CHAPTER-IV

RELATIONSHIP CONFLICT
Conflict is inherent in human relations. But it doesn’t mean that every human relationship is entirely or partly conflicting all the time. It is not necessary that every relationship may develop hostility or violence. Such conflict may vary according to the time, people and place. Erich Segal’s love story contains a large amount of relationship conflicts. The relationship conflict in Segal’s novel can be divided into Family Conflict and Societal Conflict. According to various relations Family Conflict can be divided into parent-child, husband-wife conflict. Conflict in Parent – Children relationship is the core of the novel. Parent – Children relationship plays a vital role in developing the novel and reaching to the point of climax.

Parent children relationship in Love Story has two different dimensions. The relationship between Phil and his daughter Jennifer is healthy. Due to love and affection Phil is ready to do any kind of sacrifice for his daughter’s betterment and happiness. Phil raises Jennifer after the death of his wife. Her mother dies in a car accident. After the death of wife, he raises her with love and care like a mother. Even their bond is so powerful that he suppresses all his feeling and emotions and pays all his attention on a little Jennifer. He tries to fulfill all her needs. Jennifer never realizes the lack of mother. Since her childhood, Phil gives her, the love of father as well as mother. Though she has no mother but she experiences all sort of freedom and live her life according to her own ways. The conflict between Phil and Jennifer’s relationship is negligible. He doesn’t care about religious beliefs and faiths. Jennifer and
Oliver come to seek his permission for the marriage. He says, “We are of catholic faith. But God will bless this union in any church.” *(Love Story, 102)*

For Phil, Jennifer is important than even his own life. Observing the relationship between Oliver and his father it can be concluded that the Oliver has certain limitations. Compare to Jennifer his freedom seems very limited. Laura states: “in Love Story the protagonists have different ethnic backgrounds.”(27) Oliver is born in a very rich family and lives very luxurious life. Oliver takes Jennifer to the Barrett house. But Oliver Barrett III doesn’t give permission and blessings to both. Oliver’s father has some expectations from his son. The expectations from son bring conflict in their relation. He is of the view that Oliver should marry to a girl of his choice. According to him the girl must be from rich family. But he realizes that Oliver has selected his life partner, he remains absent in the marriage ceremony. Even after marriage, Oliver is not allowed to live them in his ancestral house.

Through the character of Oliver Barrett III, Segal focuses how material greed and unnecessary expectation lead conflict in father-son relation. It seems that for Oliver Barrett III social status, property and wealth is more important than his son’s happiness. Oliver Barrett III has expected a rich girl as his daughter-in-law. Except wealth, Jennifer has everything. She is intellectual, beautiful, highly educated; and the most important that they love each other. But she is rejected mere due to her poor family background. For Oliver’s father all these qualities are secondary. The difference between their ideologies is remarkably highlighted by the novelist. Oliver’s father doesn’t think that the
love relation between his son and Jennifer is genuine. Instead of accepting the relationship, he re-questions to Oliver:

‘What attracts you most?’

I wanted to get up and leave. I told his so.

Stay here and talk like a man’, he said.

As opposed to what? A boy? a girl? A mouse?

Anyway, I stayed.

The sonovabitch derived enormous satisfaction from my remaining seated. I mean, I could tell he regarded it as another in his many victories over me.

‘I would only ask that you wait awhile,’

said Oliver Barrett III.

‘Define “whole”, please’.

‘Finish law school. It’s this is real, it can stand the test of time’. (Love Story, 89)

The root cause of the conflict between Oliver and his father is the difference between their principles and the discriminative attitude of Oliver Barrett III. Every person live life according to some principles. Though there are some people, who molds their principles benefit but Oliver is not one of them. He is different than his father. It seems that Oliver Barrett III has developed a discriminative attitude towards poor people. Though he lives in a democratic country but doesn’t accept the democratic principles. Oliver looks familiar with the principle of equality. In his view poor and rich are equal. Oliver opposes his father for one more reason. As per the view of Oliver, his family and ancestors have exploited the poor. Barrett owns some Mills. The
workers of the Mills are paid very less and therefore, according to him the wealth earned by the family is not clean. For Oliver Barrett III wealth is important instead of caring how it comes? Which ways are being used? These things are secondary for him. This difference between moral values causes conflict in their relationship. Oliver believes that his life is his own and therefore, he has the right to take the important decisions about him. He intends to live life as per his own principles.

Another cause of conflict between Oliver and his father is the generation gap. Oliver’s father is of old thinking and follows a tradition of the family. But Oliver has developed his own attitude and view towards life. While educating at Harvard, he comes in contact with several liberal minded people. The impression of these people lay on his nature and thinking. Due to the generation gap, both Oliver and his father develop different attitudes towards life. It results the conflict in their relation. Due to the conflict, Oliver leaves his ancestral mansion and doesn’t return till Jenny’s death. The conflict is mostly resolved after Jenny. The death of Jennifer plays very important role in resolving the conflict of Oliver and his father.

The place of Jennifer is very prominent in Oliver’s life and may be therefore; he forgets the conflict and goes to seek the help of his father in order to save the life of his wife. After detection of Leukemia to Jenny, Oliver begins expensive cancer therapy to save her life. Such costly treatment is not affordable to him, but he is ready to do any compromise for Jenny’s sake. With all his efforts, he could not manage sufficient money for her treatment. When
there is no option, he goes to his father for the financial help. The difference between their principles is highlighted remarkably by the novelist through their polite and formal discussion:

Instead of lying to him I evaded the issue – although it was the issue – by blurting out the reason for my sudden reappearance.

‘Father, I need to borrow five thousand dollars. For a good reason’.

He looked at me. And sort of nodded, I think.

‘Well?’ he said

‘Sir?’ I asked

‘May I know the reason?’ he asked.

I can’t tell you, father. Just lend me the dough. Please.

(*Love Story, 190*)

Segal has tried to show that the life of Jennifer is more important for Oliver than even his principle and ideology. Oliver’s married life also has little conflict. Segal has pointed out a single conflict in husband wife relationship. There are some clashes in Jennifer and Oliver. Oliver Barrett III injures in a small accident. Jenny thinks that at least Oliver should inquire about his father’s condition. She insists Oliver to talk to Oliver Barrett III, at least on phone. The intention of Jenny is to repair father-son relation but unfortunately she doesn’t succeed. The event creates little conflict in husband-wife relationship which resolves after short time.

In *Oliver’s Story*, Segal has depicted the lonely life of Oliver. Jenny’s death disturbs him. Due to the lonely condition there is conflict between Phil and his relation. Oliver’s suffering disturbs Phil. After the death of Jennifer his
social life is over. But still he has a contact with Phil Cavilleri. Philip used to meet him regularly. The relationship of Oliver and Philip is better and closer than before. Though his daughter is died but he has love and affection for Oliver too. Oliver is aware that Philip had the only daughter and now he has nobody except him. So deliberately, Oliver meets him to reduce the feelings of loneliness. After all Phil is Oliver’s most lovable person’s father. He is in a lot of grief due to the sudden death of Jennifer. He tries to forget it but it’s quite impossible to him to forget the death and memories of lovable daughter. Philip’s wife is died earlier in a car accident and after her death he doesn’t remarry. He suppresses all his feelings for his daughter. Philip thinks that Oliver should remarry. He knows that it’s quite difficult for Oliver to forget the past memories of happy married life. It is a painful experience for Phil to see the sufferings of Oliver. Whenever they meet, he asks about his marriage. Every meeting of Phil revolves around Oliver’s marriage.

