

1990

Realistic depiction of symptoms and consequences of parental problem drinking in young adult novels

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Realistic depiction of symptoms and consequences of parental problem drinking in young adult novels

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Abstract

This research was a content analysis study of young adult novels that contained a parent with a drinking problem. The researcher wanted to determine the level of realism regarding the characterizations of the child of an alcoholic, the drinker, and the spouse of the drinker. The hypothesis predicted that a majority of the books would include: 1. three or more consequences of drinking on the child, 2. four or more consequences or symptoms on the drinker, and 3. one or more consequences suffered by the spouse. A checklist that listed known consequences and symptoms of alcohol abuse was developed. A four member panel recommended books to the researcher. Fifteen books were randomly selected to be analyzed. All of the hypotheses were accepted. It was determined that there is a high level of realism in young adult fiction portraying alcoholic parents that were published between 1979 and 1989.

REALISTIC DEPICTION OF SYMPTOMS AND CONSEQUENCES
OF PARENTAL PROBLEM DRINKING IN YOUNG ADULT NOVELS

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

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

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Read and approved by
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Date *April 25, 1990*

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Chapter I

Introduction

Alcohol is not a new substance. It has been used by man since before the birth of Christ. Barnes (1988) reports that the government has counted 10.6 million alcoholics in the United States. In addition, 7.3 million more Americans have a "drinking problem" (p. 1729). Barnes interviewed several experts on drug dependency who criticize the statistics from the government because the data gathering method they use can not accurately determine whether an individual is a problem drinker or an alcoholic. The experts characterize alcoholism as a process that starts with that first drink and progresses at a varied pace for each alcoholic. In addition, some individuals who drink heavily show some signs of alcoholism and yet can not be clinically diagnosed as being an alcoholic. Unfortunately, that does not mean that the drinker does not suffer some negative consequences of the heavy drinking. Alcohol abuse costs the country 117 billion dollars per year (p. 1731). All other illicit substance abuse combined costs less than that.

According to O'Brien and Chafetz (1982), the resultant problems of heavy or alcoholic drinking can be divided into three categories. The categories include:

1. Psychological-- Can include a feeling of loss of control, depression, suicidal thoughts, among others.

2. Medical-- Can include acute or chronic illness due to alcohol ingestion as well as injuries due to accidents or crimes involving alcohol.

3. Social-- Can include problems with work, family or the law that occur because of problem drinking. Divorce, getting fired, or arrested for drunk driving are some examples of the social problems of heavy drinkers (p. 2).

Cohen (1981) reported that the consequences of alcohol abuse are varied for each case but might include loss of health, job, family, assets, friends, and self respect (p. 105). Cohen also states that suicide, aggressive behavior like assault or fighting, and sexual crimes of rape or incest occur at a disproportionately high level with an alcoholic perpetrator (p. 103). In addition, a staggering number of alcoholics or problem drinkers are divorced, separated or were deserted because of the drinking problem.

Cohen listed several symptoms of alcohol abuse. These symptoms include:

Drinking to relieve stress (p. 196).

Drinking after promising self or others to stay

sober.

Several people telling drinker that drinking is excessive (p. 197).

Trouble with the law as a result of drinking.

Problems at work.

Problems at home.

Blackouts.

Passing out.

Medical problems as a result of drinking (p. 198).

Drinking before a social gathering.

Gulping drinks.

Extreme impatience when waiting for a drink.

Attempt to cut down, but can not.

Drinking early in the morning to ward off hangover.

Evidence of tolerance for alcohol, meaning the drinker ingests immense amounts of alcohol but does not appear to be intoxicated (p. 199).

Alcohol abuse touches everyone in this country. It touches the children of parents who drink too much. Bolton (1988) found that in any 25 member classroom in this country, between four and six of the students live with a parent who is an alcoholic (p. 10). The consequences that these youth suffer because of parental drinking are not clear by looking at them and observing them in class.

Ponchalek and Reynolds (1988) work with college students who are adult children of alcoholics (COA). They express the viewpoint that because COA suffer higher incidence of psychopathology and low self-esteem, trust and intimacy problems, they are unlikely to have successful inter-personal relationships. The impact of treatment seems to be breaking the cycle of alcoholism.

Self-help books are flooding the bookstores with advice about dealing with alcoholic parents or loved ones. Almost all of these books deal with one adult living with another adult who has a drinking problem. Little has been written for the child or adolescent who lives with an alcoholic. Forrest (1986) relates that there are six common behavior traits of people who live with a problem drinker: 1. They deny the truth, 2. They "act out" the problem, 3. They become reformers, 4. They become isolated, 5. They give up, and 6. They go crazy (p. 32).

