CHAPTER – IV

MOTHER: BEARING AND REARING

I am not questioning maternal love… I’m questioning maternal instinct.

- Elizabeth Badinter

4.1.0. A comparison between the modern mothers featuring in the selected novels with their traditional mothers enables us to investigate the extent of transformations and the intensity of conformity and non-conformity on the part of modern mothers. Especially so in the case of the modern mothers because they are emancipated, modern and realistic mothers molded by the necessity and practical situations of their modern life yet not totally free from the traditional motherhood ideologies nurtured strongly in their characteristics. It is vital to observe that women who have been tolerant and enduring as daughters and wives whether they adopt the same conforming attitude in their mother’s role also; whether they offer full consensus to concepts like unconditional mother’s love or whether they generate any modern theologies about motherhood. The ownership instinct in men and the overthrow of ‘mother right’ is identified as the vital reason for vesting the reproduction and rearing of the offspring as the sole responsibility on women. This chapter scans how the selected novelists have depicted the conflicts arising out of women’s mother’s role whether it is a suffocating experience or redeeming experience for Lessing’s and Rajam Krishnan’s protagonists. Further, the novelists’ focus on issues related to the stigma of unwed mothers, problems connected with single mothers, abortion and comparison between maternal and paternal role fulfillment is dealt with.

4.1.1. The Victorian era emphasized the redemptive or salvatory potential of the mother and even in the modern twenty-first century it is the duty of woman to care and nurture the baby; the rejuvenation of womanhood is identified with motherhood. Works extolling woman’s special role as the moral regenerator of humankind, Coventry Patmore’s *The Angel in the House* (1854: 62), and John
Ruskin’s of Queens’ Gardens (1865)—articulate the differences between feminine and masculine nature, creating a myth of womanhood/motherhood, which postulates woman’s moral efficacy in the world, at the same time limiting her sphere of action. Coventry Patmore’s The Angel in the House particularly has become the most famous stereotype, one that Virginia Wolf in Professions for women vehemently attacked. Though motherhood in the Victorian age has been idealized and glorified by male novelists, female novelists, even those who were not themselves mothers, had a more realistic, if not an outright pessimistic outlook on the business of motherhood. It is hard to find in the works of George Eliot or Elizabeth Gaskell a single strong mother who influences her daughter’s life for good, a fact that is surely a refutation of the simplistic and sentimental view of motherhood found in many male essayists and novelists. The novels of Jane Austin, Fanny Burney and the Brontes reveal a tradition of the absent mother mainly because the heroine has to act independently for the plot to unfold.

4.1.2. The institution of motherhood gains sanction and is reinforced by religion that is essentially patriarchal. The image of the benevolent mother in both Western and Eastern tradition is an additional burden the woman has to carry. Any deviance from these images is deemed abnormal or immoral by the institution. The familial/social, ideological and political system of patriarchy uses religion, ritual; tradition and customs to determine what part women shall or shall not play, thus subsuming the female under the male.

4.1.3. The existing secondary status of women compels us to identify the cause as to why is that women are relegated to oblivion and obscurity in society, why they were made chattel, deprived of possession and property. It is as though nature had designed them primarily to gratify male desire for male convenience: labour, reproduction and rearing of their offsprings. This is the state of affairs, which has occurred everywhere, throughout the history of mankind. A concentration on the relationship between property and women leads to the knowledge that property and private ownership’s are deep-rooted evils, which
have pushed women to their subordinate position. It traces that the inequality of sexes is not due to natural but historical causes. Origin of private property, male-inheritance, monogamy particularly and the subsequent servility of women are highlighted in this chapter which serves as an eye-opener to understand the concept of division of labour as private and public spheres and the implications and repercussions of accepting such divisions in women’s socio-economic status.

4.1.4. If we examine in the context of feminist movements we can trace the vital reasons for women’s secondary and subjugated status. Along with the origin of property, its counterpart the institution of patriarchy is identified as the foundation upon which the female oppression and suppression is structured. The repercussions of the origin of private property, the society ultimately split into public and private spheres, based upon division of labor, patriarchal institutionalizing of female subjugation through sexual politics these vital and basic issues are elaborated in this chapter. The overthrow of ‘Mother right’ is highlighted as the historic cause for female servitude. All human activities like reproduction; rearing, feeding and sex have been reserved for the female.

4.1.5. The implications of the over throw of ‘mother right’ is identified as the root cause for women’s secondary status. The origin of property led to the growth of ‘patriarchy’. The kinship of man and woman, which eventually enslaved the woman as the property of man, paved the way for the subservient status of woman. Other institutions of patriarchy such as marriage and family were the weapons, which guarded property privileges, and ownership was the sole responsibility of the male sex.

4.1.6. The institution called family was retained to facilitate service to aristocracy, to reproduce labourers for the low wages. Of course, colonization and the resultant technical development created brought some external changes in the external status of women in India. Macaulay Educational System gave women the opportunity of education. Women got involved in the productive activities of the
society. After the independence, many democratic rights, franchise, education, employment opportunity, right for voting were legally assured. In addition, life also became improved physically.

4.1.7. Children and wife were regarded as pieces of property of the male. Among the primitive people, living entirely off the land, children, were a great asset among his fellow men in nomadic families, in which sons cared for the flocks and fought off ‘marauders’ and daughters cared for the men of the family. Women produced fresh stock and thus stood first in a man’s riches and a barren marriage was a supreme disaster.

4.1.8. The Origin of property gives a clear insight into the intricacies of patriarchal establishments: how woman was trapped into the web of economic dependence and how man came to possess all the privileges and why monogamy was imposed on woman alone. All human activities like reproduction, rearing, feeding and sex have been reserved for the female. Such division of labour in the days of barbarism was a pure and simple outgrowth of nature and existed in common between the two sexes. The man went to war, hunted, and provided raw materials for food and the tools necessary for these pursuits. The woman cared for the house and prepared food and clothing. Each was master in his or her own field of activity: men in the forest and women in the house. Each owned the tool he and she made and used.

4.1.9. Eisenstein states, “The increase in production in all branches such as cattle-breeding, agriculture, domestic handicrafts, enabled human labour – power to multiply more than was necessary” (1984:20). Productivity increased; so also the demand for labour. Consequently there began the system of slavery. Gaining livelihood was the business of man and he produced and owned the means. He, in the beginning, owned cattle, commodities and slaves. The gains of the surplus went only to man, shared by the woman in consuming it, but she had no share in owning it. The male whose pursuit became the amassing of wealth forced the
woman to second place and she could not complain. Division of labour in the family also regulated the distribution of property between man and wife. The woman’s housework lost its significance becoming secondary to man’s work, which was to obtain a livelihood. Man was everything and the woman ‘the other’, an insignificant contributor.

4.1.10. The accumulation of wealth resulted in very serious consequences detrimental to the status of woman. Ownership of property kindled the inherent possessive urge of the male, to have sole propriety over wealth and to bequeath the same after him to his blood-born progeny. Establishing legitimacy for inheritance by the male was a total impossibility since ‘mother right’ was prevalent then. The property passed to the blood relations of the mother’s side since the children belonged to the mother and since property remained with her, they inherited from their mother and not from father and had first claim upon property. When the herd owner died, his herds passed to his brothers and sisters and then to his sister’s children and to his mother’s sister. His own children were disinherited. As wealth increased, the status of man in the family also increased. This created a stimulus to overthrow the traditional order of inheritance, in favour of his children.

4.1.11. The result was that the male member who had been so far going out of the ‘gens’ or clan now remained in the clan and the females were excluded from the clan and transferred to that of their father. Male lineage and right of inheritance through the father was instituted. Thus the overthrow of ‘mother right’ has been rightly cited as the world’s historical defeat of the female sex.

4.2.0. Women’s capacities for mothering and abilities to get gratification from it are strongly internalized and psychologically enforced by being built into the feminine psychic structure, destroy the woman within, and unquestioningly conforms her to social roles. The role of a model mother is being confined to her home and domestic duties. Ambitious mothers or achieving mothers were never
heard of. A mother is alien to original aims and desires. Why female success alone is measured in terms of success in completing, fulfilling filial duties and only in satisfying patriarchy? The wife in Patriarchy became the first domestic servant, pushed out of participation in social production and could not earn her living independently. This was one consequence of the age-long ‘feminine mystique’, the dependency towards her husband, children and family imbibed by her, while the patriarch’s chief interest lay in their progeny. They concentrated on the idea that inheritance, as heir to their property should be only their own blood relation.

