CHAPTER III

MOTHER-BOUND SON

My own parents were not much to me, though I cared for my mother (AAM:7).

They are very kind and they mean very well, but sometimes they get very oppressive (TWC:127).

3.1.0. Traditionally the role of mother in the family is that of one who gives generous love to her children, takes care of her house and husband and leaves no stone unturned to see that her family is well taken care of. She is the centre of the family and source of love and affection for her children. She knows how to rear her children with values that she thinks are important in life. She loves all her children alike and without conditions. All the children share the nurturing care of the mother. So in the matriarchal concept all men are equal since they are children of the mother. As the son grows up he is separated from the mother and made fit for acceptance into the "men's" house of patriarchal society. Here the father initiates the son into life by observing "the rites of puberty - schooling of the will, a subjugation of the ego to the fortifying element of fear, hunger and pain so as to
inculcate within the ‘consciousness’ of the male child the criterion of manliness” (Armens 1966:4). All these initiation rights are to make the son free from an image of himself as the helpless child dependent upon the mother and to create in him a conscious image of the Hero. But the son always remembers the dominant role played by his mother in his childhood and finds solace in reminiscing about those days in his present predicament. So the mother is a woman who is warm, gentle, loving and above all an excellent cook with genuine family feelings. And this conventional role of the mother is constantly repeated and receives literary perception from age to age. One characteristic feature of traditional mother in literature or elsewhere is one of love and her role is one of “loving mother”.

3.1.1. In the novels of Bellow and Cheever, the role of the mother confines to this traditional idea of mother who is very much loving towards her children, though sometimes the mother in Cheever shows some signs of “New Woman”. Mother is the centre of the family whether it is the traditional Jewish family of Bellow’s fiction or the suburban Christian family of Cheever. In their fiction, the mother character is the centre of love, a sustaining force in the family which has started disintegrating in the world
of these two writers. Though the families break down and the sons get separated from their near and dear, the mother remains a stable character who is a tremendous source of strength for her children wherever they are. In their loneliness, which is mostly something willed in the case of Bellow hero, the mother is a source of strength and a symbol of all that was good in his childhood. Each hero reminisces about his childhood in which his mother stands as a figure of love and affection. He remembers various incidents related with his mother and their influence in shaping his life and behaviour. Whenever the protagonist faces some problems in his present life he goes back to those good olden days and remembers those happy days of innocence and togetherness and draws strength from that. The lonely hero was once a member of a big family with tradition and past. Now he is lonely and searches for a substitute for his mother's love and often he fails to get it, especially from his wife. In this sense, the Bellow hero remains a mother-bound son.

3.1.1.1. Once again as in the case of father-son relationship in Bellow's fiction, in mother-son relationship too, we have only a picture of the mother given to us through the reminiscences of Bellow's hero. So, whatever the image of a mother that we get in Bellow's fiction it is
only through the reminiscences of the hero and not a direct picture as in the fiction of Cheever. Most of the mother characters in Bellow's novels are dead at the time of the novel and so we are given glimpses of the dead mother by her son. We see the mother from the hero's point of view. But in Cheever's novels, particularly in the first three, we have a direct picture of mother-son relationship. In Cheever's case also, in his famous novel *Falconer*, we have the same method adopted by Bellow. Farragut's mother comes alive in his memories though most of them are not that pleasant to remember as in the case of Bellow's heroes. It may be due to some ambivalence about Cheever's own mother, which is reflected in the treatment of mother.

3.2.1.2. Bellow's treatment of mother characters is shaped out of his Jewish family background and Jewish tradition where mother is given a secondary place in the patriarchal system. Mother's role is that of a caretaker of the house and her children. The Jewish mother is "all engulfing nurturer", who feeds her children very rigorously, sometimes with curses and dominates the house. She is generally portrayed as devourer from whom the hero has to run away otherwise he will lose his identity. He flees from his mother so as to be trapped by another woman - this time his wife from whose shackles he is unable to free himself.
But in Bellow's fiction, the mother figure is a stoic sufferer who has to survive in the emerging modern world and face all the odds to bring up her children. She is the archetypal mother who looks after her household without idling away her time. She struggles hard to run the house with her husband's meagre income, as in Herzog and sometimes she has to bring up her children, without her husband, as in Augie March. Rebecca March suffers, bearing all the agony of life without complaining about her irresponsible husband. Tommy's mother in Seize the Day is simply forgotten by his father who doesn't even remember her death date. Asa Leventhal is often haunted by the image of his mad mother in The Victim.

3.2.1.3. Bellow's mother figure is "the most life-affirming female figure" (McCadden 1980:7) to his hero. The protagonist remembers her for her generous love. His comprehension of self-esteem as son is based on his mother's all encompassing love. He looks for the same kind of love in his relationships with other women who fail often to respond to his needs of love, which in turn leads to several marriages and subsequent divorces on the part of heroes. Freud has shown mother's importance as "love-object" and prototype of all later relationships. Freud firmly believed that all love and affection of a mother to
her son creates a strong unambiguous emotional relationship which continues throughout his life (1952:216-21). Bellow's protagonists are best illustrations of this relationship as shown by Freud. Almost all heroes return to their childhood and recollect the powerful influence of their mothers. After each of his adventures in wider world, the Bellow hero returns to his mother for confirmation of his worth.

3.2.1.4. In Augie March, Augie returns to his mother so as to confirm his worth. Tommy Wilhelm in Seize the Day hopes that his mother will protect him from his own mistakes and help him out in his confrontation with his father at the early stage. After all his failures to secure love from his wives and mistresses, Herzog draws strength from his mother's sacrificial love. He fondly hopes that a woman would show the same love and dedication to his welfare. Henderson's quest for self-knowledge drives him all the way to Africa, to the feet of a mothering figure in an African queen. Joseph and Charlie Citrine fondly remember their mothers as loving figures. Asa Leventhal sees a mothering figure in his wife - a "mothering wife" in Mary. He is the only hero who is happily married and is able to find a substitute-love for his mother's love. He is always disturbed by the image of his mother as a mentally ill-figure
and he compensates for that emotional disturbance by de-
pending excessively on his "mothering wife". So the Bellow 
heroes "romanticise their childhood and idealize their 
mothers' love as their difficulties with their wives and 
mistresses intensify" (McCadden 1980:8).

