

**Chapter-V**  
**CONCLUSION**

## Chapter V

### CONCLUSION

The present dissertation, which has been broadly grouped into five parts, studies family relationships in Fay Weldon's *Wicked Women*. The first part, which is an introductory one, highlights life and works of Fay Weldon as well as review of literature. It gives briefly a biographical sketch of Fay Weldon tracing her childhood, her educational career and her career as a writer as well as review of literature. The First Chapter deals with theoretical perspectives about the topic of the study. The first section of this chapter consists of generic features of short story, which highlights the origin and development, definitions, characteristics and elements of the short story. The second section focuses on the concept of family relationship, its importance, usefulness, merits, and weaknesses. The Second Chapter studies husband-wife relationship portrayed in *Wicked Women*. In this chapter, various types of husband-wife relations such as healthy, upsetting, frustrated, unhappy, co-dependent, uncommunicative, sacrificial, faithful, faithless, hypocritical, etc are discussed. The Third Chapter analyses parent-children relationship—how children behave with their parents, and vice versa. The generation gap plays important role in parent-children relationship. The Fourth Chapter, highlights other relationships such as grandparent and grandchildren relationship, in-laws relationship and other minor relationships. The Fifth and last chapter is the conclusion of the dissertation, keeping in view the foregoing chapters, where observations regarding family relationships in *Wicked Women* are made.

*Wicked Women* consists of twenty stories which are divided into six parts such as, 'Tales of Wicked Women', 'Tales of Wicked Men',

'Tales of Wicked Children', 'From the Other Side', 'Of Love, Pain and Good Cheer' and 'Going to the Therapist'. While studying husband wife relationship in the stories, there are domineering as well as unfaithful husbands like Gosling from 'Leda and Swan', Edwin from 'Love Amongst the Artists', and Basil from 'Through the Dustbin, Darkly'. Gosling is not only jealous of his wife's career but also wants to stop her development as a swimmer. So he always dominates her and creates obstacles in her career. Edwin is domineering husband who is unable to handle his responsibility, and always busy in his work. It results in Lucy's elopement with Pierre betraying her family. Basil wants to grab Philly's money as Philly, like a traditional wife, gets flattered by his appreciation. So she spends her money on the house because she wants 'home' and there is no one seems to mind it so she has to attend to household matters. Basil dominates her and hides his past intentionally. He is hypocritical husband who marries both Serena and Philly, and betrays them by having affair with Ruthy and leaves both of them when he needs them no more.

Husband-wife relations are unhappy because of betrayal on the part of husbands as well as wives. There are some couples who betray their partners and also try to maintain their married lives. Some of the stories have such husbands, who have extramarital affairs, and so betray their wives. Defoe from 'End of the Line' betrays his wife Elaine for having a secret love affair with Weena. But when he comes to know about Weena's reality he leaves her also. It is clear that because of Weena, Defoe and Elaine lead unhappy life but, in the end, they understand each other and maintain their marital relationship. In the story 'Valediction,' Edward once falls in love with one of the Lettice's girlfriends and betrays his wife. But that girl rejects him and they reunite. Weldon shows how

women conform to their husbands and unite with them, even though the husbands betray them.

Weldon shows the men who never change but the women do. Here, husbands betray wives as well as try to maintain married family life. In the story 'Run and Ask Daddy if he Has any Money,' David is not happy with Milly as he has married her just not to spoil their relations. Though he is married he has an affair with Bettina and has a daughter from her. Though they have happy marital relationship, he betrays his wife who is unknown about her husband's affair. In the story 'Knock- Knock,' Aaron betrays his wife Jessica by having a secret love affair with Maggie. So she leaves him and goes to live with her parents. But their son, Harry, plays a dominant role in reuniting them and maintaining their marital life. Like Aaron, the narrator of the story 'Wasted Lives' tries to maintain marital life, though he has an extra marital love affair with Milena. But to maintain his married life he pretends to doubt Milena's child's paternity and leaves her, and she commits suicide in the end. In this way he not only betrays his wife but also his girlfriend. Like the Narrator, X from the story 'In the Great War' also has an extra marital affair which results in a suicide of his wife as well as his girlfriend. The girlfriend also kills her daughter while committing suicide. In this way betrayal plays important role in shattering four lives from which three die. Deakey, from the story, 'Pains', is not loyal with his wife Paula who is sacrificial. He keeps Paula in dark and has a secret love affair with his neighbour, Audrey. He flirts with her and at last Paula comes to know about it. Deakey is thus a faithless husband who betrays his wife and leaves her in pains. Like Deakey, Clive from the story 'A Good Sound Marriage' also betrays his second wife Carrie. He has also an extra marital affair with Andrea. Though Carrie is his second wife, she looks after children from his first