These all sound like serious problems. For an adult, it must be difficult. For a child, it must seem insurmountable.

In order to help students be aware of what the more personal and painful consequences of drinking in excess are, Gallagher (1988) suggests reading fiction that depicts those consequences. Not only can

students who do not live with a parent who drinks too much be helped by reading, so can students that do. Literature, Gallagher says, is an excellent way to decrease a student's sense of isolation, guilt, and responsibility for a family problem. Books can even lead a child to confront and solve their personal problems (p. 13).

Purpose

With the preceding in mind, the purpose of this study is to find out how accurate or realistic the portrayals of parental drinking problems or alcoholism are in young adult novels.

Hypotheses

This researcher wants to know, what level of realism exists between what is known about the behaviors of alcoholic personalities and their effect on their children and the portrayal of the same in the young adult novel. This researcher predicts: 1. a majority of the young adult fiction books with a parent portrayed as a heavy drinker will contain a minimum of three consequences of drinking on the young adult, 2. a majority of the young adult fiction books with a parent portrayed as a heavy drinker will contain at least four symptoms and/or consequences of alcohol abuse on the drinker, 3. a majority of the young adult fiction books with a parent portrayed as a heavy drinker will contain

at least one consequence of heavy drinking on the spouse.

Assumptions that this research contains are that:

1. Young adult novels with a parent portrayed as a heavy drinker will be available to be studied.

2. It is possible to classify the symptoms of alcoholism and the consequences of such behavior on the family.

It is hoped the results of this study will help selectors of problem novels on alcohol abuse to choose novels that contain more realism regarding the excessive drinking of parents and its effect on the family. Most people do not know what effect alcohol abuse has on a family. This research might help professionals who work with young adults to broaden their awareness of the complexity and pain involved with alcohol abuse by parents on adolescents with which they work.

The conceptual definitions are as follows:

1. Drinking problem- a behavior toward consuming alcohol, expressed by an individual, to the extent that when the individual is engaged, preparing to engage, or has already engaged in consuming alcoholic beverages, this behavior concerns the drinker or other individuals. Will be used synonymously with heavy drinking and alcoholic drinking.

2. Young adult novels- those fictional narratives written for an audience of people in grades seven through twelve in the American school system.

The following limitations apply to this study:

1. Only novels written for young adults that include an alcoholic parent will be considered.

2. The problem drinker must be a parent character in the novel.

3. There is a lack of consensus among professionals in regard to whether the children of problem drinkers suffer certain symptoms because of the alcoholic environment in which they live or because the family in which they live in is dysfunctional because of alcohol.

4. This study will not deal with whether the alcoholic is sick or whether she/he suffers from weakness of will. This debate will be raging long after this project has finished.

5. Because the nature of literature precludes asking questions of characters, the analysis of characteristics and consequences will allow inclusion of any of those behaviors and consequences that are written about, or alluded to, by any character, whether it is in dialogue, thought or description of action.

6. This study will not concern itself with the delineation between problem drinking and alcoholic drinking.

Chapter II

Literature Review

The concept that is basic to the present research is the representation of alcohol use in the media. Much research has been done in this area, particularly in the area of television. There have been debates about the effect the representation of alcohol in the mass media has on young adult attitudes toward drinking. Some people believe that there are too many advertisements for alcohol products on television. In addition, some of these same people believe that programming content includes too many references to drinking, that it is not dealt with in a responsible manner by producers of prime time programming. There are those who attack the promotion of alcohol in any medium, advertisement or not, on the basis that a deceptive message is sent to consumers. That is, that alcohol can make you more capable, lovable, sociable, desirable and on and on. The studies that follow have looked at the content of media messages regarding what the message is saying about alcohol.

Wallack (1985) conducted a four and one-half year study of drinking on one of the most popular daytime soap operas on television. The purpose of the study

was to determine how realistically drinking behavior was portrayed on the soap opera. He found that the show had gotten progressively more accurate as the study progressed. This study was conducted just after the television community adopted a new set of standards regarding portrayal of alcohol consumption on television. Wallack concluded that the producers should be commended, because drinking on "All My Children" could be broken down into three categories. The categories were:

1. Social drinking, portrayed as quiet activity, primary function being socializing.

2. Drinking in response to stress, which was chastized by others as inappropriate.

3. Drinking to intoxication, which almost always included disapproval by more than one character. Bartenders refused to serve already intoxicated customers and called cabs for the same (p. 370).

This researcher argues how realistic it is for loved ones or others to admonish people who drink to cope with stress or drink to the extreme. This researcher also doubts that people convey negative feelings about such behavior on such a consistent basis in real life. The study looked at not only the consumption of alcohol but the reaction of other people to overindulgence or use of alcohol as a crutch.