4.2.1. Kinship itself is a property in ‘Patriarchy’; wife and children became a man’s possessions along with other movable and immovable properties. Father is the ruler of the ‘family’— the chief institution of ‘Patriarchy’. He is granted ownership of his wife, keeps her under strict surveillance and she cannot earn on her own, in her own right, the mother was restricted to the private / domestic sphere, and access to public realm was denied to her. Oakley explains the myth of motherhood through three popular assertions: “All woman need to be mothers, all children need their mothers” (1976:186). Women are considered innately nurturing, domestic and selfless, ever constantly engaged in child rearing, neglecting all other individual aims and desires. Motherhood extends beyond the nine-months, including the further responsibilities towards the children’s proper upbringing and physical and mental developments thus enforcing on a mother the biological and societal roles. While fatherhood meant providing the sperm to fertilize the ovum, mother’s duty included moral and psychological conditioning of the child. These ideas are only unevidenced assumptions yet these assertions are pronounced as facts. Mother’s role does not stop with bringing a child into the world, but she had to discharge faithfully her maternal role, her chief concern being the welfare of the infant. The mother’s physical care of the children is a minor task compared to the psychological responsibility of socializing them. Feminine gender-role conditioning plays a major role in pressurizing women to adopt maternity as women’s destiny. In a domestic environment, only girls are
forced to conform to structural constraints and cultural limitations. They imbibe such public images and all other desires are sacrificed at the altar of femininity.

4.2.2. ‘Feudalism’ the most powerful social structure in nineteenth century Europe depended on the inheritance of status and property. A man could see in his children, the defeat of his mortality and the promise that his estates would remain intact in perpetuity. This springs from the primitive instinct to have children and has remained strong from the barbaric days, until the present time. Family continuity is maintained by begetting children. This was valued most in Europe as elsewhere in the world.

4.2.3. Children and wife were regarded as pieces of property of the male. Among the primitive people, living entirely off the land, children were great asset among his fellow men in nomadic families, in which sons cared for the flocks and fought off ‘marauders’ and daughters cared for the men of the family. Women produced fresh stock and thus stood first in a man’s riches and a barren marriage was a supreme disaster.

4.2.4. The European social history of the nineteenth century proves that the persistent inequality of women in the economic, political, and cultural fields is even more pronounced in family relations. The tendency to prepare women chiefly fit for domestic work existed in the system, the upbringing and in female education in the capitalistic countries. The notion that a woman’s ideal is a happy marriage, a family was widely advertised in ‘bourgeois’ literature, and mass media likewise keep alive this conservative tradition, restricting the world to her family.

4.2.5. The instinct of possession is barbaric and needs to be discouraged. Patriarchy seems to retain this instinct in varies forms, according to the prevalent norms of civilization in changing eras. Only if the ideology of inheritance is abolished, can this indiscriminate possession be abolished. A
socialist family is an active participant in state policy for progress and prosperity. It strives to discourage in children any tendency towards dependency, a variance and career exploitation. Though the system has been rocked in Russia, one cannot deny that the system was worthwhile and had much strength, which may be successfully incorporated into whatever system of government we choose to practice.

4.3.0. Vying between conformity and non-conformity is very acute in the protagonists’ motherhood stage. There is constant tug of war between yearning for a baby and the boredom of caring which involves lot of concern and risk; between satisfaction and guilt of rearing their wards; the doubt of being a full-filling mother or a failing mother; between the tension of being an ideological mother or a practical mother.

4.3.1. Victims of the perpetuation of a pro-fatalist sex role, women are processed in such a way that they want children; they are expected not only to want babies, but also love motherhood. However, pregnancy causes lot of inconvenience hatred and suffering in women both mentally and physically women seem to be filled with an unknown satisfaction, yearning for, and retrials for the same process of self-destruction. Ruth Whittaker, a critic comments on Doris Lessing: “Her fiction begins by exploring social relationships which are gradually revealed as inadequate and limiting” (1998:54). Lessing herself a married woman (thrice) with many children is more suitable for the task. Martha feels being a mother, looking after the child is quite distinct from carrying and giving birth to one. Giving birth gave fulfillment but caring was a boring drag, yet whenever she observed this, immediately voices of guilt were heard and replaced by the mood of deep physical tenderness and longing for another baby though, women know that begetting a second baby is self-destruction. Most women who do not mean to get pregnant suddenly fall into the mood of getting pregnant — this sharp yearning for a baby confuses them. Women would not plan this as they planned everything else in their regulated lives; they felt insecure because of this.
Having a baby was a nuisance, a painful duty yet the voices of their female selves were a lure whose nature was ambiguous and double-dealing. In spite of all the complaints regarding the inconveniences, strange physical changes, there was something irresistibly satisfying about the process of self-destruction, self-narrowing. It is almost like women having a divided self one chained and the other a liberated free spirit: “The voice of their female selves was a lure whose ambiguous and double-dealing nature they understood very well…” (PM: 331). Being a mother, or rather, the business of looking after a child, as distinct from carrying and giving birth to one, was not a fulfillment but a drag on oneself. Yet the craving for another baby was painful and insistent and the adventure of being pregnant filled her entirely. Women pride and compare motherhood with the flattering image of Madonna like woman with a helpless infant in her arms. Everyone conspired to prevent others seeing that it is after all only the middle-aged woman who had done nothing but to produce two or three common place and tedious citizens in the world that was already too full of them.

4.4.0. Conforming to mother’s role is much criticized in the selected novels. Among her various feminine roles, it is the maternal with which a woman is identified throughout her life. It is the maternal role in which she is inextricably caught and is unable to evade. It pursues her wherever or whatever, she might be. The characteristics of a mother’s life are flexibility, passivity and adaptability. She is not given reins to her individualistic nature and she can allow herself only mental attitudes, which are stereotyped. Devi’s reasonable question is why children should children be put forth as a cause reason for living — “… the sacred cow…” (H:216).

4.4.1. The concerns about their wards are a matter of guilt and panic for women whereas men are very sarcastic ad ironical about it. Ella the liberated new woman who is a novelist in The Golden Notebook realizes that even while away from London in Paris, on an official meeting with an editor she mentally keeps track of her son Michael’s routine. She keeps following in her mind the stages of
her son’s day, though she has left him under the safe care of her friend Julia. When she is taken to the field by her male acquaintance, also “She felt guilty because she was there, in the sun, and Michael would have enjoyed the drive and the warm field” (GN: 182).

4.4.2. While the plane shudders during landing the thoughts of air crash and death flashes in her mind and immediately the though ‘what about Michael?’ accompanies. She contemplates that it is not the parents who give life to a child “… but a child gives life to its parents when the parent decides to live simply because to commit suicide would hurt the child. I wonder how many parents decide to go a living because they have decided not to hurt their children, although they don’t care to live by themselves?” (GN:285). However, this anxiety and concern of women is a matter of ridicule for men. Michael comments with cold irony when Anna refuses to drive with him because there was no one to take care of her daughter Janet: “Well, the cares of motherhood must ever come before lovers (GN: 14).

4.4.3. Anna knew that Janet’s mother being sane and responsible was far more important than the necessity of understanding the world. Anna as an individual feels ‘cracking up’ suffering from writer’s block unable to continue her new novel, she was obsessed with reading masses of print and cutting out pieces and pasting them all over her walls, she knew that on the day Janet came home from school, she would become Anna, Anna the responsible, and the obsession would go away. Anna’s American friend also agrees that children keep people sane. He feels that he would go nuts being alone. He tells her, “You’re lucky to have that kid” “I know it that’s why I am sane and you’re nuts” (GN: 572).

4.4.4. Mary in The Grass is Singing suffers from boredom and drudgery of poverty-ridden life in the dry African farm, almost turns insane. She regrets if only she had a child it would help her from blankness and solitude (GS:135). Only
one child who would be a ‘safety value’ protecting her, saving her from madness and disintegration.

4.4.5. As Friedan remarks:

…the women I interviewed fitted the new image of feminine fulfillment in four, five or six children, baked their own bread, and sewed all their children’s clothes. These women had no dreams of career, no visions of a world larger than the home: all energy was centered on their lives as housewives and mothers; their only ambition, their only dream already realized. But were they fulfilled women? (1971:234).

4.4.5. Freidan's pertinent question: “But were they fulfilled women?” is a pointer to the fact that this domestic chore, in the domestic sphere, in their role as wife and mother, unmindful of what is happening in the world around them? No doubt, they attain ‘fulfillment’— but at what cost?— Sacrifice of their desires, interests and may be even a potential career.

4.4.6. The mothers featuring in the selected novels accept the patriarchal definition of motherhood though in varying degrees yet are not silent conformists to feminine motherhood. The level of adherence varies in degree and kind among the protagonists. None of the selected protagonists accepts mother’s role stoically without an iota of protest. There is no model feminine mother, an archetype of the Earth-Mother, possessing an unending reservoir of and motherly love; Job-like in her unlimited forbearance, who takes all trials and tribulations in her stride, ascribing her suffering to her ‘karma’ or fate, all the while oblivious of the fact that she is no more than her role.

