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Mother-daughter relationships in young adult literature

Kelly K. Fischbach
University of Northern Iowa

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MOTHER-DAUGHTER RELATIONSHIPS
IN YOUNG ADULT LITERATURE

A Research Paper
Presented to the
Faculty of the Library Science Department

In Partial Fulfillment
of the Requirements for the Degree
Master of Arts

Kelly K. Fischbach
July 1, 1987

Read and approved by
Leah Hiland

Elizabeth Martin

Accepted by Department
Elizabeth Martin

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Table of Contents

	Page
Chapter	
1. Introduction.....	1
Purpose of Study.....	4
Problem Statements and Hypotheses.....	4
Definitions.....	5
Assumptions and Limitations.....	6
2. The Literature Review.....	8
3. Methodology.....	20
4. Annotated Bibliography.....	25
Mother-Biological Daughter Relationship....	26
Mother-Adopted or Foster Daughter Relationship.....	32
Mother-Step-daughter Relationship.....	34
Mother-Abandoned Daughter Relationship....	35
5. Analysis, Conclusions and Recommendations..	39
Bibliography.....	44
Appendix	
A. Reference sheet.....	46

CHAPTER 1

Introduction

"A son is a son until he takes him a wife, but a daughter's a daughter all of her life." The preceding quote from the poem Young and Old by Dinah Maria Mulock Craik has been passed through generations as an euphemism of life. Is it just a time-worn phrase, or is there justification for its validity?

The relationship between a mother and her daughter begins at birth and continues throughout the lives of both women. As Olson and Worobey (1984) point out, "the mother-daughter relationship is both biological and emotional" (p. 783). A daughter not only inherits some of her mother's physical qualities, but she also assumes various mannerisms, personality characteristics and reacts to situations in the same way as her mother.

The importance of this relationship is passed from generation to generation. Popper (1982) explains this in another way. "From a mother's view of herself and her daughter, a daughter learns about three aspects of identity: personal (sense of herself), sexual (attitude about her body) and gender (feelings about herself in relation to others and to society)" (p. 54).

Lou Willett Stanek (1976) sees a mother-child relationship as an irreversible one. She speaks of it in her article, "Growing Up Female: The Literary Gaps", as "women can divorce their husbands, split from a lover, quit a job and snub a friend, but kids are like fly paper" (p. 48).

There are various ways, besides birth, in which a mother and daughter are united, and the relationships vary as widely. The fact remains, though, that this relationship is significant in every girl's life. "Their common fate as females contributes to the lasting and comforting tie between daughter and mother" (Neisser, 1973, p, 6).

The following study describes books that deal with mother-daughter relationships that will help the reader understand, accept, or possibly change the relationship she is in. Spredemann has written, in the introduction to The Bookfinder, about the importance of books in our lives:

Books have an important role in everyday life. Through well-chosen books, readers may increase their self-knowledge, and self-esteem, gain relief from unconscious conflicts, clarify their values, and better understand other people. By identifying with characters in books, people may come to realize that they are part of humanity, that they are not alone in their struggles with reality. Reading increases personal knowledge and invites readers to consider themselves objectively. (p.xiii)

Schools are beginning to place more emphasis on the importance of the mental well-being of their students. They are just realizing the difficulties students are experiencing due to their home situations, with more broken homes, single parent families and working mothers. The use of bibliotherapy is defined by Russell and Shrodes (Pardeck and Pardeck, 1985) as "a process of dynamic interaction between the personality of the reader and literature" (p. 313).

Spredemann (1985) lists three main steps present in the process of bibliotherapy:

1. Universalization and identification. From their reading, children come to see that they are not the only persons with particular fears, frustrations, worries, or living conditions.
 2. Catharsis. A child who identifies with a fictional character lives through situations and shares feelings with that character.
 3. Insight. Through reading, children may become more aware of human motivations and of rationalizations for their own behavior.
- (xiii-xiv)

Purpose of Study

The purpose of this study was to compile a list of young adult books in which the characters and themes are based on a mother-daughter relationship. The adolescent years are often characterized by changing emotions and mixed feelings between mother and daughter, and it is the hope of this researcher that an

annotated bibliography could help the reader understand the feelings she, as a daughter, might be experiencing. This annotated bibliography also might become a useful resource in the development of school curricula and the reading guidance of young adults on this topic. Works of quality, as well as a broad range of situations, were analyzed and included in the bibliography. There are few, if any, available bibliographies on this topic; therefore, this project should fill a void and possibly lead to ideas for future books.

Problem Statements and Hypotheses

Two questions were investigated during the study. What mother-daughter relationships exist in young adult literature? How many titles exist in each of the various mother-daughter relationship categories? The hypotheses were;

1. Each one of the mother-daughter relationships will be portrayed in one or more of the books analyzed.
2. The majority of relationships will be the mother-biological daughter relationship.

Definitions

For the purpose of this study, mother-daughter relationships were divided into the following categories:

1. Mother and biological daughter- a blood relationship exists between the mother and her daughter. In this case, the mother has also given birth to this girl.
2. Mother and adopted or foster daughter- refers to a daughter not borne by the woman, but the woman is legally a guardian of the daughter.
3. Mother and step-daughter- relationship exists because the woman has married the girl's father.
4. Mother and abandoned daughter- category includes those titles in which the mother is absent from the home.

Young Adult Literature was defined, as explained by Donelson and Nilsen (1980), as "a broad term to include books freely chosen for reading by persons between the ages of twelve and twenty" (p.5). The terms young adult, adolescent and teenager all refer to the

same age group of people, those between the ages of twelve and twenty.

Assumptions and Limitations

There are some basic assumptions in a study of this kind. It was assumed that the relationship between a mother and a daughter is significant and that female adolescents are interested in reading about other female adolescents in situations similar to their own. It was also assumed that there would be books of sufficient quality and quantity that would make this a useful bibliography.

