean votes for women," Miss Black explained.

"But women don't vote," I said.

"Women *aren't allowed* to vote, but they should have every right to, the same as men. That is what we are fighting for, you see." (210)

Jenny ignores whatever Miss Black says and continues her duty because it is not important for her to vote for equality between man and woman; as a working-class woman, she is not equal to upper- or middle-class women. After a while, Jenny begins to learn something about the suffrage from what Kitty's guests, who are also suffragettes, discuss at home. While Jenny listens to them and is aware of the cause by serving tea or coffee to them, Mrs. Baker remains in the kitchen without noticing what happens upstairs. Also, she starts to be angry at the suffragettes because she notices that working-class women are excluded from the right to vote. And although she is not interested in the cause, the idea of only rich and educated women voting irritates Jenny:

I finally listened to them suffragettes today as I passed round the scones. What I heard made me want to spit. They talk about helping but it turns out they're choosy about who exactly gets the help. They

ain't fighting for my vote – only for women who own property or went to university. (228)

While thinking this, Miss Black asks Jenny whether she donates some of her wages for the struggle, and Jenny says, “I wouldn't give a penny until the cause had anything to do with me!” (228). Miss Black replies that it will be difficult to get the right to vote for everyone all at once, so they have to begin for only some women, clearly rich women. The answer does not satisfy Jenny. When she goes to the kitchen, she tells Mrs. Baker about the discussion between her and Miss Black. Mrs. Baker chuckles and adds that they do not know who to vote for if they get the right to vote. It is the first time that the working class women, Jenny and Mrs. Baker, talk about the struggle, which they have called “a load of rubbish” (228).

Unlike Jenny, Mrs. Baker is interested only in her job. Different from Jenny, she says little; and she has no dialogue with Kitty or other people. She knows that her place is in the kitchen as a working-class woman:

As a rule I don't involve myself in this family's comings and goings. I arrive at half-seven in the morning, I cook for them, I leave at seven at night – six if the supper's a cold one. I stay out of the way, I don't have opinions. Or if I do I keep them to myself. I have my own little house, my grown children with their dramas – I don't need more. (243)

Mrs. Baker is different from Jenny in terms of morality. Jenny has a love affair and is pregnant out-of-wedlock. It is an immoral action for an unmarried woman. Then, she steals silver spoons from the Colemans and sells them for her baby (227). However, she likes the Colemans, she thinks to herself; but Mrs. Baker always protects her purity and morality. She considers not only herself but also other people around her.

When Mrs. Coleman dismisses Jenny again after Kitty's death. Mrs. Baker asks Mrs. Coleman to keep Jenny on for the sake of Maude because she has just lost her mother (347).

## CHAPTER 2

### **An Analysis of Men Characters in *Falling Angels***

Chevalier reflects men's mentality and characteristics of the period through Richard, Albert, Mr. Jackson, and Simon's father. Richard, Albert, and Mr. Jackson represent middle-class men and what they think and experience; Simon's father represents working-class men or lower-class men. While strength is the only difference between men and women, men have had authority and power over women because of their strength throughout history. Furthermore, men are educated in being accustomed to their superiority over women and their right to have obedience from women. Especially in the Victorian period, the ideas of separate spheres and conservative theory of social roles were broadly accepted by middle-class women and men. According to this ideology, men "operated in professions, governmental services, and the world of business and industry to acquire property, advance themselves, and improve the material condition of their wives and families" (Tucker 30). In response to men's working outside, women were responsible for the household and duties at home. This division of labour put men and women in separate spheres and created an ideology that men and women belonged to separate spheres and that men were superior to women.

In the society of the period, a man's role was very strict: he was responsible for his wife's actions and controlled her. She did not own anything. Their children and property belonged only to husbands. The wife had no right over her children and belongings. Traditionally, the wife was dependent on her husband. After some legislation that resulted in the Infants Custody Act of 1839, the 1857 Divorce Bill, and the Married Women's Property Act of 1882, women began to acquire rights

from men. With the rise of socialism and individualism in the Edwardian era, women's awareness and self-reliance rose in society, and women staged movements and marches for the right to vote in the 1900s. While the suffrage movement during this period concerned women, it affected proportionally the men of the women who supported and participated in the movement (38).

Throughout the novel, Chevalier tries to show the role of a man as a husband and a father according to his class, and the changes in man's authority and power during the development of woman's issues with the transition from the Victorian era to the Edwardian era. She displays what a man experiences and feels while he loses his authority over his wife and family because of his wife's involvement with the Suffrage Movement. Richard is a clear example of these men. On the other hand, Albert is an example of men who are not affected by suffrage: his experience does not come across a difficult because his wife does not agree with the suffrage movement. Similarly, a working-class man, Simon's father, like Albert is not affected because his wife does not participate in it. It is clear that all men characters in the novel reflect the real life of the society and the conditions of men during the years between 1901-1910.

Richard and Albert live in the same surroundings and share some similarities as middle-class men. Both characters have wives and daughters, but their relationship with their wives and daughters is different in terms of their personal characteristics and differences between wives and daughters. Also, as a upper-middle-class man, Richard is more modern than Albert, a middle-class man according to what he thinks and experiences. Kitty's husband, Richard cannot find what he wishes from his wife, and he misses the days when he first met Kitty:

I was reminded of a night years ago when I took Kitty and her brother out to look at the moon. We were able to see Copernicus then almost as clearly. Kitty looked so lovely in the moonlight and I was happy, even with Harry babbling on in the background about Copernicus the man, trying to impress me. I decided that night I would ask her to marry me. Tonight, for the first time in a long while, I wished Kitty were with us instead of sitting at home with a book. (Chevalier 142)

He is disturbed by Kitty's neglect. She does not spend time with him and their daughter. While Richard and Maude generally go to watch stars with a telescope, the most entertaining activity for them, Kitty never participates or shares their joy. When Kitty and Richard first flirt, Richard takes her to look at the stars. At that time, it is romantic, but now Kitty compares Richard's love and the sky. According to her, Richard's love "is not heat, but the cold of distance of the universe" (67). Richard is not at the same place in Kitty's heart. On the other hand, Richard provides her "a decent life" (6) that would make another woman happy, but it does not make Kitty happy. Richard is unaware that Kitty is different from other women. While a woman can be happy with a good house, a good-looking husband, and a daughter, Kitty longs for things like self awareness, equality, etc. Richard does not see what Kitty wishes and needs. However, although he presents a good life to her, Kitty will not be happy because Richard does not try to enter into Kitty's inner world. As a result, he does not understand what she wants and perceives Kitty as "being so difficult" (6).

