CHAPTER I

INTRODUCTION

I think the differences between John and me endeared us to each other more than affinities. - Bellow

Saul Bellow is excellent ... He stands today as the most original writer in America. - Cheever

1.1.0. In an age of post modernism with its concept of a 'decentered world', 'deconstruction' and 'artistic anarchy', to speak of tradition and familial values seems to be an anomaly. However, writers who explore the interiors of American family life and problematize family relationships in the context of modern and post-modern milieus, have some interesting things to say about family, the central force governing a community. Saul Bellow (1915--) and John Cheever (1912-82) have written so often about the "familial tensions" in their fiction that it becomes a special terrain for them. They believe that family is the natural outcome of people's longing to make meaningful connections with others and that family is the crucible in which identity of man and woman is forged. Family, therefore, exists in the memory of their protagonists as
they are "family centric". They seem to say that family, in spite of its disintegration in the modern age, is a vital institution capable of ministering to the emotional and spiritual needs of their protagonists who vacillate between tradition and personal freedom. Though they have so much common to say about familial relationships, Bellow and Cheever are not studied together from this perspective so far.

1.2.0. There are a number of comparative studies of Saul Bellow with Continental writers like Dostoevsky, Kafka, Satre, Kierkegard and Jewish American novelists like Mailer, Roth, Malmu and Salinger. For instance, several critics have traced out the influence of Dostoevsky's novels on Bellow's fiction. John J.Clayton in Saul Bellow: In Defence of Man (1988) says The Victim is based directly on The Eternal Husband; Dangling Man has affinities of spirit to Dostoevsky's fiction and in all his novels Bellow uses "Dostoevsky's imagery". Helen Weinberg in her book, The New Novel in America: The Kafkan Mode in Contemporary Fiction, (1970), traces evidences of direct and indirect influences of Kafka on Bellow. Daniel Fuchs in Saul Bellow: Vision and Revision, (1984), shows that Bellow is the leading exponent of Russian way and of particular note is Dostoevsky on Bellow.
1.2.1. In the same way, there are quite a number of comparative studies of Jewish American novelists where Bellow figures predominantly. Some of them are Joseph E. Mersand's *Traditions in American Literature* (1988), M. Mudrick's *On Culture and Literature* (1970), Allen Guttmann's *The Jewish Writer in America* (1971), Nathan A. Scott's *Three American Moralists* (1973), Lois Symons Lewin's *The Theme of Suffering in the Work of Bernard Malmed and Saul Bellow* (1987), Louis Harp's *In the Main Stream* (1975) and Josephine Zadosky Knopp's *The Trial of Judaism in Contemporary Jewish Writing* (1975). All these critics see similarities and dissimilarities between Bellow and other major Jewish American novelists with emphasis on themes like Jewish tradition, Jewish affirmation of life, existential condition of man, crisis of identity and assimilation, Jewish suffering and other problems faced by these novelists.

1.2.1.2. Saul Bellow is also studied in comparison with leading American novelists such as Updike, Barthe, Pynohon, Styron, Kurt Vonnegurt. Some of the important works are David D. Balloway's *The Absurd Hero in American Fiction: Updike, Styron, Bellow and Salinger* (1970), Frank D. McConnell's *Four Post-war American Novelists: Saul Bellow, Margaret Drabble, Anne Tyler and John Updike* (1988), Sukbir

1.2.2. Familial relationships in Bellow’s novels have always interested Bellow scholars, but mostly two kinds of familial relationships—‘Father-son’ and ‘Man-Woman’—are only taken up for discussion by many critics, leaving out ‘Mother-son’ and ‘Sibling’ relationships, which are equally significant in understanding the character of the protagonist. Bellow’s novelette *Seize the Day* is an often discussed subject as in Daniel Weiss’s essay, "Caliban on Prospero" (1987), Andrew Jafechek’s "Family Struggles in *Seize the Day*" (1974) and Jonathan Wilson’s "Fathers and Sons: *Seize the Day*" in *On Bellow’s Planet* (1985). But these critics have not studied deeply ‘father-son’ relationships in other novels of Bellow.