The bibliography includes only fiction books written for the interest levels of adolescent girls between the ages of twelve and twenty. The books are limited to those in which the mother-daughter relationship is one of the major themes of the work. The daughter in the book is an adolescent throughout the major portion of the book. The relationship continues, or affects, either the mother or the daughter throughout the major portion of the book.

The selection of books was limited to those printed in or after 1975 and before 1986 and found in public or school library collections. They were also limited by their availability to the researcher. The

books must have received at least one favorable review in a retrospective bibliography or a current review source. Bibliographies such as The Bookfinder, Fiction For Youth, and Senior High School Library Catalog were searched, as well as more current titles and reviews in School Library Journal and Booklist.

CHAPTER 2

The Literature Review

Current literature which discusses the woman's role in the family and her relationship with her daughter assists readers in distinguishing between realistic and fictional portrayals of characters. The stages of growth a child progresses through are discussed to show how the mother-daughter relationship is affected by these changes. The categories of mother-daughter relationships that were used in this study are also covered. The final area of the literature review describes the development of the young adult novel and the reading interests of adolescents and mother-daughter relationships in young adult literature.

The role of a woman in the family has changed drastically in the past century. She is no longer confined to the responsibility of child care or a relationship with her husband. "The role extends into areas that were once more the responsibility of the husband-father role. The most noticeable addition to the mother-wife role today, however, is that of being a wage earner" (Bigner, 1979, p. 48-49). Although the

role of a woman has changed, Bigner still sees the mother's main role as that of raising and nurturing her children.

The mothering role is a conspicuous role in our society. It has been and continues to be the primary role to which girls are socialized. For years, motherhood stood as the ultimate proof of a woman's femininity and the core of her adult life. Her identity as a person and the reason for her existence were equated with her role as a mother. (p. 45)

Cohler and Grunebaum (1981) agree with Bigner's findings but feel that some of the results of a daughter's identifying with her mother's role may be harmful.

The result of this early socialization is the creation of a dependency between little girls and their mothers that is reinforced by the domestic tasks women are supposed to share together. Always at her mother's side, the little girl is neither expected nor encouraged to become independent of her mother or the immediate family in the manner expected of the little boy. The mother is available to the little girl in a way that the father is not available to the little boy. (p. 22)

So how do little girls grow up to become successful women? Friday (1977) defines the process as "genuine mother-daughter love. It implies a recognition on the part of each of the separateness of the other and a respect for the other" (p. 48).

How does a mother-daughter relationship begin and what stages does it pass through? Comer (1983)

believes that infants, shortly after birth, become strongly attached to the person who takes care of their emotional and physical needs most- more often their mothers. Around the age of three, the child begins to identify more strongly with the parent of the opposite sex. Near the age of six, girls begin to identify with their mother as a woman. (p. 96).

A definite void appears in the research reported once a child reaches the age of six or seven. Researchers have placed a heavy emphasis on the aspect of mother-infant bonding at birth and mother-child relationship development through the toddler and preschool stages, but once a child enters school, researchers seem to change their foci. The relationships a child develops at school, with peers and teachers, seem to be the major emphasis at this time. The research that is reported appears to require a problem such as, a learning disability or a handicapped child and how the mother copes with this problem. More research appears once the child enters the adolescent stage of development.

Hurlock (Bigner, 1979) describes the adolescent stage of development as characterized by:

1. It is a transition period. The period between two broad stages in human development; childhood and adulthood. It is a period of transition from

dependence to independence in which a sense of identity is established. The establishment of this attitude prepares the teenager to assume the major roles of adulthood.

2. It is a period of change. The changes in body proportions coincide with changes in attitudes and behavior, including a heightened emotionality, feelings of inadequacy, heightened egocentricity, and shifts in values.

3. It is a dreaded age. Caregivers perceive this stage as troublesome and full of potential conflicts.

4. It is a time of unrealism. Adolescents are characterized by unrealistic expectations and aspirations. (p.190)

Cohler and Grunebaum (1981) and Neisser (1973)

agree with these characteristics and believe the push for independence along with clinging to their childhood can be the most difficult transition in this stage. The mother, at the same time, often feels the same opposition that the daughter feels. Neisser (1973) feels "this opposition of advance and retreat furnishes the spark that propels the relationship and sometimes makes it explode" (p. 109).

Olson and Worobey (1984) believe adolescence can be a stage of ambivalence if the mother is without an adult companion. "If a mother is dependent, she may smother the child during those times when she does not have an adult to be dependent upon, and reject the child when an adult relationship exists" (p. 783-784).

The mother is also the daughter's first role model for sex-role learning. Olson and Worobey (1984) feel

"a mother who has a firm grip on her own identity can offer the adolescent a strong and provocative model" (p.782). Neisser (1973) states this same thought another way. "The girl who finds it hardest to clarify her values and beliefs is the one who has no standards imposed" (p. 117).

By the time a daughter reaches her late twenties, the relationship problems have usually been resolved. Popper (1982) believes this is because "both have usually arrived at a sense of their own identity, and a mellowing also occurs as each matures and exhibits a greater willingness to accept the other as she really is" (p. 57).

The death of a mother at anytime in a daughter's life brings anxiety as well as grief. "A daughter is supported in working through her mourning if her parents have been reasonably compatible during her mother's lifetime" (Neisser, 1973, p. 295). A strong father and family support can help lessen the loss also.

Mother-daughter relationships are not always biological. Although every daughter at one time had a biological mother, this woman, for various reasons, may not have been able to raise her daughter. The woman who is given the responsibility of raising this girl

will form her own mother-daughter relationship. Many of the characteristics of a biological mother-daughter relationship are the same in other relationships, especially in the case of adoption when the child is placed in the woman's care at a very young age. It is important to understand some of the variables of the various mother-daughter relationships.