Another difficulty that Kitty causes is that they do not share the same bed for a while. Richard does not understand why Kitty behaves in this way. To share the same bed again, Richard punishes Kitty, but the method of punishment causes more



problems between Kitty and Richard. On New Year's Day, Richard and Kitty go to a party. On the morning of that night, Kitty finds herself "with a stranger in her bed" (3) instead of her husband. She dismisses the man and after a while, Richard comes "with [another woman's] perfume on his neck" (4). Kitty feels embarrassed and angry at her husband. On the other hand, Richard thought that "being [with] another woman [and her being with another man] would bring Kitty back, that jealousy would open her bedroom door to me again" (6). But he is mistaken; she never accepts him again after this event.

Immorality in Richard demolishes both the notion of ideal manhood as well as Kitty's moral side. As a middle-class husband and father figure, Richard is responsible for protecting the morality and purity of his family, but he harms morality for Kitty and himself with this experience. He does not behave according to social conventions. He loses his esteem with this bad experience. Also, this experience becomes the first immoral action of Kitty, and it affects her deeply. It is clear that one reason that pushes Kitty into adultery is the immorality that Kitty sees in Richard. While Richard is punishing Kitty in this way, he ruins her morality and pushes her into mistakes. After this experience, he loses control of his wife and creates a huge gap between him and Kitty, so that she will never be close to him again.

Unlike Richard, Albert has a silent and controlled family life. As a conventional husband, his wife is under his control and she does not oppose him. As a wife, Gertrude knows her place and makes Albert relaxed and happy after he returns home from his job. As a husband, Albert is happily married to a woman like Gertrude because Gertrude is not a "handful" (27) like Kitty. He is aware of the

differences between Kitty and Gertrude. Although Kitty is more pretty and beautiful than Gertrude, Albert does not envy Richard because the most important criteria for him is that a woman should be an easy, soft, and controlled. The idea of easy and controlled woman is common in society of the period. For a man, it is important to control his wife, and Albert behaves accordingly, but Richard cannot succeed because of Kitty's different nature.

Another aspect of Richard's attitude that creates a gap between Kitty and Richard is that Richard generally supports his mother, Mrs. Coleman, rather than his wife, Kitty and he never disputes with his mother. When his wife and mother have a discussion about something, he does not say anything to dissuade Mrs. Coleman. This situation makes Kitty angry and causes Kitty to feel alone against her mother-in-law. Kitty says that "it is rare he will cross her. His one rebellious act has been to marry a doctor's daughter from Lincolnshire, and he will probably spend the rest of his days avoiding other conflicts" (81). It is true that Richard avoids making his mother upset. As a husband, he should protect his wife according to Kitty, but Richard is a man who was brought up according to social conventions although he is a modern man. Esteem for a father or a mother was a necessity because they were the leaders or roots of the family. Although even Richard disagrees with his mother, he does not oppose her.

While there is already an emotional distance between Richard and Kitty, Kitty's participation in the suffrage movement makes the relationship between Richard and his wife for worse. He disagrees with the suffrage movement and defines it as "ridiculous nonsense" (242). According to him, even the word "suffrage" seems silly and is not encouraging, so the cause is useless. As a result, a woman should not

participate in it and he reacts against women in it and their activities. When he sees the suffragettes chalking signs about meetings on the pavements, he threatens them “with buckets of water” (192), but he is unaware that Kitty is one of the suffragettes. One reason is that Kitty does not discuss suffrage with her husband. She participates in the meetings and activities during the daytime when Richard is at work. She returns from the meetings before he comes home:

Besides, he did not know how deeply involved Mummy had become – she talked about woman’s suffrage with everyone but him, and for the most part confined her WSPU activities to the daytime, and nights when she knew Daddy was busy. For all he knew, she sat at home every day reading and gardening, as she used to. (233)

Another reason is that he never enters Kitty’s morning room where she forms movement materials such as banners, handbills, newspaper cuttings, etc. (233). The fact that Richard never enters Kitty’s room, the domestic sphere, shows how the issue of the separate sphere in the society is clear. Each woman and man live in their own spheres and are not interested in what the other is doing there. If Richard had been interested in what Kitty was doing during the daytime and had asked question about her affairs, he would have noticed Kitty’s involvement much earlier. His early awareness might have prevented Kitty’s affairs and might have saved their family. On the other hand, Kitty continues her activities freely. Mrs. Coleman is aware of the problems and wants to warn Richard, but then she changes her mind:

The moment I saw him [...] I knew I would not say a word to him [...] about Caroline Black. He was glowing, even after a day at work, and I was reminded of how he looked when he and Kitty had returned

from their honeymoon. So that is how it is, I thought frankly. She has taken him into her bed again so that she can do what she likes outside of it. She is no fool, my daughter-in-law. [...] I do not like to play games, and as I looked at my son now, I knew that she had outplayed me. (217-18)

When Richard notices how much his wife is involved in suffrage, it is too late. He is very angry at Kitty, but he cannot succeed to persuade Kitty to give up the struggle.

When she is in prison, Richard visits and warns her:

“Enough is enough, now. When you get out we can get back to normal.”

“That rather depends on what you mean by “normal”.”

Daddy did not reply.

“Are you suggesting that I give up the fight when I’ve got out?”