4.5.0. The transition from the ‘feminine’ to the ‘feminist’ phase of motherhood begins with the realization by women that the patriarchal institution of motherhood is not the natural ‘human condition’. In the feminine stage,
motherhood was the main preoccupation of women, their one and only job; they were molded all their life for this job. In their movement to the feminist stage, women comprehend that motherhood is only one part of the female process, not an identity for all time. While the feminine mystique reaches women to seek fulfillment as mothers, in the feminist phase women understand that their existence as ‘wife’ or ‘mother’ is inadequate. As they experience a need to grow and expand their minds, their entire being begins to rebel against a role that does not permit this growth. “Who am I? Am I merely by husband’s wife and children’s mother?”—This question begins to haunt them.

4.5.1. A feminist mother begins to examine the generally unexamined assumptions of motherhood, they unveil the false aura of romanticism with which motherhood was until then endowed. The sentimental view of motherhood as the ever holy, ever infallible power is abandoned. Feminist mothers call on women to fight those aspects that make child bearing and child rearing stressful rather than fulfilling experiences, suggesting other alternatives, which can be more fulfilling.

4.5.2. For the protagonists in the selected novels though non-conformity prevails deep at heart from their childhood, crisis occurs, only after their motherhood stage. When young they are brainwashed into believing that being a mother (mother of a son especially) is their salvation. True to their breeding they just live out, undergo all stages of patriarchy though of course under the stress of constant internal conflict.

4.6.0. Motherhood proves to be a suffocating experience for Martha who is a good specimen of the modern realistic mother. The grueling experience of childbirth, the disfigurement of her body and the uncontrollable flow of the milk from her body leave Martha disquieted. When Martha was pregnant, she was consumed several times a day by a violent up surge of restlessness. She could not keep still, or read and above all she felt there must be something wrong with her to feel like this because at the back of her mind was the vision of a woman calm,
rich, maternal, radiant, the way she should be. In *A Proper Marriage* series, the author without any inhibition starkly expresses the grueling experience of childbirth. Even when Martha was pregnant, she felt it as humiliating and as an intolerable position. The swollen belly poses discomfiture similar to an animal in a cave and especially so when the husband is enjoying the company of others.

4.6.1. Martha and her friend who is also pregnant, to satisfy their passion of rebellious restlessness enjoy themselves drenched in the rain and letting themselves inside the filthy pot holes— they felt they were both free and comfortable in their minds, their bodies felt relaxed and though tired they did not care that their men preferred other company to theirs. Even after delivery when they are supposed to feed the infant, she feels she hates the brat and feel they might as well be a couple of cows and both wish they were dead. Ideologies of motherhood conditioned in women are contrary to the reality that they face. Though she was happy that all will be over after the delivery but it was not. So, it was as if the child was connected to her flesh by innumerable invisible fibers.

4.6.2. When Martha witness how Stella her friend and her mother were devoting their lives to the young child at home Esther, Martha felt the room oppressive. Martha expects some understanding from Stella who is also in the same position as her: married, husband at army, suffering from postnatal side effects, bound to the infant twenty-four hours— unable to control the bulging body, totally lacking any recreation or men’s company, parties and socializing. Another friend of Martha’s Alice frankly took consolation in Martha. They would seek each other out for the sole reason that they needed a safety valve ; they would discuss in humorous, helpless voices, for an hour or so, their boredom, the tediousness of living alone, the unsatisfactory nature of marriage, the burden of bringing up children. Young mothers like Martha concluded, “Once you’ve been married there’s no point in it, I don’t enjoy anything anymore” (PM:97).
4.6.3. However it is true and pathetic also that modern mothers are torn between confusion. For instance Martha’s emotion towards Caroline her own daughter were a confusion of hatred and love. When she saw Caroline cheerfully gurgling and singing to herself, her heart was then a hot enlarged area of tenderness for the child whom she was so lamentably mishandling. Martha’s resolutions about her fading habits are unique. She must break this bond, the mother’s caring, and a pampering she felt as something compulsive and deadly that would most certainly affect the child’s whole future.

4.6.4. She brought her up by the book— the wet blankets, napkins, clothes — troubled her so much. When Caroline grew up a little Martha was happy but now started the mess and the battle centered on food. “My poor unfortunate brat, what had you done to deserve a mother like me ! You bore me to extinction, and that’s the truth of it, and no doubt I bore you” (PM:22). Martha is convinced that one of the most important functions of the parents is that they should be suitable objects of hate. “…You and I are just victims, my poor child, you cant help it, I can’t help it, my mother couldn’t help it and her mother…” (PM: 22). Somewhere at the bottom of her heart was a pleasant self-righteousness. She was as little fitted for maternity as her mother had been but she at least had the honesty to admit it.

4.6.5. For Martha Caroline did not exist in her absence. Martha, was always, uncomfortably surprised that as soon as Caroline was away from her it was as if she had never had a child at all; whereas as long as they were together that in visible naval string twanged like a harshly plucked string at every movement or sound the child made.

4.6.6. The irony is Mrs. Quest always complained that Martha was neglecting her daughter, she is too thin, she is not giving her enough to eat, leaving her alone crying, to have a servant boy etc. but finally Martha leaves Caroline behind in search of a new relationship which though pitiable is stunning and interesting.
4.7.0. Motherhood is such a grueling and enduring experience that they all pose certain expectations on the family in return, but when nothing materializes, when no gratitude is returned the fact that nothing is judicial and nothing is reciprocal dawn as a thunderbolt upon them. They start disintegrating. Then there is a crisis then leave family and home, which symbolizes their wishing to be independent, thwart the fetters they reach out for a breathing space. After mothering their own children the suppressed beings, the stunned dwarfed human beings muster up the courage to identify the scope of establishing her individual self. At this stage a self-taught women, an independent being evolves. If sensible she uses up the new energy for her own evolvement or freedom towards success and recognition, if illogical she gushes her newly attained strength against a daughter or a daughter-in-law victimizing them in turn with her new tool of power, age and experience.

4.8.0. Doris Lessing depicts the tensions and conflicts arising out of a woman’s mother role. The institution of motherhood gains sanction and is reinforced by religion that is essentially patriarchal. The image of the benevolent mother in both Western and Eastern tradition is an additional burden the woman has to carry. The mothers featuring in the selected novels accept the patriarchal definition of motherhood though in varying degrees yet are not silent conformists to feminine motherhood. Lessing’s own life has been challenge to her belief that people cannot resist the currents of their time, as she fought against the biological and cultural imperatives that fated her to sink without a murmur into marriage and motherhood. Lessing herself married at nineteen and the two children a few years later, feeling trapped in a personal that she feared would destroy her, she left her family, remaining in Sainsbury.

4.8.1. In early Indian literature, one comes across mother figures equated to goddesses. Virtuous, caring, self-effacing and self-sacrificing, these women seem to conform to the ideal of womanhood / motherhood. But in reality, one wonder – are these mothers real women? Are they not erasing a part of their personality,
cutting fragments off themselves that refuse to conform to this ideal? Isn’t the picture we see of the perfect mother actually a stunted, distorted one where the real woman never emerges? Yet it is into this ‘safe’ hole that millions of women creep into in order to avoid complexities and strains in relationships. However, Martha denies the emphasizing on redemptive or salvatory potential of a mother, women’s special role as the moral regenerator of humankind. Martha was as always uncomfortably surprised that as soon as Caroline was away from her it was as if she had never had a child at all. Whereas as long as they were together that invisible naval sting twanged like a harshly plucked string at every movement or sound that child made and sometimes felt very despairing at her incompetence with Caroline. Lessing allows Martha very few glimpses of joy or fulfillment in motherhood”. You bore me to extinction, and that’s the truth of it, and no doubt I bore you…you and I are just victims, my poor child, you can’t help it, I can’t help it, my mother couldn’t help it, and her mother…” (PM:2). Martha is able to leave her daughter when she leaves her husband. She is also able, temporarily; to convince herself that by leaving Caroline she is freeing her from the inventible misery of being a daughter in relation to her mother.  

4.8.2. These Martyrs do not stop with sacrificing their individuality and personality at the altar of motherhood laurels but train and mould their daughters also to the same recourse. This results in the everlasting vying between modern practicalities and the traditional mothering ideologies. Martha’s observations are that the women of her mother’s generation are better grandmothers, she reflected, falling back with relief on the abstraction, that they are better with their grandchildren, than with their own children. Lessing herself recollects in her autobiography under my Skin the memory of her mother complaining to others. Lessing hated this kind of talk that goes on in front of the children, as if they were not present. It was intolerable to hear how she tells the world what a burden her children are, what a disappointment, how they drain her life from her, how they brought her low and sapped her, how all her own talents were withering unused-
“...and I was a cold flame of hatred for her, I could have kicked her there and then” (1995:30).

4.8.3. Even Anna whose mother died early remembers that at moments when somebody tried to dominate her, she was reminded of her mother about whom she could remember very little, though, she was able to form for herself the image of somebody strong and dominating—“...whom Anna had had to fight” (GN:57).

