PREFACE

This dissertation seeks to examine the concept of family and kinship in Saul Bellow's fiction from a socio-literary perspective. In Bellow's novels and stories, the family is buffeted by the winds of change. The mechanistic outlook of Herbert Spencer, "the philosopher of Darwinism," and the materialistic conception of history of Marx and Engels are the two major schools of thought compounding the modern social ferment. Their impact is felt everywhere in Bellow's fiction. In ten chapters, this study considers, among other issues, the central motif of the broken family and conjugal failure, the male-female equation, the concept of power and freedom, the institution of marriage, and love and sex as well. The last chapter 'Sociobiology' is a special closing mention. Expressions like 'civilization' 'culture' 'patriarchy' and 'matriarchy' and their cognates are not always used in their technicalistic sociological sense; they have the same multiplicity of extended usage and import that they have in Bellow's fiction. This dissertation is not exactly a sociology of the Bellow family. For, sociology and storytelling are not neatly correlated. It is primarily a critique of literature, probing the ingredients of an imaginative vision. Its findings are not programmatic.