CHAPTER V

PARENT CHILDREN RELATIONSHIP

Robert D. Hess and Gerald Handel observe in The Psychosocial Interior of the Family that "the family's life together is an endless process of movement in and around consentual understanding, from attachment to conflict and withdrawal—and over again. Separatedness and connectedness are the underlying conditions of a family's life and its common task is to give form to both" (10). Gerald Handel goes on to say that the family which is important to man has been "at once a significant source of individuality and the expression of the most binding ties of social life" (1).

If a home is the place where happiness reigns, happy, confident, well-adjusted children will be produced, who will be launched into the world to establish other happy homes and thus continue the harmonious circle. A child's nature depends largely upon the relationship he has with his parents and that in turn depends upon their imagination and wisdom. The parents have to bear in mind that the marring of a rose bud deforms the full blossom. If the personality and self-respect of a child is damaged, it will launch upon the world another twisted, fearful, difficult, maladjusted adult. If the children are denied genuine love, they lose the sense of belonging, the "we" feeling and they develop what Karen Horney calls a "profound insecurity and vague apprehensiveness" (18).

A new-born child lives in a profound communion with his mother. The child receives and in its own way gives. The child
may not be rationally conscious of that love, but it senses the peace engendered by it. Children’s greatest need is to be able to depend on someone for emotional support throughout their lives. Parents alone can give that unqualified support. No home is complete without an intermingling of the young and the old. The strength of the Indian family life throughout the centuries has been the close emotional bond between children and their parents. The need to give and receive love is felt by all healthy men.

In Kamala Markandaya’s novels, the mother figure represents love, affection, protection, fertility. Rukmani (Nectar in a Sieve) is conceived as the enduring, devoted, sacrificing, loving and forgiving mother figure. She is full of love and affection for her hearth and home. Her journey from home to her husband’s house is her journey to motherhood. She is aware of the love that binds her to her children. When her children starve, she is full of pity for them. The death of Raja leaves her in sorrow and utter misery. She ruminates:

For this I have given you birth, my son, that you should lie in the end at my feet with ashes in your face and coldness in your limbs and yourself departed without trace, leaving this huddle of bones and flesh without meaning. (89)

The despair of a loving mother who is unable to feed her dying hungry child finds expression in Rukmani’s piercing words that it would be “one mouth less to feed” (85). We are puzzled to see that earlier it is the same Rukmani who approaches the
doctor for male issues.

As a mother, Rukmani is admirable, but Nathan’s generosity and sensitivity as a father makes him a better parent. When the boys decide to go to Ceylon to earn their living, Nathan does not oppose. Like Michael in Wordsworth’s poem “Michael,” Nathan is cognisant of the circumstances:

If here he stays / what can be done? where
everyone is poor / what can be gained?

Michael sends Luke away telling him:

"but it seems good / that thou should’st go". (439)

Nathan is a gentle father and when the children fight for their rights from the tannery, Nathan pacifies his wife that as they do not understand, they must not interfere. He tells her that their “children must act as they choose to” (66).

According to Erich Fromm in The Art of Loving, the most important role “of a father is parental love and guidance” (59). Gandhiji too opines that the best teacher is the father and the best school is one’s home. Though a mother longs for sons, she always has a soft corner for her daughters. When Ira is married, Rukmani remembers that it was “for the first time, since her birth, Ira no longer slept under our roof” (38). A girl enjoys freedom till she reaches puberty. Parents pay more attention to the girls, for fear of them going astray. Even when Ira was hardly five years old, Nathan pointed her out to Rukmani as she played in the fields: “cover her. It is time” (22). With the coming of the tannery, Ira is kept indoors, for
the parents find the young men eyeing her. Rukmani ponders over her childhood, the positive contribution of her parents, towards her upbringing and appreciates the farsightedness of her father:

It was my father who taught me to read and write. People said he did it because he wanted his children to be one cut above the rest: Perhaps so, but I am certain that he also knew that it would be a solace to me in affliction, a joy amid tranquillity. (11)

The mother did not encourage this deed for she believes that a woman is successful in life only if she has lusty sons and a husband to look after her. But Rukmani follows her father and hopes to pass on this knowledge to her unborn child.

Most often it is the duty of the elder child to look after the younger ones. Ira’s taking to prostitution to feed her dying brother is an act of supreme self-sacrifice, and this stands in comparison to Sonya in Fyodor Dostoevsky’s Crime and Punishment. Though the parents at first object, they (Rukmani and Nathan) have to succumb, for she (Ira) is old enough to choose her path. Later, when the illegitimate Sacrabani is born, they silently accept him. In Bhabani Bhattacharya’s So Many Hungers, owing to utter helplessness, Kajoli’s neighbours give in and sell their daughter, and Kajoli also at one time gives in primarily to help her family.

Illegitimate children are the by products of passionate love and sex unsanctified by marriage. Pearl in The Scarlet Letter and Sacrabani have mothers, but the identity of the
father is unknown. One of the characteristics of a vigorous intellect is curiosity and perhaps hearing the gossip of the neighbours, concerning his birth, Sacrabani asks his mother, what a bastard is. When he questions her of his father, Nathan leaves it for Ira to decide and answer. He tells Rukmani not to interfere and that "it is for Ira to decide" (123).

When Rukmani and Nathan are evicted from the land, they decide to go to their son Murugan, who dwells in the city. It is natural for the parents to seek support from their children in times of crisis or old age. Selvam who feels ashamed of his inability to look after his aged parents confesses that it is perpetual shame to have nothing to offer his parents. Yet he promises "they shall not go in need" (138). But on learning Murugan has deserted his wife for another, Rukmani and Nathan blame themselves for his upbringing: "'We gave him life, we should have taught him better'; yet looking back it was difficult to see how or where the mistake had been made" (162). But, like a typical Indian mother, Rukmani refuses to hear any insulting remarks made on her son, not even from his wife. She therefore tries to justify his leaving:

"May be there were reasons," I said. Whatever claim this woman had on him, still he was my son; I could not let her heap all the blame on him. (163).

Nathan who makes no distinction between Murugan and his wife greatly feels for her:

"We will return to our son and daughter," . . .
"But what of you, my child? It is we rather than you who should ask. We have had our day, you are still young . . . " (164)

It is universal motherhood that attracts Puli towards Rukmani. She feels love and affection for the destitute leprosy stricken boy and takes him home. Poverty does not bar her from adopting Puli. It is the motherly instincts that provoke the old granny to present Ira’s child a rupee, which she has saved through the months or years and which, if spent on buying victuals, might have saved her own life.

The mother in Some Inner Fury understands her children’s needs and acts accordingly. When Kit objects to marrying a stranger, the mother lets Premala stay with them, so as to get acquainted with each other. It is certainly an unusual thing for the boy’s parents to let the girl stay with them, and even more unusual for the girl’s parents to agree to such decisions. This practice seemed shameless and dangerous to Dodamma, the old widowed lady. Most often mothers care for their son’s happiness. Premala tries hard to adjust to Kit’s westernised ways, but in vain; her face betrays her emotions. Through Mira’s views we understand the dominating position of the boy in the family and it was the duty of the wife to look to the comfort of her husband: "My parents, if they saw the signs, said nothing; to them it was wholly proper that Premala should wait upon their son’s pleasure" (48). Mira’s parents who belong to the aristocratic class train Mira in that manner “for one day--soon--I would marry, a man of my own class who, like my
brother, would have been educated abroad, and who would expect his wife to move as freely in European circles as he himself did" (22). Despite modernity, the mother does not relent to her daughter’s free mixing with Kit and Richard, and reminds Mira to bear in mind that "this is not England" (23). It is natural for mothers to have watchful eyes over their grown up daughters. She senses the change that has come over her daughter since Kit and Richard has arrived. Mira is never sent out alone. Her mother accompanies her to the temple, she is supposed to travel only by car, if she insists on walking, an ayah or peon trails behind her. When Mira is invited to join Kit and Richard for a swim, the mother denies her permission and firmly but lovingly tells her: "Modesty graces a woman. It is not right for a young woman to go among young men" (34). When Roshan Merchant comes ‘alone’ for Kit’s wedding, questions crowd the mother’s mind for it seemed Roshan has passed the marriage age, yet she has come alone. In spite of the mother’s loving cares, the children enjoy a certain amount of freedom. The letter addressed in one’s name is not opened by any other member of the house. The mother holds the foremost position in matters concerning children.