3.2.2. Just as Bellow's Jewishness and his family 
background influenced his treatment of mother characters in 
his fiction, Cheever's Puritanism and his family background 
have much influenced his depiction of mother characters in 
his novels and stories. The unhappy relationship between 
Leander and Sarah Wapshot in his first novel The Wapshot 
Chronicle has grown out of Cheever's awareness of his 
parents' unhappy marriage and tensions within it about work 
and success. Cheever's childhood provides him with a first 
hand view of the sort of failure of nerve which a business 
reversal can precipitate in a man who prides himself on 
supporting his family. His mother's success in her business 
and her growing emotional independence aggravated the 
situation between his parents. Cheever says, "I remained 
deeply disconcerted by the harm my mother's working did to 
my father's self-esteem" (1977:76). The readers of Cheever 
can surely recognise the form which that reaction took in 
his portrayal of mother characters in his novels (Waldeiband 
1979:50).
3.2.2.1. There seems to be an ambivalence about Cheever's own mother, which is reflected in the treatment of mother characters such as Sarah Wapshot, Nellie Nailles and Farragut's mother. Cheever delayed the publication of The Wapshot Chronicle until after the death of his mother. In one of his interviews he says, "The Chronicle was not published (this was a consideration) until after my mother's death" (Cheever 1997:45). Unlike Bellow's fictional mothers, they are not "traditional", conservative, domestic women whose only concern is the family. They are independent, liberated and modern. They take pride in their work and we see some seeds of emerging professional women - modernist-feminist type. They are not entirely dependent on their husbands like Bellow's fictional mothers who are absolutely traditional, family-minded and almost servile such as Rebecca March, Sarah Herzog.

3.2.2.2. At the same time, Cheever's fictional mothers are very much aware of their family responsibilities and their duty towards the family. They are modern in their attitude to life and independent. They are businesswomen and social activists rather than home-makers. They are often not accessible to their family as they are engaged otherwise and the best example of this type is Farragut's mother in Falconer. Cheever's mother characters are not
modelled on the Biblical women but on the emerging "New Woman" who is very much self-conscious and independent. She has less time to devote to her household work and more time for her social work and business. Sarah Wapshot converts her husband's dear boat "Topaze" into a floating gift-shop and spends much of her time outside the house. Farragut's mother runs a petrol bunk and is not simply worried when her sister-in-law points out that she is doing a menial job and lose her respect in the family. As they are not full time mothers, the influence of the mother on Cheever hero is less as compared to Bellow's. The Cheever hero doesn't turn to his mother for emotional support or guidance. In fact, some protagonists have some bitter memories about their mothers and how their mothers' success affected their fathers' self-esteem. Coverly feels sad to know that his mother has converted his father's favourite boat into a floating gift-shop. Farragut remembers how his mother remained indifferent to his father's threats of suicide. For Farragut his childhood is not a golden age to which he can return in his present predicament.

3.2.3. The mother character in the novels of Bellow and Cheever is a loving woman whose concern is to see that her sons grow into adult men, who can face the world. But there is a major difference in their treatment of the
mother character. In Bellow's novels mostly, the mother is dead at the time of the narration of the story, except in *Augie March* and so the hero often remembers the time of innocent childhood where his mother played an influential and important role in shaping his life—the most crucial period of life. As Bellow's novels are character studies, the mother character fades into insignificance, but remains in the mind of the hero for ever. While agonizing over his present predicament, the hero finds solace in the past, particularly the love of his dead mother. He remembers her as a sensitive and loving mother who struggled hard to bring up her children. In the patriarchal society of Jewish tradition, the mother suffers stoically so as to bring up her children during the hard days of depression and unemployment.

3.2.4. In Cheever's novels the mother is very much part of the young hero's life and she is a living character in all his novels except in *Falconer*. Farragut recollects how his mother has been snobbish and arrogant. The first three novels deal with the adult lives of the sons and their growing up in a changing and fast moving society which is almost disintegrating from its traditional values. Cheever's novels are more or less sociological documents where human relationships matter less in a disintegrating
social structure. In the first two novels, *The Wapshot Chronicle* and *The Wapshot Scandal*, the young heroes, Moses and Coverly, have a vague idea that all is not well between their parents and they know very well that their mother's economic independence and social life are a source of trouble to their father. They know quite well that their mother is not a source of solace to their father as she should have been. They are very much sure that the floating gift-shop is one of the main reasons for their father's early death. There is no love last between their parents. They know it well.

3.2.4.1. The only novel where we have a much concerned and loving mother in Cheever is his third one, *Bullet Park*. Mrs. Nailles is a typical middle class mother who is very much concerned and disturbed that her son has taken to bed without any obvious signs of disease. She is a loving mother, who in spite of some temptations never forgets her duties towards her family. As a mother she appeals to us much more than any other mother character of Cheever's fiction. The overall picture of the mother that we get in Cheever's fictional world is one of an "emerging woman" as compared to "loving and sensitive mother" of Bellow's fiction. To sum up, Cheever's fictional mothers fall under the category of "New Woman" and Bellow's mother characters
are "traditional-old world women". This difference can be further illustrated by analyzing mother-son relationships in their select novels.

3.3.0. Bellow's first novel, *Dangling Man* sets the pattern of mother-son relationship to be followed in other novels too. In this novel the hero's mother is a woman who belongs to a different world - a world of the past - a golden era of his childhood. She is depicted as a life-affirming figure who is remembered for her generous love and affection. The Bellow hero finds security in the knowledge of his mother's invincible love. He depends on his mother's love for a feeling of being at home in the modern, chaotic world. All the mothers in Bellow's novels devote their lives to the demanding task of caring for her children. Each Bellow hero searches "unsuccessfully in the wider world for another woman who will duplicate his mother's love" (McCadder 1980:69). He marries more than once and even takes on mistresses from whom he expects emotional security, sensual pleasure and confirmation of his importance as a male. He draws strength from the memory of his good mother who is an embodiment of compassionate love for her family and her courage to face the trials of life.

3.3.1. Joseph recalls his childhood days which provide him with a sense of solace. He remembers particularly the
love of his dead mother. Joseph idealizes his childhood on St. Dominique Street as the place where he was allowed to "encounter reality" \((DM:70)\) and learn about harshness of life. He remembers his mother as a sensitive and loving person who began to cry after his stubborn Aunt Diana had his long attractive curls cut off during his fourth year. She brought the curls back in an envelope and gave them to his mother, who began to cry. Joseph remembers the incident to recall how the importance of his appearance is magnified in his eyes. This is conveyed to him by "the appearance of the household" \((DM:61)\) created by his mother and makes him think that he is "handsome" \((DM:61)\) which becomes the main source of his self-esteem. His mother is mainly responsible for developing such a magnified appearance of himself.

3.3.1.1. Another time Joseph is reminded of his mother when he sees a dying man on the road. He recollects the scene of his mother's death when the whole family gathered around the dying woman. He remembers the scene very vividly:

Her lips seemed to move crookedly in a last effort to speak or kiss. Aunt Diana screamed. I tried to pull her from the body and she lashed at me clawing with enraged fingers. In the next blurred moment, my mother was dead. I was looking at her, my hand pressed to my face \((DM:64)\)
His mother's loss is seen in his attempts during adolescence days to make a "compact with the adult relatives of my friends, particularly mothers over the heads of their sons" (DM:64). The one person whom Joseph loves is his mother with whom he has no quarrels. But he loses her at a very early stage of his life, and this may be one of the reasons for his later "dangling" situation. Joseph finds solace in the past, particularly the love of his mother and this saves him from his present predicament.