Dywasuk (1973) describes adoption as "similar to marriage in that both are legal relationships based on choice" (p. 70). "You take a child not born of you, not related to you and not known to you, into your home" (p. 68). She feels that as adopted children grow, it is important to let them know it is only natural to be curious about their background and that you would consent to let them see court records. This often dispels their feelings of having a "secret" background. (p. 147).

The foster mother-daughter relationship is a more transient one and may not have the chance to develop as fully as other mother-daughter relationships. Trasler (1960) lists three main reasons that children are placed in foster care:

1. The child was rejected by the parents.
2. The child was rejected by substitute parents.
3. Separation from parents for circumstances the parents couldn't prevent. (p. 41-42)

These reasons obviously are unpleasant, and the child usually has a difficult time adjusting to the new situation. Gruber (1978) conducted a study on foster care in which he interviewed the biological parents of children in foster care. He found that 15% of these parents had been in foster care themselves (p. 132). Half of the group surveyed were either separated or divorced at the time. Of the 50% who were currently married, 40% were in their second or subsequent marriage (p. 133). The average mother stated she had more than three children in foster home care and 5% of the women interviewed were pregnant at the time (p. 135).

Divorce and death directly affect the mother-daughter relationship. The loss of the father from the home causes changes in the way children perceive their mother and the way the mother reacts to her children. Hetherington (Meijer and Himmelfarb, 1984) states "the mother-daughter relationship, in the absence of the father, tends to become more difficult when both the mother and the daughter feel deprived of the paternal figure" (p. 211). Lonabaugh (Meijer and Himmelfarb, 1984) "found that though single mothers often wish to give more support and autonomy to their

children, they often deprive them of these resources" (p. 207).

The feelings of children toward their mothers also differ depending on the presence or absence of the father. The findings of Holmes and Holmes (Meijer and Himmelfarb, 1984) indicate that "children from two-parent families tend to view their mothers as caring and affectionate more often than do children in fatherless homes. Children with fathers were more likely to see women as supportive and positive than were fatherless children. Children without fathers more often saw women as aggressive, domineering, overburdened, cold and as either victims or victimizing" (p. 208).

The remarriage of the father creates a new mother-daughter relationship with the father's new wife. The word stepmother is used when the natural mother has died. "Step" comes from the Old English prefix "steop" which means bereaved or orphaned. (Laiken, 1981, p. 151-152). A stepmother may often appear as a rival to the girl's affection from her father. Laiken (1981) explains that in the case of divorce, a stepmother's presence causes these feelings:

In our desire to have Daddy for ourselves, we become our mother's rival. The game is repeated when he is again taken from us by our stepmother.

Previously we had to repress our ambivalent feelings toward Mother. We loved her for what she gave us and we hated her for what she took away. But after the divorce, our real mother releases her hold on Father. Now the good and bad Mother no longer have to be contained in one person. Stepmother comes in and splits the image for us. (p. 156-157)

Stepmothers can also be a blessing to a family.

Adolescent children may feel the stepmother is intruding and trying to replace their mother, when actually they are worried about how the new relationship will work. Neisser (1973) feels "the greatest boon a widower can give his children, though at the time they may not see it in that light, is to remarry" (p. 295). The addition of a woman to the house allows teenagers more freedom from household chores and responsibilities and gives them a female role model that most adolescents need. Stepmothers themselves have concerns about how to handle their new situation. "Stepmothers approach their new relationship bringing memories and anxieties of their own. Their experiences as daughters will color their behavior toward the ready-made family they take on" (Neisser, 1973, p. 297).

As the current reported research shows, the mother-daughter relationship is a vital relationship no matter how it begins. Through conflicting and

rewarding times, the mother and daughter grow together, each learning from and teaching the other.

Adolescent fiction is defined by Mertz and England (1983) as "that realistic and contemporary American fiction which young adults as well as more mature and critical readers can find aesthetically and thematically satisfying, and which is, implicitly or explicitly, written for adolescents" (p. 119).

Mertz and England (1983) also list ten characteristics of adolescent fiction:

1. Adolescent fiction will involve a youthful protagonist.
 2. Adolescent fiction often employs a point of view which presents the adolescent's interpretation of the events of the story.
 3. Adolescent fiction is characterized by directness of exposition, dialogue, and direct confrontation between principle characters.
 4. Adolescent fiction is characterized by structural conventions- short, easy reading, neat beginning, middle and ending.
 5. Main characters in adolescent fiction are highly independent in thought, action and conflict resolution.
 6. Adolescents are depicted as reaping the consequences of their actions and decisions.
 7. Adolescent fiction will draw upon the author's sense of adolescent development and the concomitant attention to the legitimate concerns of adolescents.
 8. Adolescent fiction strives for relevance by attempting to mirror current societal attitudes and issues.
 9. Adolescent fiction most often includes gradual, incremental and ultimately incomplete "growth to awareness" on the part of the central character.
 10. Adolescent fiction is, finally, hopeful.
- (p. 120-123)

Moore and Sasges (1984) and Donelson and Nilsen (1980) discuss the young adult problem novel. Moore and Sasges (1984) state "the young adult problem novel is a product of the social upheaval of the 1960s and 1970s. The problem novel is still very much alive in the 1980s" (p. 129). Donelson and Nilsen (1980) describe the parents who are characterized in young adult novels.

