

**CHAPTER-III**  
**PARENT-CHILDREN RELATIONSHIP**

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### Parent-Children Relationship

Parenthood which plays an important role in child development is an exciting experience in a person's life. Child development is a long process which involves many interactions between children and parents. Close relationship creates positive outcome to cultivate healthy parent-child relationship. Good communication is an important factor, and protection of children is another one which gives them a feeling of security as well as care. Parents inculcate family values in children as well as they learn many skills from their parents.

Parenthood is a hard job and if parents fail in it, that becomes problematic for child development. Parent relationship affects child's physical, mental and emotional well-being. This relationship varies from child to child. Many factors affect it; such as, too hard parental control, family conflict, child rearing problems, remarriage as well as marital conflicts like divorce or separation etc. Love and care play dominant role in a parent-children relationship.

Thus parents have to be emotionally supportive to children. They should keep keen watch on their children's education as well as social behaviours. Nowadays, generation gap creates a lot of problem in parent-child relationship so for healthy relationship they have to understand each other.

In *Wicked Women*, there are variety of parent-children relationships. Children are mostly happy when parents care, love and have affection. But once children are grown up, they behave practically with parents. When they are in teenage, unknown to the world, parents

are worried about them and they also have a lot of affection for parents. Their nature differs age by age. As middle age is their own, so they are self-reliant and they behave as they wish, without thinking of their parents. Sometimes parents also behave rudely with their children for their own reasons. It affects them and makes the relations complicated.

In the story 'Run and Ask Daddy If He Has Money', Milly and David love their children very much. They take care of each and every thing,

The Froot children, Sherry and Baf, now in their teenage years, have never wittingly eaten sugar or meat under their own roof: Frilly Mood has seen to that. The kids are healthy if a little thin, and very polite. Frilly Mood's done well by them. It is no crime to be serious. (63)

Milly and David have so affection towards their children that when David hears voice of Bettina's daughter, he compares it to Sherry and Baf. When the daughter cries and Daddy cheers her, David suddenly remembers Sherry, who likes this type of soothing.

Similarly Bettina and her husband take care of their daughter a lot. Their daughter starts crying at the shop and follows daddy when daddy turns out from the shop, he takes her and she smiles. The daughter is so much attached to her father that at the shop 'she obediently leaves her mother's side and heads through shopping bags and springs clad elbows towards her father' (65-66). There is great affection between the daughter and father. Here, parents as well as children have great affection for each other.

The story 'In the Great War', Ellen is very attached to her six years old daughter, Orchis. She knows that after her death no one will take care of Orchis so she kills Orchis. Weldon narrates this incident,

The mother comes with whisky in the sleeptime cocoa: she brings with her a handful of pills. Take just another one, my dear, and just another one. Mother says so! For the cut on your finger, the bump on your head—see, soon all will be well: all troubles cured. (72)

It is very difficult for a mother to kill her own child. Ellen seems right because few children survive after the suicide of mothers. Eileen has boundless affection towards Orchis so for Orchis' sake, she kills her own daughter before committing suicide.

Milena from 'Wasted Lives' is also attached with her ten years old son Milo. She is divorced and works in London. She has had in crèche because her parents have been strangers. She does not want it to happen with Milo so she keeps him with her mother to keep away from family conflict.

In the story 'Valediction', the protagonist of the story and Edward love their three children a lot: Guy, Lettice and Hetty. Guy is the oldest son who threatens his parents from his childhood. He never plays with guns or motor cars. He loves dolls. He has girlfriends at teenage and then boyfriends. Then he has developed male genitalia. Later on he marries Staria and now both are happy in their life. So his mother cares him lot from childhood and wants that he should not get spoiled. The protagonist has once worried a lot about Lettice. Five years ago when Lettice's cruise ship has been hijacked by terrorists in the middle of the Indian

Ocean, she suffers a lot. Lettice has a job as an Entertainments Officer on the cruise. The mother narrates—

I sat where I'm sitting now, on the lawn, in the evening sun, in frozen panic. I could not act. I had not realized until then that fear could paralyse. I could not even answer the phone. How was it possible to sit in this familiar place, amongst this familiar green, while madmen ran amok for a cause hitherto plausible, and threatened your child? . . . why should Lettice be the one to get swatted like this by the flailing of real life? I wished then I had never had children: never held these hostages to fortune: had not been trapped by Grazecot, by my affection for it, by my sense of what my forbears require. I had never seen beyond my own nose, never recognized responsibility other than to my nearest and dearest, and was now being punished for it. (168)