3.3.2. In Bellow's second novel, The Victim, Asa Leventhal's relationship with his mother is not much highlighted though Leventhal is often haunted by an image of his insane mother. He fears that his mother's insanity may descend on him one day. Leventhal's "consciousness is shaped by the 'ghetto psychology' and childhood experiences that imprison him in a world of oppressive guilt and self-doubt" (McCadden 1980:41). His mother died in an insane asylum when he was eight. His father dismissed her disappearance from the house "with an embittered 'gone away' suggestive of desertion" (TV:17) and until he has fully grown he has not learned what happened to her. Leventhal is often disturbed by the memory of his mother's insanity and he is terribly worried that he would inherit her insanity. He is often haunted by his mother's looks.
3.3.2.1. Leventhal's mother is one of the sources of his insecurity and the loss of her sanity makes him fear his own. She still haunts him. According to his father's explanation of her illness she simply died insane. Although Leventhal has never corroborated this fact he still dreads the manifestation in himself of any resemblance to his mother. He begins to consider his own unfortunate mother whose large features and black hair he can summon up very faintly. He remembers "her wearing an abstracted look, but he was not in fact sure that her look was abstracted. Perhaps he attributed it to her" (TV:48). When he examines his idea of her more closely he realizes that what he means by abstraction is "mad-looking, a familiar face and yet without anything in it directed towards him" (TV:48). He dreads her face; he dreads "the manifestation of anything resembling it in himself" (TV:48).

3.3.2.2. This dread continues until the day when his "mothering wife" Mary analyses his insecurity and saves him from that fear of loss of sanity. He speaks of his fears to Mary who reminds him that he has accepted his father's explanation of his mother's illness without verifying it later. He has only his father's version of her insanity and death. As for his fears he is too ready to believe anything and everything about himself because Mary points out
"You are not sure of yourself. If you were a little more sure you wouldn't let yourself be bothered" (TV:48). She is probably right he tells himself. Mary drives away his fears with one concluding remark, "The only proof there is of anything wrong with your mother is that she married that father of yours" (TV:49). This remark brings tears into his eyes. Nevertheless Mary's words are beneficial on the whole.

3.3.2.3. Leventhal thinks that his fears are the fears of hypochondria till he has better evidence. This consoles him to some extent but the fact remains that when he calls up his mother's face at some moment, it is for all that "abstracted" (TV:49). So in Leventhal's case memories of his mother do not bring him any solace or comfort as in the case of other Bellow heroes and he is always affected by that insecurity of her insanity. Other Bellow heroes have pleasant memories of their mothers, where as Leventhal dreads her face and fears the manifestation of anything resembling it in himself. So he has only such bitter memories of his mother as Farragut, Cheever's protagonist in Falconer. This is the only memory that Leventhal has of his mother, which he can recall from his childhood. But from what we gather she must have been a docile, domestic, servile, traditional woman who was not cared for by her
husband who was a typical businessman.

3.3.3. At the beginning of *The Adventures of Augie March*, Augie says, "My own parents were not much to me, though I cared for mother" (AAM:7) And Augie really cares for his mother. His mother, Rebecca March, abandoned by the man who fathered her three illegitimate sons, has no resources to cope with a complex and confusing world. She is a typical traditional mother who loves her children with all her heart and suffers stoically to see that her sons grow up well. Augie says, "My mother was anxious that I should be worthy and faithful" (AAM:14). To him "she was meek and long, round-eyed like Georgie - gentle queen - round eyes and a gentle freshness of colour in her face" (AAM:8).

Her thoughts are always simple, but she felt abandoned and greater pains than conscious mental ones put a dark streak to her simplicity. Augie says, she "occupied a place, I suppose, among women conquered by a superior force of love, like those women whom Zeus got the better of in animal form and who next had to take cover from his furious wife" (AAM:15). Her man has left her to her fate and she has to care for three abandoned sons. She has to struggle to bring up her three sons during the hard days of depression, living with the domineering Grandma Lausch, to whom she surrendered her powers. Her third son is an idiot - deaf
and dumb. Augie says his mother is "the principal illustration in her love-originated servitude, simple-minded and abandoned with three children" (AAM:15). Augie emphasizes his mother's "love-oriented servitude" throughout and she is the embodiment of love.

3.3.3.1. Unlike other fictional mothers of Bellow, Rebecca March is a living character who has much role to play in shaping her son's character. Mama March meets her fate without much resistance. In her mob cap and her floppy man's shoes, she accepts her fate passively. Augie is influenced by this simple-minded woman's response to fate as much as he is by Grandma's opposite reaction. Mama surrenders her powers to Grandma. In Mama's gentleness there is a kind of faith and alleviation for pain, and that sorrow eventually comes to an end. She never shows any signs of her suffering. When the family decides to send idiot brother Georgie to an institution where he can learn some trade, Mama remains silent with dumb, animal resignation. She doesn't expose her distress at Georgie's commitment, "she didn't give any of the usual signs" (AAM:80) and Augie sees the grimness through her docility.

3.3.3.2. Overbeck in her study of "Women in Augie March" says, "Augie casts his mother in a traditional woman's role, that of man's victim... He calls her 'a slavery',
"sober and guilty", power robbed and describes her voice that is almost cry and her crippling blindness" (1968:473-74). She suffers "love originated servitude" with simple severity. When Grandma, not a relative of Marches, comes and puts a regulating hand on the family life, Mama surrenders to her. She has never known that she has some powers and takes her punishment in drudgery. Augie once takes her to visit Georgie in the institution as she cannot go alone because of her poor eyesight. At the institution, Augie and his older brother, Simon, decide to send Grandma to her son as she is troubling their mother. Mama has become her servant and the two sons cannot tolerate the old woman bossing over their mother. And so the brothers send their mother to a private family where she can board.

3.3.3.3. Even after Augie runs away from the family he often visits his mother at her home. Augie sympathizes her: "Augie's family is the emotional centre of his life to which he returns after experiencing adversity in the wider world" (McCadden 1980:68). Augie's closeness to his mother is shown in his romantic view of her predicament as the abandoned mother of three children. Simon doesn't care much for his mother as he seeks his destiny in a different world of capitalist America. But Augie often returns to his mother, seeking protection and shelter in her love from his
disappointments in the larger world. Georgie, the idiot brother sings about her importance:

Georgie Marchy, Augie, Simey

Winnie Marchy, evwy, evwy love Mama.

She has devoted her life to the demanding task of caring for her three fatherless children and she has given her children the freedom to shape their own lives and destiny, never commanding them like the domineering mother of traditional literature. She never criticizes her children but she urges Augie to be careful of domineering women.