Although in many problem novels, parents are left out or ignored, there is another group of books in which the parent plays a central role. In most of these, one or both of the parents is the problem. This relates to the one really major task faced by every young adult and that is achieving independence, making the switch from being someone's daughter or son to being an individual in her or his own right. (p. 190)

Why would adolescents be interested in reading about mother-daughter relationships? G. Robert Carlsen and his colleagues who conducted the "Books For Young Adults" book poll published in English Journal say:

Most readers are eager to discover characters their own age or just a bit older who face the problems which accompany establishing roles or identities in the adult world. Suspense and adventure, sports and personal experiences remain surefire attractions. (Naylor, 1982, p. 171)

Why then are there so few books with mother-daughter relationships as themes? Stanek (Donelson and Nilsen, 1980) feels it is because it was very difficult for women to have families and be successful authors.

Most of those who did succeed in becoming writers--Jane Austin, George Elliot, Virginia Woolf and the Bronte sisters, for example, had no children. Today it is still a relatively unexplored area, ironically because of the feminist movement, which in trying to open up new options for girls, has cast a slightly negative tone over the whole area of motherhood. She marks it as a positive step that mothers of daughters, including Norma Klein, Judy Blume, Betty Miles, and Norma Fox Mazer, are now writing for young readers. (p. 191)

The popularity of the young adult novel and an increased awareness of the interests and needs of adolescent readers should encourage more authors to approach the subject of mother-daughter relationships.

CHAPTER 3

Methodology

The product of this study is an annotated bibliography. In developing the bibliography, an attempt was made to include as many books as possible that fit into the chosen subject area. Therefore, selective bibliographies such as The Bookfinder (1985), Fiction For Youth (1981, 1986) and Senior High School Library Catalog (1977, 1982) were used for the identification of titles. A requirement for inclusion in these bibliographies is that a book must receive a favorable review, so it may be assumed that books listed in these sources are quality books. However, to ensure a quality review, Book Review Index was consulted to locate reviews of various titles. These reviews were read and a decision, based on the definitions and limitations of this study, was made concerning the inclusion of the title. For more current titles and their favorable reviews, Booklist and School Library Journal were included in the search for appropriate books.

The books chosen for this bibliography were limited to those published in 1975 through 1985, in an

attempt to keep abreast of current issues and interests of adolescents. The books were fiction books written for the interest levels of girls between the ages of twelve and twenty, in which a major theme of the book was the mother-daughter relationship. The daughter was an adolescent throughout the major portion of the book and the mother-daughter relationship continued, or affected either the mother or the daughter, throughout the major portion of the book. The problem novel is not new to young adult literature, but the approaches to various problems are. "No longer is a novel about divorce considered a real problem novel, but parents are finally being portrayed as humans with weaknesses" (Moore, 1984, p. 129).

After locating titles and checking reviews, the researcher read the books which met the criteria for inclusion in the bibliography. Two of the thirty-four books identified by the selected sources were not available to the researcher and ten had to be rejected because they did not meet all of the limitations set by the researcher. The researcher completed an individual reference sheet for each book that contained bibliographic information including recommended age or grade levels and the source in which it was cited. While reading the books, special attention was given to

analyzing the mother-daughter relationship. An annotation that describes the relationship was written and placed on the reference sheet for each title.

The researcher also looked for recurring themes or characteristics that appeared in books with mother-daughter relationships, such as the number of siblings in the family, or the level of maturity of the daughter. These were noted on the reference sheet also.

After completing all of the reference sheets, a complete annotated bibliography was compiled using information from the reference sheets. The bibliography was organized by the categories of mother-daughter relationships developed by the researcher. Titles within these categories were alphabetized by the author's last name.

The categories for the bibliography were developed after searching titles and annotations, and noting the various mother-daughter relationships that were featured. Some books appear in two categories, such as Rainbow Jordan by Alice Childress, in which Rainbow (the daughter) is abandoned by her mother and goes to live in a foster home. These books are cited and annotated in their main category and cross referenced in the secondary category.

A description of each of the relationship categories will aid in understanding their composition. Although science has made great progress in the area of childbirth, an attempt was made to distinguish between a biological mother and an adoptive mother.

Category 1: Mother and biological daughter- This relationship includes those daughters who have a blood relationship with the mother. For the purpose of this study, this relationship includes only those in which the mother gave birth to the daughter. Test tube births would be included in this category, but there were no books on this subject available at this time.

Category 2: Mother and adopted or foster daughter- This relationship includes daughters other than the natural born daughter of the mother, in which the woman is legally their mother or their female guardian. Daughters born through surrogate mothers would be included in this category, but there were no books available at this time.

Category 3: Mother and step-daughter- This mother-daughter relationship exists because the daughter's father has remarried. The word step-mother is associated with evil and bad feelings. The popular story of Cinderella is an excellent example. With the divorce rate in this country nearing the 50% mark,

many teenagers are faced with the reality of a step-mother. Quality books dealing with this relationship could help girls struggling with this adjustment.

Category 4: Mother and abandoned daughter- This is a broad category designed to include those books in which the daughter feels abandoned and alone due to the absence of the mother. The mother may be absent from the home for various reasons. Some reasons for temporary absences are cases of child neglect or abandonment, a job transfer that requires the mother to be out of the home, or a brief illness that puts the mother in the hospital. A prolonged illness or death would be examples of permanent absences.

CHAPTER 4

Annotated Bibliography

The following bibliography consists of twenty-two novels read by the researcher that met the limitations of the study. The citations are arranged by the four relationship categories established by the researcher. In some instances the book fit into two categories, in which case the complete annotation appears under the primary category and the secondary category contains only the author's name and the title of the book with a reference to the category where the complete annotation can be found. The books are arranged alphabetically by the author's last name within each category. Each entry contains the following information; author, title, publisher, copyright and number of pages precede the annotation. The review source, copyright, page of review and the recommended age or grade level follow the annotation. The number in parentheses after the daughter's name in each annotation refers to the age of the daughter in the book.

A. Mother and Biological Daughter Relationship

Anderson, Mary. Step On a Crack. see Category B.

Chute, Beatrice Joy. Katie: An Impertinent Fairy Tale. Dutton, 1978. 216p.