The mother has no discrimination between her son and Govind, the adopted. When Govind seeks permission to take up a job, she dissuades him and tells him to wait, for he is young. Though the mother is anxious about him, the father, like Nathan consoles her, that "a man must do what he must, and that no man
is accountable to any but himself" (69). When Mira and Richard seek permission from Mira’s mother to get married, the mother wisely advises them to “wait until” Mira is “twenty one” (140). The mother fears that her daughter’s decision is immature and that she will be able to take a wiser decision when she is older. The mother in Pearl S. Buck’s *Letter from Peking* advises her son who has fallen in love: “you must find a deep woman, my son, a woman with an overflowing heart” (70). When Kit’s mother is informed of her dear son’s death, she asks Mira if he has died without speaking anything. Mira says.

“He told me not to worry,” I said, “And he called—

"for Premala?"

“No,” I said, and I mustered all my strength, and I met her eyes and I said “No. He called your name.”

(Some Inner Fury, 210)

A mother, even if her son is married, would always want the son to be hers only. If Mira had said that he uttered ‘Premala,’ or ‘Sylvia,’ which he had actually said, it would cause her much worry. She could at least pass the rest of her days thinking her son loved her very much.

It is due to Premala’s motherly instincts that she decided to adopt the orphan girl; when Premala insists the poor be fed, after the wedding ceremonies, the other members of the house cut it down. When they call the children a swarm of locusts and monkeys, the ‘mother’ in her is roused and she says, “These are not monkeys or locusts; they are children” (54).

In every family, the serious matters concerning marriage is
certainly discussed with senior members. Dodamma, a poor relation of the family is approached, she tries to make Mira interested in such topics and instills the thought of marriage in her: "why, do you not know marriage is the second milestone in life?" (40). Girls, from their childhood itself is made aware of such matters and they are not supposed to go out with other male members, especially before marriage.

In *A Silence of Desire*, Dandekar, though westernised cannot approve of women flaunting themselves in front of men, either before or after marriage. He is therefore shocked to hear of his daughter Ramabai going to the milk bar. The changing times are represented by the children. They are not docile, they argue, discuss, reason out, instead of accepting everything. Lakshmbai justifies Ramabai’s visit to the milk bar, for there is nothing to eat at home. When Dandekar questions Ramabai, of going to the milk bar with a stranger (to him), Ramabai retorts, "'Doesn’t mother go to see someone none of us know? Don’t you?’" (99). The children refuse to believe the explanations that the parents give them about visiting the Swamy. The parents do not disclose the gravity for fear of frightening the girls.

Our intimacy with Dandekar’s house hold increases with the little events that go to make family life. At the end of the month Dandekar brings home presents for Sarojini and the children from the saved bus fares. All these small sacrifices strengthen the parent-children bond. Dandekar who is
westernised in his thinking takes care to bring up his children with a correct understanding of distinguishing religion from superstition.

The Dandekar household’s serenity is disrupted with Sarojini’s frequent absences from home. The children are neglected. Dandekar comes home to find a hungry Lakshmi, and Ramabai crying in the darkness. Dandekar and Sarojini do not want their estranged life being reflected on their children and they therefore pretend to be loving parents: “Soon after nine the girls went to bed. Now the pretence can end” (61). Later, when he understands the cause, he spends more time with his children, making up for their mother’s absences.

Childhood conditions and their reminiscences are lasting and they affect the development of the personality. If the children feel neglected or they find undue love given to the other siblings, they feel unwanted and insecure. Moreover, if a child does not show interest in a particular work, he should be encouraged to do things for which he is gifted. He should not be insulted and considered a good-for-nothing. A child who is always told, ‘you can’t do that’, ‘you are a stupid child’, ‘you are not half as clever as your brother’, will accept this judgement of himself.

In Possession, Valmiki’s parents are forced to sell off their son, when they are offered a compensation of five thousand rupees by Caroline. Whether a child is retarded or good-for-nothing, to a mother, he is the most precious treasure that can be compared to nothing. There follows a dialogue
between Anasuya, the narrator and the mother:

"He has always been different from my other children, always so difficult, I do not know why... he has brought us nothing but shame and sorrow."

"Yet you will not let him go," I said.

"Because he is still my son!" She said. "Because I am still his mother and unless I am turned to stone I cannot put that from me." (19)

The motherly love, when the father takes the very cruel decision of accepting five thousand rupees for his son, is reflected in the mother's words:

"He [father] has already decided," she said bitterly. "Did you not hear him? It was the money— it was too much for him. But it is always so, men are ever free and easy with that for which they have neither suffered nor laboured." (20)

Anasuya, who is aware of the parent-children bond existing in India tells Caroline: "He's not a toy, to be picked up now and discarded when something else takes your fancy" (10). To Caroline, the bond is calculated in terms of money and worth. She cares not to understand the bond. Caroline's justification of possessing the boy on the grounds that his father has seven other children confirms the view that for the coloniser, the human being in an enslaved country are no better than the heads of cattle whom one could buy and dispose of at will.

Caroline's proposal of taking Valmiki abroad is cheerfully
accepted. He tells Anasuya of the poverty in his family and sorrowfully speaks of the partiality of his parents:

"When my father is finished with the fields, it is done finished. He comes home and our mother gives him best from the cooking-pot and rubs his shoulders because he has done this work. When I have finished it is one hand of rice and rice-water, because I have not worked." (58)

He lived on the hills and his only companions were the goats. When his mother sent him word, he visited her. His father and brothers too paid him visits. It was not to see him, but the goats for they did not wish to lose their goats. (59)

What made Valmiki get close to Ellie, the German refugee, was that she was parentless and more or less facing his own fate. She reflected his own mother in her worries. Valmiki's mother's life is similar to Rukmani's life. Rukmani was married at thirteen, mother of six children at twenty six and a widow at forty. Valmiki's mother did not "complain of dying at forty: indeed she considered herself lucky, many of her friends having been taken at thirty." (173)

The mother longs to see her son before her death. She hands over to Anasuya, who visits her, ten gold sovereigns to be passed on to Valmiki, as her other sons "have already had their share of Valmiki's wealth and what remains is for him alone" (175). The significance of this act can be understood only if one can understand what the ten sovereigns means to a person in her condition. This act is similar to the old Granny's, who
gives away her last rupee to Ira’s son, which would have benefitted her.

Valmiki’s relation with the Swamy is something more than mere physical: “He was like father and mother and friend” (51). What a child needs most is the stable love, admiration and encouragement from his parents. Val, who is denied of these from his parents, receives it from the Swamy. To his parents and the villagers, he is considered a good-for-nothing. It is the Swamy who loves him and encourages him. He does not remember even a single happy moment in his boyhood days:

“When I am small, no: I am happy then. But when I am bigger, my father wish me to work like him, like my brothers. But I am no good, I not do it well, then they are angry and my mother weeps. I hate when a woman weeps.” (58)

Ravi (A Handful of Rice) remembers his childhood days and poverty in his family:

Much of his early life he had been fed largely on water in which things had been boiled, while the things themselves went to his father, who was the bread winner, or to his older brothers as they became bread winners. (89)

Unlike in Possession and A Handful of Rice, Rikki in Pleasure City, gets the lion’s share despite his being the adopted son. When poverty strikes the family, it is natural for the children to leave to the city, leaving their parents
behind. As such they seem to have no contact with the parents. When the father receives news of Ravi’s wedding, he does not object to it, but willingly takes part in it and beams with pride at his son’s success.

In a joint family, there are chances of some members growing lazy, the sole bread winner has to spend his hard earned money on them. Apu tells Ravi that he is disgusted with the three male members of his household who do nothing except remain parasites and eat him out:

He [Varma] eats and sleeps and talks . . . Then there’s my son-in-law, he’s got a shop . . . he doesn’t even go near it now, but ask him to do something and that’s where he has to go, at once, urgently. And then there’s that cripple . . . He sits all day nursing that shrunken claw . . . (38-39)

Apu has been a dutiful father, rather than affectionate. When he is dying Nalini looks at her father with respect rather than love. Tears well in her eyes: “tears more out of respect than from love of her father” (143).

A strict watch is kept on young unmarried girls (Ira, Mira, Lakshmibai and Ramabai) when the negotiation for the marriage is taking place, Nalini is withdrawn from Ravi still further. There are no more cinemas or outings and Jayamma keeps watch like an eagle to see that there are no lone occasions when desire might get beyond control. Ravi gets irritated but understands the situation.

Children can certainly brighten the parent’s life. When
Raju, their son is born. Nalini plays with him. She is affectionate and takes care not to hurt the child. Once, in their few minutes together in the beach, Ravi complains of the beggar nuisance; Nalini reminds him not to swear in front of the child, as that might leave an imprint in the child’s mind. Ravi too is affectionate, but at a times, his tension and anger make him forbidding. Raju therefore prefers his mother “whose love was constant and serene where his was volatile, subject to disconcerting spurts and quirks” (209). To quote Swami Vivekananda in *Women of India*:

> It is the father in India who thrashes the child and spanks when there is something done by the child and always the mother puts herself between the father and the child. (30)

Once, while enjoying themselves in the beach, Ravi gets wild and beats his son mercilessly, when the child gets hold of the *pattani* seller’s loin cloth and scatters the *pattani* worth ten rupees. This amount is certainly too much for a man like Ravi, but when the crowd accuses him of beating his child mercilessly, he feels guilty; to make up for this act, he takes them home in a rickshaw, though bankrupt.