1.2.2.1. Most critics of Bellow say that a streak of misogyny cuts through Bellow’s fiction as it presumably has roots in his marital experiences. But some have pointed out that women have important roles to play in his novels though they may have been portrayed mostly as two-dimensional characters. Prominent among them are studies by Ada Aharoni, "Women in Bellow’s Novels" (1983); Victoria Sullivan, "The Battle of Sexes in Three Bellow Novels"
(1975); and Vinoda, "The Dialectic of Sex in Bellow’s Fiction" (1983). J.F. McCadden has come out with a full length book on Bellow’s women entitled *The Flight from Women in the Fiction of Bellow* (1980) which says that each Bellow hero is involved with women, expecting from them emotional security, pleasure and confirmation of his mother’s love in his relationship with women.

1.2.3. But all these studies concentrate on ‘Father-Son’ relationships, particularly in *Seize the Day*, and ‘Husband-Wife’ relationships only. Mothers in Bellow’s novels have a significant role to play in shaping the lives of his protagonists, especially the humane and sentimental sides of their characters. In the same way Sibling relationships are equally important. While critics have frequently pointed out the importance of the family in his work, studies have rarely singled out the sibling blood for attention. Examining what Bellow has to say about sibling relations illuminates an important aspect of his work.

1.3.0. In the case of Cheever, there are just a few critical works on his fiction, that too not much is said about familial relationships other than the “Brother-motif”. The first book on Cheever’s fiction by Samuel Coale, *John Cheever* (1977), gives an original and genuinely perspective insight and analysis which became the
basis of Cheever scholarship. Lynne Waldeland’s book, *John Cheever* (1978), includes all of the available reviews and criticisms and synthesizes their various points of view. Religious and mythic patterns in Cheever’s fiction are analyzed by George W. Hunt in his book, *The Hobgoblin Company of Love* (1983). R.G. Collins ed. *Critical Essays on John Cheever* (1982) gives an outstanding collection of wide range of essays on various approaches to Cheever’s fiction. Patrick Meanor in *John Cheever Revisited* (1995) considers Cheever as a more serious writer than his reputation as the archetypal *New Yorker* writer has allowed. As far as the tradition and family relationships are concerned, there are just a few articles, such as "Tradition and desecration: The Wapshot Novels of John Cheever" by Kenneth Mason (1987) and Robert G. Collins’s "Beyond Argument: Post Marital Man in John Cheever’s Later Fiction" (1984). The dearth of studies on Tradition and Family relationships in the fiction of John Cheever has prompted the researcher to take up this subject for his dissertation on an intra-literature comparative basis with one of the most prominent but controversial American writers, Bellow.

1.4.1. Though a number of books and a great many scholarly essays have been written about their work, a comparative analytical study of seemingly dissimilar
novelists - Bellow and Cheever - has rarely been attempted. It may be because of their obvious differences, but a joint consideration on an intra-literature comparative basis will yield a fresh, interesting perspective on both. This study makes use of such a strategy based on a close textual analysis of their works to convey a fuller understanding of each writer's vision and to examine their treatment of tradition and familial-archetypal patterns of relationships in their novels.

1.4.2 Below and Cheever have great deal in common. Some of these parallels are superficial, mere accidents of chronology, but others are quite substantial. Both are from North (U.S.A.) and the action in majority of their novels takes place there, mostly in and around the cities of New York and Chicago. Cheever's fiction has the traditional New England as its background - the suburban town. They bring a strong sense of the traditional European novel - Dickens, Dostoevsky, Balzac to American fiction. Both Jews and Protestants value personal autonomy more than the Catholics do and it brings them together - their protagonist's bid for freedom and individuality. Bellow and Cheever take a stand against the cultural nihilism of the twentieth century, against the denigration of human life in modern society. They reject the tradition of alienation in modern
literature and their fiction emphasizes the importance and significance of brotherhood and community. Yet some of their main characters are masochists and alienates. Both writers value individuality. Essentially they "affirm" life and they believe in the essential "goodness" of man.