“We’re gonna make new friend…”

“What kind?”

“The female kind. Come on, get fancied up.”

“I’m going to the movies, Phil.”

“The hell you are. Hey, look, I know you’re out to win the Nobel Prize for suffering, but I will not allow it. Do you hear me? I will not allow it.” He was fulminating now. “Oliver,” Philip Cavilleri, now turned priest. S.J.,

“I’m here to save your soul and same your ass. And you will heed me. Do you heed?”

“Yes, father Philip. What precisely should I do?”

“Get married, Oliver.” (Oliver’s Story, 05)
Phil insists Oliver for marriage because he is aware about the pain of loneliness. He is also aware about younger age of Oliver. After the death of his wife, he suffered a lot in last few years. He thinks that the pain and grief which he has experienced should not be experienced by Oliver. There is a little conflict in Oliver and Philip’s relationship. No doubt Philip begins it. But the purpose behind it is very clean. He struggles with Oliver not for his own benefit but for the betterment and happiness of Oliver. Philip is sure that Oliver could be able to overcome the grief. He motivates him to meet girls and to participate in social functions. After the death of Jennifer, Oliver has no social life. It is Philip who again brings him in the public programme. It can be concluded that the relationship of Oliver and Philip is closer than the relationship between Oliver and his father. Philip stands against Oliver’s loneliness, makes him to re-think about his decision. He helps to change his mentality. Philip hopes that one day Oliver should fall in love with somebody and forget Jennifer. After the death of Jenny, Philip’s happiness is closely attached with the happiness of Oliver. In the course of time, Oliver comes close to Marcie but the information is not disclosed to anybody.

In a midnight, Philip calls Oliver but it seems that Oliver tries to hide the reality.

“How are you, Phil?” I said casually.
He totally ignored my question while pursuing his.
“How she nice?”
“Who, Philip?” I retorted icily.
“Her, the she, the gal who answered.”
“Oh, that’s just the maid,” I said.

At ten O’clock at night? Come on – come off it.

Level with me.”

I mean my secretary. You recall Anita-with the lots of hair.

I’m giving her some notes about my School Board case.”

(Oliver’s Story,175)

Oliver might have hidden the information because their relationship was on the first stage therefore; it seems quite difficult for Oliver to admit that he is with Marcie Nash. Segal also focuses on the understanding between Oliver and Philip. Though Oliver hides the information from Philip but he immediately understands that Oliver is hiding something.

To establish any relationship transparency is required. There should not be anything hidden. Looking at the relationship of Oliver and Marcie it can be said that there is no transparency in their relationship. She seems interested in hiding the information. Oliver asks Marcie several times about her address. But after several meetings the questions is unanswered. Every time Marcie gives him fake answer. On one hand she expects that Oliver should call him but at the same time she forgets that she has not given her number to him. Though Oliver didn’t tell her about his address but she knows everything about him. So many secrets about each other become barrier in the development of their relationship.

The event suggests that she might have her own network through which she inquires about Oliver. It focuses on lack of trust. Segal wants to assert that
the meetings are planned by Marcie. After knowing everything, she comes close to Oliver. Marcie seems very professional. Her professional attitude makes her a distinct lady. The difference between Marcie and Jennifer can be quickly observed. Before going to visit Oliver’s parents, Jenny has no idea that where he lives and how much wealthy he is! The transparency which can be seen in Oliver and Jennifer’s relationship is completely absent in Oliver and Marcie’s relationship. The relationship is based on lie and treachery. May be therefore, their relationship could not reach to the marriage. Oliver tries to guess about her profession but every time he fails. Marcie’s life is mysterious for him. The gap between their relations is highlighted by the novelist:

I got in and closed the door of my car. Marcie stood there as I revved the motor. Motionless and staring at me. As I slowly passed her, I rolled down the window.

“Will you call me?” she said quietly.

“You forget,” I answered, with no little irony,”

I haven’t got your number. Think of that.” At which I shifted tears and gunned it from the courtyard to the road. (Oliver’s Story, 107)

Another reason of Marcie and Oliver’s separation is the lack of trust. Marcie expects Oliver’s emotional support but she hesitates to trust Oliver. It may be due to her past life. She is a divorced woman and therefore she might have no dare to trust to a strange man. She doesn’t give him her contact number; it suggests that the place and time of meeting will be only decided by Marcie. She has nothing to do about Oliver’s feelings. It creates detachment in
their relation. Trust which is prominent in Oliver and Jenny’s relationship is completely absent in their love.

Next cause of the conflict between Oliver and Marcie is the lack of time. After his Law practice Oliver wish to spend the time with her but she always seems busy in her work. Till the end of the novel, she could not decide what is more important to her. She seems in confused state whether to give priority to Oliver or to the work. Most of the times, she prefers work and gives second preference to Oliver. In any relationship time is important to understand each other. But due to lack of time they couldn’t understand each others’ nature.

During Oliver and Marcie’s relationship they need to spend maximum time with each other to know the likings and disliking. But she is the only heir of Bennandale group of industries. Her business is spread all over the world. Both of them have certain feelings for each other but they could never express those feelings properly. Oliver seems aware about the importance of time. The following suggestion of Oliver may be for the betterment of their relationship:

“What should we do now, Oliver?”
“We were high on quiet. And our sentences were punctuated with reflective pauses.
“Wanna know what you should do?” I sad.
“Yes”.
I breathed deeply and then told her.
“Sell the stores.”
She nearly dropped her coffee.
“Whaat?” (Oliver’s Story, 243)
But *Bennandale* without factories and stores is quite unthinkable for Marcie. Her nature resembles with the nature of Oliver Barrett III. Even she could not think to sell the stores. Stores are her pride. Oliver thinks that she should be always with him or he is also ready to live with her. But both the things are not possible. Through her discussion with Oliver, we realize that Oliver has left two options in front of Marcie. She had to select either stores or Oliver.

There is a lot of difference in Jennifer and Marcie. For the sake of Oliver, Jennifer scarifies her career and social life. Her world begins and ends with Oliver. The relationship between Jenny and Oliver seems based on truth and transparency. In Jenny’s life, Oliver has the first preference and may be therefore Oliver gives much more importance to Jenny than anybody. Marcie asks Oliver that which kind of woman would he like. Oliver expresses his opinion, he says that a woman who will love him. Marcie doesn’t know any domestic work. Personal and professional life are different to her.

The most important reason behind Oliver and Marcie’s separation is the contradiction of principles and ideologies. Both of them discuss the subject of sweetshop labor in meetings. Mercy knows that he badly hates sweetshops and exploitation of workers. Knowing his nature, she hides the truth regarding exploitation of workers. But Marcie has a different perfective to look at all these things:

“Some heritage – America’s first sweetshops!”
“Oliver, that’s ancient history. Now days a union workers earn fantastic-”

“That’s beside the Point.”

“And look at the good your family’s done!”

The hospital, the hall at Harvard. Contributions-”

“Look, let’s not discuss it, huh?” (Oliver’s Story, 216)

The discussion points out the disliking of Oliver regarding sweetshops. Marcie never tells him about her own sweetshop. She hides the truth which later on becomes the major cause of their separation. The difference in their ideologies makes them separate.