4.8.4. The irony is while traditional mothers boast of their dedication as mothers, modern mothers only look upon it as domination. Martha feels that her mother is obsessive and needs to dominate her daughter’s life always. Mrs. Quest cornered Martha with a list of her deficiencies as a housekeeper. She told her husband and her friends that Martha ruined her servants, squandered money, and neglected Caroline. Martha’s husband also is an accomplice because pathetic middle-aged women left high and dry by society with nothing to do depended on young married couples for emotional satisfaction. This spurted anger in Martha who quelled it: “You brought me and my brother the way you wanted, don’t you think I should be allowed to do the same with my children?” (PM: 339).

4.9.0. Lessing brings out the irony behind women priding about motherhood ideals but the younger generation developing only aversion and repulsion to such ideals in her Children of Violence (1951-1959) series. Motherhood is spoken of as a great ideology but daughters have only aversion for their mothers for one main reason they take upon a very dominating role and insist the daughters follow their methods and strategies. The individuality and originality of the daughter suffers a lot at the hands of such ever matron mothers. They want to have a say over every matter. They are always complaining about and discouraging their daughters never recognizing any of their accomplishments. Mrs. Quest, Martha’s mother causes much damage to Martha’s personal feeling when she discusses about Martha in private with Douglas her son-in-law. She knows pretty well that Martha is quite all right in her household routines and in taking care of her
granddaughter Caroline too. However, she keeps complaining to Douglas that Martha is neglecting Caroline and spoiling the servants giving them too much indulgence. In the first place Martha is entangled with Douglas just to escape the hateful custody of her mother and because her mother disapproved her choice. When Martha decides to separate from Douglas as she felt that her marriage would not work out any longer, again Mrs. Quest discourages her. When Martha comes pleading at her door to let her in when Douglas hurt her feeling, as he was jealous that Martha might be having affairs with dozen other men during his stay in the army. Mrs. Quest to the astonishment of both Martha and Douglas does not let her in saying; she deserves this sort of treatment from Douglas. Infact Martha associated so much disgust and irritation with her mother that she vowed to be different from her mother. Since Martha found her mother had a rooted dislike for all matters sexual, it was a matter of pride for Martha to be attractive sexually and 'be good in bed'.

4.9.1. Such traditional motherhood dominance only channels the modern mothers towards strict non-conformity to ideal motherhood, which showers overflowing love and caring on their wards. Martha disgusted with her mother’s interference and hateful domination decides she would never repeat this in the case of Caroline her daughter that she will not get closer to her emotionally, would not have any emotional bondage with the child and resolves to be detached unlike her mother. Martha is filled with futile anger at her over-domineering mother. She even complains to Douglas about her mother’s inquisitiveness, interference in household routines and impertinence but he supports her, as he knows Mrs. Quest is dependant on the son-in-law for her emotional satisfaction. Martha hates her mother’s deliberate attempts to scatter her own personal belongings in Martha’s cupboard and drawers and her constant efforts in trying to run Martha’s affairs for her. She always complaints that Martha is squandering money, ruining Caroline, spoiling the servants by letting them do as they desire and that some one like Mrs. Quest should keep an eye on her.
4.9.2. Modern mothers have their own convictions about the breeding methodologies of their wards. They do not believe in total self-effacement and hence manage to scrapp time for their own vim and fancies. When this attitude is criticized they become intolerant. Martha hates her mother and her husband having a frank talk about her behind her back regarding Martha’s deficiencies as a mother. Especially when it is about how Martha has neglected her child and let Caroline go down and that she should dedicate more time and so on it gets on, her nerves. Martha vows to be careful not to be too interested in what Caroline her daughter does because Caroline too would hate her as Martha does her mother.

4.10.0. Some daughters feel that they want to erase their scope of being identified with their mothers who were almost primary negative models for the daughter. Betty Friedan shares this view:

"In my generation, many of us knew we did not want to be like our mothers, even when we loved them. We could not help but see their disappointment… they could not give us an image of what we could be. They could only tell us that their lives were too empty, tied to home; that children, cooking, clothes, bridge, and charities were not enough (1971:72)."

4.10.1. Feminists however over-rule Freudian psychoanalysis that views the rage of daughters towards their mothers as resentment for not having been given a penis. Many daughters like Martha see their mothers as having taught them a compromise and self-hatred they are struggling to be free from. They hate their mothers to the point of matrophobia where they experience a dread that if they relax their guard, they may identify with the mother completely. The mother stands for the victim in themselves, the un-free woman, the martyrs, and so the daughters do not want to be ‘vessels of their mothers’ frustration and self-denial. Not only their mothers, even other women who identify themselves primarily as
mothers seem threatening and repelling to the daughters who feel unequal to the mother role.

4.10.2. Motherhood is spoken of as a great ideology but daughters have aversion for their mothers. Society’s way of institutionalizing motherhood breeds guilt into the very fabric of a woman’s character. Women who bring up children as single parent are dumped with the extra burden of carefully maintaining the normality of their children’s life. The Social, psychological stigma of the unwed mother compels women like Anna into unwanted marriage. Men are immune to any guilt, remorse, or castration. Women try to inculcate the values essential for a ‘Model Mother’. With the birth of subsequent child, they begin to feel increasingly the burden of motherhood. Maternal ideologies cripple both male and female.

4.11.0. Lessing and Rajam Krishnan are truthful in portraying the inadequacies of the children also in support of the modern mothers. Children are a mystery; it is believed that when a woman becomes a mother she would know instinctively, love, wisdom, understanding and everything follows automatically. However, the protagonists as mothers are only surprised that children are a mystery. Anna, Molly, Martha, Devi and Meena deny the emphasizing redemptive or salvatory potential of a mother, the women’s special role as the moral regenerators of humankind. Molly after divorcing Richard brings up her son Tommy as a single parent sacrificing all her ambitions and desires but finds him revolting and he attempts suicide. Tommy is ever ready to instigate his dissatisfaction and regrets regarding his breeding: “…I’m very sorry my father didn’t bring me up — if he had I’d have been very happy to inherit his shoes” (GN: 239). He also regrets: “But it’s bad luck, I’ve got your character, and it should have been the other way around— well surely, if I’d had your looks and my father’s character— well, his staying power, at any rate, it would have been better ?” (GN: 57).
4.11.1. Tommy for unknown reasons takes pleasure in frightening his mother and Anna her friend. While Molly is worried when he had not returned home for a long time while his mother rings Anna expresses her fear over finding some psychology books in Tommy’s room; Anna is convinced that Tommy was enjoying frightening them all. He remarks “Anna your bed is just like coffin” (GN:235), his giggle sound harsh, uncontrolled and malicious to Anna. He knew his mother would panic seeing the books in his room. He casually remarks, “I suppose she’s been snooping in my room and she’s upset because of all those madness books” (GN: 235). Anna reflects, “He hasn’t been here five minutes, but his hysteria’s infecting me already. Be careful” (GN: 236). Though he was calm but triumphantly malicious in his stinging remarks such as, “we are not individuals for you at all. We are simply temporary shapes of something – phases” (GN: 243), when Anna and Molly discuss their teenage as difficult phases for their children.

4.11.2. He is articulate enough to analyse and pronounce reasons for his average performance. Tommy compares himself with the milkman’s son Reggie Gates who has got a scholarship because he has no other choice, if he passes he’ll be up in the middle-class whereas Tommy has got hundred opportunities and that is the reason why he is suffering from ‘paralysis of the will’. Tommy strangely shows more understanding and affinity towards Marion, Richard’s second wife who shows more attachment to Tommy her husband’s son by first marriage. It is ironical she takes to constant drinking, neglecting her own three boys, she stays with Tommy all the time and Tommy also accepts her relationship rather than his own mother Molly’s affection. This really troubles and hurts Molly. The irony is Richard her first husband, Marion and Tommy her son all accuse Molly for her life of freedom and choosing to live her own pattern of life and identify her detachment as the cause of Tommy’s tragedy, his suicide attempt and his losing of eye sight as a consequence. Thus, the modern mothers are constantly placed
under the vying of the imbibed spontaneity and the individualistic reasonable personality, which keeps urging them to escape these overtaxing fetters.

4.12.0. *The Proper Marriage* functions as the feminist critique by bringing out subtly the ideological differences between men and women in their views on pregnancy. While women are trained, compelled and nurtured to develop so much sentiments, sacredness, and feminine duties connected with motherhood, men think upon pregnancy as a punishment inflicted upon those women that misbehave; to put them in place to teach a lesson and that a carefree wife deserves this punishment. Douglas who is jealous of Martha’s involvement in party activities and out of his belief that she has been neglecting Caroline their daughter plans to bind Martha with another pregnancy and threatens his wife who was following preventive measures though half jokingly “I’ll hide that damned thing one of these nights, and that’ll make up your mind for you!” (PM: 332).