1.4.2.1. Through the filtering perspective of suffering protagonists who are often autobiographical projections, both writers address the same larger social issues like ethnic identity, familial values, tradition, individual moral responsibility and guilt, sexuality and romantic love, materialism and social mores in general. Though they have lived through both the world Wars there is little mention of war in their fiction, except in Bellow's *Dangling Man*, where the protagonist Joseph is seen waiting to be drafted for war duties. They have the traditionalist's sense of human nature and of its continuance in time and experience. They are both upholders of tradition and familial values. Bellow presents a Jewish philosophical view which is seen throughout his work and stresses the need for the return to the humanism of Judaism. Cheever's work shows a long tradition of American Protestant self-criticism and he attacks the distortion or violation of Christian tenets.

1.4.3.0. Tony Tanner says, "For some American writers
their experience of life in America is so intense and primary that it seems supererogatory to invent new material. The craft of fiction-maker goes into shaping and ordering the overall structure of his recollections" (1871: 295). And this is quite true of the fiction of Bellow and Cheever. So, it may not be out of place to give an account of their lives and careers which helped them a lot in writing their novels. Saul Bellow, born in a Jewish family of Russian origin in 1915 in Lechine, Quebec, grew up in Montreal and moved to Chicago with his family in 1924. Bellow's childhood in "the Montreal slums must have contributed much to the sense of cultural displacement and the intense desire for social or intellectual conquest that motivates so many of his protagonists" (Hyland 1882:3) Bellow drew much from his "ghetto" upbringing that was to feed his writing. His early family life has provided material for many novels. The immigrant experience deepened ties of blood, and family life was apparently as deep as it was religious orthodox. He says, "I thought it the most extraordinary, brilliant thing in the whole history of the universe that we should all be together" (Bellow 1978:67). Bellow remembers his mother as a figure from the ancient times, a woman whose only ambition for her sons was that they become Talmudic scholars. This is what Herzog exactly says about his mother. Sarah Herzog, mother of Herzog, is
modelled on Bellow's mother. Bellow obtained his BS. (Hons) in Sociology and Anthropology.

1.4.3.1. Bellow started his career as a novelist and his first two novels are written in part after the manner of Flaubert and Dostoevsky. The "Naturalist" works of Dreiser, James and Farrel influenced Bellow's novels to a large extent. Apart from several review articles, interviews, essays, travel accounts, short stories and plays, Bellow has written fifteen volumes of fiction that include Dangling Man (1944), The Victim (1947), The Adventures of Augie March (1953), Seize the Day (1956), Henderson the Rain king (1959), Herzog (1964), Humboldt's Gift (1975), The Dean's December (1982), The Bellorosa Connection and The Theft (1980), More die of Heartbreak (1987), and The Actual (1987).

1.4.3.2. Bellow has married five times and his marital life, with all its problems and divorces, has helped him to write about the familial tensions in the lives of his protagonists. His third marriage to Susan Glasman and the subsequent divorce in 1968 was followed by a decade of litigation. Bellow's bitter experience of the aftermath of divorce and the painful conflict over alimony, provided rich material for his later novels, most notably for Herzog and Humboldt's Gift. All his marital experiences must have
turned Bellow into a "misogynist". He feels himself a "marital victim" like most of his protagonists. But his fourth marriage in 1975 to Alexandra Tulcea, a Professor of Mathematics lasted for more than a decade and Bellow seemed to have achieved some domestic harmony. At present he is living and writing in Chicago having married his fifth wife, Janice Freidman.

1.4.4. Though Cheever claimed that fiction was "never crypto-autobiography", readers familiar with his work notice parallels between his life and work. Much of his fiction comes out of his own life experience and is autobiographical. But what strikes the readers of Cheever most is "the unique way in which he transforms the commonplace events of daily life into some of the wittiest and most profoundly moving narratives in modern American literature" (Meanor 1995:1).

1.4.4.1. John Cheever was born in a middle class New England family on 27 May 1912. His father, Frederick Lincoln Cheever and mother Mary Liley appear regularly throughout his fiction though they are not identified as such. His father appears as the hard-drinking, older father figure always in dramatic conflict with the sophisticated, workaholic mother figure. The father figures are quite often misfit in the modern world of business America where
the mother figures keep the family together by creating their own business. We have a fictional world in Cheever where the family background is mythologized. Susan Cheever says, "He peopled his tales with his own family and friends and neighbours" (1984:2).