After visiting her textile factory in Hong-Kong, Oliver realizes that the factory is a sweetshop. Most of the workers of the factory are children. Internationally recommended minimum age for work is fifteen years, but the children working there are of ten years age. Even the supervisor of the factory tries to hide the truth. Oliver’s observation in the factory is very minute. He asks John whether he noticed any air – conditioning. The reply of John is really shocking. He says, “This is Asia, Oliver, not California. And for your goddamn lawyer information, there is no minimum wage in Hong Kong colony.” (Oliver’s Story, 299-300) John’s statement highlights on the availability of workers and attitude of factory owners.

The condition of workers unveils the industrial world of Marcie Nash. Whatever information she has given to Oliver proves false. It is quite impossible for Oliver to see the exploitation of the poor workers. “He knows
that he can’t change it but he doesn’t want to become its part.” (Oliver’s Story, 303) Marcie’s lie in relation to the Store separates her from Oliver.

Parent-children relationship in *Man, Woman and Child* looks prominent than other novels of Erich Segal. At the beginning, Bob’s family seems the happiest family but once life is unfaithful to his wife. The mistake changes Bob’s happy family atmosphere. But a couple seems perfect. Husband-wife conflict begins at the earlier in of the novel. The major cause behind Bob and Sheila’s conflict is extramarital affair of Bob. Once he was unfaithful to Sheila which reveals after ten years become the cause to disturb family completely.

Due to the unfaithfulness of Bob, Sheila suffers a lot. Segal has pointed out her grief and pain through the following dialogues:

“Please Robert the suspense is killing me.”

Bob took a breath. He was shaking.

“Sheila, remember when you are pregnant with Paula?”

“Yes?”

“I had to fly to Europe-Montpellier-to give that paper.

“And…?” A pause.

“I had an affair.” He said it as quickly as she could. Like ripping off a bandage fast, to cause less pain.

Sheila’s face went ashem.

“No”, she said, shaking her head violently as if to drive out what she had just heard. “This is some terrible joke.” She looked at him for reassurance, isn’t it?”

“No. It’s true,” he said tonelessly. “I-I’m sorry?”

(*Man, Woman and Child, 14*)
This is major conflict in husband wife relationship. Throughout the novel, Segal deals with the conflict between husband-wife relationships. Sheila assumes her husband and marriage is perfect. But the reality revealed by Bob is unbearable to her. Even she couldn’t think that Bob can unfaithful with her. She trusts Bob very much and takes him easily rather than seriously.

Bob and Sheila’s relationship is very transparent and they haven’t hidden anything from each other. Sheila used to believe her husband more than anyone else. But the secret revealed by him hurts her a lot. Though it is true that only once Bob was unfaithful to his wife but as per the intension of Sheila, “One is more than never”. (Man, Woman and Child, 15) The event which took place before ten years, leads conflict in the family. For Sheila it is not important that Bob had an affair. The thing which hurts her most is Bob has been hiding everything from her. She thinks that the person, whom she has given her everything, loved him more than herself, now turned to be unfaithful. The unfaithfulness hurts. But though Bob was unfaithful to her but Sheila saves her family. She really plays the role of Bob’s best friend and gives him right suggestions. Segal remarkably focuses on their friendly relations:

“I guess there’s only one solution, Robert, Bring him here.”

He stared at her in disbelief.

“Do you know what you’re saying?”

She nodded yes.

“Isn’t that really why you told me?”

He wasn’t sure, but he suspected she was right. Again
“Could you bear it?”

She smiled sadly.

“I have to, Bob. It isn’t generosity – its self defense.

If I don’t let you try to help him now, you’ll someday blame me for allowing your-your child to be put in an orphanage.

“I wouldn’t…..”

“Yes, you would, so do it, Bob, before I change my mind.” (Man, Woman and Child, 23-24)

In the form of wife, Bob has got a true friend. Sheila looks somewhat aware about Bob’s purpose. She is confused that why Bob told her all these things after ten years. Through Sheila’s mouth Bob’s internal feelings are exposed in the novel which leads to know their close relationship, devotion and sacrifice for each other. She says that it isn’t generosity it’s self defense. Segal in the novel focuses on why she considers it an act of self defense. There was an operation of Sheila at the time of Paula’s birth. That operation makes further children impossible. There is a grief somewhere in Sheila’s mind that she could not beget a son. She is doubtful that if she does not beget the child, Bob will blame her. Therefore she allows Jean-Claude to live in the family.

Bob brings Jean-Claude in the house but he takes care for keeping the house away from disturbance. He gives some important suggestions to the child in order to reduce the conflict. He asks Jean-Claude:

“Do you know about my children, Jean-Claude?”

“Yes. Louis said you have two daughters. And your wife is very kind.”

“She is, “said Bob.
“Did she know my mother too?” he asked.

Jesus, don’t ask Sheila that, Jean-Claude.

“Uh-yes. But distantly.”

“Oh. Then you were her closer friend.” (Man, Woman and Child, 32)

The precautions taken by Bob definitely decrease husband-wife conflict. Bob knows that if Jean-Claude asked Sheila about his mother certainly there will be a problem. He thinks that precaution is always better than cure. In spite of all the necessary precautions some problem occurs in his family.

In the novel Man, Woman and Child the parent-children relations disturb when the secrete reveals before Paula and Jessica. Bob’s daughters realize that Jean-Claude is their step-brother. Both daughters stop talking to their father. The love between father and daughters is replaced by hate. There is a fear in Paula and Jessica’s mind that their father would live them. The girls disturb and the disturb condition of daughters disturbs Sheila’s mentality. But she behaves normally with the child. She is fully aware that it is not of Jean-Claude’s fault. That small boy is completely unaware about his father. But due to the unfaithfulness of Bob, she is unable concentrate on her job (editor). Her friend Margo could not believe that Bob can have affair. It focuses on Bob’s image in the society.

There are some events in Sheila’s life which helps to reduce husband wife conflict. Sheila is the best editor of the Harvard Press. She takes the interview of Dr. Wilson, a very popular writer. After few meetings, Sheila and Wilson become good friends. Several times they meet for dinner. The mistake
which is done by Bob is repeated by her. Margo, one of her friends motivates her to have an affair with Dr. Wilson. She assures her that Bob was also unfaithful to her then what matters if she has an affair with such a famous personality. As per Margo it’s an opportunity. Margo admits that if she would be at her place she must have not loosed it. She plays an important role in the development of Sheila and Gavin Wilson’s relationship.

After few days Dr. Wilson visits Sheila’s house in absence of Bob at 9.30 in the night. Sheila had invited him for the drink at 9.30 in the night. Dr. Wilson appears at the decided time and they discuss several things earlier to the drink. Earlier few months, Sheila blames Bob for being unfaithful with her. But here one can find that though Sheila is not involved completely with Dr. Wilson, yet she has some feelings for him. Her movement and behavior show that in Sheila’s mind Dr. Wilson has occupied a certain place. She has not crossed the moral boundaries but it cannot be said that she is faithful to Bob. The behavior of Sheila suggests that she has the same feelings and intension in her mind which Dr. Wilson has. After this event she loses the right to blame Bob for his past mistake. Jean Claude, who is arrived in the house, is Bob’s own son but he had not planned it. Jean-Claude’s mother was an independent woman. Even she never intended that Bob should know about the child. The dialogues between Sheila and Dr. Wilson focuses on hidden feelings of Sheila:

“Gavin had come into the kitchen without her even hearing him. As he continued to hold her, he whispered, “Now Sheila, are you or are you not going to tell me what the matter is?”
She could not move, trapped by the crosswinds of emotions

“I don’t know you.” She said without turning.

“If it will make it any easier, “he answered gently.

“I’ve been shacked for security by the FBI. That means I can be trusted with the most vital secrets.”