“Surely you’re not going to continue?”

“On the contrary, Richard, I think prison has been the making of me.

[...] That’s Nietzsche, you know.”

“You read entirely too much,” Daddy said.

Mummy smiled. “You didn’t think that when you first met me.

Anyway, when I get out I will have far too much to do to read.” (267)

This discussion shows how Richard and Kitty look at the events with a different perspective. Richard sees the struggle and his wife as “abnormal.” On the other hand, Kitty defines it as the most important thing in her life and adds she will continue. While Richard accuses Kitty of neglecting her home and family, Kitty claims to do

something for the first time in her life. They do not understand each other, and they only think according to their points of view.

Unlike Richard, Albert does not have any problem with the Suffrage Movement and his wife. Since Gertrude does not participate in the movement and she is against suffrage, so Albert is not affected and harmed by the movement like Richard. Richard experiences what middle-class men whose wives participated in the movement during the period experienced. Albert experiences that what middle-class men whose wives did not support the movement experienced. In this way, Chevalier portrays the real conditions of the Suffrage Movement with points of views of both types of middle-class men and what they experienced. Another important thought that Chevalier presents is that a man never wants to give up his superiority and power over his wife. While Richard is far-sighted and reasonable, he also is against the idea of the Suffrage Movement and women's struggle like a traditional man.

Richard condemns Kitty because of her involvement; but he cannot say anything against her because she has blackmailed him. If he does not let her participate in the meetings, she will give speeches in the meetings. As a result, Richard does not prevent her, for the sake of their family name and for his mother's emotions (274). As a husband, he feels desperate and powerless because he does not have any authority over his wife. With his hopeless situation, he asks Albert, Gertrude's husband, how to "handle [his] wife" (273). Albert is surprised and cannot reply to this question because he does not know the answer. His wife, Gertrude, is not the kind of wife he needs to control. While Kitty is wandering from one meeting to another meeting, Gertrude is dealing with her children and household at home. Albert cannot help Richard, but gives him hope by saying "it is just a phase [his]

wife is going through” (274). According to Albert, after the march in June, the movement will finish and Kitty will return to Richard and her home.

As for Mr. Jackson, the superintendent of the cemetery, he is a middle-class man like Albert and Richard and is brought up under the same atmosphere of society as Albert and Richard, but Mr. Jackson is different from both men in many ways. He does not behave and experience according to social conventions although he is educated with the belief that men are superior to women and they belong to separate spheres and roles. It is clear that Mr. Jackson’s different acceptance and fulfillment of social norms affect Kitty as a woman. In the society of the period, there was a border between men and women and they behaved as if they belonged to different worlds, but Mr. Jackson transcends this idea. From his conversation and meeting with Kitty, we see that he accepts a woman as equal to himself. He does not make a woman feel inferior. As if he is talking with a man friend, he talks with Kitty about all kinds of things and asks her thoughts about something. His curiosity about a woman’s ideas and listening to a woman affects Kitty, so he captures Kitty’s attention. Important characteristics of Mr. Jackson that affect Kitty most are his morality and principles, unlike Richard. While Kitty is ready to sleep with him and has tried to influence him for two years, he refused her every time. His principles and morality are more important than Kitty (121). Actually, he is not married, he can accept Kitty if he wishes, but he does not. On the other hand, Richard sleeps with another woman on the New Year’s Eve and he insists that Kitty sleeps with another man to punish her, even if he is a married man. In this way, Mr. Jackson is really dissimilar from other men of the society, but his refusal does not last long and he loses his morality, like Richard.

Another difference of Mr. Jackson from Richard and Albert is his approach to the Suffrage Movement. While middle-class men like Richard and Albert do not approve of the Suffrage Movement and what the suffragettes have done, Mr. Jackson supports and help them. He does not make any negative comment about the issue. When Kitty requests him to find a horse for the march, he helps her. On the other hand, Richard and Albert avoid the movement and ignore what is happening. Women's struggle for the right to vote does not disturb him like it does Richard and Albert. He does not react against it and he even visits the place while the march is continuing. Chevalier shows that each man reacts differently to the Suffrage Movement. While Richard and Albert view it in a negative way, Mr. Jackson views it in a positive way. Another notion that Mr. Jackson views positively is cremation. Although Richard knows his wife's thoughts about cremation and her wish to be cremated when she dies, he does not mind her thoughts because he "feels we should do what society dictates concerning the disposal of – bodies" (334). According to Richard, wishes and norms of society are more important than our own wishes and preferences. As a result, he does not fulfill Kitty's wish about being cremated when she dies, but Mr. Jackson fulfills her wish after a while without getting permission from the family because he knows they will never allow it (397). It is evidence that Mr. Jackson is more open-minded than Richard or Albert. Also, he is much closer to currents of the Edwardian period than other men in terms of what he thinks and feels.

Just as Richard's and Albert's relationships with their daughters are different as fathers, so are their relationships and experiences with their wives as husbands different. Unlike Albert, Richard has a close relationship with his daughter, Maude. During this period, men generally spent their time away from home to get their bread

and focused on financial conditions. Children remained in the realm of women and had a close relationship with their mothers at home. As a result, a gap between fathers and children developed. In the novel, the relationship between Albert and his daughters occurs according to social conventions: there is a distance between Albert and his daughters because he is working all day outside the home. The daughters do not see him and only Gertrude takes care of them during the daytime, so the daughters are more closer to Gertrude than to Albert. On the other hand, Richard and Maude have a deep connection. They go to observe the stars outside together. Maude is generally with her father instead of her mother. Even at her first menstruation day, she is with her father (232). One of the reasons why Richard and Maude have a close relationship is Kitty's neglect, but another reason is that Richard is an open-minded man and is not as traditional as Albert. He can talk with Maude about science, books, and nature, and he takes her outside with him. He behaves and educates his daughter like a boy. While some fathers think that a girl should be educated only about domestic issues and that science is the job of a boy, Richard disagrees with this idea during those years. With the effects of Edwardian social development, Richard is portrayed as an understanding and modern father figure. When Maude tells him about her wish about going to university, he lets her (390). While it is not common for a girl to go to university during those years, Richard does not prevent Maude from a university education although he will miss her. While Richard is so an understanding and sentimental father, he is strict about authority like a traditional father. When Maude asks him about the change of funeral day and adds that she has a right to know why he changed the funeral, Richard is angry at her:



“You have no rights!” [...] “Don’t ever let me hear you say that again. You are my daughter and you will do as I say.” I did not move from my chair. Daddy glared at me. “Do I have no authority in my own house? Does no one obey me? Has her influence extended so far that my own daughter won’t do as I say?” (357)

It is not only about Richard’s authority over his daughter but also Richard’s anger at Kitty. He cannot forgive Kitty and cannot forget what she did and caused during the struggle. What he experiences as a man and a husband during the cause affects him deeply. He is afraid Maude will resemble Kitty. On the other hand, Albert loses his daughter Ivy May, and he also has some problems with his daughter Lavinia like Richard. He thinks a girl brings trouble, which he experiences with his daughters. When Gertrude is pregnant again, he worries about the child. When he receives news that he has a son, he thanks God because he does not have a daughter that will bring trouble. Chevalier shows that it is difficult for a father to cope with a girl; the role of fatherhood of both men during this period, and the relationship of daughters and fathers in the middle-class is portrayed realistically with the examples of Maude-Richard, and Lavinia and Ivy May-Albert.

Simon’s father is a clear example of working-class men in the Edwardian era in terms of what he experiences in social life and reflecting conditions of working-class men during the period. During the Edwardian era, there were great differences between the wealthy and the poor, and there was high unemployment as a result of population growth and urbanization, so many members of working-class men had to work on farms, in mines, factories, dockyards, and at railways or as blacksmiths, builders, carpenters, and gravediggers. They worked at physical labors and were paid

daily or weekly low wages. They had to work long hours under poor working conditions. Their primary struggle was to earn money for their family. Chevalier shows these sides of working-class men by choosing the character Simon's father and the reality of society during the years between 1901-1910. In the novel, Simon's father works as a gravedigger at the cemetery and spends time digging graves all day. He does not have any social activity like a middle-class man. Another important characteristic of Simon's father that Chevalier shows is that he is a drunkard father figure, which was common among working-class men during the period. He is a drunkard and ignorant father. When Lavinia meets Simon's father, she describes him:

[...] A horrid man appeared. He had a very red face and bristles on his cheeks, and he smelled of drink. I couldn't help but scream, even though I knew right away it was Simon's father as they have the same blue eyes like pieces of sky. He began shouting terrible things at Simon about where had he been and why were we there, and he used the most awful words. Papa would whip us if Ivy May or I were to use such words. And Papa is not a whipping man. That's how bad they were. (23)

Lavinia is afraid not only of Simon's father's appearance but also his morality and role of fatherhood. As a working-class father, Simon's father is not educated like Albert and Richard, who are middle-class men. As a result, he is not as moral and polite as Albert, Lavinia's father. While Lavinia does not hear from her father such bad words, Simon usually hears them from his father because his father lacks modesty and education. As for Simon's father's fulfillment of ideal fatherhood, he

cannot give Simon a good education and future because of poverty and ignorance like other working-class men in society. Simon generally spends time with his father at the cemetery and helps him by digging graves instead of going to school.

Simon's father is interested only in his job. Although he is a poor man, he is not greedy as a working-class man. As a father, he warns Simon in this way and as Simon said, "our pa always says never ask for too much. Ask for just what you need or you mightn't get any at all" (164). Simon's father accepts his poverty and tries to learn to live with it. Also, he is aware of his class and what his place is in society. Accordingly, there is a dialogue between him and Simon about their class when Simon kisses Lavinia:

Our Pa shakes his head. "It's no use kissing girls like her," he says.

So he did see. "Why not?" I say.

Our Pa shakes his head again. "Them girls is not for you, boy. You know that. They like you 'cause you're different from them, is all.

They'll even let you kiss 'em, once. But you won't get nowhere with 'em." (202)

What Simon's father has told Simon makes Simon upset at first, but he tries to protect and warn his son as a father. He cannot give a good life to his son, but he becomes a friend to his son. While they dig a grave, they sing, play, and watch the sky together. Like friends, they help each other when one is in a difficult situation. As father and son, they have a close relationship with each other. In this way, Simon's father is as interested a father as Richard and Albert.

As for the Suffrage Movement that was an important issue for women and men during the period, the movement does not affect Simon's father as it does Richard,

Albert, and Mr. Jackson, who are middle-class men, because suffrage was created by middle-class women to search for their rights, and working-class women were out of the struggle, so only the husbands of the women who participated in the movement were generally affected. As a result, Simon's father does not deal with the effects of the Suffrage Movement like Richard, because his wife does not participate in it. Also, it is evidence that working-class men were not affected and harmed by the movement as much as middle-class men.

## CHAPTER 3

### **An Analysis of Children Characters in *Falling Angels***

The children characters in the novel are unique because of their own characteristics and experiences. Chevalier's children are from each class. In this way, we can see a child figure from each class and understand what they experience and feel in the novel. While Maude, Lavinia, and Ivy May are middle-class children, Simon is a working-class child. Thanks to these characters, Chevalier shows how children fulfill social roles and are affected by social conventions and realities. While Lavinia and Ivy May are brought up as Victorian ideal girls by their parents, Maude is brought up with realities of the new age, the Edwardian era. Lavinia becomes a sentimental and fragile girl, so she needs to be protected by her parents, as expected by society. Maude becomes a sensible and strong girl, like a boy, that is not appropriate according to social conventions.