4.12.1. The problem is all ideologies have two perspectives one male and another female and the two images are always contradictory and confusing.. Men think upon pregnancy as a punishment on a woman, which serves a tool to groom her under male supremacy. Woman’s pain in childbirth is considered as punishment in certain theologies. Though this is looked upon as passive suffering the highest praise accorded to mother, it has found entry into every sphere of women’s existence and has been accepted as natural, universal female destiny. Any assertion by feminists regarding the right of a woman not to mother has objections from religious sectors and some religious views abortion and artificial means of contraception as against God’s laws. The institutionalization of motherhood had created the mystique of motherhood, which presupposes the maternal instinct and along with it, lifelong, unflinching devotion to the child, reiterating that mothers and mother alone have the power to transform malleable infants into moral, productive adults. This mystique defines a woman as ‘wife’ or mother, relegating her real identity, her real self, to the background. Betty Friedan remarks : “In the feminine mystique, there is no other way for a woman to dream
of creation or of the future. There is no way she can even dream about herself, except as her children’s mother, her husband’s wife” (1971:62). By suppressing the ‘real self’ or the ‘woman within’ the woman becomes her social role abiding patriarchal ideals and is moulded into the ‘ideal mother’. In Lessing’s *The Golden Notebook* mother, child tension manifests itself – the mother is depicted as self-effacing, loving and generous while the child is usually selfish, callous and demanding. Mothers become the scapegoat of her children’s complaints for all their needs, regardless of hers. She begins to experience schizophrenia, a fragmentation of identity, a division of self, because of conforming to the feminine ideal of motherhood.

4.13.0. Society’s way of institutionalizing motherhood breeds guilt into the very fabric of a woman’s character. Women work hard to achieve the virtues prescribed for them as women, and, if they fail, they feel terribly guilty of not living up to the standards of motherhood. Psychoanalytic thinking blames the mother for anything that goes wrong in the family. Her very character is called into question if she ‘fails’ her children. She experiences:

> The full weight and burden of maternal guilt, that daily, nightly, hourly Am I doing what is right? Am I doing enough? Am I doing too much? The institution of motherhood finds all mothers more or less guilty of having failed their children (Rich 1976:223).

4.13.1. Molly feeds to her own doubts when the milkman’s son fairs well in studies in comparison to her own son Tommy, brought up by a divorced single woman like her. Children become antagonistic at teems which is again the mothers who have to endure the most of it.

4.13.2. Molly does not like Tommy’s girl friends and they are bound not to like her. Whenever they are there they simply, “…radiate disapproval of me all the time. Tommy simply pushes us together in other words he is using his girl friends
an alter ego to say about me what he thinks but doesn’t say aloud” (GN: 325). Tommy always regretted his mother bringing him up as a single parent. He attempts suicide and loses his eyesight because an optical nerve is damaged. Molly’s ex-husband Richard and Molly abuse each other finally the mother has to bear the brunt. When Molly told Tommy about his blindness Richard accuses her, “that was a pretty bloody thing you did, wasn’t it ? (GN: 285).

4.13.3. For any misshapenness in a ward’s course of life the fault is identified as the mother’s, either something in wrong with her breeding methodologies or her pattern of life is criticized and she is accused for neglecting the child. Versatile women and single women like Anna & Molly is accused the more by the ex-husbands, the society, their own children and ironically they themselves are pushed to feel guilty as mothers.

4.13.4. Tommy through his attitude and activities inflicts pain on Molly. When Tommy attempted suicide and lost his eyesight, he never showed his breakdown for a moment. All his movements and dialogues made Molly very self-conscious and she even feels that Michael her son enjoyed Molly’s delicate position. He neither gives her the opportunity or satisfaction of attending on him as he expertly manages all his routines, even does his own cooking and very kind enough to encourage his mother to have pleasure with her friends. Though he is blind, Molly is conscious of his ever-prying eyes and mind. When somebody is on the phone before she needs to tell him he prudently would guess whom it is and what was the query and his reply etc. And people who come up ever so sweet and kind, on the surface kindly but concealing malice, used her as a target for their remarks analyzing what all mistakes Molly had done such as whether her leaving her son for an year or her living abroad, or her broken up marriage etc. Richard her ex-husband accuses her more aggressively than ever for ruining his son’s life whereas he is happily married to Marion who bears three more boys for him but ultimately unhappy and drunk because of Richard’s unending affairs and neglect.
4.14.0. The physical and psychic weight of responsibility is the heaviest of social burdens on modern mothers; though it is a powerless responsibility, it brings about feelings of inadequacy and guilt in the mother. At the mercy of both her child and of society, the mother constantly assesses her performance in terms of the ideal standard propagated by patriarchy. Women are caught in a dilemma as to how much love they should impart to their children — on one hand, they feel that infinite love and attention is due to their children, and on the other feel that too much of affection would be to their detriment. Especially when women tried to integrate career with motherhood, they suffered the guilt of neglecting their children. Guilt becomes a part of their psyche for Martha, Anna, Molly, and Ella.

4.14.1. Women who bring up children as single parent are dumped with the extra burden of carefully maintaining the normality of their children’s life. Any untoward incident provokes the whole society and there they are to direct their criticism and accusations blaming them for their way of life and other mistakes. Children too become an accomplice and ditch them gaining a sadistic pleasure by inflicting pain indirectly and making the mothers feel guilty about the plight of their children.

4.14.2. Molly shudders at the thought of attending a party, or inviting home her friends. Even to answer the phone or dye her hair because she is ever guilt ridden and conscious what would be Tommy, her blind son’s reaction; he might smell the dye or sense the ‘vibrations’ and that he would say: “Mother, have you had your hair dyed. Well, I am glad you’re not letting yourself go” (GN: 335).

4.14.3. Molly is right in her instinct and feeling when she says: “He is happy Anna. He is happy for he first time in his life. That’s what’s so terrible …you can see it in how he moves and talks — he is all in one piece for the first time in his life” (GN: 335). She weeps and is even afraid to weep because Michael would hear her though she is in Anna’s house— this is what the under current of her thoughts are. Richard, Molly’s ex-husband was condemning both Molly and her
friend Anna for their trials in bringing up Tommy, but they felt that whatever they
did was best because their own life was formless as such but the ungrateful
sadistic Tommy’s criticism is: “At the best people can be good to one other person
or their families. But that’s egotism, it isn’t being good. We aren’t any better
than the animals, we just pretend to be. We don’t really care about each other at
all” (GN: 248).

4.15.0. Ella the free woman who is modern enough to live without a husband is
anxious and troubled as a single mother about her son’s relationship with Paul
who visited her. Michael the little boy had loved his own father, who had married
again and was living in America. The child naturally turned with affection to the
new man. However, Paul would stiffen when Michael put his arms around him, or
when he rushed at him in welcome. Ella watched how he instinctively stiffened,
half laughed and he would gently put down Michael’s arms and talk to him
gently, as if he were grown up, serious, answering serious questions. Ella felt
spontaneity of affection had been cut off in him. He kept it for her, warm and
responsive in touch and in speech but for Paul, for the men’s world, he had a
responsible calm, thoughtful response. This panicked Ella: “I’m doing Michael
harm; he is going to be harmed. He will never again have a natural warm response
to a man” (GN: 193).

4.15.1. Another single parent mother Anna decides to sent her daughter Janet to
a boarding school to protect her from fatherless atmosphere and to avoid the
acquaintance of gay men like Ronnie and Ivor her tenants. But she also
contemplates, what’s the use of protecting her ? She will grow up in England, a
country full of men who are little boys and homosexuals and the half-
homosexuals… there are few real men left, and I’m going to see she gets one of
them. I am going to see she grows up to recognize a real man, when she meets one
(GN: 356).
4.15.2. In a society committed to sexual equality, single and professional women would be applauded as pioneers. They are breaking down all sorts of ancient prejudices, from the sexual double standard to the connection between femininity and submissiveness, poverty, dependence, powerlessness and incompetence. In the current climate of antifeminist backlash, however, they are loose cannons on the deck. Clearly, the hope in many quarters is that they will give up this careers nonsense if it is made sufficiently arduous, and get back under male ‘protection’ where they belong— even though that protection, in terms of a guarantee of lifelong support, no longer exists.

4.15.3. This is the underlying message of a variety of seemingly disparate contributions to the public discourse. While Sylvia Ann Hewlett, in *A Lesser Life*, blames the women’s movement for the absence of social supports for working mothers, as though the feminist goal of shared parenting were a piece of utopian lunacy. Deborah Fallows, in *A Mother’s Work*,portrays women who use day care as shallow materialists; as though stay-at-home moms could waltz back into the workplace whenever they wished. While the govt. sectors does its best to scuttle affirmative action and thwart comparable worth for pink-collar women, their white-collar sisters find themselves mysteriously ‘topping out’, hitting the ‘glass ceiling’ of overt discrimination. Abortion is under attack, non-marital sex is under attack, and infertile women are prone to criticism of being selfish for having put careers before pregnancy, as though no man ever insisted on postponing fatherhood; but women who beat the clock by having babies without husbands are selfish too.