This shows that she loves Lettice so much that she gets shocked by the news. Like Lettice she also loves Hetty. When Hetty is twenty one years old, she starts sexual relationship with girlfriend so her mother is worried that she starts classes of lesbians for the parents. When Hetty meets Rory, her lesbian phase is ended and her mother also stops her classes. So she is very caring about Hetty. After Hetty's marriage she has upsetting relations with her husband, Rory. But she is a clever mother. She quarrels with Rory at least twice a year and for it she waits for school holidays. She does not want that children's schooling is interrupted by family conflicts. Thus she is a caring mother who looks after her children's schooling though she has unhappy relations with her husband.

On the other hand, when children are grown up, they do not take care of their parents. They are self-absorbed and live their own lives and do not think of the parents. It hurts the parents so much that they curse their children saying they are ungrateful bastard, bitches. The children also think that their home is unsuitable for them and it is fit only for parents. The parents are traditional and belong to “the harsher the better: no gain without pain!” principle. They know that children are never interested in Grazecot and describe them as “rattling round in that great house like peas in a pod”. Finally, the parents let the kids deal with the problem of what to do with a changing world, since it is beyond them. Thus Edward and his wife care for their children but children fail to understand the parents when they need them most.

Phillipa and Paul from the story ‘A Question of Timing’ are also children-loving parents. Phillipa has left her job for the children but later on because of her family’s financial crisis she resumes to her job. She gets the Boondock Boy’s Christmas tour of Australia and New Zealand. She wants to celebrate Christmas with her family but she cannot. She misses all things very much so she calls Paul at midnight to see whether everything is okay. They also miss her a lot. As she is not there, he is unable to adjust with the children. He tells her,

“Pauline’s running a bit of a temperature,” . . . “but I’m sure it’s okay. She’s just missing you. And Peter got sent home from nursery for biting but it’s the end of term anyway. They couldn’t miss a trick of course; they’re using it as an excuse to say he’s not mature enough to be at nursery. I explained that you were away and they condescended to accept his biting as a temporary behavioural problem due to maternal deprivation.” (226)

The children are unable to do their things on their own and miss their mother. So Pauline has fever. Phillipa asks Paul to call a doctor but Rosa, their neighbour who was once an assistant, takes care of them.

It is clear that Phillipa and Paul care their children and admit that it is happening because Phillipa is away from them. She also misses them and does not want to celebrate Christmas without them.

Maria, in the story 'Red on Black' is also a caring mother. She and her husband, Bernard, live apart but their son, Martin, lives with Maria. He has so much affection for his mother that he is always on her side. Whenever she returns home from her job, he asks her for a cup of tea. He does not like Angela, his father's girlfriend. At the funeral of Bernard's father, he goes with Bernard but when Maria arrives he joins her. He does not like Angela attending funeral. Though his father looks after him he has no much affection for his father. He does not like his parents living separately. Bernard quarrels with Maria over the way she brings Maurice up. He does not leave Maria because it will be harmful to Maurice. He knows that divorce will upset Maurice and disturb him if his parents are divorced. He does not like Maurice watching a football match because, according to him, television rots brain. Maurice also fails to satisfy his father's expectations. He knows that his father likes a stupid women like Angela. So at last he decides to live with his mother. Maria also takes care of him a lot. At funeral when Maurice smokes a cigarette, she hopes that Bernard should not come and catch him smoking. Thus she is very affectionate towards Maurice as they are held together by loss relations.

Similarly Harry from the story 'Knock Knock' also wants his parents not to live apart. He knows that his father, Aaron, has an affair with Maggie, and his mother, Jessica, has left Aaron and stays with her

parents. Harry is also disappointed and frustrated by the parental matter. He plays important role to reunite them. Harry, who is eight years old but 'an overly mature for his age', does not bear his parents' deprivation. To reunite his parents he strangely talks,

"If I died," . . . "you'd forget me at once.

"We wouldn't, we wouldn't." exclaimed Jessica. "We all love you so much!"

And even Bill and Rosemary, though talk of such emotion came with difficulty to their lips, assured their grandchild of undying and unflinching love.