3.3.3.4. Throughout his life Augie remains on his "mother's side" (AAM:408), a world of love and gentility in opposition to brutality of the world and the materialism of marriage as represented by Simon. Augie says she gives "her affections too easily" (AAM:19) and this influences him to trust others easily, a quality Simon attributes to his mother. Simon doesn't want to see his mother to be moving around with her hand stick during his wedding ceremony and he tries to take her stick away from her. But Mama doesn't yield it up and Augie is proud of his mother's exhibition of will "I approve of Mama's exhibition of will wondering at the surprises the meek will pull" (AAM:283). This incidence reveals their different attitude to life - Simon, out of his love for material comforts, considers that his
mother is a misfit in his kind of society. But Augie is very proud of his mother and her will power. Augie, taken after his mother, refuses to obey his brother to marry his wife's cousin, Lucy and become a rich millionaire like him. He goes in search of his destiny elsewhere.

3.3.3.5. Like all other Bellow heroes, Augie searches unsuccessfully in the wider world for another woman who will supplement his mother's love. Augie refuses Grandma's advice to succeed in capitalist America. Instead, he follows his mother's values by learning about life first hand. Of all the Bellow heroes Augie is closer to his mother and is his mother's son. It may be because the mother character in the novel is a living character who influences the grown up hero in shaping his life and destiny. All other heroes have only childhood memories of their mothers whereas here the hero's mother is very much alive to guide and influence him in his life. That way, Augie is more fortunate than all other heroes to have his mother's love in his prime time of life.

3.3.4. Unlike Augie, Tommy Wilhelm, the hero of *Seize the Day*, does not have his mother with him to confront the world, particularly his hostile father. But she has definitely influenced in shaping her son's emotional life. The whole novel is a complete dramatization of father-son
conflict, where in Wilhelm calls on the memory of his mother for protection in his confrontation with his father. The only source of unqualified love that he knows is his mother's love but that also is not available to safeguard him from his father's bitter rejection. When he returns to his father for material and emotional support after all his failures elsewhere, he appeals to his father's help by reminding him of his mother's goodness and love. But the old man is of a different make and refuses to be moved by his son's fervent appeals. As every other Bellow hero, Wilhelm too doesn't receive love from his wife as he is separated from her. And so the memory of his mother's love is the only sustaining force which allows him to survive in the present world.

3.3.4.1. Like all Bellow heroes, Wilhelm feels that his mother influenced his essential character, "From his mother he had gotten sensitive feelings, a soft heart, a brooding nature, a tendency to be confused under pressure" (SD:29). In this novel, the mother is nameless and shadowy but she played her part as a docile mother without much influence on her family or son. No doubt, she has influenced his emotional life but she is not a strong and influencing mother like Rebecca March or Sarah Herzog. When Wilhelm wanted to go to Hollywood to become an actor she expressed
her fear and concern as he would destroy himself. She said, "Wilky, Dad would make it easy for you if your wanted to go into medicine" (SD:20). And Wilhelm feels stifled when he remembers her advice. In spite of her advice and his father's protests, he went to Hollywood and failed to become an actor. Wilhelm recalls his parents' different attitudes to his going to Hollywood—his mother’s sincere concern for him and his father’s indifference. He says, "Dad I couldn’t affect one way or another. Mama was the one who tried to stop me and we carried on and yelled and pleaded" (SD:18). Later Wilhelm regrets "Poor Mother! How I disappointed her" (SD:19).

3.3.4.2. In fact, Wilhelm is the only son character in Bellows novels who doesn’t come anywhere near his mother’s expectations of him. But he knows very well, "she was his protection in confrontation with his father as well as a source of reassurance in his attempt to re establish a secure identity" (Mc Cadden 1980:97). The non-availability of her love makes him handicapped by depriving him of the self-confidence required to overcome the mistakes of the past. His mother is the only link to his Jewish tradition because his father has no religion and his wife is a Catholic. When Rappaport reminds him that he is expected to say prayers to his parents for Yorn Kippur, Wilhelm thinks
"I suppose I should say a prayer for mother once in a while" (SD:93). At the cemetery Wilhelm pays a man to say a prayer for her. Though he doesn’t go to synagogue, he often prays in his own manner and performs certain devotions, according to his feelings. And this keeps him in contact with his dead mother and Jewish tradition.

3.3.4.3. In his confrontation with his father in the Hotel Gloriana, Wilhelm shows his grief at her loss to admonish his father. Wilhelm reminds his father about his mother so as to establish a contact with his father to temper his cold judgments. He desperately tries to seek his father’s love by reminding him some facts about his mother and the year of her death. Wilhelm wants to test his father’s devotion to the memory of his dead wife by asking, "Gosh, Dad. I am not sure. Wasn’t it the year Mother died? What year was that" (SD:32). Wilhelm knows that his father’s forgetfulness of the date of her death is an indication of his lack of concern for his children. He remembers "the year, the month, the day the very hour of his mother’s death" (SD:32). And he reminds his father that her loss was the beginning of his end. He says "yes, that was beginning of the end, Wasn’t it. Father" (SD:33). But his father remains unprovoked by his son’s poking question which is meant to test his affection for
his dead wife. For Dr. Adler his wife is nothing, but, for Wilhelm “his mother is his protection before his father’s threatening eyes, a silent advocate in his moment of need” (McCadden 1980:98).

3.3.5. Eugene Henderson, the protagonist of *Henderson the Rain King*, unlike his Jewish counterparts in Bellow’s other novels, doesn’t have many memories about his mother. He has very few memories of her and it may be one of the reasons that his search takes him to the feet of a mothering African Queen. Like the Jewish protagonists he has no fond memories of his mother and he has nothing to acknowledge as something that is influenced by his mother’s values. Henderson remembers that his “mother used to write poems in the brick cathedral of Albi” (*HRK*:17). She had a favourite story about a lady from Paris who was very affected. This memory makes him think, "Gone, those times: closed, sealed, and gone" (*HRK*:17). He associates his mother with those happy days and feels the loss of those times.

3.3.5.1. Another time, he remembers his mother is the recollection about his father who was a very strong man known for his harsh treatment of his wife. Henderson recollects how his father once “made her prostrate in her night gown at the door of his room for two weeks before he
would forgive her some silly words" (HRK:27). The next time he talks about his mother is when he makes attempts to reach his parents by playing on an old violin, in a sort of spiritual communion: "I played in the basement to my father and mother, and when I learned a few pieces I would whisper, 'Ma, this is Humoresque for you' " (HRK:32). He plays the violin with dedication, with feeling, with longing love plays to the point of emotional collapse. This is the last thing that Henderson remembers about his mother. Unlike other Bellow heroes, Henderson has very few memories about his mother. Hence, he goes in search of a mother figure to distant Africa.