1.4.4.2. Cheever's relationship with his only brother becomes an important aspect of his fiction—the "brother-motif", an oft repeated subject. Cheever and his brother, Fred, were very close, shared an apartment in Boston for two years and went on a walking tour of Germany. Cheever said that their relationship became "morbidly close", evoking love-hate feeling. And these ambivalent impulses appear quite often in his fiction. Cheever said that his relationship with Fred was "the strongest love in his life" (Ibid, 8). So the "brother-motif" appears as principal theme in all his fiction. Family relationships based on the archetypal situations form the major backdrop for Cheever's fiction. His own life experiences supplied enough material for his writing insofar as his mother, father, and brother became significant prototypes for many of his fictional mothers, fathers and brothers (Meanor 1985:5).

1.4.5. Critics have dismissed Cheever as a writer of the New Yorker school, a chronicler of suburbia, a clever satirist, but he has his impressive achievement in both the
short story and the novel. Like most of his contemporaries, Cheever is not stylistically flamboyant nor philosophically pessimistic. He too has experimented with various narrative techniques but he is mainly a storyteller. As a popular New Yorker short story writer, he has a number of collections - The Way Some People Live (1943), The Enormous Radio and Other Stories (1953), The Housebreaker of Shady Hill (1958), Some People, Places and Things that will not Appear in My Next Novel (1961), The Brigadier and the Golf Widow (1964) and The World of Apples (1973). He has published five novels - The Wapshot Chronicle (1957), The Wapshot Scandal (1964), Bullet Park (1968), Falconer (1977) and Oh What a Paradise It Seems (1982). As Cheever is a master of the short story - "a Chekhov of the exurbs" - in an age devoted to the novel, he has generated a scant amount of academic criticism. But the publication of Falconer reversed this situation, which has been acclaimed for its "formal and technical mastery".

1.5.0. There are of course major differences between Bellow and Cheever. Most important is their different ethnic backgrounds: Bellow's Jewishness and Cheever's W.A.S.P. identity. Bellow himself has highlighted this: "I think the differences between John and me endeared us to each other more than affinities. He was a Yankee; I, from
Chicago, was the son of Jewish immigrants. His voice, his style, his humour were different from me. His manner was reticent, mine was ... something else" (1984:273). These dissimilar heritages determine their dominant thematic concerns and also influences some of the technical aspects of their methodologies. Confessional mode seems to be popular with both of them, more particularly in Bellow. As a Jewish writer, Bellow shows a prevailingly Jewish angle of perception. Cheever writes about the embattled W.A.S.P., whose former cultural predominance has been at stake. Cheever adopts a broad, sociological and mythical approach whereas Bellow tends towards a more introspective in handling his material. Interestingly, both their first novels make use of the technique of journal entries. Joseph in Dangling Man and Leander in The Wapshot Chronicle keep journals where "they to talk themselves".

1.5.1. Bellow's characters are in search of sophisticated, existential self-knowledge as they are great intellectual thinkers with extraordinary sense of perception. Cheever's protagonists are ordinary, middle class suburban men, longing for a traditional "leap of faith" that will somehow restore sense of stability and Christian community to their world. Bellow's world is a lonely one, where his protagonists live their lives
exclusively and introspectively. He has tried to resist a sentimental nostalgia for the unrecoverable values of earlier age, Cheever's world is nostalgic, celebrating the New England life in all its glory. He is a major chronicler of contemporary absurdity and trenchant moralist. Cheever pays attention to the dailiness of American life, the focus often gets him characterized as "novelist of manners".