As the title states, this is a fairy tale in which Katie (16), the youngest of four sisters, sets out to find a husband. Katie's mother finds this difficult to understand because she has never believed in marriage, but just enjoys the company of men. Her four daughters have four different fathers, but she is neither bothered or embarrassed by this. Katie decides, after hearing the story of Noah's ark, that she must find a husband because everyone should go two by two. As Katie searches for the right man, her mother tries to make the road as easy as possible even though she can't understand this desire for marriage.

Fiction For Youth, 1981. p. 27. grades 10-12.

Culin, Charlotte. Cages of Glass, Flowers of Time. Bradbury Press, 1979. 316p.

Claire Burden (14) is caught in the web of child abuse. She is living with an alcoholic mother whose own mother comes to their house and beats her. Claire hates her mother because she refuses to let Claire draw, which is her one passion in life. Her hatred for her mother is not as fierce as her fear of her grandmother, so Claire tries to get her mother to stop drinking and stand up to the grandmother. Things seem to get better as the mother tries to stay away from booze, but when the grandmother harasses her about neglecting Claire, she turns to the bottle. One night the mother returns home, drunk, and finds Claire drawing. She beats Claire until she loses consciousness. The grandmother arrives then and beats the mother. Both are taken to the hospital and the police are called. Claire tries to convince them that her injuries were caused by her grandmother because she is still afraid they will make her live with the

grandmother. A trusted friend sees through these lies and shows Claire that she doesn't owe these women anything.

Bookfinder, 1985. p. 145. grades 12+.

Duncan, Lois. The Third Eye. Little, 1984. 220p.

Karen (18) has an ability to "sense" things. While babysitting, she senses one of the children is locked in the trunk of a car. As the story progresses, Karen is asked to help solve crimes with this "sense". Her mother refuses to allow her to help and asks Karen to lie about what she feels. Karen can't understand this and thinks her mother is being overprotective. As Karen becomes involved in different cases, her emotional state is shaken many times. Her mother continues to insist that she stop helping and Karen becomes very frustrated because of her mother's apathy in helping the police. Eventually we learn that the mother has the same abilities, but was ostracized from her family and friends because of it. In attempting to protect Karen from the same fate, she actually pushes her into an even more dangerous situation and must use her powers to save Karen.

Senior High School Library Catalog, 1984 Supplement. p. 75. grades 9-12.

Gerson, Corinne. How I Put My Mother Through College. Atheneum, 1981. 136p.

Jessica's (13) parents have just divorced and her mother has enrolled in college. The very appropriate title describes the role reversal that Jessica feels. After her first day at college and many nights following, Jessica's mother comes into her room and tells Jessica about her day and asks her advice on everything from clothes to dates. Jessica finds herself doing housework and taking care of her younger brother while her mother is out cheerleading and writing for an underground newspaper. Jessica feels frustrated as she enters junior high and the life of a teenager and needs the support of a stable mother, but

unfortunately, her mother is too involved in reliving her own lost youth. A new friend and a good sense of humor help Jessica through this period.

Bookfinder, 1985. p. 207. ages 11+.

Hall, Lynn. The Leaving. Scribner's Sons, 1980. 116p.

This story about an Iowa farm girl is told through the thoughts of the characters so the reader is able to see how each of them feels about the other and how their actions are misunderstood. Roxanne (18) and her mother rarely talk and keep to themselves. As Roxanne went through high school, she wished her mother would come to watch her play ball, but she never asked her to. Her mother wanted to go to the games, but since Roxanne never invited her, she stayed home and listened to the radio broadcasts. After graduation, Roxanne feels she must leave the farm and go out on her own. Her mother hates to see her leave, but knows Roxanne must be allowed to grow up. After moving to Des Moines, Roxanne realizes she belongs on the farm. Her mother has missed her and regrets all the years she let pass without telling her daughter how much she means to her. When Roxanne moves back home, their relationship begins anew with the two of them chatting at the kitchen table and talking about feelings they have kept hidden.

Senior High School Library Catalog, 1982. p. 561. grades 9-12.

Hautzig, Deborah. Second Star To the Right. Greenwillow, 1981. 151p.

Leslie (16) and her mother appear to have the perfect relationship. All of Leslie's friends enjoy her mother and she goes out of her way to show Leslie how much she loves her. Leslie isn't happy though and begins a diet that develops into anorexia nervosa. Denying there is a problem, Leslie is deathly ill before her mother admits there is something seriously wrong. The consequences of a mother establishing unrealistic standards for her daughter and the problems

they create when she feels she can't live up to them are the basis of this story.

School Library Journal, August, 1981. p. 75.
grades 9-12.

Hayden, Torey. The Sunflower Forest. Putnam, 1984. 344p.

Lesley (17) has always had a restless mother with many mood swings. During Lesley's senior year, she learns that her mother, Mara, was put in a breeding camp during World War II and gave birth to two sons. She has been searching for these boys ever since and her mental health has gradually deteriorated. Lesley has always felt responsible for Mara and when she discovers that her mother has met a four-year-old boy whom she is convinced is her lost son, Lesley is alarmed. Mara neglects her own daughters while she meets daily with this boy. Lesley is ashamed of her mother, yet she feels sorry for her because of the treatment she received during the war. Mara eventually kills the boy and his parents and is shot by the police. Following her mother's death, Lesley travels to Europe to visit the places her mother talked about in hopes of finding a reason for her mother's actions.

Senior High School Library Catalog, 1985
Supplement. p. 66. grades 10-12.

Hermes, Patricia. You Shouldn't Have To Say Goodbye. Harcourt Brace Jovanovich, 1982. 117p.