She gave a little laugh. He was still holding her.

She neither turned nor tried to move away. His voice now trembled slightly as he said:

“Anyway, for what it’s worth, I think I’m falling in love with you?” she did not reply. (Man, Woman and Child, 152)

The action of Sheila looks confusing. Bob tells Sheila that he was only once unfaithful to her. Sheila replies, ‘Once is more than never’. (15) She herself involves with Dr. Wilson. Does Unfaithfulness means only to have sexual relationship? What one can say if somebody is mentally involve in love relationship? It is clear that she neither protests to Dr. Wilson nor opposes him. To be mum is a kind of motivation. After this event she doesn’t blame Bob for his affair. The question rises whether she will show the courage to tell Bob about her feelings regarding Dr. Wilson.

Though once Bob was unfaithful to her but later on he tells each and everything to Sheila. Will Sheila tell Bob about Dr. Wilson? In later discussion readers also come to know that Dr. Wilson has given his landline number to Sheila and she has promised him to call after every week end. The novelist remarkably delineated both the characters- husband and wife on the same and equal ground of faithful or unfaithfulness to expose very kind of husband-wife
relationship with full of compassion and contribution to some extent. She accepts Jean-Claude-as a family member. She has no objection if he lives with the family life-long. The unfaithfulness of Sheila helps to resolve the conflict between husband and wife relationship.

_The Class_ is one of the Erich Segal’s best seller novels. It’s a different type of novel as far as the structure is concerned. His other novels concentrate on the life of a single protagonist or central character. But _The Class_ weaves at together the life stories of five Harvard classmates. The novel begins from their earlier days as undergraduates and ends to their class reunion which takes place after twenty five year. The novelist also has depicted political, social and historical changes of a quarter century. In other words, the novel is a story of protagonist’s journey to maturity.

Some autobiographical elements can be observed in _The Class_. It is the most personal of all Segal’s novels. The novel presents a story of Harvard class 1958. Erich Segal himself is a 1958s graduate of Harvard. He also has attended his twenty fifth – year class reunion in 1983. In one of his interviews he has told that his reunion 1983 helped him to focus on the novel about his Harvard experience he wanted to write since 1977. Most part of the novel is fictitious but very remarkably Segal has woven his characters with actual historical events. A member of Israeli army, Jason sees action in the Sid-Day war of 1967, The American President John Kennedy’s assassination etc. are the realistic events in the life of Segal which he has rendered in the novel.
The novel, *The Class* is the journey of all major characters from innocence to experience and from ignorance to enlightenment. The journey challenge them to reevaluate their dreams and revise their notion of success. At the end of the novel, all the protagonists have learned important lessons about life and individuality.

The novel is full of relationship conflicts. The story revolves around five members of 1958 Harvard Class – Andrew Eliot, Ted Lambros, Jason Gilbert, George Keller and Danny Rossi. The lives of all major characters are filled with extreme conflicts. Conflict is their tutor, who teaches them several lessons of life and finally reaches them to the top positions. If there would not be a conflict into their life, it would be difficult for them to achieve the immense success. Whatever they achieve is a result of their continuous conflict, sometime these characters have conflict with self or with the society. It seems that all the major characters of *The Class* are devoted to their goals. Society, family, love and relationship these things are secondary for them. They get the desired success on the cost of sacrifice. Sometime they sacrifice for the intimate life partner, beloved, family members and for their own children. Finally all the protagonists learn to get success is not an easy task. All the characters struggle to some degree. The price of success for these men is personal – failed marriages, physical and psychological deterioration. Ted Lambros loses his wife while Danny Rossi also almost destroys his marriage.

Ted Lambros is one of the major characters in *The Class*. He has come from the lower class of the society. Though born in a very poor family but has
strong wish to take education at Harvard. It is Ted’s dream since his childhood to become Harvard graduate. Throughout the novel, he struggles for knowledge. His life is devoted to his students and research. Even his parents haven’t dreamed about his immense success.

Husband-wife conflict in Ted’s life is very prominent. The major reason behind the conflict is unfaithfulness of Ted. He has an affair with one of his students. When his wife Sara comes to know about his affair, she separates from him. A single mistake spoils his whole life. Though his career is bright but he loses Sara. At the end of the novel, Ted Lambros seems on the top of the world but to get such immense success he really scarified a lot.

He always keeps his dreams on fire. There is no parent – children conflict in Ted Lambros case. He is completely aware about the fact that his father has come from a poor family. He would not afford the tuition fees. Therefore he doesn’t seek any financial help from his father. He works in a hotel in order to pay his tuition fees. It shows Ted Lambros maturity. Instead of seeking help from any other, he himself decides to do hard work. There are certain difficulties in his life but he knows that every problem comes with solution. He finds out the solution of every problem. Ted’s hardwork and intellect is really admirable in the novel.

Sara leaves Ted on the top of the world. It is notable that till their divorce, Ted and Sara’s relationship is free from any relationship conflict. Several times that Sara increases the confidence of Ted Lambros. Her love for Ted is genuine. Before marriage, he frankly admits that love and sex are for two
different things for women. He loves Sara and therefore has no hurry to establish physical relationship with her. Remarkably Segal has delineated different views of Sara and Ted towards life:

“I don’t see why you’re in such a hurry, Sara.”

“I don’t see why you’re not.”

In truth Ted could not explain the qualms he felt about prospect of going all the way with her. He had grown up with the nation that love and sex were for two completely different kinds of women. While his buddies took swaggering pride in their exploits with girls who

“went down,” none of them would ever have dreamed of marrying anyone who was not a virgin. And through he dared not admit it even to himself, something subconscious in him wondered why a “nice” girl like Sara Harrison was so eager to make love. *(The Class, 96)*

It seems that Sara has no problem to establish physical relation with the person whom she is in love and going to marry. For her, Ted is her future husband. Ted asks Sara to go for a long drive at New Hampshire. Sara says reacts: “New Hampshire? Have you lost your mind? You mean from now on we’ll have to drive a hundred miles every time we want to make love?” *(The Class, 96)*

Ted has different notions, about love and sex. According to him, love and sex are completely two different things for different women. This principle of life also causes conflict in their married life. Ted’s hunger for youthful body creates several problems in his life.
He goes to spend weakened with Felicity, but Sara thinks that nothing is wrong if Ted decides to spend one of his weekends with his friend. When Ted comes back home spending weakened with Felicity. Sara doesn’t say anything to him. The health of her son is important to her. She wants to give first preference to child’s health. In hospital, she suffers due to extreme pain. After getting discharge, she directly throws out Ted from the house and demands a divorce.

Though Ted has grown up with the notion that love and sex are for two completely different women but for Sara has different opinion than him. Till their divorce, she remains faithful with her husband. But the man, whom she loves most, seduces her. This is shocking for Sara. She never could forget this and separated from Ted, leaving him alone. Though the separation is quite heartbreaking for Ted but he himself is responsible for it. He never thinks that his single mistake would destroy his marriage completely. Sara is right at her place, though her decision is somewhat daring. She has the right to blame Ted for the act which he has done, because throughout their life she has been faithful with her husband. Though she suffers a lot due to their divorce but the pain of seduction is much more. Ted realizes his mistake very late. Later on he begs pardon but fails to convince Sara for the reconciliation. He realizes the value of Sara after their separation. After few months, he becomes the Dean of Canterbury College. Segal writes: “Though the Dean of Canterbury college was saluted everywhere on campus. But once at home, he loses both his scepter and
his crown and becomes an ordinary human being, with ordinary needs.” (The Class, 442)

At the end of the novel, Segal has delineated Ted’s pathetic condition:

He was emotionally dead.