1.5.1.2. Their very different - religious - ethnic heritages ultimately lead them to common ground. They repeatedly portray questing, alienated protagonists and a moral wasteland unredeemed by the traditional values that sustained earlier generations. Thus the novels of Bellow and Cheever not only record with striking fidelity the everyday details and concerns of American family life, but also deal with topics and themes of enduring interest. Though they ventured into experimentation employing unconventional techniques of novel writing, their best work is predominantly realistic. They work within the limitations of realistic fiction and their novels can be labeled "traditional" symbolizing an ordered and governable world. While most of their work is 'modernist in cast', there are occasional 'rumblings of post-modernism'. More than anything else, Bellow and Cheever convincingly present the "metaphysical tensions" that occur in a family.
Despite obvious differences of technique and tone, they display a certain unanimity of concern for tradition and familial relationships.

1.6.0. It is to this concern that the present study addresses itself. As the review of literature shows, Cheever’s works have been grossly neglected by critics. Moreover, none of the studies touches upon all the familial patterns in their novels. There have been a few articles on familial relationships in Cheever and Bellow but they have not been analyzed on a comparative basis so far. It is, therefore, proposed in the present study to analyze the familial archetypal patterns of relationships in the novels of Bellow and Cheever. For the sake of coherence and literary discrimination, this study addresses their major novels, with necessary allusions to short-stories and secondary works. In the case of Bellow, particular attention is paid to Dangling Man, The Victim, The Adventures of Augie Marie March, Seize the Day, Henderson the Rain king, Herzog, and Humboldt’s Gift. The analysis of Cheever focuses mainly on The Wapshot Chronicle, The Wapshot Scandal, Bullet Park and Falconer.

1.6.1. These novels examine as problematic for their heroes, tradition bound familial relationships as enshrined in religious and social structures. All these family
relationships are analyzed on the basis of familial archetypes as given in Sven Armens's *Archetypes of the Family in Literature* (1968) which serves as a frame of reference for this study. Armens defines familial archetypes as certain human situations and roles that are constantly repeated and receive literary perceptions from age to age. "Approach to family relationships is based on the principle that a child encounters two fundamental formative factors within the family circle - the patriarchal demands of the father and the nurturing care of the mother" (1968:6). The patriarchal society demands respect for man-made laws, recognizes obedience to authority as its main virtue and the family is dominated by the father. When this authority is questioned there is disorder and breakdown of values in such a system. But the patriarchal system has diminished in due course of time and the hierarchal authority is replaced by the principle of equality. Matriarchal culture, characterized by the emphasis on ties of blood, believes in the concept that all men are equal. A child encounters these two formative factors in the family circle and as he grows he is separated from the mother and made fit for acceptance into "men's house" of patriarchal society. Then the rites of initiation begin so as to free the son from an image of himself as the helpless infant dependent upon the mother.
In this process he encounters some primary forces such as birth into life, birth into society, selfless giving and imposition of duties.

1.6.1.2. In addition to these familial archetypes which serve as frames of reference for their fiction, we have the archetypal sibling relationship based on the first brothers, Cain and Abel, and this "brother-motif" becomes a major theme in their fiction. All these familial archetypal patterns can be discerned in Bellow and Cheever who have modelled their Judaeo-Christian societies on the Biblical families with necessary modifications according to the needs of their fictional world. In their fiction we have all the familial archetypes - the authoritarian patriarch, the loving mother, the obedient son, the rival brothers - with emphasis on the "elemental conflict" between father and son leading to a great variety of fictional situations bordering on 'Oedipal Conflicts'. In this patriarchal society women are given secondary place, more particularly in Bellow, as it is a male dominated world where women are almost marginalized. But in the matriarchal culture of Cheever, women assume important roles and meet their husbands on equal terms proclaiming some sort of 'domestic feminism'. On the whole, the family, even the Jewish family, the most stable of all, begins to crumble and we
have divorces, separation between spouses and lack of communication between parents and children. And so, the paradigm of the broken or disrupted family is found throughout their fiction.

1.6.2. In the memory of the Bellow hero, family exists as a vigorous and vital force. He is extremely "family centric" as he comes from family oriented Jewish tradition. The 'isolated' protagonist remains very much a family man with a deep sense of love for his parents and children. He is a member of the patriarchal Jewish family which has begun to crumble in the modern American commercial world. He is nostalgic about those good olden days spent in the eden of childhood in the Jewish ghettos. The patriarchal values, that he has inherited, influence his relationship with his wife, with whom he invariably has a severed relationship. He loves his brothers but he remains "remote" from them.