Sarah Morrow's (13) mother is dying of cancer. They have always been a close family and Mrs. Morrow's illness draws them even closer. The mother and daughter experience the stages of grief associated with dying and find that it brings them even closer while they try to let go. Shopping trips, redecorating a room, learning to do laundry and celebrating Christmas are a few of the experiences the author uses as she describes the preparations this mother and daughter make while facing death.

Bookfinder, 1985. p. 286. ages 10-13.

Holland, Isabelle. Of Love, Death and Other Journeys. Lippincott, 1975. 159p.

Meg (15) and her mother have spent many years traveling around Europe. They have a very close relationship based on trust and understanding of each other's needs. This is shaken when Meg learns that her mother has cancer and her father is coming to visit. She has never met her father and did not realize he did not even know she existed. She has a difficult time accepting her father because so many of the things she had grown up believing about him were untrue. There were many other stories her mother had told her as she grew that were not true also. Meg must sort out facts and feelings as her mother grows weaker and eventually dies.

Fiction For Youth, 1981. p. 79. grades 9-12.

Mendonca, Susan R. Tough Choices. Dial Press, 1980. 136p.

Tough Choices begins with Crystal (13) testifying in court in a custody battle between her parents. Although she would rather live with her father and step-mother, she is unable to tell the judge her feelings for fear of what it would do to Vicki, her mother. Her mother has always been irresponsible and has left Crystal alone for days at a time. She seems to want Crystal to be with her, but once the judge rules in Vicki's favor, she soon loses interest in Crystal. Crystal realizes her mother would rather be free than have the responsibility of a daughter so she must again decide who to turn to. In this story, the daughter faces many adult decisions, while her mother runs away from them.

Bookfinder, 1985. p. 238. ages 11+.

Ryan, Mary E. Dance a Step Closer. Delacorte, 1984. 180p.

Katie (16) is the daughter of a would-be actress. Her parents divorced six years ago, and since then they have lived on the money her mother earned doing house

cleaning commercials and fingernail ads. Katie's main interest in life is dancing, and she uses her lunch money to pay for lessons. Katie's dance instructor feels she has real talent and encourages her to apply for admission to a dance school in New York City, but her mother refuses to give her permission. She wants Katie to do something sensible and to use her mind. As the tension between mother and daughter increases and the audition draws near, they both realize they are scared of the same things. Katie is afraid of failing and her mother wants to protect her from all the disappointments a career on the stage can bring.

School Library Journal, October, 1984. p. 170.
grades 6-9.

Sallis, Susan. A Time For Everything. Harper, 1979. 218p.

Lily's teen years span World War II which adds an extra dimension of difficulty to the trying years of growing up. Lily has grown up in a village in England, but her mother has always been considered a foreigner because she was not born there. People have whispered about how different her mother is and this intensifies when Lily's father leaves to join the army. As Lily and her mother fend for themselves, they must deal with an evacuee in their home, the death of the grandfather and a handicapped cousin. As each problem arises, they grow more apart, and Lily begins to believe the rumors she has heard about her mother. When Lily discovers that her mother was pregnant with her when she married her father, she wishes she were dead. When her mother becomes pregnant again, Lily must deal with feelings of guilt, low self-esteem and hatred. The problems that can arise when a mother and daughter do not communicate are an important part of this story.

Fiction For Youth, 1981. p. 145. ages 13+.

Zindel, Bonnie and Paul Zindel. A Star For the Latecomer. Harper and Row, 1980. 185p.

Claire Hillary has dreams and ambitions for her daughter Brooke (16) to be a star. She has enrolled

Brooke in a high school for kids with talents and spends most of her time looking for auditions and casting calls. Brooke is beginning to realize that she wants more out of life than to be a star, but she doesn't want to disappoint her mother. When Claire discovers she has cancer, her drive to see Brooke's career take off is increased. Brooke feels the same need mainly because she wants her mother to be proud of her. As the cancer weakens her mother, Brooke frantically searches for roles, but also learns something very important about herself.

Bookfinder, 1985. p. 721. ages 12+.

B. Mother and Adopted or Foster Daughter Relationship

Anderson, Mary. Step On a Crack. Bantam, 1978. 180p.

Sarah Carpenter (15) is troubled by a recurring nightmare in which she sees her mother trapped near a grave surrounded by an iron fence. She hears her mother screaming but never sees her face, and it always ends with her mother's face buried in a puddle of blood. To add confusion to these nightmares, Sarah is always compelled to shoplift the day after the dream. She has done this over the years and has quite a collection of stolen things that seem to have a purpose, but Sarah can't find a connection between them. When Sarah's Aunt Katrin cables that she will be arriving for a visit, Sarah is thrilled that she will finally meet her elusive aunt, however, her nightmares intensify and she begins sleepwalking. She is afraid to tell her mother even though they have always been able to discuss things easily. As Sarah makes a connection between the nightmares and the stolen items, she realizes that the woman she has always called mother is actually her aunt and that Aunt Katrin abandoned her after a traumatic experience.

Booklist, April 1, 1978. p. 1247. ages 10+.

Childress, Alice. Rainbow Jordan. Coward, McCann & Geoghegan, 1981. 142p.

This book revolves around two relationships. Kathie had Rainbow when she was fifteen and married to a sixteen-year-old boy. They split soon after Rainbow's birth and Kathie has had various relationships since. When she becomes involved with a new man, or finds a new job, Kathie often does not return home. One night when she was out, the building they lived in caught fire and Rainbow was found alone. Social Services placed her in the care of Josephine and now whenever Kathie doesn't return, Rainbow must go to Josephine's. The relationship between Kathie and Rainbow is typical of a teenage mother and daughter. Kathie loses her temper easily and takes it out on Rainbow, but feels terrible afterwards. Rainbow comments that some of the best days of her life are those following a beating. Kathie has done a good job of instilling values in Rainbow though, and Rainbow loves her despite the fact that she is left alone so often.