The only part of him he kept alive – by intravenous shots of research- was his intellect. He was close to finishing that goddamn book that would be his academic passport to a brave new world. So, if the price of this was solitude, then he would make the most of it. (The Class, 442)

Both the protagonists (Oliver and Ted Lambros) seem emotionally dead. And therefore it becomes clear that none of them could remarry again. They love only once in their lives. The shock is unbearable for both the characters. The true love for their life partners doesn’t allow them to begin new life. In solitude condition, though they are surrounded by pretty women but unable even to notice the presence of them due to their past memories of their lovely women. They never intend to forget the happy years which they have spent in the company of first love.

There are several clashes in the life of Danny Rossie and Maria, obviously before and after the marriage. Throughout the novel, Ted Lambros struggles for respect and high position but in Danny’s case it is different. He doesn’t fight for it. He just remains faithful to his music and piano. Whole day he plays piano which makes him the world’s best musician. When he becomes perfect in his art; name, fame and wealth come to him. His name reaches in every house of the country. He completely surrenders his life to music. Music is
life for Danny. He lives very luxurious life but his married life is not happy. Several times conflict appears in their relation due to his extra-marital affairs. His unfaithfulness leads Maria to finish their sex life.

Father-son conflict is also very prominent in Danny’s case due to the difference in dreams about Danny’s career. He wants to become a musician but his father tries to force his dreams upon him. But he chooses a field in which he is interested. Segal intends to highlight that there are several students all over the world, who just follow their own parent’s dreams. The parents never care the child’s interest. The same thing happens in Danny’s case in the novel.

The relationship of Danny with his father is full of conflict. His father, Dr. Rossi has several dreams about his career but unfortunately he could not fulfill it. Danny seems a neglected child in the family. Danny’s father was very close to Danny’s elder brother Frank. He was a pilot in air force. His father was involved with his brother so that he did not have time to pay attention to Danny. Frank was an athlete and his father was very proud of him. Unfortunately his plane was shot down in Korea. The death of an elder son is very painful to Dr. Rossi. Danny intends to please his father. Danny is determined to keep fighting for his father’s love. But unfortunately he disappoints him. Due to his disobedience as far as his career is concern, disturbs father-son relationship. Later on he turns towards his dream of becoming a musician. Due to disobedience of Danny, he is being considered as a black sheep of house which leads relationship conflict.
Father-son conflict in Dr. Rossi and Danny continues through the whole novel. Since his birth, his father doesn’t pay any attention on him. He expects love of his father but after several attempt he fails. He becomes so frustrated and therefore, returns to his previous life. The keyboard becomes an outlet for his frustration. There is a very good understanding in Danny and his mother. She is of the view that Danny is a gifted pianist. But Dr. Rossi doesn’t agree with his wife. In childhood, Danny always remains neglected form Dr. Rossi. This is also of the major reasons behind their conflict. Dr. Rossi has several past memories of Frank. Therefore every time he compares Danny with his late son. This act of his father hurts him a lot.

The basic reason of Danny and Dr. Rossi’s conflict can be found out in the history of the family. Dr. Rossi’s elder son was obedient. Even he chose the career which his father had selected for him. Dr. Rossi is the fond of sports, athletes and therefore; he dreams that Danny may become a good athlete. But he does not obey. Later on his father decides that he should attain the college of Princeton, but Danny has different opinion. Without caring his father’s wish, he announces to go to the Harvard. Danny’s announcement hurts his father. He says, “how can anyone whose brother died protecting us from communism even dream of going to that kind of school?” But according to Danny music isn’t political.”(The Class, 11)

Due to his individualistic attitude his father never treats him with tender and affection. The death of Frankie creates hate in Dr Rossi’s mind about America. The conflict makes Danny to leave the house without any financial
support. But while leaving the house there is a thought in the mind of Danny that he need to prove his talent. Danny never follows the path laid down by his father and hence ultimately he becomes the victim of his father’s hatred. It seems that the father-son conflict helps Danny to achieve his goal.

Another conflict between Danny and classmates is delineated in the novel. There is a conflict of Danny with some of his classmates in Harvard University. In Harvard University, Danny plays piano whenever house rules allow him to practice a musical instrument. Dickie Newall and some of his friends are always in search of a chance to create conflict with Danny. One day while practicing in afternoon Dickie and his friends enter in his room, surround the offending instrument, lag it to the open window, and hurl it out. Danny’s piano falls down three floors to the courtyard, smashing and disintegrating on the pavement below. After throwing piano, Dickie Newall simply remarks, “thanks for your co-operation, Dan.” (The Class, 80) Though “Dr. Porter threatened them with expulsion and ordered them to pay for a new piano as well as for the broken window.” (The Class, 80) But the reason behind Dickie and his friends’ behavior is revealed by Andrew Eliot. He says to Danny:

‘Hey, Rossi, I’m sorry to hear about your piano’. Danny lifted his head. “Who the hell do they think they are?” he suddenly exploded.

“You want the truth?” Andrew asked.

“They think they’re God’s gift to sophistication. But actually there’re just a bunch of empty-headed preppies who wouldn’t even be here if their parents hadn’t sent
them to expensive schools. A guy like you makes them feel insecure.”

“Me?”

Yeah, Rossie. You’re what place is all about. You’ve got one thing they can’t buy, and it galls the hell out of them. They’re jealous because you’re got real talent. *(The Class, 80-81)*

Andrew Eliot’s opinion seems true. It seems that the real talent of Danny makes some guys insecure. They look afraid that Danny may win the favor of all the professors which can increase obstacles in the way of their success. They assume Danny as their competitor. But Danny’s talent is unbeatable. The violent action of Dickie and his friends is the result of their fear. This action is the result of their frustration.

The conflict in Danny and Maria’s relationship attract the attention of the reader. Danny is Catholic but careless about the religious traditions and beliefs. Danny meets Maria Pastore. She is the president of Radcliff Dance Club. Maria is extremely pretty and her long black hair, soulful Mediterranean eyes infatuated him. She is the first person who recognizes Danny’s talent and dare to allow him to compose music for the program. Both of them fall in love with each other. But Maria and Danny’s concept about love and sex are completely different. Like Danny, she is also Catholic. But soon encounters serious ethnical differences. According to her religious beliefs physical relations before marriage are not permitted. She warns: “Danny, we’re both
Catholic, Can’t you understand. It’s wrong to do this sort of thing before you’re married?” (The Class, 155)

But Danny ignores her feelings and disrespect her. His physical passion overshadows his care for her emotions. To involve physically before marriage is a mortal sin for her. She has different ideology about love and physical relations. Segal writes:

“Look, Maria, we’ll be married someday. Isn’t that enough for you?”

Perhaps she was too upset to notice that he had actually mentioned matrimony. In any case she answered, “Danny, please believe, by everything that’s holy, I simply can’t forget the way I’ve been brought up. My priest, my parents, no- I won’t evade responsibility and put the blame on them – it’s my belief. I want to give my husband my virginity.” (The Class, 155)

Both of them are Catholic but they have different views towards life which create conflict among them before marriage. It is quite difficult for Danny to believe on the religious beliefs. On the other hand Maria believes and follows all the Catholic faiths. The difference leads them to become separate. Maria leaves but she loves him. Segal has wonderfully depicted the conflict of religious beliefs in the relations.