A child is a welcome sight, but to the poor it is not always so. When Thangam is pregnant, Jayamma is not very pleased at the prospect of having to feed another mouth, she blames Puttanna: “If he cannot support children, why does he have them?” Apu who is understanding says that “Puttanna had
fathered the child because he was vigorous and because he could not control it" (95). He tells Jayamma, that when the baby arrives, she will feel differently.

A family with plenty of children brings happiness, but when there is nothing to provide, it is a misery. When Ravi is asked to go out, when his wife is in labour, a stranger frankly tells him, that with nine children to take care of, he has really become sick of them all and children seem no more a pleasure. This can be cited as a working class family, who has children without any planning.

In Markandays’ s early novels, poverty blinds the parents, which costs them their children’s lives. It is penury that dissuades Ravi from calling the doctor, thus costing his dear son’s life. It may be recalled that the same scene is enacted in Nectar in a Sieve, where Rukmani longs for the son’s death. Once again poverty forces the father to sell his son for a few thousands in Possession. In A Handful of Rice despite Ravi’s breaking into Apu’s house, when he plans to take leave, the motherly instinct has the better of her and Jayamma tells Ravi, that “everything’s nearly ready. You musn’t start the morning on an empty stomach” (10). This act signifies that a mother’s love is constant, whether the person is a robber or good-for-nothing.

Srinivas and Vasantha, (The Nowhere Man) who are forced to leave India to England, bring up their sons in the Indian tradition. But Laxman, never wishes to be even reminded of being an Indian, for he is well aware of the Indian’s degraded
position. He is embarrassed by his mother's Indianness in dress and speech and he feels she sticks out "like a sore thumb." (33)

Vasantha is deeply hurt when she is denied the maternal right of choosing a bride for her son, for he has already been engaged to Pat, a foreigner. The most pathetic part is when Laxman writes to his parents that they have a baby and they [his parents] are not to come up yet as Pat's parents are staying in their only spare room. Vasantha who is bewildered on hearing this says, that she "would have slept anywhere in a corridor, or the kitchen, just to see the baby" (35). This suggests an Indian mother's love and affection for her children and grand children. This act of Laxman implies that he is taking pains to see that all the bonds that existed between him and his parents are to be cut off at any cost. He did not want his children to resemble his own parents, but their maternal grand parents. Though Pat says that his "parents are sweet," Laxman says that he finds them "impossible to talk to" (34). In short, he hates his parents and hates them most because of their Indianness. He does not want himself to be identified with his parents and therefore refuses to stay with them.

After his mother's death, Laxman once visits his father and tells him that the house resembles a pig sty and tells him to keep a charwoman. He does not care to understand that his father's health, as well as his business is deteriorating. In the western countries, a man with no money is looked down upon
by others, even by his children. In Arthur Miller's *Death of a Salesman*, Willy Loman's business is failing and the sons blame him. All that matters is how much prosperous you are, not how much you have been. Laxman tells his father: "you must pull yourself together" (*The Nowhere Man*, 46).

Srinivas never argues with his son on any matter for he reminds himself that his son has moved too far away from him. When Mrs. Pickering comes to stay with his father, with misinterpreted thoughts, Laxman questions his father: "You are a dark horse. Now where did you meet her, eh? come on now, tell all" (62). Srinivas muses over the fact that he has never spoken to his father in this manner, but suppresses his astonishment for he accepts the fact that this is the speech used by sons to their fathers in this country. Yet the father never curses his son. When towards the end, Laxman comes to see his leprosy stricken father, Srinivas says that he has been deeply touched as his son has come over to see him through his troubles, Laxmana's reply to this hurts Srinivas: "Do you think I had much option? . . . The papers have already got on to the fact that I am your son" (261). It seems that he is ashamed of being recognized as his son. Srinivas, despite of his son's harsh treatment never blames him. Laxman's relationship with his father is the love-hate relationship, love for his father, for he is his own flesh and blood; hatred for he does not belong to England. Laxman tries to have an independent existence, and he has been striving all his life for it. The difference between an Indian parents' attitude and an English
parents' attitude to children is depicted through Srinivas-Laxman and Fred Fletcher and his mother. Fred blames the Indians for his unemployment. His mother, who too is fed up of his ways, replies: "You're fed up. You don't want to stay, you don't have to, you know. Nobody's forcing you, neither your dad, nor me" (163). She feels sorry for the misbehaviour of Fred to Srinivas. She herself confesses, "I'm sick and tired of Fred" (247). Yet she prays for him, that he might be granted Christian love and understanding. She tries hard to put him on the right track, but finally he is a victim of his own trap.

Appa, (*Two Virgins*) a freedom fighter allows full freedom to his children irrespective of their sex. He sends his boys to the city and his favourite daughter Lalitha to The Three Kings School and most often "brought home presents for her but forgot about Saroja" (26). He does not stand against her desire of becoming a film artist and when she disappears into the city in her craze for films, the father is able only to shower praises on her and fails to find the goodness and talents in his younger daughter. Both Appa and Lalitha have similar views: they are against the joint family system, they approve the machine age. But to the aunt, film is not for a girl from a respectable family. The aunt objects to the father's decisions to buy bicycles for the girls. She is also against the free mixing of the two sexes. For her, it is not a sign of civilization but is contrary to the code of Hindu society.

When Lalitha returns home pregnant, Amma blames Appa for
having lavished all praises on one daughter. Aunt blames Appa, for having given much freedom to his girls: "You have given the children rights Brother, she said, and they have come home to roost (177). Later, Appa accepts the blame himself:

He felt in his pocket and drew out a crumpled sheath, this time he made no attempt to conceal it from his daughters. I educated the milkman, he said, but I couldn’t do as much for my own child . . . she was innocent, and we let her go out as she was. (178)

This signifies that he is not against pre-marital sex, except that it should be safe.

Contraception and legalising of abortion help to dispel the myth of the maternal instinct. According to Simone de Beauvoir, contraception and legal abortion would permit woman to have children by freedom of choice. In her book The Second Sex, She writes:

Enforced maternity brings into the world wretched infants, whom their parents will be unable to support . . . Our society, so concerned to defend the rights of the embryo, shows no interest in the children once they are born. (502-503)

Though Lalitha has no liking for children, unlike Saroja, yet, when her own illegal child is to be aborted, the mother in her kindles. She says to Saroja that “an unwanted child is better off unborn. But I did want him, I wanted him most when he was going, those last ten minutes of his life (232). All that Saroja wants in life is to get married and have children. Tara
in *Clear Light of Day*, also has the same longings. Whereas Bim loves to be a heroine, Lalitha longs to be an actress. Both end up as failure. Tara has succeeded and Saroja too will. This novel is cited as a sort of warning to those parents who might take their growing children for granted and fail to suspect in them propensities that may endanger their lives. From the normal rural class life, Markandaya shifts her attention to the kingly class. However in matters concerning mother-child relationship there seems to be no difference between the rich and the poor. It is a mother’s instinct to nurse her children. The Queen Manjula (*The Golden Honeycomb*) does not have the right even to nurse her child: "she considers the choice a mother’s prerogative" (14). The Maharani weeps from frustration for she is denied the rights even to feed her child as she has to keep her breasts in good form and condition for her husband. The Maharaj begs his wife to cope up with it. The infant sucks and thrives on the milk from the wet nurses.

When Bawajiraj and Manjula select a girl for their son, the Maharani detects qualities of stability and fruitfulness in the future bride that she calculates will stand her son and his kingdom in good stead. She is aware that the bride lacked spirit "but rationalises: spirited responses are not conducive to happiness under the British Raj, and happiness is what she must seek for her son" (22).

When Bawajiraj III’s concubine Mohini becomes pregnant, (he did have affairs with many women, but none had become pregnant)
he notices that her sexual inclinations are secondary and subservient to her maternal role. Every woman with the birth of children begins to show deeper attachment to her children than to her husband. Mohini wants to bring up her son in the commonest way, as a commoner. Once, when he sees the peaches and reaches for the peeled, uneaten slice on his father’s plate, Mohini guides his hand to the whole fruit: "Eat it properly, not like your father—the skin and the bloom are the best" (54). Rabi, being brought up in the commonest manner, gets acquainted with Das, the gardner’s son and Janaki, the servant girl.