Josephine became a foster parent because she and her husband could not have children of their own. She refers to Rainbow as a repeater and enjoys her as much as any of the children she has watched. Rainbow is comfortable at Josephine's because she feels it is a real home. Josephine demands that Rainbow be honest with her, but when Rainbow finds Josephine has lies of her own, their relationship changes. The two of them realize that truthfulness is necessary for successful relationships and that hiding from or denying the truth only complicates things. The two of them decide that together they can help each other through their loneliness and fears.

Bookfinder, 1985. p. 115. ages 12+.

Lifton, Betty Jean. I'm Still Me. Alfred A. Knopf, 1981. 243p.

Lori (16) knows she is an adopted child, but has never been concerned by it. When her junior history teacher assigns the class the task of filling out a family tree and tracing their roots, Lori is torn between putting her adoptive family down as her ancestors, or finding her birth mother. As Lori grew

up, her mother gave her different versions of the circumstances surrounding her birth and adoption. Now when Lori asks, her mother evades the question. Lori has always been an obedient daughter who didn't cause her parents grief, so she lets it pass. Lori's brother, Mike, has problems of his own and as her parents become more involved in helping him, Lori decides to actively search for her birth mother. When the two are united, Lori has mixed emotions, but finds that her mother gave her away because she loved her and wanted Lori to have a good life, not because she was ashamed. When Lori returns home, she tells her mother what she has discovered and is relieved to know that she accepts what Lori has done. Her mother explains that she deliberately didn't ask about the birth mother because she wanted to think of Lori as all hers and it was easier if she knew nothing of the birth mother. The discoveries Lori made opened communication between Lori and her adoptive mother and actually made them closer.

Bookfinder, 1985. p. 372. ages 12+

C. Mother and Step-daughter Relationship

Adler, Carole S. In Our House, Scott Is My Brother. Macmillan, 1980. 139p.

Since her mother's death, Jodi (13) has tried to fill a void in her father's life, but he has met and married a beautiful woman named Donna. Donna's first reaction to Jodi was that she needed to lose weight, change her hairstyle and buy a new wardrobe. Jodi tries to be pleasant, but resents the changes Donna is making. The toad green dress Donna buys for Jodi for the first day of school and insists she wear, further aggravates a touchy situation. Jodi realizes after some time that Donna actually is a very unhappy person with a drinking problem and a need to be accepted. Just as Jodi is accepting Donna as a part of the family, Donna decides she can no longer stay in the home and moves out, leaving Jodi to pick up the pieces of their lives.

Bookfinder, 1985. p. 5. ages 10-13.

Klass, Sheila S. To See My Mother Dance. see Category D.

Oneal, Zibby. A Formal Feeling. Viking, 1982. 162p.

Anne's mother died a year ago while Anne was at a boarding school her mother had chosen because of its high standards. Anne returned home for Christmas break and is still wrestling with the image of a perfect mother who has since been replaced by Dory, her new step-mother. Everything Dory does falls short of what her mother would have done, but Anne's father and brother both seem to be happy with the way things are now. Although it is easy to idealize the actions of a person who is no longer alive, accepting and living with the present can be hampered by illusions. Anne works her way through false images and finds Dory to be a thoughtful and loving person.

Bookfinder, 1985. p. 472. ages 12+.

D. Mother and Abandoned Daughter Relationship

Adler, Carole S. In Our House Scott Is My Brother. see Category C.

Childress, Alice. Rainbow Jordan. see Category B.

Girion, Barbara. A Tangle of Roots. Scribner's Sons, 1979. 154p.

Beth Frankle (15) is interrupted during a sophomore English exam to be told her mother has just died of a brain hemorrhage. Beth has always enjoyed a comfortable life, with loving parents, close friends and a special boyfriend. Throughout the traditional Jewish period of mourning, Beth is torn by the loss of her mother and the inability of those around her to

understand what she is dealing with. Beth's feelings are the main focus of this story and her transition from denial through acceptance are clearly portrayed by the author.

Bookfinder, 1985. p. 220. ages 12-16.

Hayden, Torey. The Sunflower Forest. see Category A.

Hermes, Patricia. You Shouldn't Have To Say Goodbye. see Category A.

Holland, Isabelle. Of Love, Death and Other Journeys. see Category A.

Klass, Sheila S. To See My Mother Dance. Scribner's Sons, 1981. 154p.

Jessica's mother, Karen, abandoned her on Jessica's first birthday. She left her in the crib with a note attached saying Karen just wanted to be free. When her father and grandmother returned, Jessica was crying and lying in a dirty diaper. Jessica's grandmother reminds her of this every chance she gets. As Jessica grows up, she fantasizes about this wonderful mother whom she believes is a beautiful dancer and how they will enjoy each other once they meet. Jessica is thirteen now and her father has just remarried. Jessica decided to drive the step-mother out because she is interfering with her fantasy mother, and she is afraid of the changes this woman will make in her life. Martha, the step-mother, is firm with Jessica, yet shows her love through various actions. Martha decides that the only way there will be peace in their home is for Jessica to meet her real mother, so that her fantasy mother can be put to rest.

Bookfinder, 1985. p. 196. ages 10-13.

Oneal, Zibby. A Formal Feeling. see Category C.

Sargent, Sarah. Secret Lies. Crown, 1981. 118p.

Elvira (13) returned from a sleepover to find a note from her mother attached to the refrigerator. It said she had eloped with Duane and left for a honeymoon. She left \$100 and instructions for Elvira to go to Virginia to live with a great aunt. Abandoned first by her father and now by her mother, Elvira clings to a fantasy world in which her father turns out to be a handsome surgeon who finds her after years of searching. She also dreams that her mother suddenly realizes how much she needs and misses her daughter. Reality slaps Elvira in the face when she arrives in Virginia and discovers the truth about both her parents. Elvira eventually accepts the fact that her mother will never send for her because she is a selfish person. She became a parent unintentionally at a very young age and was then abandoned by Elvira's father shortly after Elvira was born. Now she is tired of the responsibilities involved in being a parent and has left Elvira to be raised by a trusted relative.