After marriage, Danny Rossi has some disagreement with Maria. Success illuminated him like a halo. It is true that Oliver has a series of affair,
before and after marriage. He marries Maria because of the following reason. He admits:

I want a wife, I think.

I know I want a wife. But someone genuine I can share my life with – and my thoughts. And most of all – if this is possible – a woman who might like me for myself and not that phony PR image my publicity machine has manufactured. Come to think of it, who in my life has ever loved me for myself?

Only … Maria. (The Class, 224)

Such kind of opinion Oliver has in Love Story and Marcie in Oliver’s story. Marcie hides her identity to find someone who would love her and not to her wealth. Danny has the same opinion. He gets very lovable wife but doesn’t remain faithful with her.

The extramarital affairs of Danny Rossi are partly responsible for the conflict between husband and wife. Maria seems the traditional wife. She also follows all the rules and regulations of religion. Even she knows about Danny’s affairs but remains silent. Throughout the novel, Maria doesn’t complain for anything. Maria is the traditional wife and real woman in the dream of Danny. She trusts Danny but his behavior makes her to reconsider the relation. There is a large difference in Sara and Maria’s characters. Sara is the woman, who remains faithful with her husband, but when she realizes that Ted has an affair with Felicity, she takes the decision of divorce. She could not forget the
seduction of her own husband and after a short period decides to marry another person.

Maria’s perspective seems completely different than Sara. She loves Danny and married him. Sara has no problem to sleep with the future husband before marriage. But as per the belief of Maria it is a mortal sin. Even their thoughts regarding children are different. Maria is aware about Danny’s extramarital affairs but instead of taking divorce, she chooses another way. She sacrifices her life for the sake of children. She doesn’t want to make her daughter’s life worst for the mistake of her husband. She thinks that the girls are little and they need love of father as well as mother. Like traditional mother, instead of separating from her husband like Sara, she continues to live and perform the duties of wife for the sake of her daughters.

The novelist has taken efforts to make her motherly figure with full of devotion, sacrifice and tenderness so that the relationship of husband wife may continue with conflict through various compromises and contradictions. Though she lives with Danny but their bedrooms are separated. Maria expresses her opinion regarding divorce. She says, “we’re catholic – at least I still am. And besides, it would devastate the girls.” (The Class, 394) The conflict which had begun due to the extramarital affairs of Danny comes to the end with end of their sexual relationship. She decides not to take divorce but to break sexual relationship. The conflict between husband and wife reaches to the highest degree with hope of reconciliation.
The conflict between Danny and his father comes to the end after the death of his music teacher, Dr. Landau. He teaches him the skill of piano playing therefore Danny gives whole credit of his success to Dr. Landau. It seems that he has a lot of respect about his teacher. Dr. Landau is the most respectable person in his life. Dr. Landau also loves him more than his child. Before dying, he leaves his message for Danny which is forwarded by his mother to him at the time of Dr. Landau’s funeral. Dr. Landau’s final wish is that Danny should reconcile with his father. Dr. Landau’s words are like an order for Danny. Immediately Danny becomes ready for the reconciliation it may be because of two things, first it is quite impossible for him to neglect the final wish of his teacher and second, since childhood Danny tried to get love of his father. Since childhood has the intension to get his love and affection. He has become world’s most famous musician that makes his father very proud.

The reconciliation in Danny and Maria take place due to his physical disorder. Throughout the novel, Maria plays the role of traditional wife. Though their bedrooms are separated but when Danny comes home consulting a doctor, she realizes his need to have her presence. Like the real traditional catholic woman, She says:

“I didn’t marry you because you could outplay Liszt. I didn’t marry you because you were a star. I married you because I loved you and believed you when you once said that you needed me. (The Class, 495)
Danny is unable to play piano but finally he reconciles with his wife. He does several mistakes in his life but at least gets chance to correct all the mistakes reconciling with the family.

Erich Segal intentionally invented another distinct type of relationship conflict through Andrew and Faith encompassing various personal, family institutions and societal dimensions raising cultural and traditional issues. He takes efforts to make his marriage life happy but unfortunately he fails. His family is considered to be one of the respectable families of Boston and the family has a long tradition of Harvard education. Due to rich family background, Andrew has a burden of high expectations and as a result suffers from a lack of confidence. At beginning of the novel, Segal makes it clear that Andrew Eliot couldn’t achieve great success like his other friends. He admits, “My Harvard 25th reunions next month and I am scared to death. Scared to face all my successful classmates, walking back on path of glory, while I have nothing to show for my life except a few gray hairs.” (The Class, 01) The reason of lack of confidence can be seen in his background.

Andrew Eliot, the son of Eliot family has a privileged childhood. His parents were divorced but they lavished on him all a growing boy could wish for. He is sent to the most expensive boarding schools and summer camps. They establish a trust fund, to make his future secure. His family also contributed a lot for the development of Harvard University and therefore the University named one department as ‘Eliot House’ due to his ancestor’s great contribution to the university. Andrew is the first of his entire family to feel
himself unworthy of admission to Harvard. As he often jokes self
deprecatingly, “They let me in because my name was Eliot and I could spell it.”
(The Class, 20)

It seems that the college life of Eliot is without any conflict. His nature
is so good. He always helps other as much as he could. Even he opposes his
roommates when they abuse Jews. Dickie Newall and other roommates have
several prejudices about Jews. But the stand taken by Andrew against his
roommates is admirable. Dickie abuses Jews comparing them with animal.
Andrew tries to reconcile the conflict between his friends and Jason. Though
his parents are divorced but they taught him good manners. Due to good
manners he tries to avoid conflict. Though he belongs to the family which is
affected by divorce and various family calamities, but he is being projected as
well cultured and aware about the values of relationship. And his role makes us
to note his maturity in relation to establishing harmonium relationships in and
out of Harvard. Erich Segal points out that Andrew neither can abuse anyone
nor can he hear. Though since childhood his parent sent him to the boarding
school but he is proud about them:

“Hey, look,” Andrew replied, “I didn’t say my dad’s a
saint. But at least he taught me not to use the kind of
language Newall enjoys so much”. (The Class, 53)

Throughout the novel he never makes any discrimination on the basis of
religion or race. He tries to establish harmonious relationship between religions
by keeping their individualistic values, customs etc. He tells his friends:
“Listen, guys,” Andrew responded.

“In prep school we had no Jews or Negroes at all. So who cared if you went on about the lower orders? But Harvard’s full of all types, so I think; we should learn to live with them. (The Class, 53)

Segal has remarkably delineated husband-wife conflict in Andrew and Faith. After his education he serves navy for few years. After his military service, he makes an ill–fated marriage with a daughter of his father’s one of classmates and begins a career in investment banking. His wife Faith is a beautiful woman. She gives birth to a son and a daughter. Very soon after his marriage, he comes to know that his wife, Faith is a serial adulteress and alcoholic. The secret reveals to Andrew which causes conflict in husband-wife relationship. Even it becomes difficult for them to live with each other and therefore they take divorce. After getting divorce, she sends both the children in boarding school at the age of 9 and 6 respectively. The divorce disturbs him a lot. He becomes very panic for his children. Faith is never faithful with Andrew. But he has intension that at least his children should live with him. Andrew himself spends several years in boarding school and therefore he is familiar with that painful life. He doesn’t want that his children should suffer like him. But he really feels helpless when the custody of children is denied by the court.