During the period, a girl or a boy had their own roles that they had to fulfill according to class, expectations – as did adults. A girl remained with her mother at home and her mother educated the girl to be an ideal lady according to social principles. The girl learned cooking, householding, etc. that were necessary for a girl. She was protected from the evil and darkness of real life. The girl was to be dependent on her father or her husband, and as a result the girl was brought up as a weak, sentimental, and fragile person. On the other hand, a boy was brought up as a strong man because he would take the place of her father as a leader of the family. While Lavinia is educated to be a traditional girl, in some ways, she exceeds her place and becomes manipulative even of her parents. In this way, Chevalier shows that each child is different and has her own ideas and feelings. Although Lavinia is

generally as a traditional girl who does not wholly fulfill the role of a traditional girl, Maude is non-traditional like her mother but sensible like her father.

Chevalier throws a light on the conditions and experiences of working-class boys between the years 1901-1910 with the character Simon. During the period, bad working conditions and difficulties were great and the percentage of children who worked in mines and factories was high. A working-class child lacked the facilities that middle-class children had. Chevalier makes a working-class boy and middle class daughters friends in the novel. In this way, readers can compare what they have or lack, and can see both worlds in one picture. Simon is a clear reflection of working-class children, while Maude, Lavinia, and Ivy May reflect middle-class children's lives. Differences between characters are evidence that each character is unique.

Maude and Lavinia are the same age, but they are quite different from each other according to their own characteristics. Lavinia is the elder daughter of the middle-class Waterhouses, and she is a "pretty [girl] with bright brown eyes and long lashes and creamy skin" (Chevalier 9). Although she is nearly six years old, she acts like a lady or a woman. On the other hand, Maude, the daughter of the upper-middle class Colemans, is a clever girl who behaves according to what a girl at her age experiences accordingly. For example, the funeral day of Queen Victoria shows how these two girls are different: Maude is aware of the death of the Queen, but as a six-year old child she does not understand why the Queen's death is different from other people's deaths:

[...] The Queen is dead, which I think means no one can sit down, or play, or do anything comfortable. I heard the bells ringing last night

when I was in bed, and when Nanny came in this morning she told me the Queen died yesterday evening. I ate my porridge very slowly, to see if it tasted different from yesterday's, now that the Queen is gone. But it tasted just the same [...]. (8)

In her small world, Maude comments on the Queen's death in this way. On the other hand, Lavinia wears a black dress to show her being in full mourning because of the Queen's death. Also, she cries very much for the Queen when she is going to the cemetery with her family, but her father warns her, "Now stop all this crying. She was a good queen and she lived a long life, but there's no need for a girl of five to weep quite so much" (10). What Lavinia does is actually what a woman or a lady should do when the Queen dies during the period. According to social conventions, a man or a woman wore black to show their mourning at the funeral. It seemed life stopped. All shops and schools were closed, and all adults mourned because of the death, but children were out of this mourning. They did not have to wear black or mourn, but for Lavinia, a child of the period, the situation is different. She dresses and mourns like a traditional adult.

One of the important differences between Lavinia and Maude is sentimentality versus sensibleness. While Lavinia is sentimental, Maude is sensible. Lavinia, "a bossy, spoiled little thing" (19), manipulates her mother and father thanks to her sentimentality, and she has them do whatever she wants. For example, Mr. Waterhouse buys the angel on their grave at her insistence. It is clear that Lavinia admires angels, which to the Colemans seem excessively sentimental. It is also an example of Lavinia's sentimentality. While Lavinia wanders and watches the angels in the cemetery with great admiration, Maude does not like them and says, "[Angels]

are very smooth and regular, and their eyes are so blank – even when I stand in their line of sight they never seem to look at me. What is the good of a messenger who doesn't even notice you?" (61). It is not only evidence that Maude is sensible and Lavinia is sentimental, but also it is evidence of both girls' different religious perception. Lavinia and Maude reflect their families' religious understanding according to their education and thoughts. While the Waterhouses are a middle-class and traditional and sustain the sentimentality of Victorian-era religion, the Colemans are upper-middle-class and modern and reject the sentimentality of the Victorian era and adapt the more sensible attitudes of the Edwardian era. Maude and Lavinia think and behave according to their families' social ideologies, as shown by Maude and Lavinia's discussion of angels:

"Why do you like angels so much?" Maude asked Lavinia.

She laughed. "Why couldn't like them? They are God's messengers and they bring love. Whenever I look in their gentle faces they make me feel peaceful and secure." [...]

"Where is God, exactly?" I asked, thinking about angels flying between us and Him.

Lavinia looked shocked and stopped turning pages. "Why, up there, of course." She pointed at the sky outside. "Don't you listen at Sunday school?"

"But there are stars and planets up there," I said. "I know I've seen them through Daddy's telescope."

"You watch out, Maude Coleman," Lavinia said, "or you'll commit blasphemy." (62)



This dialogue shows how Maude questions religion, like her family while Lavinia is traditional and sentimental about religion. Maude questions God and fate while Lavinia accepts religion according to the social conventions of her family.

Another important difference between Maude and Lavinia is that Lavinia is embedded in her imagination and a dream world while Maude is realistic. As a result, they interpret events differently according to their points of views and beliefs. For example, when the Waterhouses become neighbors of the Colemans, both daughters interpret the situation in a different way. Lavinia sees it as a “miracle” (43), but Maude sees it as a “coincidence” (44). There is another example of how both daughters accept events according to their points of view. One night, Lavinia goes star-gazing on the Heath with Maude and Maude’s father. While Maude prefers to look through the telescope and talks about craters on the moon, Lavinia prefers looking at the moon without the telescope and talks about its beauty. While Maude looks at the moon in a scientific way, Lavinia prefers to look at it in sensitive way (140). On the one hand, Maude deals with science and facts, on the other hand, Lavinia deals with imagination. After a while, they come across “falling angels.” Maude says they are shooting stars that are pieces of an old comet burning up. Lavinia claims that they are angels whose wings make streaks across the sky while bringing messages from God to us (141). These examples are clear evidence of differences of perception and understanding of Maude and Lavinia.