"No," said Harry, refusing their comfort. "I'm right about this. I'm just not important to you. In a couple of hours you'd forget all about me. In fact if I were out of your sight for just ten minutes you wouldn't remember who I was."(254-55)

Harry's harsh and emotional speech touches Jessica's heart who changes her decision for Harry's sake. Jessica and Aaron reunite for him. Thus Harry's concern changes all situations. In this way, Harry solves his parental matter because he loves them a lot.

Martin, from the story 'Santa Clause's New Clothes', is a keen child. His parents, Philip and Audrey, now live apart because of Dr. Hetty to whom Philip remarries. Martin though lives with them wants to celebrate Christmas with Audrey. He thinks that she will be all alone in Edinburgh without him. He rings Audrey frequently and assures her that he will show Hetty her place in his home. He does not want to see Hetty in his house and take his mother's place. Martin and Audrey are very



affectionate to each other. Philip also loves his children. He thinks that a child should not be used in the parent's disputes. According to him Martin is small and has to stop worrying about the grown-ups as well as he should not try to spoil the atmosphere like his mother. But Martin is too emotionally attached to his mother rather than to father. He wants to create problem for his stepmother and expel her from the house but Philip is not ready to do so. On Christmas, he purposefully wrangles with Dr. Hetty. He calls her a bitch thrice and expresses his anger:

“I think you're a selfish bitch,”. . . “You've no business sitting there. That's my mother's chair. She meant to be serving the vegetables, not you. Those are her plates you're handing round. You didn't even hear them. You talk so much everything's gone cold.” (271)

So Martin purposefully insults Dr. Hetty but Philip patches up. As she is sensible she does not react. Martin indirectly pleads for his mother and in the evening he calls his mother and tells, “I told them what she was. I saw her odd. You can rely on me (272).” In this way Martin does not see Audrey's distress which hurts him.

Jim Baghshott, from the story 'Tale of Timothy Bagshott', is a property developer, rich man who is a millionaire. His wife Audrey has run off with a chauffeur by leaving them. Now Jim is in jail for creating a fraud, so his son, Timothy, lives with aunt Annie, Jim's sister, in a council flat on the twenty first floor of his father's crappy flat. His father worries about Timothy who has brought up very posh and is now forced to live in such a flat. He goes to 'one of his jerry-built schools.' So Jim's only worry is the boy because he is a 'poor motherless boy'. When Jim meets his solicitor, Clive, he asks him about Timothy. At that time tears

come in his eyes. When Audrey comes to meet Jim in the jail, he expresses his feelings, “What sort of mother are you? Running out on your own child. That boy’s going to spend the rest of his life searching for an absent mother figure (151).” He also states that ‘he will be searching for an absent father figure too’. He also worries for his son and confesses to Audrey, ‘I haven’t been fair to him. Bringing him up posh, then pushing him in the deep end’ (151). As he is in the jail so he admits, ‘There’s nothing else to do round here. I wasn’t much of a father myself. He’ll be searching for an absent figure too’ (151).

Jim’s love for Timothy is narrated as—

. . . Jim expresses his anxiety about the swimming pool at Bagshott School—chlorine might eat away at the new-style insulation of the underwater electronics—and suggests Timothy be warned not to take a dip. And so love, affection and trust is re-established between the two. (151)

Thus it is clear that, though Jim is in jail, he cares for Timothy a lot and so he enquires about him which shows his affection for him.

Later on a postcard comes from Audrey to Timothy. It has the message, ‘*See ya soon, kid*’. He has rejoiced in his heart and feels ‘his father’s blood surge more strongly in his veins, and his mother’s too’. This shows that though they live apart, his mother loves him and he too loves her.

In the story ‘Love Amongst the Artist’ Edwin and Lucy have two children, Bessie and Bertie. Edwin takes cares of them. They are Edwin’s children most than Lucy’s because ‘Bessie [has] Edwin’s beetling brows and Bertie [apes] Edwin’s [clip], dry manner of speech’ (104). But Edwin is career oriented. When he appoints Pierre to teach his children a piano

for summer, he is on the last chapter of a novel. It is tense time for him so he orders that the piano-playing should be only between two and four o'clock of an afternoon. He tells it so forcibly that all frighten and weep. Bessie can hardly get to the piano and then forgets it. In case of Lucy, she loves her children but for the sake of love she betrays them. Though she has left that house, she yearns for them, particularly, on their Christmas celebrations. She has affection towards the children but Edwin's love dominates them as she is away from them.