At the beginning there is a gap between Eliot and his children. Faith was close to the children and therefore she tries to create misunderstanding in
father-children relationship. He realizes that the growing children hate their parents. They are right at their place. Before understanding the meaning of father and mother they were sent to the boarding schools. They never experienced the affection and love of their parents. The life of the boarding school is very rude for them and for their entire sufferings nobody, but their own parents are responsible. The condition of children makes Eliot to remind his own days in boarding school. In order to reconcile father children conflict and remove hate from their mind, he leaves his job and decides to spend time with children. He loves them and performs the role of not only a good father but also mother. He wants to see the children grow. Segal has described the pain of Andrew’s loneliness:

Lizzie is also a problem. She mopes a lot, disappears for walks and won’t let me come along. Now and then I try to chat with her, but she resents me too. At least her reasons are more personal and less political than Andy’s.

“If you really love us, you and mom wouldn’t have busted up. I hate my boarding school. It’s kind of like an orphanage with fancy uniforms. I don’t think more than five girls in my class still have both parents. (The Class, 389)

Andrew and Faith are separated but the little innocent children have no fault. Andrew realizes that children need the love of parents. Later on Faith engages with another man and neglects the children. The attitude of Faith gives him an opportunity to perform the role of mother and father for his children. With the help of The Class, Erich Segal has attacked on fragile Aristocrat class.
After divorce, most of the parents send their children to the boarding schools. Getting married again is one of the options to Andrew to have his kids back. But he doesn’t meet anyone, who makes him confident enough to risk a second plunge.

*In Doctors* marital conflict is prominent than conflict depicted in *The Class, Man, Woman and Child, Acts of Faith, Love Story* and *Oliver’s Story*. Parent-children and man-woman conflict have also occupied an important place in the novel. There are several reasons due to which parent children conflict appears in the novel. Castellano family is migrated from Spain and settled down in America for some years. After the death of Isobel, Laura is the only daughter of Dr. Luis Castellano. After completing her college education, she is admitted in Harvard Medical School. Laura comes home in vacation. She watches the atmosphere of her own family and gets disturb. It seems that the death of a younger daughter has shocked her mother deeply. The behavior of Inez focuses on her disturbed mentality. Due to the disturbed psyche it becomes difficult for her to concentrate on the family. Unwillingly, she neglects both of her family members. In such a pain, meditation helps her a lot. Every day she goes to a Church for the pray and the religious activities and forgets her responsibilities regarding family. Even she accepts father Francisco Xavier as her spiritual father. Inez may realize that the life is mortal and death is the only truth of life and therefore might have decided to spend her maximum time in church, in religious and spiritual activities. Being a wife and mother she has some
responsibilities. It seems that she forgets Laura completely in the memories of her dead daughter.

Inez is responsible for the conflict between husband-wife relationships. Being a husband, Luis expects love, affection, companionship and emotional support from his wife. But she completely fails to fulfill the minor needs of Luis. In such condition, Luis remembers the painful memories of his unborn son. Due to the disturbed family, he begins to drink wine. He feels lonely in the family. The lovable and affectionate relationship of the couple turns towards formal relationship. He becomes alcoholic. Even for little period, he doesn’t pay any attention on his medical practice. The decision of Inez of becoming a nun becomes the reason for parent-children conflict in Castellano family. Dr. Castellano assumes that Laura is mature enough to take her own decisions and to survive her life. Instead of living alone without goal, Luis decides to go back to Spain. He thinks that his country and his people need him. The disturbed family atmosphere is painful for Laura. The negligence of Inez regarding the family disturbs Laura and her father.

But without watching like an inert observer, there is nothing in her hands. In order to reconcile, she tries to convince but unable to change the decision of her parents. The separation of parents appears conflict in parent children relation. She lives the life like orphan though her parents are alive. Though she tries to resolve the relationship of Luis and Inez but doesn’t succeed. In Doctors, parent-children conflict in Maury Eastman’s case seems stronger than anyone else. He is classmate of Barney Livingston.
Through his behavior it can be concluded that he bears a large amount of burden of his father’s expectations. He calls himself a writer. Maury’s father is a well known doctor and he always lives busy with his patients. Though Maury is admitted in medical school but the writer in a doctor can be seen easily pointed out.

This was our first encounter with a representative of the other world. Curiously, we looked inside him and found everything in order. Nothing was missing. What then does Death take away? Hard-nosed scientists would simply say electric impulses; religious men might say a holy spirit. I am a humanist and what I saw today I took to be the absence of his soul. Where did it go? (Doctors, 237)

It seems that the writer in Maury is alive and active. Though he is very good in writing but as a human being he is of a very delicate minded. Much more expectations have made him depressed and unconfident. He could not bear the tension of studies and therefore in depression jumps from the window of his room. He was injured badly and later on transferred to the mental hospital. But the attachment father son relationship is completely absent in Maury’s case. Through the discussion of Maury and Barney, it can be concluded that there is something wrong with the father son relationships. Dr. Eastmen considers the critical condition of his son like the condition of any other patient. He knows that whatever happened with Maury, only due to depression. But being a doctor he forgets that in such condition his son needs emotional support.
Parent-child conflict may occur in Seth Lazarus’s family due to the contradictory thoughts among the family members. Seth Lazarus is the obedient son of Nat and Rossi. Seth is the younger brother of Howie. While pointing out the difference Segal says, “Seth could walk and talk, could dress and feed himself, while Howie needed help for everything.” (Doctors, 237) Howie begins life as Seth’s elder brother but till the age of 25 he has not become a grown up human being. He sometime recognizes his parent and sometimes doesn’t. Being a doctor, Seth is now completely aware that Howie would never recover. He also discusses with the doctors where Howie has been admitted since more than last twenty years. Seth knows that his brother’s condition is out of recover. But Nat and Rossi are not ready to accept the reality. Seth and his parents have completely opposite assumptions.

“Seth knows that his mother has lived in a constant hope that doctors somewhere, someday would invent a miracle to bring her lost but living son back to her family.” (Doctors, 237) These opposite opinions create tension in the family. Seth’s act of Mercy Killing seems disagreement with his parent’s belief. Seth might be aware that his parents would never allow mercy killing in Howie’s case. Therefore he injects Potassium chloride intravenously for the end of Howie’s suffering and pain.

After few years, FBI catches him while performing the act of Mercy Killing. In court, he accepts his crime and supports the act of mercy killing. Jury makes him free by suspending for two years. In every mercy killing his wife Judy has helped him. He feels satisfied whenever he makes someone free
from suffering and pain. But it is notable that he never performs act of mercy killing without patient’s permission. The conflict in Seth and his parent seems the conflict of principles and beliefs.

In *Acts of Faith* Segal deals with the conflict between modern and traditional Jews and Christian. One generation is attached to the religion. These people follow all the codes and conducts of the religion. Religion is most important for such orthodox people than even their family members. They have the notion that they are selected by the God to tell their followers the meaning of religion. They are the self announced religious leaders of their society and make people to follow codes and conducts of the religion. In this novel Segal has tried to show the conflict between orthodox and liberal people. These people can be Christian or Jews or the followers of any other religion.

The parent-children conflict depicted in *Acts of Faith* is the conflict between traditional and modern views. The generation gap between parent and children is also important as far as parent children conflict is concerned. In society nearly about everybody has the role model. The major characters in the novel *Acts of Faith* have their role models too. The youngsters like Daniel have the hidden wish in their mind to live the life below the open sky. He is motivated by his teacher, Bellar. The father of Daniel, Moses Rav Luria is the most respected personality and chief Rabbi in Brooklyn. Rav Luria and his wife both are very religious and have a strong wish that their children should follow all the codes of their religion. Moses has a wish that his son Daniel should become a Rabbi after him. Moses starts his religious education from his
childhood. But it seems that when Daniel comes in age, he doesn’t believe on religious traditions. Though he takes admission in university to become Rabbi but he doesn’t attend the exam. Under the guidance of Bellar, Daniel violets several beliefs of his orthodox society.