3.3.6. Moses Herzog reminisces in the first chapter of Herzog, "To his own parents he had been an ungrateful child" (H:11). This thought disturbs him throughout the novel. His idea of Jewish tradition is derived from his parents, particularly from his mother, Sarah Herzog, a Biblical name, which suggests a noble woman devoted to the Jewish heritage. She was the dominant figure in his childhood, responsible for teaching her children "what a human being really is" (H:233). In fact, Bellow said in an interview that Sarah Herzog's character was based on his own mother (1964:37). Bellow's mother, like Sarah Herzog, was a woman dedicated to her family and Jewish tradition.
Herzog's mother in the novel, like Bellow's mother, wanted her son to become a rabbi: "Herzog's mother had a weakness for Jews with handsome beards. In her family too, all the elders had beards that were thick and rich, full of religion. She wanted Moses to become a rabbi" (H:28). Herzog seemed to himself gruesomely unlike a rabbi. But Herzog, like his creator, Bellow, was brought up in an eccentric and erratically "religious" family and his mother played an important role in imparting Jewish values to her children, particularly to Herzog. So Herzog repeatedly refers to his Jewishness and reveals a strong family sense which are inherited from his mother.

3.3.6.1. Herzog draws his moral and religious sense from the memory of his mother, Sarah. The memory of her compassionate love for her family and her courage in facing the trials of life are the real source of his strength. Herzog's childhood friend Nachman draws his attention to the source of her altruistic values, remembering how she was compassionate to him:

But a good man, Moses. Rooted in yourself. But a good heart like your mother. A gentle spirit. You got it from her. I was hungry and she fed me. She washed my hands and sat me at the table. That I remember. She was the only one who was kind to my Uncle Ravitch, the drunkard. I sometimes say a prayer for her (H:140).
And in the course of our reading of the novel, we come to know that Herzog is a "good heart" like his mother, "a gentle spirit". Sarah Herzog is an ideal wife and a loving mother who courageously accepted her poverty-stricken life. Her husband is a thorough failure in whatever he has attempted but she still never allowed her children to think low of their father. She cautions her children never to mention that their "father is a bootlegger" (H:29). Herzog remembers how his mother has instructed him "you must never say" (H:29). The trusting, innocent, grief-stricken Jonah Herzog failed as a farmer, marriage broker and above all a bootlegger but still he remained "a father, a sacred king" (H:154) to Herzog. And Sarah Herzog is very much responsible for this image created in the mind of her son by protecting her husband. She never allowed her children to think of their father as a failure.

3.3.6.2. Herzog praises his mother and he loves to recollect memories of her. He proudly tells his wife, Madeleine "My mother came from Baltic provinces. She loved fish" (H:120). But Madeleine is not interested in Mother Herzog, twenty years dead, however "mother-bound this nostalgic gentleman's soul might be" (H:120). And Herzog never expects Madeleine to consider his mother, as "she was one of the 'dead', dead, without effect on the new genera-
Herzog recalls his childhood days in the Jewish ghetto in Montreal, Canada. He remembers his mother's sacrifices for her children, her grief at the news of the death of her brother in Moscow. His mother withstood all the criticism of Aunt Zipporah who chided his mother for wasting money for encouraging her children's artistic abilities. When Aunt Zipporah suggested that Sarah's children could be sent to work like her children, Mama Herzog argued, "Why shouldn't the children study if they have intelligence, talent" (H:152). A visit from Aunt Zipporah was like a military inspection. After every visit Mama laughed and often ended crying "Why is she my enemy? What does she want? I have no strength to fight" (H:153). Herzog says "Mama's mind was archaic, filled with old legend, with angels and demons" (H:153).

3.3.6.3. Herzog remembers his mother's belief in the goodness of Jews. When his father recounts how he has been attacked by some of his Jewish rivals in one of his bootlegging escapades, Mama Herzog simply can't believe that Jews could be bad, "Landtsleit? Impossible. Now Jews could do this to a Jew... Not Jews. Never. Never! They couldn't have the heart. Never" (H:154). Such is the faith of this traditional Jewish woman in her tribe. Like a typical Jewish woman she is known for her suffering. Herzog remem-
bers his mother's sufferings and sacrifices in bringing up
her children against all odds. She has the courage to
accept her poverty-stricken life and grief. So Herzog says
proudly,

We had a great schooling in grief. I still know
these cries of the soul. They lie in the breast,
and in the throat... But all these are antiqui-
ties, Jewish antiquities originating in the
Bible, in a Biblical sense of personal experience
and destiny (H:155).

Herzog has that pride in his Jewish suffering and grief
which is symbolised by his mother's struggle in her life.

3.3.6.4. One of the fond memories of Herzog about his
mother is how she used to "moisten her handkerchief at her
mouth and rub his face clean" (H:39). He still feels the
smell of her saliva on his cheeks and this has a strong
influence on Herzog "of the mature generation now and life
was his to do something with, if he could" (H:39) but "he
had not forgotten the odour of his mother's saliva on the
kerchief that morning in the squat hollow Canadian station,
the black iron and the sublime brass" (H:39). Herzog ac-
cepts that excessive nostalgia may be a symbol of disorder
but he does not care:

All children have cheeks and all mothers spittle
to wipe them tenderly. These things matter or
they do not matter. It depends upon the universe,
what it is. These acute memories are probably
symptoms of disorder (H:39).
But Herzog feels that it is nothing wrong to remember those happy days of his childhood where his mother was the centre of all love. She was the one who held all of them together and avoided the disintegration of the family in its hardest times.

3.3.6.5. Sarah Herzog sacrificed her life to bring up her children in those hard days of depression. One interesting memory of his mother is about her answer to his doubt regarding Adam's creation. When the seven year old Herzog had asked her how Adam could be created from the dust of the ground, she showed it:

Sarah Herzog opened her hand and said, 'Look carefully now and you'll see what Adam was made of'. She rubbed her palm of her hand with a finger, rubbed until something dark appeared on the deep-lined skin, a particle of what certainly looked to him like earth. 'You see it's true' (H:240).

Herzog repeats the same experiment years after and realises "What a human being really is?" (H:240) - earth.

3.3.6.6. Herzog vividly remembers his mother's death which happened when he was sixteen years old. She called him to his bed side and she lifted up her hand and showed him her finger nails. They were blue. She slowly began to nod her head up and down as if to say, "That's right,
Moses, I am dying now" (H:241). Herzog noticed "the fingers had lost their flexibility. Under the nails they seemed to him to be turning already into the blue loam of the grave. She had begun to change into earth" (H:242). She became part of the earth from which she came. For Herzog his mother remains a symbol of the "Old world with feelings like Love - Filial emotion" (H:288) which no one shows to him at present. Years later, remembering his insensitivity to her suffering, Herzog takes comfort in his mother's sympathetic understanding of his fear of death, thinking, "She only pitied me, her orphan, understood I was a gesture-maker, ambitious, and a fool" (H:241). Even after she lost the power of speech, she showed concern for his feelings by stroking his head while he read, appropriately, The Decline of the West. In his present predicament, Herzog is completely beaten and exhausted, especially after his quarrel and separation from his second wife, Madeleine. But whatever strength he has, he draws it from the memory of his mother's compassionate love for her family and her courage to face the trials of life. His memories of his mother are a source of strength to him. Herzog is very much a "mother-bound" son.