wife, Audrey. Bernard, from the story 'Red on Black,' has an affair with Angela, who is now pregnant. Though he has a son, Maurice, he is obliged to have a girlfriend after a girlfriend. He is a very crooked as well as wicked minded and domineering husband who betrays Maria who is always loyal to him. Philip, from 'Santa Clause's New Clothes,' has suffered from enigmatic heart pains and gets treatment from Dr. Hetty. During his treatment, he falls in love with Dr. Hetty. Philip betrays his wife Audrey by having an affair at the age of fifty seven. So his wife goes to live with her parents. Maria's father, from 'Red on Black', takes consolation in Eleanor, whom he marries later, when his first wife elopes with a rich man. In this way these stories portray such types of husbands who betray their wives by having extra marital affairs but some of them become successful in maintaining their marital lives while some fail to do so.

There are also some women who try to achieve freedom from husbands who are indifferent to them. These stories contain some relations in which wives betray their husband by having an extra marital affair. Audrey, from 'Tale of Timothy Bagshott' betrays her husband, Jim and runs off with the chauffeur. When Jim was imprisoned, she comes to see him but they quarrel a lot for her abandoning him and their son. Like Audrey, Maria's mother from the story 'Red on Black' has eloped with Victor, a rich man, and left Maria with his father. As she has attraction for money and property of Victor, she elopes with him. Lucy from the story, 'Love Amongst the Artists,' elopes with Pierre. Her husband, Edwin, is unable to handle his family responsibilities and fails to understand her which results in her elopement as well as her betrayal towards her family. The protagonist from the story 'Baked Alaska' marries Roland who is politically serious. He is involved in the peace

movement and is so busy that he has no time for her love. So she runs around with other men and is addicted to extra marital affairs. Because of Roland's involvement in peace movement she finds satisfaction in extra-marital affairs, and thus becomes victim of Anton's false love. So she betrays her husband as well as betrayed by Anton. Dr. Hetty from 'Santa Clause's New Clothes' is also not loyal with her husband, Mr. Grainger. She has married him for the sake of her parents and so it results in separation. Later she gets attached to Philip and they marry. Beverley from the story 'Not Even a Blood Relation' is so wicked that for the heir, she marries Brian and betrays her husband. She has a lot of property for which she needs a son to heir it as she has already three daughters from her husband. Otherwise her property would go to her brother-in-laws.

Parent-child relationship is also one of the dominant concerns for Fay Weldon in her stories. Children are happy when parents care, love and have affection but once they grow up they behave with parents unconcernedly. Children, as teenagers, are dependent on their parents but when they grow up they want to be independent which create a lot of differences between them. There are various types of parents-children love-hate relationships which are unhappy, healthy, controlling, abusive, happy, unhealthy etc.

Happy as well as healthy relations between parents and children are seen till the children become teenagers. Milly and David love their children Sherry and Baf so much that they take care of each and everything that they like. Bettina and her husband's love for their daughter is shown when the daughter cries at the shop, and her husband tires his best to console her. While exploring these relations, Weldon traces different aspects of motherhood like helpless unmarried mothers, who stand with children without means to bring them up and so on. In the

story 'In the Great War' Ellen loves her daughter, Orchis, so much that when she commits suicide she also kills her daughter. It is because she knows that after her death no one will look after her. In other story, Milena is divorced so she keeps her son, Milo, with her mother as Milena herself has also been in a crèche because her parents have been separated. So she does not want it happen with her son. Phillipa and Paul from the story 'A Question of Timing' love their children a lot. Phillipa leaves her job for children but later on because of financial crisis of her family, she resumes to her job. On Christmas she is out of station and so she misses her children and does not want to celebrate Christmas without them.