The relations between Rav Luria and Deborah are very good. Both of them seems very closely attached to each other. Being a father, Rav Luria has certain expectations from his daughter. He intends that Deborah should become traditional woman. Obviously, he begins her religious education since childhood with Daniel but the education received by Deborah is only useful to become a good Jewish wife. Rav Luria expects that his daughter should be pious, religious like her mother. She must follow all the traditions, rules, regulations, codes and conducts of their religion. In short, he has an intension to make Deborah as a good, observant, religious woman. He decides her marriage at the age of sixteen but after his wife’s request postpones for two more years. But Deb fails to fulfill the expectations of her father which causes conflict in their relation.

According to the religious belief, it is not allowed for any Jewish girl to talk with any non-Jewish. But Deborah doesn’t care about it. She falls in the love of a Christian boy, Tim, who is appointed by Rav Moses Luria as a Shebes goy. Very soon Moses realizes that his daughter is in love with Tim. He assumes that due to the touch of Tim, she is polluted. She needs to purify her soul by staying in the holy city, Jerusalem. The act of Deb hurts Rav Moses Luria. To purify her, Moses decides to send her to the Holy Land. Rav Luria
has never assumed that his lovable, obedient daughter would become rebellious. He seems aware about the psychology of children. He handles the matter of Tim and Deb’s love like a trained psychiatrist, may be because he doesn’t want to lose his daughter. He may know that love is blind and leads human being to rebel. Obviously his intension is to separate the two lovers but unfortunately, he couldn’t succeed. The distance brings Deb and Tim closer than ever. The two bodies separate for a while but it was not in the hand of Moses to separate the two souls.

The act of Deb is shocking for her parents. The parent-children relationship seems affected by her behavior. On the one hand it is quite impossible for Deb to forget Tim. She also takes care that due to her, his problems should not increase. She doesn’t want to hurt her family but Tim’s happiness is also important for her.

Segal asserts that religious faith and family restrictions fail to remove the love of Tim from her mind. Before her departure to Israel, she writes a letter to Tim. Segal puts her internal feelings:

They are sending me to Israel tomorrow. To be honest, I feel guilty for disobeying my religion and my parents, but I feel even worse for what I have done to you. You acted with such friendship and pure heart, I hope you don’t get into any trouble on account of me. I m sad to think we will probably never see each other again. But I only hope that I will remain somewhere in your thought. (Acts of Faith, 100)
She in deep love with Tim and it is true that both of them do not forget each other till the end of the novel. In the last few lines of the novel, Tim and Deb say: “you never left my thoughts,” she said, unafraid. “Nor you mine,” he confessed.” *(Acts of Faith, 540)* The dialogues of Deb suggest that she loves and cares for Tim. She doesn’t want that due to her any mistake, he should come in trouble. Though they are not married but their souls has accepted each other. Segal asserts, “They were already married in a way no earthly force could ever separate” *(Acts of Faith, 202)*. Deb also admits, “for both of us our religion is important. In my heart of hearts, we are already married. But, in the real world, it would never work” *(Acts of Faith, 208)*. In brief, the rebellious behavior is the major cause of conflict between Deb and her father.

Due to love for Tim, Deb becomes rebellious; otherwise she would have become traditional, observant Jewish wife. Another cause of Deb and her father’s conflict is her love for Tim. But her relationship with her parents is not out of repair. But when she receives the new of her father’s heart attack, immediately takes Eli and come to meet him. She doesn’t tell truth to her family members that Eli is Tim’s child. Instead of that she tells that Eli is the son of Avi (Jew). Avi was pilot in Israeli air force and was killed in air crash. She admits that Avi was Jewish but the child is born out of wedlock. Rav Moses discharges from hospital and starts to see the future Jewish leader in Eli. Throughout the novel, Deb cares about her father and tries to hide her rebelliousness in order to decrease his pain.
The relationship of Deb and her family are scattered due to her behavior but seems better than the relation of Daniel and his father. In Daniel, Rav Moses sees future Rabbi but he completely disappoints him. His all dreams about his son scatter into the pieces. Daniel doesn’t want to become rabbi but he has no courage to tell to his father. He had no ideas that like his daughter his son too going to rebel. He will too destroy his dreams very cruelly. Somehow Danny decides to tell the truth to his father. Danny’s wish of not becoming Rabbi makes his father helpless:

“Father?”
“Yes, Daniel?”
“I don’t want to be a rabbi.”

For a moment he did not speak. Perhaps no words existed to respond to such a statement.

“You don’t want to? You don’t want to follow in the footsteps of your father and his father before him?” he paused and asked almost pleadingly, “Why, Danny, Just tell me why?”

I had come this far- I had to say it all.

“Because… I’ve lost my faith.” *(Acts of Faith, 240)*

After listening Danny, Moses too announces his decision. He tells his son to leave the house as early as possible. After this moment, Rav Luria never sees the face of his son till his death. By killing off the line of Silczer Robbes, Danny becomes the cause of his father’s heart attack. For Moses, it is not only the matter of rebel. Danny loses his faith therefore; the family doesn’t allow Danny to live in. It is notable that after the departure of Danny from the family, his father never asks about him. Rav Luria admits in the hospital after heart
attack, both of the half sisters of Danny blame him for the condition of Moses. In hospital, Moses meets and talks with everybody but he did not want to see the face of his son. The conflict which occurs in Deb and her father’s relation is temporary but the father-son relationship goes out of the repair. The lack of religious faith is the major reason of the father-son conflict.

The conflict between Mr. and Mrs. Hogan completely changes the life of Timothy Hogan. Novelist reveals the fact that Tim’s father was a merchant seaman. In case of his work, he used to go on several voyages. Sometime he not used to come home for several months. Once Eamonn was on such a voyage for few months and when he comes back, he shocks to see his wife pregnant. The child in her womb is not his child. It seems very clearly that Margaret is pregnant due to the extra marital affair. The unfaithfulness of Margaret is the root cause of the conflict between husband and wife. Eamonn realizes that his wife is not faithful with him. Several times, he tries to know the name of the person, she has an affair with but every time, she gives the round answers telling him that “no mortal man had touched her. She began hallucinate, babbling to the world that she had been blessed by a visit from a holy spirit.” *(Acts of Faith, 07)* But in the middle of the novel, it proves that she had an affair with several other people. Extra marital affair of Margaret Hogan destroys her family completely.

In *Acts of Faith*, the adultery of Uncle Tuck and Margaret Hogan is the root cause of the conflict between Eamonn and his wife, Margaret. The adultery separates the husband-wife and scatters the family. A single wrong step taken
by Margaret, in the greed of physical pleasure traps her in a critical condition. Margaret Hogan can be considered responsible for Timothy’s sufferings.

To conclude, relationship conflict plays very important role in the development of major characters of Segal’s novels. The novelist has remarkably highlighted the conflict in husband-wife, parent-children and man-woman relationships. It seems that extramarital affairs are mostly responsible for the conflict in husband-wife relationship. In some cases mismatch, difference in social and economical background also causes conflict in husband-wife relationship. High expectations, generation gap, different principles are mostly responsible to appear conflict in parent-children relations.
References