When Mohini and Rabi decide to go travelling, as a part of Rabi’s education, Bawajiraj is disgusted. Sir Arthur notices his dejected mood and invites him to his house. He understands Bawajiraj’s mental agony, for he too experiences dejection in the absence of his wife and children. To Bawajiraj, children are pleasing and the councils of state tiresome. When Bawajiraj sees Arthur’s children, he is enchanted. Markandaya describes his attitude to children:

‘How lovely they are! such lovely children!’

The Maharajah is enchanted. His emotion wells up and over flows into the room. It is totally unfeigned. He is the archetypal family man; children to him are the blossoms of if not the reasons for existence; he adores everyone of the many he has fathered. (99)

Parents, especially mothers always keep an eye over their girls. When the Dewan’s daughter Vimala begins to get close to
Rabi, Vatsala, the mother speaks to her husband of it. Though Rabi has stately looks, the parents disapprove of the match and dissuade her in that matter. Despite Vimala’s arguments that she and Rabi have the same likes and dislikes, the father disapproves of the match:

Fundamentally there are divisions. At deeper levels. So deep our minds would have to be re-cast to—to find the richness and harmony that, say, your mother and I enjoy.

‘Rabi and I often enjoy harmony.’

It really alarmed the Dewan . . .

‘Believe me, your parents know best. The harmonies you speak of are as nothing to the concord you will one day enjoy with the partner we have choosen for you, your mother and I.’ (298)

Vimala ponders and finally accepts her future. He is a gentle father. He tries to reason out things and makes her understand matters and succeeds in dissuading his daughter from marrying Rabi.

The Dewan’s youngest child, Usha has a special place with her father. He finds time to tell her a number of stories, of battles. But when she goes older and begins to read for herself, the father misses his little one. Later, she gets close to Rabi and we are astonished to see that the Dewan approves of this match for he considers it natural as their attitudes appear similar, and hence "it’s bound to bring them
together" (385). The father knew what was best for his children.

The relationship between Rabi and his parents is also intimate. Bawajiraj shows Rabi the place where he was conceived. In all matters, Mohini guides Bawajiraj as well as her son. Mohini is aware of Rabi's goings and comings. Once Rabi goes to settle the strike of the mill workers, he returns only the next day. The mother tells the father: 'He's been with a woman.' 'Did he say so?' 'There was no need' (291). The mother later, understands his fondness for Sophie, but does not encourage him in it: she is aware that their relationship will not turn out successful.

In the matters of conjugal love and parental affection, there seems to be no difference between the races—English and Indians. Inspite of the English parents' broad outlook of life, they are worried of their grown up daughters. When Sophie gets close to Rabi, her mother Mary tells Lord Copeland to check in their daughter. But Arthur is confident and says that his daughter can be trusted to look after herself.

In the Indian families grand mothers held a very prominent position in the bringing up of the children and feeding them with stories from history. Girls were taught to be submissive and trained according to the traditional ways. Rabi fondly remembers of his grandmother to Sophie: "when I was a child she used to tell me the most tremendously inspiring stories" (431). Sophie too enjoyed the company of her grandparents. She was also nourished with inspiring stories. She tells Rabi: "I loved her. More than my parents really, darlings though they are. But
I saw them so seldom" (431). The grandmother-grand children relationship stands in contrast to Anita Desai's latest novel *Journey to Ithaca*, where the children Giacomo and Isabel are tired of their life with their grandparents.

It is the mother who shapes the destiny of a child. In *The Art of Loving* Erich Fromm uses the Biblical symbols of "milk and honey" to express the pervasive nature of motherly love:

Milk is the symbol of the first aspect of love, that of care and affirmation. Honey symbolises the sweetness of life, the love for it and the happiness in being alive. Most mothers are capable of giving 'milk,' but only a minority of giving 'honey' too. (48)

Only a 'good' 'happy' mother is capable of giving 'honey' to her children. The relationship of the parents to the children is too subtle to be explained through any surface analysis. The hold and domination they sometimes exercise may be destructive. Anita Desai's characters have strange childhood and hence their inability to establish any harmonious relationship. Desai herself in one of her interviews with Jasbir Jain says: "I agree that the experiences of childhood are the most vivid and lasting ones." (60-61) Mothers are frequently the "mother villains," (113) that Judith Kegan Gardiner in *Psychoanalysis and Feminism* has described. Sarah's mother (*Bye-Bye Blackbird*) is rendered ridiculous by her prejudiced bourgeois attitude. The mother of Bim and Tara (*Clear Light of Day*) has no time for their children. Nanda Kaul (*Fire on the Mountain*) wants to
reject the very idea of motherhood. She sees her past "as choked and blackened with the heads of children and grandchildren" (17). Sita’s mother (Where shall We Go This Summer) runs away to Benaras and to Sita herself, children are of no concern.

Unconditional love is essential for the healthy growth of a child. Many factors obstruct the flow of warmth and affection. Dominating, over-protective, over-indulgent, partial, indifferent, hypocritical elders endanger a child’s free growth and damage his sense of self esteem and self reliance, and therefore he fails to relate himself to others. Erich Fromm in The Fear of Freedom is of the opinion that if "every step in the direction of separation and individuation were matched by corresponding growth of the self, the development of the child would be harmonious. (25) In Cry, The Peacock, Maya’s father, Rai Saheb wants his children to be submissive and obedient. Rebellion is not acceptable to him. Maya is submissive and so he rejoices in her saying that in a daughter, he has a treasure. He would like her to be "daddy’s girl" inducing his feeling of protection, rather than showing any signs of maturity and independence. Birds push their little ones out of the nest, so that they may learn to fly. Animals reject their young, when they may be of an age to fend for themselves. This seems brutal. But human parents who deny their children independence in their misguided love are even more cruel. They do not guide their children to cope with the various trials in life. Maya’s father denies her the freedom to grow into an
independent individual. She never knew the reality of life. She lived like "a toy princess in a toy world" (89). This over protection develops a hysteria in her, a wish not to come out of her maiden world like the elder Catherine in *The Wuthering Heights*. The father in *Cry, The Peacock* stubbornly shut out the realities of life from Maya, he never allowed her to grow mentally and emotionally. The most vital thing for a healthy childhood is independence, but the father wants his children to be dependent on him. Therefore when Maya's only brother rebelled, the father gave up all hopes of him and his name was never mentioned, she was never allowed to interact with him.

The recollections of Maya's childhood are depicted by the imagery of bird, plant and flowers which underline her sensuous nature. She compares Arjuna to a "wild bird, a young hawk that could not be tamed, that fought for its liberty" (134). Maya vividly remembers a game of kites she played with her brother which showed the difference in their preferences: "Mine were awkward kites that never lost their earth-bound inclination. Arjuna's were birds--hawks, eagles, swallows--in the wind" (135). In all the similes and metaphors used with reference to Arjuna, he emerges a symbol of freedom. Gautama is surprised when Maya tells Gautama: "My brother was always the rebel--unlike me (143). Gautama finds it incredible and amusing:

> What amuses me is how this young man, barely older than you, revolted so violently against an order that you so naturally gathered to your bosom as the only
way of life possible for the Brahmin daughter of a Brahmin . . . (143-144)

Maya herself was aware of her father spoiling her: "people say he spoils me. This means that he fondles my cheeks, holds my hand . . . . They also say that I can get anything I want from him" (39). Gautama accuses her of electra complex. It is the reason why she relents to marrying a man so much older than herself. Gautama also finds fault with Maya’s father for the upbringing: "A spoilt baby, so spoilt she can’t bear one adverse word. Everyone must bring a present for little Maya—that is what her father taught her." (115) All that Maya longed for was to please her father, thus winning his love and affection. Her primary need is to remain the adored and admired child. Karen Horney in *Neurosis and Human Growth* states: "A blind adoration may inflate his feeling of significance. He may feel wanted and appreciated not for what he is but merely for satisfying his parent’s needs for adoration, and prestige or power" (87).