Another characters like Philly, from 'Through a Dustbin Darkly', Carrie from 'A Good Sound Marriage', and Milena from 'Wasted Lives' are still pregnant but love their child most. They take care of their child very much. Philly makes changes in her house because her house is unhealthy, dark and damp as she cleans it every day because she does not want that it will affect the health of her child. She forgets to take down the decoration of Christmas, so she fears it as unlucky and it does not affect her baby so she prays a lot. There is a lot of smell of paint and turps so she packs it all because she does not want that it should harm herself and her child. Thus she cares a lot in her pregnancy so that it should not affect the health of her baby.

Carrie cries a lot as she repents her frustrated marital life. Her grandmother, Christabel, consoles her. Christabel tells her that it will affect her baby and 'the baby will be in the habit of crying when it comes out and will give her hell and sleepless nights'. Carrie is five months pregnant so for her child's sake she restrains her pains.

Milena, a divorcee, is pregnant by the protagonist of the story who is a family man. She wants to marry him but he rejects and suspects about child's fatherhood. She is so devastated that she does not bear it and for

the child's as well as her own prospects she commits suicide by jumping in river.

Weena and her mother, Francine, from the story 'End of the Line', have unhealthy relations. Weena is a journalist and Francine is an elegant, unemotional woman doing a degree in clinical psychology. Weena has low salary so she needs someone to take care of her. Both live together 'for the reason of commerce and comfort'. They always taunt each other and use very low words. According to Weena, her mother has an unhealthy hold over her. She calls her mother in anger 'The bitch!'. She hates her mother because 'she's always driving her men away' and she tells it to her friend Hattie that 'It isn't healthy to live with one's mother'. On the other hand, to Francine 'Weena is hopelessly spoiled because of her beauty and she is as poisonous as a pampered rattle-snake'. Both are stubborn and they never talk normally. Francine always threatens her that she will put her out. When Dervish, Weena's boss, calls, through their conversation their unpleasant relations are exposed—

"Can I speak to Weena?" he asked.

"I don't know who she is," said Francine, and put the phone down. It rang again.

"Wrong number," she said this time, but before she could hang up Dervish spoke.

"You're Weena's mother," said Dervish, "and I don't know who she is either, so we're on the same side. Is it a child, is it an employee, is it Superbitch? Since her father died, she's been a nightmare! I'm her employer. Hello."

“She’s been a nightmare since the day she was born,” said Francine. “Daddy’s little jail-bait. So why don’t you fire her? Does she have some hold over you?” (33-34)

They have so complicated relations that Francine wants that Weena should be fired from her job so that she will get that job. She has an evil eye on Weena’s job so when Francine talks with Dervish, her wickedness is exposed—

“So it seemed a risk worth taking? Of course it is! Fire Weena, employ me as a contributing editor. I need money. You need me. Circulation is falling. Fifty per cent of your staff need to go; I expect you know that. You just lack the courage to do it. Make me assistant editor—I’ll do it. Years with Weena have toughened me up.”

“But they’re such nice, good girls,” said Dervish helplessly.

“What would I fire them for?”

“For being too young, inexperienced, half-starved and in need of animal protein to liven them up, but which they are too principled to eat. (41)

This shows that Francine is a ruthless mother. She and her husband occasionally wish to beat Weena to death. This shows they have unhappy relations with Weena. At last, Francine locks the house by throwing her suitcase out of the house. It is clear that lack of understanding creates complicated relationships. Hetty, Weena’s friend, also has upsetting relationship with her mother. She has no good opinion about her parents because of a generation gap.

Similarly, Peter and Daphne behave impolitely with their parents: Defoe and Elaine. Peter is thirty one and an investment broker for a direct insurance company. Daphne is a light-hearted, ruthless girl. When Peter and Daphne come to know that their parents are going to sell their house, they become angry. Their parents are selling their house without informing their children. When Daphne calls Peter, she loses her temper. Daphne tells Peter that their parents are 'Entirely selfish', and Peter replies "Heaven preserve us from these turbulent parents." Thus they are ungrateful children. They even lie to parents when Daphne is going to have a sex-change operation but she hides it from Defoe. This shows that they are crooked children who never take any advice from their parents. They are self-absorbed and want their parents should behave nicely with them. When children are grown-up they get engrossed in their own lives and forget their duties. They have no sense of responsibility, so they argue with their parents. It is because of a generation gap.