1.6.3. The Cheever hero is less family-minded and he comes from peaceful suburban background, with all its traditional values. He is pitted against a living father belonging to a different world of the past and he is part of a family where there is more of a matriarchal authority. He shares a love-hate relationship with his siblings, sometimes verging on fratricide. He is married to an
emancipated "new woman" leading to marital tensions.

1.7.0. The story of the Bible is the history of one family, the chronicle of its experience through time. The first commandment of the Bible is that of procreation. "Honour thy father and mother; that thy days may be long upon the land which Lord thy God giveth thee" (Exodus 20:12). This undoubtedly shows that the role of family is paramount and acknowledges the realization that the family by means of transmission of tradition creates the link between time and eternity. In keeping with this tradition, literature, all over attaches much importance to family and it becomes the centre of action in all literary works. In Jewish literature or philosophy, life is viewed as a network of continuity whereby the present is inexorably bound to the past (Wiesel, 1978:7). And this is equally true of Christian literature or any other literature.

1.7.1. In the novels of Saul Bellow and John Cheever, we have all the familiar archetypes. During the rites of initiation their heroes are locked into a paralyzing relationship with a dominating wife, lover, companion or relative which in turn leads to tensions of all types. The family, as their heroes experience it, is a specific point of reference, as that part of their daily existence which embodies procreation, nutrition, affection or lack of
these. Family dominates their physical energy, functioning like the earth under their feet as the very foundation of feeling. Family is of great importance to their protagonists, though many of Bellow's heroes belong to a fractured nuclear family. Cheever's heroes, more or less, lead a peaceful family life, though there are one or two like Moses in *The Wapshot Chronicle* and Farraugut in *Falcon* who are, like Bellow's heroes, separated from their wives. Family very definitely and concretely dominates the physical and the psychological energies of the protagonists of Bellow and Cheever.

1.7.2. At the very centre of American literature - Jewish or Christian - writers place that great symbol of American values - "the family". Of all the institutions which condition behaviour and adjustment of the individual, none is more important than family. Moreover, of all institutions it is the first in the development of man as social being. And it is no wonder that two of the leading writers of this century, Bellow and Cheever attach much importance to family. They celebrate the traditional institutions like marriage and family in their own way. Marriage and family relationships are perhaps their most frequently chosen subjects and it is clear from their fiction that they have extensively drawn upon their religious and
cultural experiences as well as upon their experience as husbands, fathers, sons and brothers.

1.7.3. Although most of Bellow's protagonists belong to fractured nuclear families, the family is, nevertheless, of great importance to them. Cheever's heroes belong to traditional small town families which have a long historical past tracing back to the early times of "the pioneers". In both cases there is a strong attachment to children, a closeness to brothers, a reverence to their parents and a concern for the past which each protagonist, through the course of the novel, attempts to reclaim for himself. Their novels narrate stories of unhappy, broken, embittered families, which are struggling with the difficulty of close interpersonal dealings, especially between parents and children (father and sons), husband and wife, and between siblings. Both the novelists consider family relationships as extremely problematic, essentially frustrating but they do acknowledge their importance in human affairs and return to them quite often as a theme for their fiction. Their interest in the question of power in relationships between men and women, sometimes growing out of their own family situation, has been the major theme of their work.

1.8.0. The "elemental conflict" that goes on between
the traditional father and the freedom-seeking son in their fiction leading to a great variety of fictional situations bordering on "Oedipal conflicts" is analysed in Chapter II: "Between Father and Son". In their fiction, fathers modelled on archetypal patriarchs are often depicted as 'dominant', sometimes even 'tyrannical' and invariably the sons are 'obedient'. Sons are overtly fond of their mothers and they wish to overthrow their fathers who are both heroes and tyrants to their sons. The Jewish patriarch has absolute power over his family and he is, as Herzog claims, "a sacred King" to the Bellow hero. In Bellow's fictional world, one parent or other is missing and the hero remembers the "elemental conflict" that was waged between him and his father. In Cheever's novels, the hero is pitted against a living father who belongs to the world of the past. The son often makes an effort to bridge the present with the past but he fails to do so. As the fathers are possessed by a desire to pass on to their sons some usable or substantive traditional values, there arises a conflict between them, though less tension-filled when compared with the conflicts in Bellow's fiction.