The most vital link—the mother is absent in the life of Maya. The father therefore tries to compensate for it by being over-indulgent in his care for her, and thus spoils her. He never gives a negative answer to her. Maya herself notices her father’s partial behaviour towards her against her brother (for he is rebel):

I wondered if it would not be wiser for father not to be quite so cold, so terse, so grim. With me, he never was, no matter what I did— even I noticed the
difference, and felt uncomfortable. (133)

A child who has no confidence in authority cannot accept the demands it makes and the effort it requires. A son is unable to accept the demands of a father who does not love and recognize the son as an individual. Children who sense that their father is interested only in his own reputation, his work or leisure or that their presence is a disturbance, will not heed to their father's advice. Walls will be built between the child and authority. Arjuna, Maya's brother rebelled against the father's domineering ways. He leads an independent life and is always ill at ease while at home. Maya remembers:

Amongst us, he had been uncomfortable. For long he had borne it in silence, like a resigned, bird but one that still gazed with passion through the bars . . . When I returned from school and he from college, he would finally rise . . . 'I'm going for a little walk,' he would cry, if I were alone with him, but, if father was present, not even that. (132-133)

He most often does not answer his father's questions and remains confined to his room. When questioned over anything, he would raise his eye-brow, "with a face so distant" and unrelated thoughts that the father finally had to "set him free" (134). Maya felt uncomfortable in her father's behaviour; what he wanted of his children was obedience and submissiveness, and to mingle only with friends of the upper class. Once, in a fit of anger, he questions Arjuna:
'What do you go into those slums for? Why do you need to consort with butcher's sons? I have sent you to the finest college, where you can make worthy friends, and you turn to--city loafers. Haven't I found suitable friends for you? 'Mohammed is my friend--and Hari.'


'He lives here, on your compound, and you don't know him! . . . ' The dhobi's son.' 'You are not permitted to play with the servants or their children, you know that' (137-138).

Arjuna's obstinacy in rebelling, is balanced by the father's stubborn rejection of his son. He longs to break away the ties between him and his father. In his pioneering work on the psychology of colonization titled Prospero and Caliban, O. Manoni presents the theory which attributes the urge to colonize to the psychologic gain to be derived from the colonial situation rather than to the economic gain implicit in the colonial domination. Manoni holds that in the course of colonization, the colonized transfers to the colonizer, feelings of dependence the prototype of which is to be found in the affective bond between father and son (158). The father cared for social status, therefore when Arjuna asks for a bicycle, the father gives him money enough to buy a car. Tired of the father's sophisticated ways, Arjuna escapes in search of freedom. The missing son's absence was not felt or commented upon: "There was no void; he was merely absent, and one did not feel an absence, not Arjuna's whose presence itself was so half
hearted, and barely felt" (132). Not a word of the mother too 
was mentioned. Since there is none other than her father, he 
becomes the model gentleman to Maya. Some girls look upon 
fathers with hope and affection. The father is therefore 
idealised and is looked upon as an object of hope. As a result 
of this cathexis with the father, the role that women introject 
in relation to men is characterised by dependency and a need 
for approval. Some of their temperamental behaviour in marriage 
arises out of this cathexis. Other images of this father lead 
to a negative cathexis. Maya’s father is a dominating figure, 
who does not allow her to face reality, instead assures her, 
"It will all be well, it will all be well soon" (52).

The question that arises as to why Rai Saheb chose Gautama 
for his daughter, "who always comes riding a bicycle, while, 
when his son comes cycling, he gets angry. The answer may well 
be as was spoken by Amla in Voices in the City. “or was it 
because fathers, unconsciously, spite their daughters who were 
available to them?” (198). The father does not take much 
care about her education, while Arjuna is encouraged in his 
studies; and the father longs to see a superior status in his 
son’s living.

In Maya’s family, the father discussed all minute details 
of life with her, Gautama’s parents did not speak of love or 
affection, but discussed political treatise, bribery and 
corruption revealed in government, of discussions in 
parliament, etc. The children paid scant attention to their
parents. Gautama tells Maya that in his family all are egoists and work for "fame, name and money" (17).

Divorce is not an accepted thing in the traditional Indian families. The parents would rather have the death of their daughter than a divorce in the family. The mother blames her daughter for taking a hasty decision in going for a divorce, "for she hated this matter of a divorce in the family, and children going fatherless" (162). But a completely different mother figure is portrayed in Voices in The City, where Lila Chatterjee is really glad of her daughter's divorce and her leading an independent professional life in Paris.

Parents demand too much from their children, they measure their status taking their children's deed into consideration. Mrs. Lall bundles her children into an over heated room to clear the drawing room for the party and tells the little boy, freshly woken up by the noise to go and play at ten in the night. And Maya realizes that the mother thinks of her child nothing more than a social necessity. Nikhil in Voices in the City is transformed into a mindless recitation machine, threatened and brow beaten by his parents.

Excess attachment to a parent can warp social relation. A proper amount of love from the opposite sex is beneficial, since it trains the children to respond pleasantly to people of the opposite sex in adult life, especially in marriage and also outside. When the child's fixation on the parent is too exclusive, he robs himself of his ability to grow to be an independent adult. He can do nothing that is not willed by his
father or mother. He does everything as his mother/father wants him to do, even in the business of marriage. Often he will remain celibate, so that he can live with father/mother.

If the heart has been hurt, the child tends to turn towards knowledge, power, and efficiency, toward personal success, indeed to all those areas which demand less relationship. A man who has not been touched with love by his mother finds it awkward in touching a woman and this awkwardness leads to further rejection. Anita Desai has said in one of her interviews that all human relationships are inadequate and involvement in human relationships leads to disaster. Nirode, who dominates throughout the novel is obsessed with his mother. The cause of mother fixation is never an idyllic relationship, which proceeds from a terrifying feeling of insecurity. Nirode presumes his mother has illicit relation with Major Chadha. We get a good glimpse of Nirode’s involvement with his mother:

Between him and his mother’s brilliant territory was erected a barbed wire fence, all glittering and vicious. To his astonishment, he found at his side, also on the wrong side of this cruel division, his father, lying slovenly . . . asleep, his mouth half-open, the button of his silk coat undone . . . . Then something distracted her, footsteps, a voice, and she turned to greet, with a ravishing smile, her neighbour, that retired Major, . . . . Hideous to see in his mother, hideous to see in the heroine who had led
his crusade. He turned over, away from her, and in his sleep groaned... 'No mother, you can't'. (27-28)

If a child feels safe and secure, he grows into a healthy child and develops the feeling of belongingness and love, otherwise, it results in frustration and neurotic conditions. Nirode is talented, but his obsession with his mother leads to his mental and professional failure:

The book he had meant to write, once... seemed no more urgent now... Nothing existed but this void in which all things appeared equally insignificant, equally worthless. (63)

He longed to remind them of the two rights Baudelaire had added to the rights of man- 'the right to contradict oneself, and the right to leave.' (71)

The 'void' in the 1st passage and 'the rights of man' in the second have a subtle association in terms of Nirode's family politics and the city scape the novel meticulously evokes. Baudelaire's cynicism was the result to his mother's second marriage, whom he had loved and adored as a boy. This was a severe blow to him, which bruised his heart. Nirode's hurt feeling is more visible than Baudelaire's. Nirode's 'void', his so called existential anxiety and cynicism do stem from his mother's betrayal of the family prestige.

Nirode in his childhood lacked the sportsman spirit. In his childhood when he had fallen off his horse once, he declared never to ride again. One can visibly notice Nirode's envy of his brother and his father's attitude:
If Arun had not ridden like a prince, captained the cricket team and won top honours in all examinations. If his father, while dictating his will to an obese solicitor, had not weighed these distinctions before laying aside a sum of money for the education abroad of one of his two sons. If Arun had not been the favourite and Nirode a congenital failure. (7-8)

Even Amla notices father's bias and tells Dharma that father was "imperiously unfair" to Nirode (207). As a result of this, Nirode lacked self-confidence. Marie Rasey in her paper on Psychoanalysis and Education calls this lack of self confidence as "basic confidence," which means confidence in self and in others. Karen Horney in Neurosis and Human Growth is of the view that a child who is brought up in a congenial "atmosphere of confidence and encouragement in his activities and constructive discipline" (86) feels a sense of warmth and security, and along with it develops self respect. Nirode does not like anyone mentioning his mother and stubbornly rejects his inheritance from the family. If a child is loved sufficiently by his parents, he never questions the significance of life and his own existence. Mother plays an important part in developing the personality of the child, she is therefore projected as a kind of divinity or else as a kind of witch. At times maternal protection, over protection, can also be a threat to developing individuality and is expressed in such symbols as witches, dragons. Nirode calls his mother
'kali,' which can mean goodness or 'destruction,' and also addresses her as 'the old she cannibal' (103).

A child’s need for parental love and assurance is so great that if he feels neglected, his thirst for love reaches breaking point and turns to anger. Hate pours out of him like larva in eruption. He hates, and therefore hurts the person he loves. Nirode, therefore keeps from writing letters to his mother and hurts her by living in misery and poverty.