Carrie from 'A Good Sound Marriage' has unhappy relations with her mother, Kate. Kate wants 'a sporty, wooly-hat sort of daughter with no soul' but Carrie has refused it and chosen Art school. Once, Kate does not allow Carry to attend Carrie's grandmother, Christabel's funeral to whom Carrie loves most. Their relations are out of order. Kate does not like Carrie' marriage with Clive as well as Carrie never forgives her mother for divorcing her father and remarrying. Kate is dead for Carrie as she does not help Carry even in her pregnancy. Weldon narrates,

Carrie's mother, too, was as good as dead; that is to say Kate had scarcely a word to say her now that Carrie had gone out and married Clive. Kate threw up her hands in horror and just left her alone to get on with her husband and her

pregnancy, and Carrie, to her own surprise, felt the loss.  
(189)

This shows from her childhood they have no healthy relations. Kate betrays her daughter by remarrying as well as Carrie hurts her by marrying Clive. Both are stubborn and never compromise with their views.

There are love-hate relationship between children and parents. The children such as Maria from 'Red on Black', Eleanor from 'The Pardoner' and Eleo from 'Heat Haze' have love-hate relationship with their parents. While Maria was fifteen, her mother left her with her father and eloped with Victor, a rich man. But Maria becomes happy when her mother leaves them. Later on Maria's mother never goes to her daughter but Maria goes. Maria never forgives her mother for abandoning her. Her mother is also angry with Maria because she has not stopped Eleanor, the second wife of Maria's father, so Maria's mother does not cooperate in Maria's marriage. When Maria's mother comes to attend her marriage, Maria drives her away as Maria does not want her mother to spoil her marriage. Maria suspects that her mother really does not forgive her because Maria has insulted her mother on the wedding, and for this reason her mother hardly speaks with her though her mother loves her. Once, at a lunch, when Maria eats fish, her mother advises her to be careful of bones, she does not want that fish bones choke Maria. Her mother comes at funeral of Bernard's father because she wants that Maria should not be defeated by the funeral as Maria has already been defeated by her wedding once. She consoles Maria when Maria cries seeing Angela, her husband Bernard's lover, who has come to attend the funeral. This shows Maria's mother cares her though they have love-hate relationship. Maria's father is a cold person who has not good relations

with Maria. When she asks him, at the time of her divorce, some money as a loan to buy a house, he replies:

“I don’t think lending you money would be a good idea,” . . .  
“I don’t want to interfere between husband and wife, even when they’re allegedly exes. You two get along well enough. A divorce by mutual assent. Very civilised. If anyone can make it work, you can, Maria. I only wish your mother had been like you.” (237)

Though he has not totally denied giving money to Maria, he has no intention to give her money.

Eleanor and her father, Bob, also have love-hate relationship. Bob loves her most as she is Bob’s little girl who sometimes tries to be what Bob wants and sometimes the opposite, and gets it all wrong anyway. Eleanor has a ‘charming eagerness as well as vulnerability’ which Bob loves. Bob does not like ‘to see her so easily dismissed him for her therapist’. When Eleanor organizes her first big event, he worries because it is important to her and fears that it will go wrong. When Bob behaves rudely with Julie, Eleanor’s therapist, Eleanor scolds him, and he becomes angry and tells that he will not provide her any more money. She cries and, in a fit of anger, calls him ‘mercenary bastard’. This shows that they love as well as hate each other.

Eleo has lived with her mother for thirteen years. Her mother never wants to let Eleo know that her father is alive so she hides the truth. As Eleo’s father is gay, Eleo’s mother leaves him to protect her daughter from him. She loves Eleo most so she never uses her husband’s money which he has sent for daughter’s maintenance. She works as a secretary and all her earning is spent on them. She elopes with a truck driver. When



Eleo was thirteen, her mother had died and it upsets Eleo. After five years, she comes to know about her father and becomes happy now. She is anorexic so he fears and compels her to go to a psychoanalyst. Though she is normal, she agrees with her father. She loves her father but does not like him to have the lovers like Bo and Franklin. She is afraid and wants someone to rescue him because she knows Bo and Francine very well.