The reason of Lavinia’s sentimentality and Maude’s sensibleness is the result of cultural conditioning that they get from their parents. Lavinia is brought up according to Victorian social conventions and norms. According to the society of the era, a girl did not need to learn science or knowledge she would not use. She should

learn cooking, sewing, and householding, which were the most important things for a girl. She was educated according to the idea that a girl needed to be protected because she was sensitive and fragile, so the attitude of a mother or a father toward a daughter was different from their attitude toward a son. Lavinia is brought up by Gertrude according to the social conditioning of Victorian girls. Lavinia spends time with her mother at home in the domestic sphere, which is the best and safest place for a girl and she helps her mother about the house and in the kitchen (112). As a traditional mother, Gertrude teaches her daughter how to sew and cook, as an ideal girl. On the other hand, Maude receives a different kind of education from Lavinia. In direct contradiction, she is brought up by looking through the telescope with her father and reading *Encyclopaedia Britannica*, which did not get Lavinia's attention or other girls' attention during the period. While she is interested in science that was defined as a boy's activity during the era, she is not good at a girls' activities such as sewing unlike Lavinia, whose sewing is better than Maude's sewing when they sew the suffragettes' banners for the march. While Maude's fingers are torn and pricked from the needle because of not knowing how to use it, Lavinia successfully finishes them (285).

One of the most important differences between Maude and Lavinia is their relationship with their mothers. While Gertrude and Lavinia have a close as-a-mother-daughter relationship that conforms to social beliefs, Kitty and Maude have an inadequate and distant relationship. From her childhood, Maude feels the lack of her mother's love and interest. As a child and daughter, she cannot find her mother with her when she needs her most, such as on her first menstruation day (237). She is hurt, but never expresses her feelings to her mother. Instead, she spends time with

her father and the Waterhouse family. The maid Jenny and the cook Mrs. Baker in their home are like mothers to Maude. When her mother becomes involved in the Suffrage Movement, the most difficult time for Maude starts. While Kitty works for her struggle, she ignores and neglects Maude even more. For example, when Kitty goes to prison, Maude worries and becomes upset for her mother, like a child. And when Maude visits her mother in prison, instead of comforting and reassuring of Maude, Kitty wants Maude to raise money for the movement (244). Maude begins to avoid Kitty because of her involvement in the suffrage movement, which disturbs Maude. Kitty never becomes a good mother for Maude, so that Maude cannot even put her feelings into words when she sees her mother dying:

I did not want to see my mother. I had been waiting for her all my life, and now I preferred to be waiting for her always, if that was the only alternative. [...] Mummy was lying very still, her face pale, her eyes open and unnaturally bright. I sat down next to her. She fixed her eyes on me. I knew she was waiting for me to speak. I had no idea what to say or do. (327)

Maude leaves her mother without saying goodbye. As a child, Maude is hurt very much. Nevertheless, her mother's death saddens and affects her dramatically:

I could only compare it to how I felt losing my mother: an aching emptiness, and a precariousness about life now that one of the things I had taken for granted was gone. Mummy may have been absent or remote these past few years, but she had at least been alive. It was as if Mummy had been shielding me from a fire and then was suddenly taken away so that I could feel scorching flames on my face. (355)

Maude loses her mother, but she has deep injuries in her heart and mind about marriage and maternity because of her mother's ignorance and neglect. She does not want to marry and to have children because of her mother (237), while Lavinia dreams of marriage and children. After her mother's death, she is in a bad mood that is reflected by her clothes:

I had worn black for almost a year following Mummy's death, and for the first time I had understood why we are meant to wear black. It is not just that the colour reflects a mourner's sombre mood, but also that one doesn't want to have to choose what to wear. [...] It was only when I did want to wear colour again that I knew I was beginning to recover. (376)

While Maude experiences these difficult situations, Lavinia continues her life near her mother. Maude's experience makes Maude more mature and serious. On the other hand, Lavinia continues to be a spoiled and mischievous child. Her parents show great interest in her and Lavinia uses it to manipulate them. Gertrude is aware of how difficult her daughter is, but she cannot do anything. When they have a discussion about something, generally Lavinia wins the discussion and gets whatever she wishes. One of these discussions is about the march of the Suffrage Movement. Lavinia wants to participate in the march, but Gertrude does not let her. Gertrude knows "nothing stops [Lavinia] getting what she wants" (290). Although Gertrude tries to deceive Lavinia not to participate in the march, in the end, Lavinia wins and goes to the march. This event shows how Lavinia is a dominant and stubborn child who never gives up. Also Lavinia's friends are aware of the fact that she can do anything to get something. As Maude says, Lavinia "can make a man do anything

she likes” (255). There is one example that affirms Maude’s claim. Kitty becomes pregnant as a result of a love affair and she gets rid of the child. Then, she becomes ill, but nobody knows the real reason. Simon knows the real reason because his mother helps Kitty. Lavinia notices that Simon knows something about Kitty’s illness, so she forces Simon to tell her what has happened to Kitty. At first Simon resists telling Lavinia, but when she offers to let Simon kiss her if he tells her what happened to Kitty, he tells her (199) . This event shows Lavinia’s stubbornness and suggests that as an adult she will use sex to manipulate men.