1.8.1. As the protagonists are fond of their mothers, Chapter III: "Mother-Bound Son" scrutinizes the mother-son relationships in their novels. The treatment of this
relationship is very much determined by the Jewish "patriarchal" outlook of Bellow's world and by the domineering 'matriarchal' attitude adopted by Cheever. In Bellow's patriarchal hierarchy, women are given secondary place in the Jewish family set up, whereas women are emancipated in Cheever's world. But whatever my be their attitude, mothers are centres of love, sustaining force in the family. We have the traditional role of the mother - genteel, loving, nurturing and an excellent cook who is all the time worried about her children's welfare. The Bellow hero overshadowed by his patriarch and unable to overcome the "Oedipal Conflict", turns to his mother for love and emotional support. The mother character is the most "life affirming" female figure to the Bellow hero. Bellow's Jewish tradition and his loving mother influenced him very much in shaping the mother characters in his novels. Cheever's family background - the estranged relationship between his parents - has influenced his treatment and portrayal of mother characters in his novels. They are known as "male-devourers" who dominate the family and run it with a matriarchal authority. They know their powers as they also share the economic burden of the family. This leads to emotional tensions between parents and the Cheever hero always remembers those days with bitterness.
1.8.2. Chapter IV: "Marital Bond—Age discusses the estranged marital relationships of their protagonists. Marriages often break up in their fiction, more so in Bellow. Marriages are loveless or vicious and we don't have traditional functions of marriage, such as companionship and support but marriage failures and illicit sex sometimes even homosexuality as in Cheever's novels. This 'troubled man-woman relationship' is, in fact, one of the major themes in their fiction. We get three predominant images of wives in the novels of Bellow and Cheever — "the maternal wives", "the castrators" and "the exotics" in addition to the usual "victims" and "victimizers". In Bellow the wives are portrayed exclusively from the point of the male hero whose temperament is highly conditioned by the patriarchal concept of the world. Cheever's novels present man-woman relationships on equal terms as the women here are more "emancipated". The wives meet their husbands on equal terms but still they fail to create enduring marital bonds. The wives are too independent and liberated to be domiciled by their husbands as they are representatives of emerging "New Woman", with a thorough professional attitude to life. They practise a sort of "domestic feminism" as the middle class American woman's search for greater personal autonomy within the home. So, it is almost a woman-centred history which focuses on women..."
as actors rather than women as victims as in Bellow's novels.

1.8.3. **Chapter V: "Sibling Rivalry"** takes up for examination one of the principal themes in their fiction - "the brother motif", modelled on the first Biblical brothers. The protagonists are invariably younger brothers who are often controlled by their rich elder brothers. The elder brothers are all engaged in making money and seeking power. Unlike the hero, the elder brother is not very much a family man for whom money is everything. The younger brother reveals an enlightened spirit with a high sense of appreciation for human values whereas the elder is an embodiment of brutalized materialism. Bellow's conception of archetypal brother is the "main chance" man, the practical, patronizing, contemptuous, yet tender brother, making money, longing for power, wanting women. The brother motif is a major theme in Cheever's fiction where we see a sort of sibling rivalry between the two brothers modelled on Cain and Abel - the first "antagonistic brothers". A sort of "Siamese situation" can be traced in much of his fiction. The brothers enact the episodic drama of spirit and flesh. The troubled love for brother based on myth and reality (Cheever's relationship with his brother, Fred) appears often in his fiction.
1.8.4. Besides summarizing the findings about the treatment of family relationships in their novels, Chapter VI: "Conclusion: Traditional Modernists" shows that these two writers remain "traditional" in spite of showing some modern and post-modern tendencies. Family which is highly marginalized in the modern and post-modern fiction gets its due consideration at their hands.