When I was reading Cheever for my doctoral thesis I came across one of his entries in *The Journals of* John Cheever where he expressed his high appreciation of Bellow as a novelist. In the same way, Bellow in his book *It All Adds Up* praises Cheever and goes on to say that the differences between him and Cheever endeared them to each other more than affinities. So, I realised that there must be some affinities between these two novelists and they happen to be their concern with tradition, interest in family ties, their stand against the cultural nihilism and rejection of the tradition of alienation in modern literature, emphasis on the significance of brotherhood and community and finally their affirmation of life. These commonalities between these two seemingly dissimilar writers have made me think of studying them on a comparative basis so as to analyse their concern for tradition and familial relationships. It is felt that they provide enough leeway for productive research though many of my fellow scholars expressed their apprehension of
comparing such an unknown and much neglected writer like Cheever with one of the leading writers of this century, Saul Bellow. This thesis attempts to analyse the "Familial-archetypal patterns of relationships in Bellow and Cheever" and thereby bring to light an hitherto unexplored aspect of their work on a comparative basis.

Chapter I: "Introduction" discusses the need and justification for a comparative study between Bellow and Cheever. Their interest in community makes them turn to the basic unity of society - the family. The theme of familial relationships becomes a special terrain for them as they show that family is the crucible in which identity of their protagonists is forged. They problematize these relationships as they have started deteriorating in the context of modern and post-modern milieus. After a brief survey of literature on Bellow (comparative studies) and Cheever drawing attention to the fact that Cheever has not been subjected to academic criticism as much as Bellow, it is proposed to analyse the operation of familial archetypal patterns of relationships in their novels. It gives a brief account of similarities and dissimilarities followed by
short critical biographies of Bellow and Cheever which shaped their fiction-making.

Chapter II: "Between Father and Son" analyses the "elemental conflict" between fathers and sons in their fiction as their novels present, among other things, a study in patriarchal behaviour and they are particularly suitable for this type of analysis. There are a great variety of fictional situations bordering on "Oedipal conflicts". In their fiction, fathers are more often 'dominant' patriarchs and sometimes even 'tyrannical' and the sons are 'obedient'. The fathers are possessed by a desire to pass on to their sons some usable and substantial values but the sons are not ready to imbibe them in their modern world. There is a clear-cut pattern emerging in their fiction. In Bellow's novels, the hero is nostalgic of his childhood as he never feels so alive and confident as he did with his parents. There is one parent or other dead or indifferent to the son and the protagonist remembers the "elemental conflict" that was waged between him and his father which reaches its climax in Seize the Day. In Cheever's novels the hero is pitted against the living father who belongs to the world of the past and there is
often an effort made by the son to bridge the past with the present in which all sons cannot succeed. There are some foeticidal and fratricidal tensions where fathers think of aborting the foetus in the womb or try to kill their sons.

Chapter III: "Mother-bound Son" examines the mother-son relationships in their novels. The role of the mother confines to the traditional image of mother - "a loving and nurturing woman", though the women in Cheever are more 'emancipated', moving towards the concept of the "New Woman". In Bellow's "scheme of patriarchy", women are given secondary place and so mothers belong to the world of kitchen, whereas in the matriarchal culture of Cheever women are liberated and practise a sort of "domestic feminism" bearing the burden of the family as professional women.

In Bellow's novels, the son, overshadowed by his father and unable to overcome his "Oedipal conflict", turns to his mother for love and emotional support. She is the centre of love, a sustaining force, and a "life affirming" female figure to the Bellow hero. Bellow's Jewish heritage and his loving mother have influenced him much in his
creation of mother characters. Cheever's family background - the estranged relationship between his parents - has led to an ambivalence about his own mother which is reflected in the treatment of mother characters. The Bellow hero idealizes his mother as his difficulties with his wife and mistress intensify. Bellow's mother characters are modelled on the Biblical mother characters whereas Cheever's are 'prototypes' of the emerging 'New Woman', who is self-conscious and independent. For Bellow's protagonist his mother is an image of Mary - bringer of life, the nurturer whereas in the case of Cheever's she is a character modelled on Eve - giver of pain and death. The role of mother in Cheever is ambiguous.

Chapter IV: "Marital Bond-age" discusses the marital disjunctions and problems that each of Bellow and Cheever heroes faces in his conjugal life. Marriages often break up in their fiction, more particularly in Bellow's. These marital tensions are the result of the restlessness of self of the hero. They are the outcome of marriages which are loveless or vicious as there is no sharing between the partners. The paradigm of the broken or disrupted family is found throughout their fiction. Their protagonists feel
that they are victims of their domineering wives. We get three predominant images of wives in their novels - "the maternal wives", "the castrators" and the "exotics" in addition to the usual "victims" and "victimizers". The failure of marital relationships in the fiction of Bellow and Cheever has some autobiographical overtones.

In Bellow's novels the protagonists dominate the action where women are given secondary place in the Jewish "scheme of patriarchy". Women are portrayed from the point of view of a 'misogynist', which is male-oriented with all its biblical notions of female inferiority. So, women are defined, analysed and described by the estranged husband narrators who reserve their tender feelings for the lost mothers thereby rejecting a sustained loving relationship with their wives.

In Cheever's novels we see that the women are more emancipated and they meet their husbands on equal terms. Women seem to have domineering roles here as they order, dictate and decide things. In Bellow, women are mostly two dimensional characters. But in Cheever, they are fully developed three dimensional characters who can create
lasting emotional stability or destructive disharmony in their relationships with their spouses. If women are marginalized in Bellow's fiction, here they are often domineering, devouring and sometimes even "spectacularly cruel".

Chapter V: "Sibling Rivalry" takes up for examination one of the principal themes in their fiction - the "brother motif". Growing up with siblings, they show, is a complex experience that can nurture and damage. We get a clear pattern in their portrayal of brother characters. The protagonists are more often younger brothers who are controlled by the rich elder brothers. The elder is not very much a family man for whom money is everything. The protagonist reveals an enlightened spirit with a high sense of appreciation for human values whereas the elder is an embodiment of brutalized materialism. But the two worlds represented by the two opposing brothers are brought together with the bondage of love. The protagonists love their brothers though they remain remote from them.

Bellow's conception of archetypal brother is the "main chance" man, the practical, patronizing,
contemptuous, yet tender brother making money, longing for power and wanting women. He is 'successful' and 'a reliable son', 'a good husband' and 'very much alive to his duties' whereas the protagonist brother is an idealist who seeks freedom rather than bondage. The "brother motif" is a significant theme in Cheever where we see a sort of 'sibling rivalry' as compared to 'sibling revelry' in Bellow. The two brothers are modelled on Cain and Abel - the first "antagonistic brother". A sort of "Siamese situation" can be traced in much of his fiction. They enact the episodic drama of spirit and flesh. The troubled-love for a brother based on myth and reality appears often in his fiction.

Chapter VI: "Conclusion: Traditional Modernists", besides summarizing the findings about the treatment of familial-archetypal patterns of relationships in their novels, shows that these novelists remain 'traditional' in their treatment of subjects and approach to novel. The family, which is highly marginalized in the modern and post-modern fiction, gets its due consideration at their hands.