Although Maude and Lavinia are good friends, they disagree on several issues because of their different characters and generally Lavinia makes Maude angry. Many times, Lavinia’s fictionalizing events around herself and her childish behaviour bore Maude. When they visit Kitty in prison, Lavinia begins to make up a story about prison. She transforms the prison into a castle and a guardian to “a character out of Dickens” (257). Maude warns her by saying “This isn’t a fairy tale!” (257). Another discussion between them occurs when Kitty is injured at the march and Ivy May is lost at the same time. Mr. Jackson comes to help them. While Lavinia wants Mr. Jackson to seek Ivy May, Maude wants him to take her mother home and they look for Ivy May. Mr. Jackson cannot decide:

[Maude] knew he could not make the decision himself – I would have to do it. ‘Mr. Jackson, go and find a cab,’ I ordered. ‘You’re more likely to get one than me or Lavinia, and you can carry Mummy to it. Caroline, you wait here with Mummy, and Lavinia and I will look for Ivy May.’ (312)

It also shows that Maude is an authoritative character. Although there are adults like Caroline and Mr. Jackson, nobody can decide. As a child, Maude decides and she does not think only of her mother, but also of Ivy May. Maude always tries to be kind to Lavinia, while Lavinia does not think of Maude and ignores her feelings, but one day Maude blows up because of Lavinia's jealousy. Lavinia criticizes Maude's dress as being "ostentatious" because she envies Maude's fine silk dress. But Maude does not understand her jealousy; instead, she tells her that she has no mother to ask advice (350). After that event, Maude becomes very sorry:

I could not stop shaking. I have never been so furious. What I hated most were the horrid things I said as well. Lavinia brought out the worst in me, and it is much harder to live with that than with her remarks. I have learned to expect her to say silly and stupid things, and I have usually managed not to sink to her level, until now. (352)

Jealousy is like a worm in Lavinia's inner self. She cannot get rid of it. She always wants to own the best things and to be the best. Maude does not make her jealousy a problem, but now it harms their friendship. Lavinia may be unaware of her jealousy, but she envies Ivy May even when she dies. When they get letters of condolence that tell how Ivy May is a perfect daughter or how she is angelic, Lavinia is angry at them (341). These bad thoughts in Lavinia are not appropriate for an ideal and traditional girl because an ideal girl is sweet and pure and far away from evil and darkness according to social conventions. In this way, Lavinia harms her struggle to be an ideal girl.

As for the Suffrage Movement, it affects not only adult women or men but also children. Both Maude and Lavinia are against the Suffrage Movement, but their

reasons are different. As a traditional girl, Lavinia does not understand women's struggle for the right to vote. According to her, this issue and politics are "dull" (203) and unnecessary and she defines suffragettes as wicked. Maude also disagrees with the Suffrage Movement, but her reasons are different. She is against the movement because the movement separated her from her mother, broke apart her family, and caused her mother's change and death. By contrast, Lavinia's reaction against the Suffrage Movement shows her traditional mentality. Although she is a spoiled and sentimental girl, she is also strict about some social realities. An example of her strict ideas about social beliefs is her attitude when she learns of Kitty's pregnancy and abortion. Lavinia suffers from "moral repulsion" (203) and sees abortion as contamination of the Coleman family. She hates Kitty and wishes to inform Richard because of her "Christian duty" (204). The reason for Lavinia's reaction is that abortion is illegal and immoral during the Victorian and Edwardian era, so she is affected very much and criticizes Kitty because of it. On the other hand, when Maude learns about Jenny's baby born out of wedlock, Maude says nothing about the issue and she never judges Jenny for her immorality; instead, she helps Jenny (392). This is a clear example of Maude's and Lavinia's different perceptions and fulfillment of social conventions.

Another child character in the novel is Ivy May, Lavinia's sister, who is different from Lavinia. While Lavinia wearies their parents out, Ivy May gives them peace because of her well-behaved nature and silence. She helps Gertrude and never makes her mother upset (112). Although Ivy May is younger than Lavinia, she is much more understanding and easy. She rarely speaks her mind freely, unlike Lavinia. She is not as stubborn as Lavinia. She needs to be protected because of her

weak nature, and she always remains under Lavinia's shadow and dominant character. In this way, she has a special place in the family. When she is lost and murdered, Gertrude cannot recover for a long time. Chevalier reflects Ivy May's silence and hazy character by using her voice in only one chapter – with one sentence.

As a working-class boy, Simon has to share his mother's and father's fate. He lives in poverty and experiences the disadvantages of his class. When we compare Simon with Maude and Lavinia, we clearly see their differences. Simon does not have a good education and up-bringing. As Maude says, "In many ways he knew so little – had never been to school, could barely read, and that learned from gravestones. Yet he clearly knew about things in the world that I had no notion of" (159). While he lacks a good education, he knows many things that are generally related to his neighbourhood and the dark sides of society that he sees everyday. His working as a gravedigger with his father introduces him to the reality of death. As a child, what he experiences in the cemetery every day affects his world and his mentality. What he experiences is far away from Maude's and Lavinia's world. One day, he explains about what he does in a day in the cemetery and how he digs a grave. Lavinia begins to cry because the things Simon tells them horrifies her as a child. Until that time, she never hears "such tedious things" (58). Her family protects her from evil and the dark side of life, but Simon lives in it. Simon's working in the cemetery and his talking about such things shows how working-class children experience the dark and evil side of life.

While Simon lives in poverty and experiences the dark side of life, he of course lacks the facilities that middle class children have. The first meeting of Maude and



Simon is a clear example of it. For the first time, Maude sees a boy full of mud. His checks, hair, jackets, and shoes are muddy and dirty. She questions why he is full of mud (8) and does not understand his being dirty. While she is talking to Simon, Simon asks Maude whether he can touch her muff or not and he wishes to put his face in it (18). For the first time, he touches a muff because it is rare to see a muff in his world. This dialogue also shows how they are far away from each other because of their class and life standards. Nevertheless, they become friends and they teach each other the world that they are unfamiliar with. While Maude and Lavinia are afraid of Simon's world, Simon dreams of Maude's and Lavinia's world: "I think about the girls, the one with the muff and the one with pretty face. They're tucked up in their beds, all toasty warm. I wish I was like them" (31). Again, Simon reflects the difficult conditions of poor people. Also, he is an important character in terms of his witnessing immorality and unknown events in the novel. While nobody knows the relationship between Kitty and Mr. Jackson, he knows it. He knows Jenny's love affair with a gardener and her pregnancy. He is aware of secret events around him. When Kitty comes to meet Mr. Jackson in the cemetery confidentially, Simon is with her:

They don't see me following her. I jump from grave to grave, ducking behind the tombstones. The granite slabs on the graves are warm under my feet where they've been in the sun. Sometimes I just stand still for a minute to feel that warmth. Then I run to catch up with her. Her back from behind looks like an hour-glass. (99)

Although he witnesses the immorality of some characters, he also helps them in some ways. When Jenny thinks about what to do with her child, Simon advises her to get rid of the child:

“I couldn’t do that!” Our Jenny sounds shocked.