4.16. 0. The social ideology is that, parentage is very essential, especially in the case of girl children, the existence of a father or identity of the father— his name is very vital. Society, which has foisted value on the father’s identity, does not insist on his role-playing. Mere name is honoured even if he is non-existent or worthless. Without the background of a father’s name, a woman is considered rootless and she cannot expect any respectability from the society. This is another
tactics, which subordinates women to a male. Be submissive, pledge your self-identity to a single male your husband or battle with the rest of the world. In the case of a male contribution of mere name, identity is enough but in the case of a female, especially a single mother has to withstand the worst of the society and yet she cannot expect to be recognized or to be respected by the society.

4.16.1. The Social, psychological stigma of the unwed mother compels women like Anna into unwanted marriage. She, who had been living with Max wulf without marriage, marries him when she conceives so that their child is legitimate and divorces him after the birth of their daughter. Anna and Molly are of stronger metal as Molly prides: “…neither of us was prepared to get married simply to give our children fathers. So now, we must take the consequences. If there are any. Why should there be?” (GN: 32).

4.16.2. Men are immune to any guilt, remorse, or castration. Irrespective of their fulfilling, the duties assigned to men or those who fail to play these roles are not punishable or immune to any consequence. Fatherhood is never viewed as spontaneous or fostered in men. This is typical of Meena’s so-called father in After the Sound of Fury.

4.16.3. All over the industrialized west, women want education and jobs, couples want small, planned families, and people-men and women, married and unmarried – want sexual intimacy. A society’s abortion rate is a measure of it failure to meet these imperatives straightforwardly: by making it easy to get contraception that works, by demystifying sex, by making children the responsibility of all. Moralists say that abortion is not or should not be a method of birth control. However, that is just what abortion is—‘a bloody, clumsy method of birth control’. Those who find abortion immoral have a duty to come forward with other solutions to the unwanted pregnancy problem. However, where are the pro-life voices shouting for increased funding for contraceptive research, sex education and true universal access to family planning? It is the
movement’s lack of enthusiasm for a birth-control crusade. Even the non-Catholics do not campaign for contraception in a noticeable way – that reveals the pro-life cause as more about shoring up Victorian sexual values than about stopping abortion.

4.17.0. A change over to the Indian scene, renders the observation that the old order does not easily yield to the new and the Indian mother finds her caught inextricably between tradition and modernity. Restricted both biologically and culturally, the Indian woman’s predicament is such that, she finds herself at crossroads— she is unable, to shake off her conventional roles of being a wife and mother, nor is she able to completely assert her identity as a woman, in terms of what she really is.

4.17.1. Meena decides to abort because of the compulsion she is placed under by the patriarchal society. She feels insecure about the child’s future, as Sarangan is indecisive about the child’s origin or Meena’s fidelity to Sarangan. Moreover, his, plan to go abroad for employment creates within her the fear that her child too might have to withstand the worst of the society being a fatherless child. Younger generations are capable of stronger decisions.

4.17.2. The craving for self-establishment only drives her to abort the child. She feels that a child now when they are struggling hard to make both ends meet is unnecessary and hence tries informal abortion consuming tablets recommended by her nurse friend, which she later finds out it has not been successful and that her pregnancy has been continuing. This she discovers only after three months of pregnancy though Sarangan had gone to the extent of throwing her out in the rage, as she does not listen to him regarding employment and pregnancy. She had to live with her friend, she nevertheless learns from her experience that child breeding in the absence of proper security and recognition from the father would be fatal. She does not want to bring into the world another insecure child without proper parentage in the absence of sound financial and moral support.
4.17.3. Meena who has conceived feels strongly that she needs to strengthen their economical background and then go for a child. Moreover, Sarangan has been planning to go to Dubai and hence Meena was worried in his absence that would take care of her during her pregnancy and delivery. When a wife opts, abortion the husband’s reactions are strong and vehement. He is enraged at the idea—choice of mothering is not awarded to women. When she retorts, she is man handled. Therefore, she keeps her pregnancy a secret. As she is sure of Sarangan’s protest for such liberal ideas, she seeks the help of her former hostel mate to be aborted. She consumes some tablets and is very sick the next day. Sarangan who somehow detects that she has aborted, turns out a different personality. He scolds her with hatred for her slum contacts and for her unclear parentage etc., He even keeps her under the guard of neighboring ladies who do not allow her to leave home and keep her imprisoned—in a sort of house arrest. Nevertheless, Meena is keen on saving her job and in obtaining her certificates, which are with the school authorities. For Meena who is almost rootless now, her education, qualification and degree certificates are more important than childbearing and rearing in her life. Sarangan returns home drunk, makes love to her, and compels her every day not to go for job, to stay under his protection and care, solely surrendering to him. When Meena starts going to school after recouping, Sarangan batters her and throws her out along with her belongings. In spite of such ill treatment Meena feels like returning to Sarangan because she is doubtful about her pregnancy and on check-up discovers that the abortion was unsuccessful and she had been pregnant for over three months and nothing could be done except caring for the child and delivering it properly.

4.18.0. The reason for all such inequalities and discriminations is the breeding of male and female through differential conditionings and values. Especially mothers are responsible for the existing state. The male children are given so much importance as they are thought of as the heir to the family. Women dote on male children developing so much anxiety over begetting a male child. They
them and spoil them and finally when old, sons desert parents because the mothers had been so far feeding into them an air of confidence and superiority complex and hence they expect the same thing from other females especially their wives, they need somebody to boost them. This causes animosity among women.

4.18.1. It is ironical that Meena brought up by Annamma a symbol of spontaneous motherhood should reject motherhood and goes to the extent of aborting an unexpected conception. Annamma though was below poverty line still roots of humanitarian motherhood was spontaneous for her, takes up the responsibility of bringing up Meena who otherwise would have turned into an antisocialist element or destitute women naturally prone to victimization by the cruel society. However, Meena who has experienced the ideal motherhood phenomenon through Annamma refuses rejects motherhood for herself but she has her own justification for her rejection. Women that are victimized because of the vulnerability of their gender either adopt abortion or go to the other extent of female infanticide. Yet Meena too is a reasonable mother the modern practical sensible realistic mother. Yet the pangs of femininity are so many and abortion gives way to so much guilt feeling in women.

4.18.2. Daughters the younger generation who are equipped with education, self-confidence and self-esteem and hence heading for success and achievement revolt motherhood ideology. The protagonists as new modern mothers object to the compromise and the self-hatred as strategies for solving problems. They are intellectuals with creative aspirations and do not believe in self-negation any more. Of course, the protagonists are also shown as experiencing the urge of mothering—the spontaneous motherhood aspirations. However, the ever criticizing, accusing dissatisfied society and the antagonistic children vex the modern mothers so much.

4.18.3. The modern scientific discoveries, which have separated reproduction from sexual relationship, have created a situation in which women are able to
separate themselves from male/female sexual differences and view their problems differently with more independence. Consequently, this has created changes in both family relationships and has created social awareness such as the claim over democratic independent rights, regarding the factors such as rights that men have over female body, right to agree or disagree for child bearing, and they should be rendered legal justice in matters such as legal implications of laws on abortion. Though pregnancy may be biological function and something inevitable, a pre-ordained factor, women are protesting the act of forcing the child rearing responsibilities in the name of motherhood ideologies on women alone strongly vehemently. In an article called ‘Economic Development Alone is not enough’ in Competition Success Review, March 2006 issue, a regular feature on current issues and ‘Topics of social Relevance’ the author points out the gender gap in literacy points and in child sex ratio. It is ironical that Punjab, which ranks high in the urban social indicators, has the lowest child sex ratio of 798 girls to 1,000 boys.

Sex selection of babies is illegal but the practice is still widely prevalent and it is estimated that at least 10 million female births may have been aborted in the past 20 years. Because of selective abortion nearly 5,00,000 female babies are lost in India every year. The girl deficit was more common among educated families, especially in homes where the first-born is a girl. The desire to have a male heir was found to drive families to sex-determination tests and termination of pregnancy if the fetus was female. Better economic status and education do not guarantee the survival of the girl child. Female infanticide of the past is refined and honed to a fine skill in the modern guise and more widespread in urban areas and among the more educated. This shows that the mere economic development and even education are of no avail when society still practices gender bias whatever be the compelling reasons. Indian society has to wake up to the reality that there could be no future for a society where women at all stages are treated as lesser species. Women are no longer liabilities they are assets of our family and our society. In certain parts of Tamilnadu, female babies used to be killed just because of the poor parents who could not afford the huge dowry they had to pay
when the girl grew up and reached the marriageable age. The only difference between the rich, the educated and the poor killing the female babies is the matter of timing but the motive is the same. The book *Disappearing Daughters* (2007) focuses on the tragedy of female foeticide in India. “It’s a deeply disturbing work, and quite chilling. But one needs to know the realities of the situation, and take necessary steps to route out this practice altogether” commented Andal Damodaran, Vice President of the Indian Council for Child Welfare, one of the panelists of eminent writers, novelists, journalists and activists on launching and discussing a senior journalist Gita Aravamudan’s book, *Disappearing Daughters* (2007). Mere economic growth, GDP (Gross Domestic product) and Sensex cannot change the mindset of both the rich and the poor who regard a son as an asset as he fetches dowry and daughter as a liability as the parents have to spend a fortune to get her married. It should be remembered that a sizeable percentage of highly educated employed in India and abroad and receiving huge pay packets are women. The daughters who are well educated and well employed have brought glory to their parents.