Anita Desai has tried to create a situation in the novel parallel to that of Shakespeare’s drama 'Hamlet'. Like Hamlet, Nirode is obsessed with his mother’s relation with Major Chadha, and he is angry as she uses too many tubes of paint to decorate herself even after his father’s death. Nirode at times longs to go back to his mother, but pride has the better of him. Jit feels sorry for not having invited his parents and specifies that it is the parents’ right to live with their son. But Nirode opposes his statement and out of hate for his mother for having rejected him, he swears that he will never invite her even if he has a home of his own.

Jit very often fondly remembers his childhood wherein, he used to lie on his bed on the verandah and listen to his father and his friends talk of the wealth, of their health, politics, philosophy, poetry, music. But Nirode remembers only his drunken father and indifferent mother. Amla voices her doubt to Dharma of her parent’s incompatibility. “Do you think children are ever really able to unravel the truth about their parents?’ (208). When the children notice open hostility between the
parents, it affects their personality. Children are the mute sufferers of their parents’ drama. Only if the parents enter into partnership with the children, will the child respond actively.

Despite the father-mother incompatibility, the mother was loving to her children. She played Chinese checker with them and told them stories from Mahabharata. She must have looked after them with care and must have been quite devoted to them, because Monisha admits that when she failed again and again at school, she crept home to her mother for comfort. She must have been a source of consolation to her children. But as they grew up, they realized that their mother had a world of her own. She used to write long, loving letters but had no channel of communication with her children’s very real and rough lives in the city.

The parent’s relationship with each other exerts a great influence on the children. Monisha’s parents do not display any strong involvement with each other or with their children. Monisha too has no deep sense of involvement either with Jiban or with other members of the family. The parents’ non-balanced relationship is re-enacted in Monisha and Jiban.

Love has deep influence on the life of a child, its absence or its excess can cause havoc. Distortion of love and trust in infancy develops a schizoid personality. The term schizoid indicates a person who has lost his ability to feel and be in touch with others. The peculiar nature of their parent’s
relationship dries all tender feelings of love and trust and in its place fear and suspicion prevails.

Amla wonders why her father has chosen Jiban for Monisha. Aunt Lila replies that Jiban’s is a respectable family, completely unsuitable to Monisha’s tastes, and inclinations:

He [the father] thought he was being sensible--that Monisha ought not to be encouraged in her morbid inclinations, and that it would be a good thing for her to be settled into such a stolid, unimaginative family as that, just sufficiently educated to accept her with tolerance. (199)

In the traditional family, women accepted the role of wife and mother. Today, the feminist movement has incidentally contributed to the increased number of broken homes, they look upon the family as the central agent of repression, and values freedom above everything else. Divorce is resorted to by women, who are quite devoted to their profession. But often when freed from the binding ties of the home, the women find themselves in the midst of society with nowhere to go. And this has given rise to numerous single parent family. Children of these broken families very often turn into delinquents. Delinquency owing to the emotional disturbance between the parents appears in Desai’s novels.

In Desai’s Where Shall We Go This Summer? Sita, who is a product of the broken family, whose mother deserted her father and headed for Benares, her father who had been a saint to his chelas (disciples), a Charlatan to his critics and a wizard to...
the villagers, led a strange life. While Maya's father is over protective, Sita's does not in the least care for her. He had no time for his children. There is always an "impossibility of talk between her and her father" (79). It was from Jivan, Sita comes to know that their mother had run away to Benaras. This breaks her image of mother. She thinks that a mother dead and lost is far more easy to accept than a callous and deserter mother. Sudhir Kakar in The Inner World opines that the image of a good Indian mother is a "nurturing and fear dispelling presence" (83). Sita being motherless derives satisfaction by imagining that "she came into the world motherless" (84). It is also from Jivan, Sita comes to know that Rekha is their half sister. From then, she senses incestuous relationship between father and Rekha. She never finds him alone but with Rekha or with the chelas. Sita remembers an incident with her father in her childhood. Once he sends her to fetch a lantern from Moses's hut and meets her half way as she returns with it. He affectionately reaches out his hand to touch her chin but she rushes up to the house as if frightened. This is the result of the fear unconscious in her, for she has witnessed "that heavy lidded look between father and daughter, or his arm in its fine white sleeve lie fondlingly across her round shoulders" (79).

Sita uses epithets to describe her father first "as a white water bird," (67) then "a sacrificial bull" (88) and then as a "lion in his lair" (90). Through these epithets, we come to know the change in Sita's responses towards her father. Her
admiration changes into distaste and fear. Thus being disillusioned with the father and mother image, Sita feels that she is struggling through adolescence "as a cripple without crutches," (93) without a companion in her life. Sita too recalls fondly "the silver wisps of hair across the majestic mahagony dome of his head" (59) and was told by all "to respect, admire and adore him" (79).

Rekha's relationship with her father is merely superficial, for immediately after his death, she goes away, as if she has already made plans for her future and has been waiting for his death. Since the most vital link, the mother is absent in their life, there seems to be no emotional force to bring the children together. Jivan goes away to be a trade union leader, and nothing is heard from him. Sita has nowhere to go and so Deedar’s son marries her. Sita was deprived of any positive reciprocal relationship with another person in her childhood. Her only companion was Jivan. She was deprived of motherly and filial affection, which certainly had a negative effect in her marital relationship, as well as her relationship with her children. Sita inherits her father’s cosmic liberality. To Moses, Sita appeared to be "the unworthy offspring of the illustrious and well remembered father" (28).

Only the woman who is well balanced, healthy and aware of her responsibilities is capable of being a good mother. The mother’s relation with her children takes form within the totality of her life, her relation with her husband as well as her past. Desai summarises the opposing temperaments of Sita.
and her children in one single image: "Unlike their mother, who continually broke apart into violent eruptions of emotion, the children seemed rigid, encased in their separate silences like larvae in stiff-spun cocoons" (19). Sita's emotional nature proves to be an embarrassment to the family and has an adverse effect on her children. They detest and distrust any show of emotion even if it is genuine:

Menaka loathed her mother's proclivity for drama, for theatre, for emotion, with more bitterness than any other suffering relation of hers. Being her daughter, she felt most disgusted and hurt by it. (109)

Sita's strained relationship with her children is seen by Sita's love of art and Menaka's love of science, and she wants to study medicine. She likes a life of "logic, order, sense" (117). She is tired of "her mother's disorder and nonsense she would manage it wholly". (117)

To Sita, children meant only "anxiety, concern--pessimism. Not happiness. What other women call happiness is just--just sentimentality" (147). The child brings joy only to the woman who is capable of disinterestedly desiring the happiness of another. A child must be desired for its own sake and not for hypothetical benefits. Children should not be considered as a substitute for one's disappointed love or to fill out an empty existence. They should be brought up so as to become happy human beings. The children love their practical headed father. Sita thinks it strange how a "man so passive, so grey, how
could the very mention of him arouse such a tumult of life and welcome” (128). Though Sita has escaped to the island leaving her husband and children, but on her return, she longs to hear news of her children, that they wanted her, missed her” (132). But when she learns that he had come in answer to Menaka’s letter regarding her college admission, she is disappointed, yet she takes the positive step and returns with her husband. Menaka detests her mother’s non-sensical ideas, and therefore grows independent of her mother—She seemed to be “the most cool and self possessed of her children, most closely resembling her father in her ability to cope with life and accept it with more than a careless shrug of the shoulders” (108).

There has always been and will always be a generation gap, between parents and children, as is seen in Sita and Menaka. Youth and age see things in a different way, they live in a different world, talk in a different language, shouting at one another across bridges of misunderstanding. Parents, especially mothers, are apt to be possessive, and to resent the change. The younger teenager gives way, there is no alternative but the sense of grievance, the feeling of disappointment remains, leading to frustration. This habit of depression takes over the moment she senses any withdrawal of affection. Her exaggerated longing for love has made her abnormally sensitive to any word or action, that could be twisted by her unhealthy imagination to indicate neglect or rejection. Her husband, busy with his work, children with their studies, do not mean that they love.
her less; they are simply engaged in their activities, and hardly care for her emotions or feelings. This mental state of depression vanishes, when one realizes that one has a place. Shoma Chatterjee in *The Indian Woman’s Search for Identity* calls motherhood a bondage and a "mirage which never materializes in terms of emotional returns" (115).