“Why not? You don’t want it, do you?”

“It’s a sin. It’s murder!”

“But you sinned already, aint you? What difference does it make?”

(163)

It shows the dark and evil side of life in which Simon is raised. He sometimes behaves like an adult. What he suggests to Jenny is not a thing that a child can think. Also, abortion was illegal during that era. It was common in poor people because they could not take care of several children financially. In this way, Simon reflects characteristics of his society and his class, although a child, he is aware of every reality of his society. Also, Simon is aware of his class differences from Maude and Lavinia. During Maude’s and Lavinia’s last visit to Simon at the cemetery, Simon asks whether they will visit him another time or not. The girls are surprised and reply that they will come, but Simon does not believe it:

Don’t know why I asked that, ‘cause I know the answer, and it ain’t the one they gave. They’re growing up and they don’t play in the cemetery any more. Maude’s got her hair up and looks more like her mother every day, and Livy’s – well, Livy. She’ll married at eighteen, to a soldier, I expect. (383)

Any more they are not children and they grow up. While they are children, they play together by ignoring their class. But now, the situation is different.

## CONCLUSION

*Falling Angels*, written in 2001, is set in the ten-year period between 1901 and 1910 and reflects the social realities of the period through its different characters and their experiences. The Coleman family and the Waterhouse family show how a wife, a husband, a mother, a father, and a child can feel and experience life differently according to their social status and their individual perception and understanding of reality. Kitty, Richard, Maude, Gertrude, Lavinia, Albert, Simon, and the others represent the voices of each group and class in society during the era. The author, Chevalier, shows not only diverse aspects of women, men, and children in terms of their feelings, experiences, and ideas, but also the visible problems and conditions of women, men, and children in fulfilling their roles.

Chevalier highlights some important episodes of that period such as the ideal Victorian womanhood and motherhood, how to be a good wife and a good mother, and she presents the different reactions of her women characters, especially Kitty and Gertrude, against this ideal norm according to their perception and acceptance of the old Victorian social codes. The new age, the Edwardian age, becomes a transition period to some extent. In society, the gender norm for a woman was clearly defined: her sacred duty was to be a good wife and mother. She was to care for her children and her husband. She had her place at home. Her field of work was the household – her private sphere. She did not have the right to enter a man's world, and she had limited rights. These features were the keys of ideal womanhood and motherhood in society.

Chevalier shows the inadequacy of social stereotypes, however strong, during this period through the examples of Kitty and Gertrude in *Falling Angels*. Both are

wives and mothers, and they live in the same area during the same period but they feel and react differently. Their relationships with their husbands and daughters, and their acceptance of their contemporary social values differ greatly. Gertrude is a happy wife in her domestic sphere and fulfills her sacred duty as an “angel in the house.” She dedicates herself to her husband and her daughters. She accepts her place and remains at home where she deals with her household. Gertrude does what society expects from her at that period. On the other hand, Kitty is not pleased to be a wife and a mother. She longs for equality with her husband and for going outside the house. She does not accept the notion of separate spheres for women and men. She differs from Gertrude because she wishes to speak in society and to have a place near men. Both women’s different perceptions and thoughts affect their fulfillment of maternity. Kitty and Gertrude understand maternity differently and fulfill their responsibilities of mothering in terms of their own points of view. While Gertrude sees maternity as a sacred duty, Kitty sees maternity as a burden that limits her freedom and desires. Gertrude’s daughters are the focal points of her life and her main goal is to bring them up as ideal girls and women. She spends all her time on her daughters and their education. Unlike Gertrude, Kitty sees her daughter’s birth as a trap because it will prevent Kitty from the public world which she wishes to enter into.

Chevalier also shows that men and children characters, like the women characters, experience life differently because of their class and their life standards. While Albert, Richard, and Mr. Jackson reflect middle-class men, Simon’s father reflects working-class men. Although Albert and Richard are educated according to social beliefs, their experience is different because of their wives. Albert can control

his wife, but Richard cannot because Kitty longs for equality and participates in the Suffrage Movement. Her involvement in the movement becomes a difficult experience for Richard and makes him feel weak. Through these two male characters, Chevalier shows what men experienced during the period. Some men were affected by women's issues, like Richard, and some were not affected, like Albert.

As for children characters, Chevalier shows that each child character is different and reflects a kind of child during the era – like the adult women and men characters. Lavinia is an example of an ideal girl who knows how to sew, to clean like her mother, and she prefers to remain in the domestic sphere with her mother. In some situations, she does not behave according to social conventions. By contrast, Maude is interested in science and the outdoors, which belong to man's world; she spends her time outside with her father. While Gertrude brings her daughters up according to the social values which she respects, Kitty does not bring her daughter up according to the social values since she disagrees with them, and Maude is affected by the new Edwardian era and she becomes a sensible girl. And Simon becomes the voice of working-class children in terms of his feelings, experiences, and life conditions.

Chevalier observes each character one by one and tells her readers what they think, what they feel, and what they see. Also, she combines their lives with the realities of society and she shows how they interpret events and how they react to them. In this way, the realistic characters of *Falling Angels* give us a sense of real life and real people between 1901 and 1910.

This thesis study helps me understand the relationship between people and their social conventions and it tells that social conventions can be strong, but each person behaves according to his thoughts and feelings. In this way, this novel shows that each character is different and unique. Also the way Chevalier portrays the Victorian society and people of society influences me very much and it takes me the depth of the Victorian society and period with a realistic point of view.

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