3.3.7. Charlie Citrine's childhood in Humboldt's Gift is not much revealed to us as in the case of other Bellow
or Cheever heroes, particularly Augie and Moses, Coverly and Moses. We know very little about Charlie’s parents and his relationship with them. He remembers his parents only on two occasions and unlike other heroes of Bellow, he doesn’t indulge in childhood memories. He tells us that he spent eight years in the public ward of a TB Sanatorium where his parents used to visit him once in a week. He remembers his “mother with her bosom in old green serge, big-eyed, straight-nosed, and white with worry - her deep feelings inhibited her breathing” (HG:66). Another time when his small daughter, Mary asks him what his mother used to do, Charlie tells her about his mother and the old times when they had coal stove. Like all Bellow heroes, Charlie too loves to be nostalgic about the old times but he doesn’t practise it severely like them. He tells his daughter about his mother:

I think she was very pretty. I don’t look like her. And she did cooking, baking, laundry and ironing, canning and pickling. She could tell fortunes with cards and sing trembly Russian songs (HG:74).

His mother and father took turns visiting him at the sanatorium every other week. He even remembers the Vanilla ice-cream they brought which was so hard that it could not be cut with knife. So he remembers his mother as a traditional caring mother.
3.3.7.1. Once when he lost a tooth his mother threw it behind the stove and asked the little mouse to bring a better one. Such delicate scenes show how Charlie cherishes his childhood memories. When Mary asks him whether he loved his mother, eager swelling feeling suddenly has swept in and he tells her:

Oh, I loved them all terribly, abnormally. I was all torn up with love. Deep in the heart, I used to cry in the sanatorium because I might never make it home and see them. I am sure they never knew how I loved them. Mary. I had a TB fever and also a love fever (HG:75).

This is all we know about Charlie's mother. But whatever little we know about his mother, Charlie loved his mother like all other heroes of Bellow.

3.4.0. Cheever's fictional mothers are women of a changing society and his concern is to show the decay of the past and the new emerging suburban society as compared to the traditional lives of Bellow's mother characters who belong to entirely different times. Cheever is dealing more with the contemporary society where tradition has no significance. So, Cheever's fictional families are not large families with many children and relatives as in the case of Bellow. We have mostly the typical American
"nuclear" families in Cheever's novels where traditional family values have become secondary. In Cheever too, we have broken families and separated husbands and wives as in Bellow's fiction. But mother characters in Cheever's world are no doubt family minded women. Like their counterparts in Bellow's novels, they are very much concerned with their children and their welfare. They also worry about their children's welfare and growth in a decaying society but they do not have much control over their children.

3.4.1. Cheever's fictional mothers do not appeal to us much as they are not as loving as Bellow's mother figures. Some of the mother characters in Cheever's fiction are sinister and domineering. The reason for this kind of portrayal of mother characters, as pointed out earlier, can be attributed to an ambivalence about Cheever's own mother. Cheever's creation of fictional mother's is influenced by his mother's behaviour towards his father. Sarah Wapshot modelled on Cheever's mother proves to be a successful business woman when she opens a floating gift-shop by converting her husband's boat, "Topaze". Her emotional independence and economic success disturb Leander very much and he is driven to suicide by drowning himself in the sea. Leander and Sarah Wapshot are modelled on Cheever's parents. He was deeply disconcerted by the harm his mother's
working did to his father's self esteem. But this old-fashioned view of proper relationship between the sexes has changed somewhat for Cheever. In one of his interviews he acknowledges his mother's sovereignty and expressed his changed attitude to the relationship between sexes:

She was ecstatic to be independent. I didn't understand it all. But today for me to grant what I think of as sovereignty to other men and women is one of the most thrilling experiences I know, and when I finally realized that my mother, managing her gift shop, felt herself to be sovereign, I was happy to get the news (Cheever 1977:76).

But suffice it to say that the portrayal of Sarah Wapshot's character is a reflection of the relationship between the author's parents.

3.4.2. Sarah Wapshot in *The Wapshot Chronicle* is portrayed not as a strong character like Bellow's mother characters to influence and shape her two sons' lives. Her role as a mother of Moses and Coverly seems to make her potentially as important as Leander is, but she is markedly less developed character than Leander or his cousin, Honora. We are introduced to Sarah Wapshot at the beginning of the novel when the whole town of St. Botalphs gathers on Independence Day to witness the parade. She is seen moving on one of the floats, watched by her two sons in the crowd. The narrator says she "is a woman of forty
whose fine skin and clear features could be counted among her organizational gifts" (TWC:7). As the novel involves the struggles of Leander and Honora to lead fulfilling lives, Sarah gets lost in the shuffle. She doesn't have any say in the brought up of her two sons. Her husband "did not always see eye to eye with Sarah but this seemed to him most natural, and life itself appeared to regulate their differences" (TWC:154). Leander wants to initiate his first son, Moses in trout fishing, an annual ritual but Sarah protests it. When it is time for Moses to accompany his father, his mother doesn't want him to go fishing with his father. She protests that Moses is sick and he cannot accompany Leander. She threatens her husband: "Leander, if you take this poor boy out of a sickbed and up to the north woods I'll never forgive you" (TWC:54). But Leander takes her son to the Canadian border in spite of her protests before she wakes up in the morning. And Moses follows his father without any protest. This one incident proves that she has no sustaining influence on her son.

3.4.2.1. Next year when it is Coverly's turn to go trout fishing with his father, Sarah simply packs his bag and gives him a cook book with an advice: "your father doesn't know how to cook and I don't know what you will eat for four days so I'll give this" (TWC:59). But Leander throws
the book when Coverly tries to read it in his fishing adventure. However much she tries to influence her sons, Sarah Wapshot thoroughly fails to do it. When it is time for Moses to leave home and go into the outer world to prove himself at the command of his aunt Honora, Sarah simply agrees without much protest, "Sarah's habitual reliance on sad conclusions helped her to bear the pain of having her first born plucked from his home" (TWC:88). She doesn't have much effect on crucial moments of her son's lives such as this. But the estrangement between Sarah and Leander fades for a while as the narrator comments, "the closeness of Moses's departure drew Sarah and Leander together and refused those charming self-deceptions that are the backbone of many long-lived marriage" (TWC:89).