Maria and Bernard, in 'Red and Black', live apart but both have great affection towards Maurice, their son. They worry a lot about him. Similarly, Harry from the story 'Knock Knock' also wants his parents not to live apart. At the end, for Harry's sake, his parents reunite which shows their affection for him. Martin, who loves his mother Audrey and hates his stepmother Dr. Hetty, wants to expel her from the house so he keeps on abusing her. Jim Bagshott who is in a prison cares his son, Timothy, a lot. He enquires about him eagerly. He quarrels with his wife who has left him as she has left them. But she loves Timothy, their son most even though she lives away and worries about him. This shows that both of them have great affection towards their son. In another story, Edwin and Lucy love their children, Bessie and Bertie. They are Edwin's children most than Lucy's. Though she has run away with her lover Pierre, she misses her children too.

Some women like Philly, Carrie and Milena are pregnant but they take their mothering seriously even though they face number of problems in their married lives, and take care of their children yet to be born.

Relationships between parents and children change when children grow up. Weena as well as her friend Hetty from the story 'End of the Line' have unhealthy and abusive relationship with their respective mothers. Similarly Peter and Daphne have upsetting relations with their parents. Though their parents are caring and affectionate, they maintain secrecy about their personal affairs from parents and behave rudely with them. They are ungrateful children who never take cognisance of their parents. They are self-absorbed and make abusive remarks in the absence of their parents. Carrie has unhappy relation with her mother Kate who wants a sporty, wooly-hat sort of daughter with no soul. Carrie never forgives her for divorcing her father and remarrying because Kate betrays Carrie by remarrying. And so Carrie takes revenge by marrying Clive against her mother's wish. Both are stubborn and never put away their differences.

In the story 'Valediction' Edward and Protagonist love their three children. But, when they grow up they do not take care of their parents that hurt parents so much that they curse their children as ungrateful bastard and bitches. Thus parents care for children but children fail to understand parents' feelings when they need them most. It is because of a generation gap. When children grow up, they get engrossed in their own world and forget their duties towards parents. They do not have a sense of responsibility, and argue with their parents rudely.

There are also healthy parent-children relationships. Gosling from 'Leda and Swan' has a healthy relationship with his mother. Jessica from the story 'Knock Knock' has also good relations with her parents who support her when she is betrayed by her husband. They console as well as help her in decision making about her life. Similarly Philly's father from 'Through a Dustbin Darkly' cares a lot when she is pregnant.



There are also such parents who make discrimination between male and female child. The story 'Not Even a Blood Relation' portrays three daughters who are unkind towards their mothers. As their parents want a male heir and expect a son every time, they name their daughters as Edwina, Thomasina and Davida which hurts the girls and they think it is their mother's doing and always take their father's side. But, later on, they come to know the reality from their mother that she has done all these things as per their father's wish, and then the daughters start behaving more politely with their mother.

Weldon portrays some other relationships too like step-mother and children relationships. Eleanor from 'Red on Black' has healthy relations with her step-daughter Maria. Dr. Hetty behaves warmly with her step-children but except Martin all other children accept her. In the story 'A Good Sound Marriage', Carrie has upsetting relations with her step-children. Though she cares for them, they hate her as well as distress her.

There are also some other relationships like grandparents-grandchildren relationship, sibling relationship, in-laws relationship etc. Love and affection play important role in developing these relations. Loving, supportive, and understanding grandparents care for their grandchildren very much. Sibling relationships are also marked with such kind of relationships. Mostly, relationships among sibling are warm and healthy. But, in-laws relationships are both positive as well as negative one. These relationships are dominated by love and affection, but sometimes they get spoiled because of misunderstanding.

In these dark and satiric moral tales Weldon shows battle of sexes. Marriage brings affairs, and affairs result in divorce so betrayal plays a dominant role in shattering the relationships. One partner, to hide secrets,

dominates and keeps other partner in dark. A partner becomes unfaithful because of fluidity of sexuality and gender. These characters are punished by their own deeds: as they behave, so they are punished.

Mostly men characters from these stories have extra marital love affairs. They ignore the emotions of their wives and hurt them a lot. But most characters try to maintain their family lives and make compromise with cheating spouses and struggle to protect family as well as married lives. Women are shown talented and their activeness creates jealousy in their husbands which proves destructive. As some women do not get love and romance, they break their ties with husbands and seek independence from them. But these betrayals are not always successful and result in shattering their lives. Thus most family relations are shattered because the characters are self-absorbed and cannot see beyond their own muddled lives and fail to handle their responsibilities.

In this way Weldon combines both positive as well as negative aspects of family relationships. She believes that there can be a change for the better. So, most of her stories end on optimistic note focusing on mutual understanding which results in developing healthy and fruitful relations.

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