In this collection of short story there are some happy as well as healthy relationships between parent and grown up children. Gosling from 'Leda and Swan' has also the same kind of relationship with his mother. She is very kind and more affectionate towards him. She calls him fondly 'a real water baby'. She has named him Gosling to become a swan, a water baby. When he was young, she dies by cancer, painfully. She is confident about him as she always encourages him for swimming.

Jessica from the story 'Knock Knock' has also healthy relationship with her parents: Rosemary and Bill, who support her when she is betrayed by her husband, Aaron. Now she lives with her parents. Her husband's adultery troubles her but her parents console her and help her in decision making. They love Jessica most, so when she is ready to live with Aaron and not to divorce him, they agree because they do not wish any problem to harm Jessica. In this way Jessica has healthy relations with her parents.

Similarly Philly's parents from 'Through a Dustbin', Darkly cares her a lot. Philly is pregnant and her house is dark and damp. So her father wants to cut down trees but Basil, Philly's husband likes trees. According to Philly's father, their house lacks sufficient light. Philly's mother has left her eleven thousand pounds which Philly spends on her house. This

shows that her parents love her and care her a lot. But a crooked minded Basil, who has an evil eye on Philly's wealth has spent all her money.

While concerning the parent-children relationship from this collection of short story, there are such parents who make discrimination between male and female child. The story 'Not Even a Blood Relation' portrays three angry adult daughters, who are unkind. Hughie, Duke of Cowarth and Beverley want a male heir as they have three daughters. They crave for a son. As a Duke, Hughie owns a property so they want an inheritor for their estate. As they expect a son every time and decide the name before birth, so they put their names as Edwina, Thomasina and Davida by adding 'a' to the names Edwin, Thomas, David. It hurts the girls so much that they think it is their mother's doing and always take their father's side. They blame their mother for that. Edwina, once, calls her mother 'selfish'. Hughie wants to please the girls and 'eat, drink and be merry, and spend the lot' but Beverley is wicked so instead of satisfying expectations of the girls, she keeps 'what was her by legal right'. The girls are crooked minded so they always argue with Beverley:

"But then," Edwina remarked, "you always were selfish, Mother."

"What is so selfish," asked Beverley, startled, "about wanting to live in my own home?"

"Because it's far too big for you now," said Thomasina. "Sell the place and find somewhere small and sensible to live, and divide the money amongst us." (74)

Later on Hughie dies by cancer. A year after Hughie's death, Beverley calls the girls as she is going to make an announcement of selling the

house, the Titian, and shift somewhere else. When the girls come there, they wonder,

They were surprised to see scaffolding up on Cowarth Court and workmen busy everywhere.

“Where’s she got the money from?” They were wild! “Has she made some deal with the National Trust? If she has, we will have her declared incompetent by reason of insanity!”

(78)

The girls hate Beverley from their childhood and now they decide to plan a plot against her. Beverley wants a son so she keeps relations with her boyfriend, Brian. As Beverley tells the girls that she is going to marry Brian the next week, the girl gets shocked,

“You are completely disgusting!” said Edwina to her mother later, on the the phone. “What will people say? You have betrayed our father!”

“I know older people do have sex, but do you have to flaunt it?” asked Thomasina. “That short skirt! And you were holding that man’s hand! It doesn’t bear thinking about.”

“Now Mother,” said Davida, “you can’t replace Father so why do you try? You can only make a fool of yourself. Pop stars and actresses can get away with toyboys but a woman like you simply can’t. You just don’t have the style. Can’t you be content to just be yourself?” (79)

The girls do not like their mother’s relation with Brian. Edwina has set a private detection on Brian and gets information that he is an Australian

and has made a fortune in computers. He has met Beverley three years ago. The girls not only wonder but also backbiting her,

“She used her title to trap him!” declared Thomasina. “Why else should one of the world’s most eligible millionaire bachelors”—for that was what Brian had been before she nobbled him—“take up with a cowgirl from New Zealand?”

“She’s a manipulative, greedy bitch,” said Davida, for once losing her cool. “I hate her! She only didn’t marry him so as not to lose her title.” (80-81)

Now Beverley is sixty years old and thinks about a baby, which shocks them. They do not like their mother, who is Cowarth and from traditional Catholic family, doing such thing:

Davida said Beverley was being entirely selfish. She was trying to dance long after the music had stopped: it was pathetic; Beverley was sick in her head. For all her training, Davida said, she, Davida, just couldn’t come to terms with this: it was too monstrous. (82)

Later on she delivers Edwin and reveals to the girls that Edwin is Cowarth. The girls also accept it and feel sorry. They begin to respect their mother as they are for being ‘so thoroughly selfish and bad’. At last, they realize that it is their father’s doing rather than mother’s and become more polite to mother. In this way unhealthy relations are turned into healthy one.