3.4.2.2. Coverly Wapshot remembers some of the incidents that left a deep impression of his mother. Sarah, according to her son, Coverly "is afraid of crowds. I mean she's afraid of being trapped" (TWC:124). He remembers how she used to grab hold of his hand and drag out of crowds into a lovely street to get back her breath. He says "In anywhere my mother felt she was confined she'd get uneasy" (TWC:124). Coverly remembers one incident which left an impression on him. Whenever Coverly goes out with his father and has some fun, she will wait for him to return so
as to tell the story of his abortion. She tells him that his father doesn't want him to be born. She wants to make Coverly hate his father and come closer to her. Coverly says, "She told me several times. She told me I shouldn't trust him because he wanted to kill me" (TWC:125). She tells him that but for her courage he would have been dead. The irony is that Coverly knows fully well that his father will not hurt him, "He never punished me" (TWC:125). In fact, Coverly has love and regard for his father and thinks that his mother is responsible for his father's suicide later in life. He understands well how his father has become lonely and is driven to suicide. His sympathies are with his father.

3.4.2.3. Coverly narrates to a Psychoanalyst how his mother punished him for peeping into a bathhouse where women get undressed. When she sees him doing this, she takes her son home and whips him with his grand father's buggy whip. This incident has some effect on his fundamental attitude toward women. He tells the psychoanalyst, "I think it is hard to take much pride in being a man. I mean women are very powerful. They are kind and they mean very well, but sometimes they get very oppressive. Sometimes you feel as if it wasn't right to be a man" (TWC:128). Somewhere in his mind Coverly feels that his mother is
responsible for such an image of women imprinted in his mind. Sarah Wapshot turns out to be an "oppressive" woman though she still fails to influence her two sons. Coverly feels strongly that his father is a victim of such oppression on the part of his mother.

3.4.2.4. Sarah Wapshot died two years after her husband's death and the omniscient narrator The Wapshot Scandal says, "... she ascended into heaven, where she must have been kept very busy since she was a member of that generation of American women to enjoy sexual equality" (TWS:16). She has been a society woman active with her social work and less concerned with domestic matters and sometimes she seems to be detached and disinterested in her family. The last word about Mrs. Wapshot that we hear from the narrator of the novel is some sort of a judgment passed on the "new emerging woman". He says, "Sarah Wapshot was one of those women whose group of vital matters had forced them to consider the simple tasks of a house to be in some way perverted" (TWS:16). We see the emergence of 'New' active women in this novel, particularly in the character of Melissa, wife of Moses. Sarah Wapshot has successfully overcome male domination and goes on to dominate her husband and to some extent she is also responsible for the family's destruction. So, in Cheever's novels we see a
different kind of mother, who is a prototype of the "New" woman. She almost turns out to be a "man devourer" and such women are many in the world of Cheever.

3.4.3. In Cheever's third novel, Bullet Park, we have an ideal mother-son relationship in the relationship between Nellie Nailles and her son, Tony Nailles. Nellie "an honest and decent woman" is a conventional middle class suburban mother who "looked around desperately for honest-mothers, wives, women who took pride in their houses, gardens, their flower arrangements and their cooking" (BP:31). She lives with her husband and son, a clean, well-ordered life. She is an honest, conscientious, intelligent, chaste housewife leading a normal life in a suburban town, Bullet Park. But all her normalcy, routine and peace are disturbed when her only son refuses to get out of bed saying, "I am not sick. I just feel terribly sad. I just don't feel like getting up" (BP: 40). He refuses to leave his bed and is stricken with a strange unknown disease. The rest of Part I of the novel centres on the confusion that the parents suffer as a result of Tony's immobility. Nellie invites three doctors to treat Tony. Her son's condition is allied comically with the melancholy of Portia in The Merchant of Venice. Here it is not the winning of her hand these suitors are after but" one by one
they stood over her son trying to devise or guess the force that had stricken him." (BP:40).

3.4.3.1 All the three doctors fail to cure Tony of his strange disease and the loving mother grieves, "He wouldn't get up again. He's been in bed for some days" (BP:42). After some ministrations of these doctors, Tony gets up, takes a shower, eats his breakfast and again goes back to bed refusing to get up. The loving mother fails to understand why her son is stricken with this strange disease. They are good Christians and she tells one of the doctors that her husband goes to church nearly every Sunday but still her son is ill. She goes on:

We don't tell lies. I think Tony never told a lie... We haven't read one another's mail. We don't cheat. We don't gossip. We pay our bills. Eliot loves me. We drink before dinner. I smoke a good deal. We are honest and decent people and I'm not going to be made to feel guilty about it (BP:45).

She protests strongly that they don't deserve that kind of punishment. It is appropriate to quote the words of Hunt in this connection, "The poignancy of her protests is heightened by the minimalism of her standards" (1983: 171). She wonders whether anything more is expected of her, "Prophets with beards, fiery horsemen, thunder and lightning, holy commandments inscribed on tablets in ancient
languages?" (BP: 45). In spite of all these things Tony refuses to get out of bed and his mother is very much concerned and anxious to know what happened to her son and she is ready to do anything to make her son leave the bed and go out.

3.4.3.2. Tony brings a war widow home after having spent a night with her. At the dining table Nellie behaves as if nothing happened and pretends that there is nothing between her son and the war widow. She knows that her son has spent a night with the widow and the narrator comments, "Nellie saw it; seemed to be looking. Would she rail at the stranger for having debauched her clearly son? Bitch, ... Degenerate. Would she cry and leave the table?" (BP: 98). Nellie manages to put up a show and even suggests that they can play a game, "Let’s play I packed my grandmother’s trunk. We always used to play it when Tony was a boy and things weren’t going well" (BP: 98). She stays cool till the war widow leaves the house and then starts crying. Her husband consoles her as they go upstairs and returns to his son and asks Tony "For God’s sake, please don’t ever do anything like that again" and the boy assures" I won’t, Daddy," (BP: 99). Throughout this scene the mother behaves as though she doesn’t know her son’s relationship with the war widow and saves the situation.
3.4.3.3. When Tony has been in bed twenty-two days Nellie receives a neatly typed letter from her former maid, who says that a certain guru, "faith healer" by name Swami Rutuola can heal her son. She meets the eccentric Swami whose injured eye "Immovable, was raised to heaven in permanent attitude of religious hysteria" (BP:130). The Swami arrives at the Nailles' house to employ his original technique on Tony in the boy's bedroom. After repeating the word "Love" hundred times Tony declares "I know it's crazy but I do feel much better" (BP: 141). After sometime Tony starts walking and comes down to his parents and announces "I don't feel sad anymore and the house doesn't seem to be made of cards. I feel as though I'd been dead and now I'm alive" (BP:142). Nellie is seen crying. At long last her son's strange sickness is healed by the "faith healer" or "magician". Part I of the novel comes to an end: "Tony went to school ten days later and everything was as WONDERFUL as it had been" (BP: 142).

3.4.3.4. So, we have in Bullet Park a genteel and loving mother who takes care of her son and protects him like a mother chicken. She comes to his rescue when the father fails to get his son's sickness healed. She goes in search of a "faith healer" taking all pains and gets her son healed of his strange sickness. Nellie is a typical mother
who loves her only son excessively and all the time she worries about his welfare. She is the most devoted and loving mother in Cheever's fiction. Cheever's ambivalence towards his mother has been overcome in this novel and we have a portrayal of a perfect mother in the character of Nellie. She comes closer to the fictional mothers of Bellow who are all love and care for their children. Nailles can be grouped with the traditional mothers of Bellow's fiction though she too shows a few characteristics of "New Woman" in Cheever's fiction.