In 1986, Greeson reported on the content analysis he had done of adolescent psychology books. He looked at several issues considered important to young adults and compared those issues to the amount of coverage in adolescent psychology books. He found that drug and alcohol abuse was a major topic in the textbooks. On average, 25.2 pages were devoted to that subject (p. 1386). Drug and alcohol use or abuse was found to be a major theme in popular music and music broadcast on MTV. Textbooks, however, did not discuss media influences on alcohol and drug abuse. Greeson found this puzzling, in addition to negligent on the part of textbook authors and producers.

This researcher feels this report lacks thoroughness. Greeson failed to report how he decided on which themes or issues were of importance or significance to young adults.

DeFoe and Breed (1983) conducted a study to determine the number of "alcohol acts" on prime time shows. They defined an alcohol act as instances of alcohol ingestion, preparation to ingest, or alcohol presence. DeFoe and Breed found that there were an average of 7.02 alcohol acts per hour. Thirteen and nine tenths percent of all scenes contained some presence of alcohol (p. 30). The people doing this drinking were generally men, professional business

people. They were people whom the audience could identify as "good". Young people were almost never seen drinking on television. The researchers, however, found a high incidence of young people engaging in these activities:

1. Expressing the desire to drink.
2. Showing approval of drinking.
3. Giving protection to a problem drinker (p. 32).

The researchers also noted that consequences of abuse of alcohol were sometimes shown realistically and, at other times, not at all.

This study purported to be done in order to count alcohol acts. The report of results, however, suggests that other more subjective counting was done regarding the talk or action of young adults about alcohol and towards problem drinkers.

A content analysis of all prime time television programming the week of March 12-18, 1973, was done by McEwen and Hanneman (1974). The three networks and public television programs were analyzed. The purpose of the study was to determine if there was overall promotion of drug use on television or discouragement of it.

Of 80 hours of prime time programming, 59.7 minutes were used to promote licit chemical use. There were 127 commercials for drug products (p. 285).

Twenty-six of the ads were for alcohol products. Of the 88 commercials for drugs other than alcohol and tobacco, and with the exception of stomach remedies, 39 commercials promised some positive sociopsychological benefit of using the product (p. 286). Alcoholic beverages strongly emphasized social and psychological benefits. In addition, one third of the alcohol ads promised a physical benefit as well (p. 287). Consequences of alcohol use were almost 2 to 1 positive (p. 289). Alcohol incidents were treated in a positive light compared to treatment of illicit drug use.

Smart and Krakowski (1973) conducted a content study of 13 of the most widely circulated magazines in Canada. All issues from January, 1970, until May, 1971, were included in the sample. Of 80 articles dealing with drug use, seven were about alcohol (p. 17). The majority of those articles were about the drinking problems of youth (p. 18). Researchers concluded that due to the long history of alcohol, alcoholism is considered less news worthy than other substance abuse stories (p. 19).

The same study examined Canadian broadcast programming. The sample included all programming after 4 p.m. during the 1971-1972 season. The ratio between drug promotion and anti-drug messages was 295:13. Forty-three percent of the advertisements for drug

products were for alcohol (p. 20). In regular programming, heavy drinking was portrayed several times, but no criticism of such behavior was implied or expressed. One-half of the anti-drug messages were about drinking and driving. Smart and Krakowski conclude that television and magazines make only a slight contribution to the national drug education of Canada (p. 21).

Strickland, Finn, and Lambert (1982) conducted a study of magazine advertisements for alcoholic products. The purpose of the study was to identify the themes used to promote such products. The team was also trying to find evidence as to whether alcohol ads are targeted at women, young adults, and blacks. The researchers discussed past studies and for the most part dismissed them as taking too emotional an approach. They criticized the work of DeFoe, whose work was discussed earlier, on that basis. This research study was said to be more objective.

The study included 42 magazines. About two-thirds of the magazines were selected because they were the most widely circulated. The rest were chosen to be included because their target audience was women, young adults, or blacks. The content of each issue of each magazine was analysed for one year. There were 3,131

alcohol ads found (p. 665). Many of these were duplicate ads.

The five most prevalent themes in the ads were:

1. Quality of the beverage.
2. Tradition or heritage of the product.
3. Specific information about the production process.
4. Association with foreign places.
5. Celebration of special occasions (p. 665).

These top themes occurred in at least 10% of the ads (p. 664). Less than one percent of the human models were judged to be under 25 years of age (p. 672). Two percent of the ads were judged to contain references to the effects of alcohol. One percent of the ads seemed to suggest heavy or frequent consumption. Moderation of consumption was suggested in 2.7% of the ads (p. 669).