Bookfinder, 1985. p. 570. ages 11+.

Schotter, Roni. A Matter of Time. William Collins, 1979. 128p.

Lisl's mother has died of cancer and Lisl is retelling the events leading up to her death. Lisl had always thought of her mother as a superwoman, one who was always busy, looked glamorous and was adored by everyone. Lisl viewed herself as insignificant compared to her mother and did not feel she had any redeeming qualities. As her mother's health deteriorated, Lisl realized she was not this powerful woman, but a person with weaknesses and insecurities too. As the end drew near, her mother tried to express her love for Lisl, but could not put her feelings into words. Lisl realized what she was trying to say and felt sorry for her mother because she had let life slip past her because she was busy with insignificant things and hadn't taken time for the really important aspects of life. At the end, Lisl learned death does not

necessarily mean the end of life, but rather the end of living. Her mother was no longer the beautiful, vibrant woman, yet her heart was still beating. Lisl was frustrated by feeling that her mother was dead even though she was alive and by hoping the waiting and agony would soon be over.

Bookfinder, 1985. p. 575. ages 12+.

Zindel, Bonnie and Paul Zindel. A Star For the Latecomer. see Category A.

CHAPTER 5

Analysis, Conclusions and Recommendations

Each of the four mother-daughter relationship categories which was established by the researcher was found in young adult literature. The mother and biological daughter relationship category contained the most books with thirteen as primary entries and one secondary entry. The mother and abandoned daughter relationship was second with four primary entries and seven secondary entries. The mother and adopted daughter relationship category had three primary entries, and the mother and step-daughter relationship category had two primary entries and one secondary entry.

Each of the two hypotheses was accepted. Hypothesis one stated that each one of the mother-daughter relationships will be portrayed in one or more books analyzed. Hypothesis two stated that the majority of the relationships will be the mother-biological daughter relationship.

Each of the books included in this study was written by a woman. The only book read by the researcher that was written by a man was Bruce Brook's

Midnight Hour Encore. It was rejected for inclusion in the bibliography because the main relationship was father-daughter and the father was preparing the daughter to meet her mother who had left them when the daughter was a toddler. A further study could be done to find out how many of these authors are mothers of daughters themselves.

A second interesting aspect of the study that was not anticipated by the researcher was the lack of siblings of main characters. Fifteen of the twenty-two books had a daughter who was also an only child. An explanation could be that the development of a relationship between mother and daughter is easier if relationships between mother and other siblings do not have to be developed. I'm Still Me by Lifton was the only book, of the seven in which the main character had one or more siblings, with a fully developed sibling character. The brother in this story was having problems at school and with the law, and his actions directly influenced the actions of the daughter.

Another generality that was noted by the researcher was that in twelve of the twenty-two books the daughters either felt responsible for the mother or were placed in adult situations with the mother acting irresponsibly. This usually was the basis for the

Sunflower Forest, Lesley was made to take care of the house and watch her little sister because the mother was having mental problems and was ignoring her family.

A final interesting point was that in all but one of the books in which the mother died, the death was due to cancer. The mother in A Tangle of Roots died of a brain hemorrhage, but all of the other deaths were cancer related. It could be speculated that the nature of cancer allows for the development of a relationship between the mother and daughter because they are facing imminent death. On the other hand, an instant death, such as a heart attack, would not be a conducive vehicle for relationship development.

In general, the books in this study were either depressing or contained some type of tragedy with which the daughter was forced to deal. This was unexpected, but probably realistic. Most books which deal with relationships need some type of conflict for the characters to work through. This is a weakness that should suggest to authors the need for positive books dealing with the topic of mother-daughter relationships.

Summary

The purpose of this study was to compile a list of young adult fiction books in which the characters and themes are based on a mother-daughter relationship. Selective bibliographies and current periodicals were examined for titles that fit the limitations of this study. The books were read by the researcher and a reference sheet was completed for each book that included bibliographic information and an annotation. These reference sheets were used to compile the complete bibliography.

Hypothesis one, which stated that each of the mother-daughter relationships will be portrayed in one or more of the books analyzed was accepted because each of the four categories had more than one book which fit the description of that category. Category A- Mother and Biological Daughter contained thirteen primary entries and one secondary entry. Category B- Mother and Adopted or Foster Daughter contained three primary entries. Category C- Mother and Step-daughter contained two primary entries and one secondary entry. Category D- Mother and Abandoned Daughter contained four primary entries and seven secondary entries. Hypothesis two, "the majority of the relationships will be the mother-biological daughter relationship", was

be the mother-biological daughter relationship", was also accepted. Thirteen of the twenty-two books are contained in the mother-biological daughter relationship category which constitutes a majority.

All of the books in the bibliography were written by women and fifteen of the twenty-two books contained a daughter who was an only child. Twelve of the twenty-two books had the daughter feeling responsible for the mother, or the daughter was forced into an adult situation. The books in general were depressing or contained some type of tragedy, which suggests the need for books that portray positive mother-daughter relationships.

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Reference Sheet

AUTHOR _____

TITLE _____

PUBLISHER _____ COPYRIGHT _____ PAGES _____

REVIEW SOURCE _____ DATE _____ PAGE _____

RECOMMENDED AGE/GRADE LEVEL _____

MOTHER-DAUGHTER RELATIONSHIP

mother and biological daughter

mother and adopted or foster daughter

mother and step-daughter

mother and abandoned daughter

ANNOTATION _____

SPECIAL NOTES (themes, characteristics, similarities, differences, etc.)