Nanda (Fire on the Mountain) is portrayed as an educated, intelligent, sober, unsentimental and unemotional woman. Her relationship with her children is nothing beyond the duties and obligations. Children can brighten the saddest moments of one’s life. But to Nanda, like Sita, motherhood is never a joyful experience. Desai has beautifully depicted Nanda’s relation with her children:

Looking down, over all those years she had survived and borne, she saw them, not bare and shining as the plains below, but like the gorge, cluttered, choked and blackened with the heads of children and grandchildren, servants and guests, all restlessly surging, clamouring about her. (17)

The sight of a bright hoopoe feeding its nestling does not rouse tenderness in her: "Their screams were shrill and could madden" (4). So was her reaction to her children. Nanda is not a conventional grandmother who would have rejoiced to meet her great grand daughter, for she does not want "to be drawn into a child’s world again--real or imaginary, it was bound to betray" (45). Matteo’s mother’s (*Journey to Ithaca*) relation with her
grand children is hateful. She prefers gardening to the company of her grand children. According to Shanta Krishnaswamy: "the debunking of the myth of motherhood runs as a continuous thread in Anita Desai's novels" (258). Nanda is portrayed as a sickly, offensive mother, whose duty towards her children is not out of love, but mere responsibility. As a result, Nanda becomes a machine, who has lost her human capacity to relate to others. She feels no love for anyone. She begins to dread the idea of looking after a child again, as it means she has to enter the webs of family, once again:

Now to bow again, to let that noose slip once more round her neck that she had thought was freed fully, finally. Now to have those wails and bawls shatter and rip her still house to pieces, . . .

It seemed hard, it seemed unfair, . . . (19)

The violence of the sound imagery 'wails, bawls, shatter and rip' reflects Nanda's intense dislike of her family.

The mother's love is essential for the child, for, without it, the child may not even survive. A child calls for plenty of patience, tenderness and care in its rearing and there is nothing to substitute a mother's love. Home life without love is a terror and children who have not had enough love in childhood stand a good chance of being socially maladjusted. Love is mostly a learned behaviour, so, one who has not received love in one's childhood is incapable of giving it when one grows up. Raka, victim of a broken home, has witnessed enough of the ambiguity of life in her short span of eight
years. There seems to be no love lost between Raka's parents. Raka's father, an officer in the Indian Foreign Service, having failed to socialize the mother ceases to take interest in her even as a patient. This has an adverse effect on Raka.

The most harmful types of parent-child relationships are those where the children are rejected very early in life. In such circumstances, the children feel unwanted, unloved and despised and often crave for affection from other persons. Like Karen Horney, Anita Desai also believes that childhood experiences, to a great extent determine conditions for neurosis. In one of her interviews with Jasbir Jain, she says:

I agree that the experiences of childhood are the most vivid and lasting ones. But I'm quite sure that even adult life contains many traumatic experiences, for instance fighting in a war may be a traumatic experience for a soldier. (10)

Raka's parents have no time to cater to their child's needs. The mother is an unhappy predicament that she cannot do anything for Raka. Her father too has no time for his daughter. Consequently Raka does not enjoy the company of others. William Walsh in The Uses of Imagination remarks that for the healthy growth of an individual, love is very important:

The child's consciousness, which is partial and successive, does not include a sense of the past or the future. It has to be discovered and the provocation to learn it, is love. Affection is the
seed of time. It is love, intensifying the delight in the present and correspondingly bringing discomfort in absence which introduces an element of permanence into the child's experience. (166)

Devoid of love and affection, Raka has an aversion to belongingness, or as Karen Horney in *Neurosis and Human Growth* states "a feeling of being isolated and helpless in a world conceived as potentially hostile" (18). To a child, his parents are the models and he sees others as the extension of these two figures. But a child brought up in a pernicious home environment finds it difficult to establish any positive relationship in life, or to use Caroll Davis's psychological term, Raka gets "no room to grow," (3) which therein hamper her "full humanness" (vi) as Abraham Maslow in *Towards a Psychology of Being* terms it. Raka has had no joy of parental love and therefore it is her morbid psyche that sees madness and violence in the gay party in the club:

Somewhere behind them, behind it all, was her father, home from a party, stumbling and crashing through the curtains of night, his mouth opening to let out a flood of rotten stench, beating at her mother with hammers and fists of abuse--harsh, filthy abuse that made Raka cower under her bedclothes and wet the mattress in fright, feeling the stream of urine warm and weakening between her legs like a stream of blood, and her mother lay down on the floor and shut her eyes and wept. (71-72)
Raka’s silent withdrawal is the result of her mother’s nervous breakdown and her father’s inhuman behaviour. Raka revolts against the "animal-like" behaviour of the men at the party. She therefore cannot imagine loving or encouraging fathers, and therefore declines from listening to Nanda’s happy childhood with her father. Despite a happy childhood, Nanda fails to establish any intimate relation with her children. Tired of her life with her children, Nanda takes a strong resolution never to let anyone intrude upon her life at Carignano. The relationship Nanda had with her children was the result of her unhappy and cumbersome relationship she had with her husband. She did all she could do for her husband and children, but on looking back, she understands that she was never loved or was needed. Stanley Harrington gives Walter his views on the family in John Arden’s *Three Plays*:

> You start a family, work and plan. Suddenly you turn round and there’s nothing else. Probably never was. What’s the family any way? Just kids with your blood in them. There’s no reason why they should like you. You go on expecting it, of course, Bloody nothing. (83)

This is the modern state of life, children’s attitude towards their parents. Children have turned independent, and the parents feel they have lived a life worth nothing. In an age where even sex has lost its glamour due to extreme commercialization, marriage has no place. Children are no longer the connecting links and they are looked upon as un
invited guests, who stay on till they can stand on their own.

There are parents who care for only themselves and hardly find any time for their children. In Clear Light of Day, there is no hostility between the parents but the self-centredness of the parents ruins the children's life. Mrs. Das, who is diabetic, makes her husband devote most of his time in entertaining her at a game of cards and in the club. The mother is duty bound to entertain her husband. They have hardly any time for the children, they live for one another and die almost together. This stands in comparison to the dying father's advice in Goldberg's The Birthday Party: "Never, never forget your family for they are the rock, the constitution and the core" (78). The mother's absences are compensated by the presence of Mira masi. Aunt Mira is the main shelter of the Das household. The father and the mother are mere show pieces. Aunt Mira, who had been twelve years old when she was married, and was a virgin when she was widowed, was rendered useless in her husband's home in her later years and so sought shelter in the Das household. Aunt Mira can be termed "a good mother". "She was the tree, she was the soil, she was the earth" (111). It is she who brings happiness and life to the Das household. The children can think of their mother only as spending "long hours at a dressing table before a mirror, amongst jars and bottles that smell sweet... commanded servants and chastised children and was obeyed like a queen" (110-111). Mira masi, who has the motherly instincts feels elated to see the children growing up: "as the leaves and flowers and fruits of the
earth." The children dread their past and neither wants to be reminded of it. Raja seeks asylum in the Hyder Ali household and later becomes a part of it; Tara in marriage. As Raja grows up, he reflects on his home and finds the atmosphere suffocating:

He felt there could be no house as dismal as his own, as dusty and grimy and uncharming. Surely no other family could have as much illness contained in it as his, or so much oddity, so many things that could not be mentioned and had to be camouflaged or ignored. (49)

There are people who maintain a strong sense of independence as a defence against showing any sign of weakness. A deep sense of insecurity is sometimes concealed by an outward show of strength of character. Such people have an unconscious need to be on "top" as giving help rather than receiving it. They are efficient and readily accept leadership. They win the admiration of their fellows. Being unsure of themselves deep down, they over compensate for this by appearing strong and self reliant. A difficulty may arise however if some new experience, some traumatic event causes a breakdown of their defences, such a breakdown is particularly hard for them to bear. It is Raja's letter to Bim, saying that, he will not raise the house rent, which hurt and insulted her. She felt she was living at the expenses of Raja, but living in a miserable condition, she is unable to rebel, which turns her angry.

Bim's anger against Raja is in part an anger against the
father, who never cared for his daughter:

Father never bothered to teach me. For all father cared, I could have grown up illiterate and—-and cooked for my living, or swept. So I had to teach myself history, and teach myself to teach. But father never realized—-and Raja doesn’t realize—-that—-that doesn’t prepare you for running an insurance business. (155)

The father’s attitude towards his daughter stands in comparison to Mikki’s father in Shobha De’s Sister’s who doesn’t get her acquainted with his business but only wants to find her a suitable husband. Despite the drastic changes within the family and in the society, women are given only secondary position, the fathers exercised male chauvinistic attitude towards their wife as well as daughters, to follow the traditional customs.

Mothers like the one of Dr. Biswas fixed themselves on their sons like leeches, trying to live their lives for them and consequently destroying both. The body of a man is made to be united with the body of a woman. The psychology of one is complementary to the psychology of the other. The mother tends in her son the fulfilment of her own emotional needs because she feels abandoned by her husband and experiences an inner void. Unconsciously, she wants to prevent her son from becoming attached to another woman. He will be blocked in his relations with women and probably never be able to live a unique relationship in marriage.