4.19.0. The protagonists who are acutely conscious of the discriminations are under constant dilemma and doubts about undertaking varied roles in their life. Finally in their middle age maturity and self-confidence gained through their experiences leave them convinced that their stressful role is devalued at all quarters and hence relinquish their role-playing in patriarchy and take recourse to their individually. Though mothers like Martha worry from time to time about their fitting role as a mother such as “Do I love her? But the next moment this remorse and doubt is replaced with determination like” “I must be careful not to be much interested in what she does” (PM: 347). In the scope of establishing self-identity, shed their varied roles and resort to personal gratifications as per their taste and convenience. The modern mother is not ready to suppress ‘the real self’ the ‘woman within’ to become her social role and willing to be molded into the ideal mother.
4.19.1. She no more suffers from panic and guilt of neglecting family and children. Those who revolted and rejected the relationships called ‘husband’ deplore motherhood role also because experience has awarded them the prudence that however hard they try they are not going to be accepted or accredited for enacting this stressful role. Unwilling to be martyrs and the scapegoats any more for the egoistic, male dominated patriarchs who are ever ready to dump all their short coming and failures on women—the modern mother both British and the Indian mother find escape routes.

4.19.2. Devi the docile, obedient wife and abundantly loving dedicated mother just manages to play her role till her daughter’s wedding ceremony is over and leaves immediately at the crucial juncture before the marriage reception, which demands certain duties and responsibilities from her as a mother. Mary is prudent enough to leave her two years old daughter more so because for the child’s own good. Molly decides to marry again and Meena compromises only because she is convinced that her husband Sarangan would be reasonable husband and father for her child. Anna sends away her daughter Janet to a boarding school and endeavors to concentrate on her creativity in writing. The protagonists as mothers put an end to renunciation of their aims, interests, desires and careers and hence for a change they act as judicial persons for their self-fulfillment and self-identity thus it is obvious that the enforcement of biological and societal roles a woman denies her the actual experience of mothering. With several duties added to it, motherhood extends beyond nine-months to include responsibility for the children’s proper upbringing and intellectual development. While fatherhood meant just providing the sperm to fertilize the ovum, the mother’s function went beyond the biological to the moral, transforming the biological mother to a psychosocial one. The mother was considered the person in the best possible position to take on these duties, as it was “nature” that assigned them to her.

4.19.3. The heroines of the selected novels do not outright reject motherhood. The novelists endeavor to reinstate the fact that women try to inculcate the values
essential for a ‘Model Mother’. With the birth of subsequent child, they begin to feel increasingly the burden of motherhood. When their life style changes, they begin to experience the pressures of motherhood, with mounting difficulties they try to fit into the mould of feminine mother and remain there.

4.20.0. Lessing and Rajam Krishnan are feminist creative artists and their literary creations exemplify as feminist critique since they have proved themselves androgynous in their principals. The Indian Novelist reinstates in her novel *The House* that maternal ideologies cripple both male and female. Devi’s husband who is a male chauvinistic husband who makes everything a prestige issue nevertheless agrees to live in the flat given to his son by his in-laws. He sells his own house in spite of his wife Devi’s objections at the advent of his daughter’s extravagant marriage. While playing his role as Devi’s husband he was a very sensitive, short-tempered egoistic person. However, as a father he denigrates so much loosing his self-respect. This is because as a father he wants his daughter to settle comfortably. When it is a choice of priority between wife and daughter, it is only a daughter who is considered from a feminist reading of anthropology we learn that the social meaning of maleness and femaleness is constructed through kinship rules, which prescribe patterns of sexual dominance and subordination. From psychoanalysis we learn how these kinship rules become inscribed on the unconscious psyche of the female child via the traumatic re-orientation of sexual desire within the Oedipal phase away from the mother and towards the father describes Alexander and Taylor in *The Lass of the Father*.

4.20.1. The irony of feminine motherhood lies in the fact that women are trained in dependency for a role demanding strength. Independence and autonomy are considered dangerous for mothers. At the end of the eighteenth century, Mary Wollstonecraft pointed out the paradox of preparing women for the most demanding of all roles, that of a mother, by fostering weakness in them rather than strength. The double standards of the ideal of feminine motherhood are obvious. In the fourteenth century, for example, Virgin Mary could be worshipped, while
living women were brutalized and burnt as witches. The dark or the negative aspect of the Great Mother — as the goddess Kali, the killer-mother Medea, the lewd and malign witch, and the castrating mother— exists along with the benign, life-giving aspect— the mother was some times the source of pleasure and at other times the source of discomfort or pain.

4.20.2. Rich indicates the hypocrisy of patriarchal motherhood. Throughout patriarchal mythology, dream, symbolism, theology, language, and two ideas flow side by side: one, that the female body is impure, corrupt, the site of discharges, bleedings, dangerous to masculinity, a source of moral and physical contamination, “the devil’s gateway”. On the other hand, as mother the woman is beneficent, sacred, pure, asexual, nourishing, and the physical potential for motherhood— that same body with its bleedings and mysteries— is her single destiny and justification in life. These two ideas have become deeply internalized in women, even in the most independent of us, those who seem to lead the freest lives. The mother therefore serves as both Monster and Muse. She is, to quote Rich again, “both more and less as a person; she is something terribly necessary and necessarily terrible” (Rich 1976:112).

4.20.3. Questions asked in the HR interviews, which are obscene to motherhood ideologies, are objectionable. “What will be your reaction if I call your mother a prostitute?”, they except model answers like probably my father is her only customer. This is spoken in a crowd of young professional students while enhancing them with the strategies of facing interviews successfully. A particular female celebrity in sports field is mentioned and the question clusters around choice between her one single kiss and an increment in the job— what would the interviewee chose. All these only imply that still even in a crowd of highly educated and trained professionals, astonishingly women are devalued for her gender and she is yet a laughing stock and a source of comedy, joviality and frivolity.
4.20.4. The modern founding mothers are striving to challenge the mystique and the material realities— that made them prisoners, and wish were not hemmed in by maternity. Veneration in return for mother’s dedication might have been a bonus or an incentive. However, dedication itself is mistaken as over indulgence by the younger generation. They are uncomfortable with excess of maternal attentions or over considerations. When they are not able to receive emotional extravagances no doubt they cannot reciprocate it. Therefore, modern mothers feel assured that there is no more necessity for maternal charms.

4.20.5. Once, when self-identity is established women due to the imbibed psyche feel guilty and try to compromise or conform. However, in the modern course of life it may not be possible. This fighting will go on and has to go on— future progeny will automatically enjoy its fruits. Even indications in novels are that the younger generation women evolve as liberated personalities, very gracefully so and there is nothing uncommon or unusual about it though very different from their mothers. This is the necessity; something artificial and false cannot exist for a longer period. Society also will change definitely and an androgynous world will be established at the cost of men’s satisfaction. Men would suffer from this opposition and the woman’s craving for liberation. Men may feel injustice done to them, boy child may suffer psychologically but this is temporary but equality would be established in the due course and everyone would live happily ever after conforming to each other’s self-identity.

4.20.6. Both the British and the Indian contemporary writing portray the struggle between what is expected from a woman and what is innate in her. Rajam Krishnan’s women question and sometimes rebel against their maternal role; but are not able to reject it outright. At some point in their lives deny motherhood and attempt finding escape routes, but eventually understand total separation is not possible since they feel children are vulnerable and re-enter their maternal roles but of course with modifications. The feminist mothers found channeling their anger to more creative forms such as Devi joining social work team, Meena
compromising with patriarchal standards, Martha turns a communist and Anna materializes through her individualistic creative writing.

4.2.0. The chosen novelists are also sensitive to the issue that patriarchy brainwashes women into the delusions of spontaneous motherhood. In contrast when one views at the responsibilities a father is invested with and a search for the significance and ideological role of a father, it in surprising that the father’s role wins laurels at the level of giving legitimacy to the issue and nothing else is expected of the role.

4.2.1. Both the novelists are perfect critics in their delineation of father characters and in contrasting them with the mother characters. Meena’s father is picturised as a person who deserts Meena in an orphanage. The person, who brings Meena to the convent hostel, calls himself Meena’s father, other than this there is no other evidence to prove Meena’s parentage. He pays the hostel fee for one year and says he would return after a year to take Meena with him who would somewhat grow up by that time. He says since his wife is dead in an accident he is unable to take care of Meena. From Meena’s memory we can guess that Meena’s connections were rich people since she remembers having flown by an aero plane, her rich dresses, chocolate box, dolls etc. But why didn’t he return? Is Meena really his daughter remains a suspense throughout the novel. Orphans are created by such men who just satisfy their conscience according to their standard of morality immaterial of what it may cause to other’s lives.