3.4.4. In Cheever's fourth novel, Falconer, we have the same method as in Bellow where the hero remembers his childhood days and his mother's role in it. In the first three novels of Cheever, the fictional mothers are living characters who do not interact much with their grown up adult sons. But in Falconer, the hero Farragut has only memories of his childhood which he recollects during his term of imprisonment at Falconer prison. The first memory of his mother is one of the favourite stories that his mother used to tell about his father's intention to abort the child in the mother's womb. He recounts painfully, "Firstly, his father having written Farragut's name with his cock, had tried to erase the writing" (F:48). In Cheever's first novel too, Coverly recollects his mother's
story about how his father wanted to abort the child in her womb. Somehow this bitter memory of their childhood days gets embedded in their mind. They realise that they had come into the world against their fathers' wishes. In the case of Farragut, the very first memory of his parents is bitter that they are uncaring parents. And the remaining memories about his mother are not pleasant ones. Whenever he feels that his life is threatened he remembers his mother's story about his father's attempt to kill him in her womb. So she makes him feel that he is an unwanted child. There is a psychic fear created by his mother, lurking in his mind throughout.

3.4.4.1. The second memory of Farragut's mother is in connection with his addiction to narcotic drugs. He says that it is only "natural" that he is an addict because he has been "raised by people who dealt in contraband, of unlicensed spiritual, intellectual and erotic stimulants" (F:54). He says that his "family had endeavoured to be versatile at every political, spiritual and erotic level. It helped him to explain the fact that he was an addict" (F:55). Then comes a vivid memory of his mother coming down a circular staircase in a coral coloured dress heavily embroidered with pearls on her way to her "Tosca" and he could remember his mother pumping gas on the main road to
Cape Cod. He could remember her casually and repeatedly regretting invitations to dine with Trenchers, a rich family in the village. He remembers, "the Farraguts were a sort of people who had lived in a Victorian mansion and when this was lost had moved back to the family homestead" (F:55). When everything was lost the Farraguts decided to run a gas station. When his Aunt Louisa cautioned that they would lose their friends, his mother replied, "To the contrary I shall discover who they are" (F:56). His mother was such a stubborn and no nonsense woman. Aunt Louisa's visits do not disturb her as such visits by Aunt Zipporah disturb Sarah Herzog in Herzog.

3.4.4.2. The traditional mother in Bellow's fiction suffers silently and bears the pain but the "New" woman in Cheever's fiction resists, fights back and does not cry or complain. She faces the crisis and overcomes it. But Bellow's fictional mother yields and overcomes. Cheever's fictional mother fights and conquers her enemies. She is a stubborn, firm and decisive woman who knows her strength and asserts her rights as a woman and mother. She is not a slave or subordinate to her husband and refuses to be mastered by her husband. She remains the master of the house and not a submissive and servile mother.

3.4.4.3. For Farragut, the word "mother" evokes "the
image of a woman pumping gas, curtsying at the Assemblies and banging a lectern with her gravel" (F:57). He remembers her as an authoritarian woman who can command people. He cannot square this image of motherhood with the image in a "Degas painting of a woman with a bowl of chrysanthemums that had come to represent... the great serenity of 'mother' " (F:57). The word "mother" keeps urging him to match his own mother, "a famous arsonist, snob, gas pumper and wing shot, against the image of the stranger with her autumnal and bitter-smelling flowers. Why had the universe encouraged this gap?" (F:57). He remembers another incident when his mother took her sons to the club. According to Farragut his mother "on the road was an agent of death" (F:80) as she was known for her reckless driving which killed one dog and two cats. He often associates his mother with death. At the club her behaviour was quite authoritarian and disturbing to her two sons. She insulted the steward which prompted Farragut's elder brother, Eben, to leave the club in disgust. But ironically Eben inherited this quality from his mother which disturbs Farragut much later.

3.4.4.4. Another important memory about his mother is her announcement without any apparent interest at the dinner table that his father would drown himself off the
island of Nagasakit. When Farragut questioned her about his father she simply says,

I am not sure. When I came downstairs to make supper he handed me a long indictment enumerating my failures as a woman, a wife and a mother. There were twenty-two charges. I didn't read them all. I threw it into the fire. He was quite indignant. He said that he was going to Nagasakit to drown himself" (F:61).

In a very disinterested way, without any sense of remorse or fear she announces to her sons about their father's threat of suicide. Farragut is disturbed even now when he remembers that incident and his mother's indifference and casual behavior.

3.5.0. The fictional mothers of Bellow and Cheever, in general, are quite loving and caring. But the major difference in their treatment of mother-son relationship lies in their narrative styles. The mother characters in almost all Bellow's novels are seen through the minds of the protagonists except in Augie March. We see the mother through the eyes of the hero and his point of view helps us to understand her character and her influence on him. At the time of action of the novel the mother character is dead and we are given glimpses of the dead mother by the hero. We see the mother character in Bellow from this point of view. In Cheever's novels the mother is a living charac-
ter except in his fourth novel *Falconer*, where we have glimpses of the dead mother given to us by the hero. The memories of Bellow hero about his mother are pleasant and he often recollects those memories so as to sustain himself in his present predicament. In the case of Cheever hero there is no need for him to recollect the memories of his mother as she is a living character. And the influence of the mother on the hero is very much less as compared to the influence of the mother on the hero in Bellow’s novels. However, all the mother characters in the novels of Bellow and Cheever are loving and caring towards their sons and the sons are attached to their mothers. But Bellow’s mother characters appeal to us much more than Cheever’s fictional mothers as the Bellow hero is more a mother-bound son than the Cheever hero. This aspect of Bellow hero is much more crucial to his character in understanding his strained relationship with his wife. To sum up, for Bellow hero, his mother is Mary whereas for Cheever hero, she is Eve.
CHAPTER IV

MARITAL BOND — AGE

Will never understand what women want. What do they want? They eat green salad and drink human blood (H:48).

There is nothing on earth as cruel as a rotten marriage (F:25).

4.1.0. Marriage is considered to be a 'holy covenant' as it provides companionship and support, creates a proper environment for procreation, and minimizes the possibility of illicit relationships. As the story of mankind has shown, marriage, in due course of time, has become the most important social and religious ceremony. Every religion considers marriage as a 'holy covenant', where man and woman have their roles to play so that the sacred institution continues for ever. In Judaism "marriage is a paradigm of completeness as it is considered as 'holy covenant'" (Geller and Kottun 1976:44). Christianity considers marriage holy because St.Paul compared the relationship between husband and wife to the relationship between Jesus and Church. The significance of marriage and companionship is much emphasized in the Second Chapter of