While in Clear Light of Day, the parent’s dissonance
separate the children, in *The Village by the Sea*, the parents dissonance bring the children together and finally the parents too lead a harmonious life. Hari's house represents other houses in the village with the added disadvantage of a boat, a cow, a job, sisters to be married off, sick mother and useless drunkard father. The drunkenness of the father leads the children to wishfully think of his death by snake bite in the darkness of the night when he comes stinking of toddy. It lies on Lila, the eldest daughter to give up schooling and nurse her mother and to do the other household chores.

Finding her father useless, Lila takes the bold step of asking the de silvas to take her mother to the hospital, in turn working for them to compensate for the expenses. She is able to bring about a change in her father, who gives up drinking and spends his time nursing their mother.

Even when Hari returns from Bombay after a long gap, he refuses to enquire of their father, for it seems to him that the father might be lying drunken in some corner. He is happy to hear of the change in his father and goes to bring his mother from the hospital for the Diwali. There is the family get together. The mother says, "I feel wealthy when I see all of you beside me." Their father is repentant of his worthy deeds. He feels sorry and responsible for the existing family conditions. The children are glad that the father has at last decided to mend his ways and there is the family reunion.

Despite Hirabai's nipping toddy from time to time, she
makes it plain in her behaviour towards her sons that she will not tolerate drunkenness. Once, when her son in a drunken stupor frightens Lila and her sisters, Hirabai’s social and moral sensibilities surface, and she chides her son. Though the sons are grown up, and fatherless, the mother has firm control over them and she is against the ill treatment of men towards women. Desai stresses on the point that if there is love and understanding between siblings, the family can remain everlasting. But in her earlier novels, the absence of love depotentiates and destablishe...
a sense of defeat and failure.

Manu’s love of bestiary songs, nature and the evening walk with Deven reminds Deven of his own father. Deven suffers what Abraham Maslow terms “Jonah Complex,” which means a tendency to run away from one’s best talents in life. Nirode too is a victim of this complex. One can overcome this complex with the help of self awareness and self analysis. All this results from his childhood experiences. Nirode’s mother fixation can be compared to Hugo’s unhealthy love for his mother in Baumgartner’s Bombay. Hugo, the only child of his rich parents is deeply attached to them. However, they do not have the same feeling towards him. The relationship between his parents and him is very suggestively painted through the residence upstairs and the showroom downstairs: “At home, Hugo skittered back and forth between the apartment his father’s showroom, the staircase in between a place of perilous choice, the no man’s land where he might be summoned and drawn by either” (26). It is only later that Hugo is aware that his parents do not have a good relationship and he senses “a rift, a break between his parents that might have existed for all these years but of which he was only now really aware” (46).

Hugo suffers from mother-fixation. After his father’s death, he shoulders the responsibility of looking after his mother. His mother fixation is aptly narrated in the following lines: Their lives fell into a groove and remained there: they might have been and old married couple, Hugo and his mother.
When he leaves for India his only ambition is to make a home for his mother and himself and tells his mother:

'And when I am in India, I will make a home for us. How will you like that? I will have servants for you and drive away the snakes and bring you gold oranges' (56)

Throughout his life he is unable to recover from his fixation and so never feels attached to any other lady and does not marry anyone. Later, with the death of his mother he finds life and living worthless and meaningless. He develops a brotherly love for Lotte because of her natural acceptance of him. Though Lotte does not have a sisterly love for him, he himself is unable to respond to her in any other way due to his deep rooted mother fixation. Like Desai’s other novels, in her recent novel *Journey to Ithaca* the protagonist Matteo’s childhood is unsatisfactory. He seemed to have no connections with his mother or sister. He preferred silence: "He had nothing to say either to her (Caroline, his sister) or to Mama. His entire presence seemed made up of silence" (16).

Unlike other children of his age he had no interest in stories, but was in a world created of his own. From his childhood itself, he found the home atmosphere stifling and was "like a tom-cat who wants to escape from the house and go on the tiles" (28). At school he could not mingle with the other boys and he was a failure throughout. Matteo finds happiness in the company of Fabian, his tutor. Matteo was moulded and expected to behave as his mother wished: he was never allowed to choose his path.
A house without a child is no home and it is the women who are prosecuted for this childlessness. Childless women were treated cruelly and looked down upon in the society. Ira was brought back to her father's house because of her barrenness. Neither Rukmani nor Nathan blames her husband, for they too justify his action, for a man needs sons to help him in his manual labour as well as to continue the family lineage. In the village, a barren woman, even one with a daughter, but without a son is considered an ill-fated one. When Rukmani receives her first born daughter, she feels she has failed her husband, the family and society, "for what woman wants a girl for her first born?" (19). In R.K Narayan's *The Financial Expert* the birth of a daughter is a cause of anxiety to the parents. Moreover the theme of their distinction between boy and girl is aptly depicted, a son is the saviour of the ancestors as he alone has the right to offer oblations and can continue the family lineage. A girl enjoys freedom till she reaches puberty. She is considered a liability to her parents and always restricted. Like other fathers, Apu (*A Handful of Rice*) is disgusted because he has only daughters and no sons and therefore he has no one to pass on his trade to; like Apu, Ravi too wishes he has a child, preferably a son, rather than a daughter, a little boy who would run after him and call him father, who would look up to him and to whom in time he would pass on his skills, so that he would never have to worry about whom to hand over to like poor old Apu. Thangam, who keeps on producing girl
babies is jealous of her sister who gives birth to the first male child in the family.

In *Two Virgins* the birth of a son was longed for and was given much privileges. Amma tells Saroja: "She had been to Varanasi and bathed in the sacred river, in fulfilment of a vow. Its terms were never disclosed, but Saroja guessed it was to do with having boy babies. From her very first novel to her present novel, Markandaya depicts the importance of son in a family, suggesting that the birth of a son is a grand affair and looked forward to by all couples, irrespective of the socio-economic status. In D.H. Lawrence’s *Lady Chatterley’s lover*, Lady Chatterley’s husband, who is impotent allows her to have a child through any other man, and agrees to bring up the child as his own, thereby continue the family lineage. In *The Golden Honeycomb* the illegal son of Bawajiraj is given a dominant position, to his legal daughters. When Rabi and Mohini go along with Bawajiraj to take part in the Delhi Durbar the grand mother misses Rabi:

The one, to her, who carries the torch. Not her son, the lustrous satellite. Not her grand daughters, fair obedient little wax dolls, like their mother, the sallow and suspicious Shanta Devi, unlit from within. (169)

In Desai’s novels too, childlessness is an unending problem, the birth of a son is looked forward to. Maya and Monisha are an object of pity for the women members of the family. Maya’s anguish is that she is childless. The "pigeon’s nests filled
with babies" (35) and the rats that "suckle their young most tenderly" (126) fill her with a longing for motherhood. On learning that Mrs. Lal has four daughters to look after her, Maya rejoices at Mrs. Lal's prospect as her father might have rejoiced in her. Even though the fact that grown up daughters bring visions of dowries, debts, yet mothers love to have girls. Maya is childless and she showers all her love and affection on her pet dog Toto: "It is no less a relationship than that of a woman and her child, no less worthy of reverence, and agonized remembrance" (10). Pom's driving to the Birla Mandir to offer prayers suggests the importance of boys and the woman's longing for sons. Monisha (Voices in the City) visits the zoo and is pained when she looks at the empty pouch of the Kangaroo, suggesting her barrenness, emotional as well as physical. Inspite of leading a detached life, when her husband's female members discuss things concerning her, of her fallopian tubes, Monisha is disturbed. Both Maya and Monisha could have erased their loneliness by adopting a child as Premala (Some Inner Fury) does. When Premala brings up the orphan girl, Kitsamy scolds her for fear that "people will think I've slept with the serving maid and this is my bastard and you're just being nice about it." (133) Despite Kit's refusal to accept the baby in that household, Premala adopts her, which solves her problem of loneliness. Phoolmaya (Where shall We Go This Summer) was almost taunted to suicide for not bearing a child by her mother-in-law.
In Desai's novel, over pampering and emotional deprivations obstruct in the way to maturity and the establishment of good relationship in adult life. In Markandaya's novels, parent-child relationship provides one with the sense of security, respectability and identity. Desai's characters are emotional and sensitive and fail to achieve harmony in their interpersonal relationship because they lack involvement, and acceptance. Markandaya's characters have a deep understanding, loving concern, self-sacrifice and practical wisdom. While in Markandaya's novels, parents guide their children lovingly, in Desai's novels, parents, make the children dependent on them solely, which hinders them to lead an independent life later on. Both Markandaya and Desai promote happiness of children having both parents. In the novels of Kamala Markandaya and Anita Desai, children play a very important part in building up stable family relationships. Family happiness depends to a great extent on the children in their novels.