4.2.2. Meena is an innocent, good-hearted girl of purity and good will. She is very grateful to Aaya who has been magnanimous enough to bring her up as her own daughter — an unknown orphan from the orphanage. Meena admires Aaya for her kindness, generosity and spontaneity of motherhood. Meena who is full of honest principles is unable to digest that even missionary differentiate between children who have some donors to support them and those orphans who do not have financial support of any sort. Her own history, her own childhood has
created hatred towards the materialistic ways of the world. Meena is such a darling that every one pets and pampers her in the convent. But when the father does not return even after a year over she is transferred to the unpaid orphanage where things are entirely different. The child is unable to adapt to the inferior, status and unkind ill treatment; runs away from the orphanage once or twice and is brought back again. The head sister who has a soft corner for Meena brings her to the custody of Annamma who has been working as a maidservant in the convent. Annamma who has lost her own two daughters, readily and gladly accepts the ward and sincerely brings up Meena as her own daughter with much affection and caring.

4.2.1.3. In Rajam Krishnan *After the Sound of Fury*, Aaya an old widow is a noble unselfish woman living in the slum, leading disciplined life. She works as maidservant in one or two houses for years together steadily. She has a son Mannikkam and an adopted daughter Meena. Meena is the only graduate in the locality. Since the day, the head sister put Meena under her custody Aaya carries on the burden of bringing up Meena through constant hard work and care. She has strange affection for the orphan girl. Aaya often feels guilty that Meena does not belong to the slum at all and that Aaya is unable to provide her a comfortable and decent life. She sends Meena to college and Meena becomes a graduate. Aaya wants her to continue studying for B.T. It is only Meena who refuses and gets employed with Kannairam the local MLA’s assistance.

4.2.1.4. Annamma dedicates her whole lifetime in bringing up and protecting Meena. She slaves with the only target of liberating Meena into the upper class as befitting her parentage, which is very vague. Meena is very fortunate to have been handed over to a pure hearted compassionate woman like Aaya otherwise she would become another destitute orphan like Teivanai who is an orphan victim. Aaya was Meena’s mother father, patron everything soon after Aaya’s death, Meena’s life the very next day becomes unsecured and threatening. Annamma is a symbolic representation, personification of motherhood. Though she lives in the
slum, she leads a righteous life and has taught Meena also to lead a noble life of self-respect and dignity. Women care for other’s children as foster mothers, but not men ironically they do not care for their own children and spontaneity of love towards other’s issues is quiet impossible.

4.21.5. A sensitive and much-complicated notion that the novelists have brought into discussion and highlighted through their novels is that Motherhood is expected to be spontaneous for women— such emotion is expected even in unmarried women and women who have not borne children. However, no such spontaneity is expected off a man. Paul in *The Golden Notebook* who starts visiting Ella and stays with her overnight would stiffen when Michael who had loved his father put his arm round Paul, and when the child rushed at him in welcome. Michaels father that is Ella’s husband has divorced and married again and was living in America. It was quite natural for Michael to turn with affection to this new man Paul, his mother’s acquaintance. Ella watched how he instinctively stiffened. He would gently put down Michael’s arms, and talk to him gently, as if he were grown up. In addition, the child responded. However, it hurt Ella the mother to see how the little boy, denied this masculine affection, would respond by being grown-up, serious, answering serious questions. Spontaneity of affection had been cut off in him, he kept it for her, warm and responsive in touch and in speech, but for Paul, for the men’s world, he had a responsible, calm thoughtful response. Sometimes Ella panicked a little, that it is harmful and that he will never again have a warm response to a man.

4.22.0. Feminine motherhood demands of renunciation of their aims, interests, desires and careers, and the inculcation of the ability to relate to others, to live and think through others. A mother is expected to negate her individuality; self-realization and self-understanding are irrelevant for the mother. Women have been told that their intellectual or creative aspirations are inappropriate, inconsequential or scandalous; an attempt to become like men or to escape from the tasks of childbearing and rearing. Career women are considered the ‘bad
guys’, ‘castrating females’ and ‘deviants’. The dependent, feminine, home-centered housewife is the one who receives the accolade; the women who insist on pursuing their interests, who leave the home, to take up jobs are severely criticized. The mother is not supposed to have interests of her own— the interests of the mother and child are supposed to be identical. She, therefore, has to develop extreme willingness to sacrifice. Elisabeth Badinter indicates that ‘feminine nature’ synonymous with all the characteristics of ‘model mother’ or ‘feminine mother’ presupposes certain ‘qualities’ in the mother: passivity, weak ego or sense of self, renunciation of active aims, interest of one’s own to live through others, and incapacity for abstract thought. Adrienne Rich puts forth a series of ‘unexamined assumptions’ that feminine motherhood encompasses:

A natural mother is a person without further identity, one who can find her chief gratification in being all day with small children, living at a pace tuned to theirs; that the isolation of mothers and children together in the home must be taken for granted; that maternal love is, and should be, quite literally selfless; that children and mothers are the causes of each others suffering (1976:22-23).

4.22.1. Denying mothers access to the public sphere, feminine motherhood confines them to the home, which is considered a sacred place, for social altruism. Idealizing both the home and the mother in it, institutionalized motherhood consists that the isolated home, protected from the outside world, is the mother’s responsibility to maintain as a sanctuary. The perspectives of motherhood in literature have always been exalted, suppressed, or otherwise rendered as dominating roles. However, the attitude towards motherhood is changing. The real mother was elusive in previous literature, but in these novels they figure in as real mothers. No more smarming and smothering of sons without stressing on discipline and regularity. The realistic mothers acknowledge the hypocrisy of maternity. Devi’s strong conviction is: “Children are quoted as the final argument
the sacred cow, our justification for everything, even for living. No wonder that they grow up to be such sullen monsters, burdened with all this unselfishness of their parents” (H: 98).

4.2.2. The social and economic roots of women’s oppression lies in the relegation of women to roles associated with their sexual or reproductive activity, which is disadvantageous to our progress as individuals and as a race. Careful attention to the details of the intricate relationship between sexuality and cultural role-playing needs to be recognized, Firestone comments: “The crucial problem of modern life is sexuality” (1970:209). This is the only feminist theory, which argues explicitly that women’s liberation also necessitates children’s liberation. Firestone explains that this is because,

The heart of women’s oppression is her childbearing and childrearing roles. And in turn children are defined in relation to this role and are psychologically formed by it; what they become as adults and the sort of relationship they are able to form determine the society they will ultimately build (1970:165).

Male power is at the root of the social construction of gender. The men control over women’s role as child bearers and child rearers. Ours is andocentric culture, which treated women merely as extraneous, childbearing female. Matrimony and motherhood is acceptable provided women were released from compulsory conformity to bondage. Motherhood is such a grueling and enduring experience that they all pose certain expectations on the family in return. However, when nothing materializes, when no gratitude is returned the fact that nothing is judicial and nothing is reciprocal dawn as a thunderbolt upon them. They start disintegrating.

4.23.0. Scrutiny into the protagonists’ motherhood stage has reinstated how the selected novelists have depicted the conflicts arising in women when they
undertake mother’s role. It described the myth of motherhood, how the women’s capacities for mothering and abilities to get gratification from it are strongly internalized and psychologically enforced by being built into the feminine psychic structure. The ensuing contradictions and conflicts arising in women gave birth to the feminist phase of women who realized their discontent. For most of them, it is a suffocating experience. The modern mothers not only protest and contradict with their traditional mothers as in the case of the Martha but also suffer from an internal vying between the traditional motherhood ideologies nurtured strongly in their characteristics and the emancipated modern realistic mother molded by the necessity and practical situations of her modern life. Molly after divorcing Richard brings up her son Tommy as a single parent sacrificing all her ambitions and desires, but finds him revolting. For Anna however, motherhood is a soothing and satisfying experience. In her moments of turmoil, tension and disintegration, Anna finds comfort and stability in the thoughts of Janet. The novel further reflects on the stigma of the unwed mother—Anna, who had been living with Max Wolf without marriage, marries him when she conceives so that their child is legitimate, but divorces him after the birth of their daughter. The mothers featuring in the selected novels—Martha, Anna, Molly, Meena and Devi though at times are doubtful about their satisfactory fulfillment of mother’s role they resort to temporary separation from their children when there is a crisis in their lives, as does Devi. The Indian mother decides to leave home without informing anyone during the crucial juncture of her daughter’s marriage reception in the novel *The House*. Martha the British mother emphatically decides to leave her husband and two-year-old Caroline finding the role too suffocating and over-taxing in the novel *A Proper Marriage*. This chapter has exposed that women who have been tolerant and enduring as daughters and wives now seek to shirk their role, leave home as a token of their protest temporarily or forever which though certainly may shock the patriarchs yet offers them a scope to rectify and make amendments and remedies for the harm they have done women.