There are also step-children and step-parent relationship. Eleanor from ‘Red on Black’ cares Maria, her husband’s former wife’s daughter. Maria, first, hates her as she interferes between Maria and her father but

later on Eleanor's kind behaviour changes her. As Eleanor is a superwoman and she cares for each family member, she does everything for Maria's marriage. Eleanor's income earns living of Maria, her husband, and their son Maurice also. Whenever Maria needs money, she asks it from Eleanor. Maria also takes care of Winnie, Eleanor's daughter, when Eleanor's child-care arrangements break down, and also tries to repay her money. Unfortunately Eleanor gets breast cancer and dies. Maria comes late for Eleanor's funeral. She cannot forgive herself for that so she cries for a week. Both are so attached to each other that, though Eleanor is stepmother, she takes care of Maria more than Maria's mother. It is because Eleanor understands Maria very well and in return Maria also helps her by looking after her daughter.

In the story 'The Pardoner', Eleanor and Sorrel, Eleanor's stepmother, have unhealthy relationships. Eleanor is a whimsical girl so Sorrel always speaks with her mildly, kindly and she is doing it just to avoid danger. At the end of the story, when Bob is ready to pay indemnity, there is a clash between Sorrel and Julie, Eleanor's therapist. Eleanor also argues with Sorrel. The stepmother behaves patiently but Eleanor treats her rudely.

In the story 'A Good Sound Marriage', Carrie has upsetting relationship with her stepchildren, Chrissie and Harry. Carrie looks after them but they hate her. According to Carrie they are 'two monsters created by Audrey'. They distress Carrie. Though she is not feeling well, they make her play Monopoly. They fetch the cokes because she is near the kitchen. In this way they try to give trouble to her. Carrie is pregnant and afraid of her child's care particular about babysitting, as she knows that her stepchildren hate her most so they will not do the baby-sitting. When Clive and Carrie want to buy a new house and sell their own, no

one buys it. Stepchildren become happy because ‘this house was where they’d always lived and where their mother, Audrey, died. It was theirs’ (193).

Dr. Hetty, from the story ‘Santa Clause’s New Clothes’, has four stepchildren: Henry, Petula, Penny and Martin. Except Martin, others accept her. As she makes their father happy, their opposition dissolves. Martin is nine and does not admit that she has acquired her mother, Audrey’s place. Hetty treats them well and adjust with them as well as grown up children also get adjusted with her. Hetty thinks that ‘Martin might need a little pressure to help him adjust to the new set of interpersonal relationships at home’. She is happy as everyone manages to be civilized but Martin has no ‘civilised behaviour!’ Hetty tries to convince that Martin has to accept reality but he creates problems for Hetty to see her off the house. She states to Martin,

“Civilised behaviour,” . . . “is my understanding why you do such a selfish thing, and forgiving you for it, and helping you not to do it again. You want to hurt me, Martin, because you are angry and jealous: of course you are, you feel there is not enough love in your father for you as well as for me, but there is, I promise you there is.” (269)

This shows that she cares as well as loves him but he is not ready to accept her. She cannot admit her defeat at the hands of nine year old Martin. She thinks that he will forget the past but he answers clearly,

“I think you’re a selfish bitch,” . . . “You’ve no business sitting there. That’s my mother’s chair. She’s meant to be serving the vegetables, not you. Those are her plates you’re

handling round. You didn't even heat them. You talk so much everything's gone cold." (271)

He expresses his anger by calling her 'bitch' and wonders why others do not see her as bitch. At last he leaves them at Christmas table and weeps and goes to his room into loneliness.

In this way *Wicked Woman* explores various types of parent-children relationships. While considering parents and their grown up children, these relations are different. Children, still in teenage, are dependent on their parents but as they grow up they can decide on their own; so there are a lot of differences between them. Thus various types of relationships such as unhappy, healthy, controlling, love-hate, abusive, happy, unhealthy, etc. are explored in the stories. Positive communication and healthy environment strengthens these relations while lack of understanding as well as because of communication gap these relationships are spoiled.