The researchers found no evidence that alcohol ads targeted women and young adults. A significantly higher number of ads, however, occurred in magazines in the sample that were targeted to blacks. The highest concentration of ads for alcohol occurred in magazines whose readership was likely to be people with higher than average incomes (p. 675).

Strickland, Finn and Lambert conclude that magazine ads for alcohol do not target women and young adults solely on the basis that there were far fewer ads for alcohol in magazines for women and none in magazines for young adults. Ads for alcohol could be

targeting women, youth and blacks in a more subtle way than heavy ad concentration in those magazines would allow. It is possible that writers of ads for alcohol, use that desire to be the same as or wanted by the white man to gain a psychological advantage.

The second part of the above study was done by Finn and Strickland (1982). The study continuously monitored television broadcasts for the week of May 11-18, 1980. All alcohol advertisements from local stations in the St. Louis area and the three networks were recorded.

In this analysis, there were five themes that were present in 25% of the ads. Those were:

1. Camraderie
2. Relaxation
3. Humor
4. Quality of product
5. Physical activity (p. 968).

Quality of product is the only theme that can be considered product-related. All the rest of the top themes were very model-related. Five percent of the ads had models that could be judged to be under 25 years old (p. 972). The researchers concluded that controversial themes, such as psychological orientations and sexual or romantic themes, were seldom found.

Interestingly enough, this researcher wonders what the definition of psychological orientations was.

The fact that camaraderie, humor and relaxation each occurred in 25% of the ads makes this researcher think that it is possible that alcohol ads do play on emotions of viewers to be all those things-- funny, popular, relaxed or engaged in fun activity.

Another study by DeFoe and Breed (1988) examined the drinking done on television programs by teenagers. It found that less than two percent of all drinking shown on television was done by young adults (p. 538). Of those young people shown drinking, most were involved in gangs or criminal activity. The exceptions were the stories of young adults who had life problems and turned to alcohol to cope with the problems.

By the end of the program these teens always discovered that alcohol only compounds their problems, and they took action to correct the situation. Defoe and Warren found, however, what they thought were too numerous references by teen characters who had a strong desire to be old enough to drink. This characterization of lusting after alcohol only furthers alcohol as forbidden fruit and so increases its importance to teens. The researchers also found that youth are portrayed as having a fascination with alcohol while adults have great uncertainty about it. This, they believe, is the societal reality of alcohol and young adults (p. 542).

The aforementioned research studies are not seriously comparable because each one set out to measure a different variable. The obvious thing to say about the advertising of alcoholic beverages is that the purpose of it is to sell alcohol. Of more significance is the content of television programming and magazine articles. Smart and Krakowski might have been right about the news worthiness of alcohol. It is legal, and drunks seem less frightening than the television depicted addict who will kill for the money to buy cocaine.

This researcher found only one piece of research which analyzed the novel. Hoepfner (1976) did a content analysis of young adult novels that dealt with teen drinking. She established criteria for selecting novels for school use. The criteria she developed included:

1. Self-concept.
2. Parental attitudes.
3. Peer attitudes.
4. Secondary reasons for drinking (p. 10).

Hoepfner found that teenage problem drinkers exhibit similarly low self-esteem and social isolation. Parental attitudes towards teen drinking were not rigid. Parents seemed to feel that alcohol was a better substance to abuse than other drugs. Hoepfner also found that there was no overt pressure from peers

to start drinking. Peers typically exerted pressure on others to continue drinking and in some peer groups, drinking was the main activity. After sobriety the teen could not go back to the old drinking crowd and, therefore, had to seek out new friends. It was also determined by this study that:

1. Drinking begins with experimentation.
2. Drinking is seen as an adult activity.
3. The taste of alcohol is pleasant.

Based on the limited research found, there appears to be plenty of room for research on the novel to establish the level of realism in the portrayal of parents with drinking problems.

Chapter III

Methodology

This research employed the content analysis technique to determine the number, nature and variety of consequences of alcoholic drinking by a parent on the family, and of symptoms of the drinking problem.

A panel of experts was asked to recommend ten books. The panel consisted of the following:

1. Jane Seeley, a junior high library media specialist.
2. Linda Waddle, a senior high library media specialist.
3. Lucille Lettow, the youth librarian at the UNI library.
4. Geraldine La Rocque, a professor who teaches young adult literature at UNI.

The panel was chosen by the researcher. Their primary function was to recommend books, written for young adults, that contain a parent who has a drinking problem. The panelists did not concern themselves with the amount of realism in the novel. The individuals were chosen to represent a diverse group of experts. It was hoped that they would provide a variety of titles that were quality literature, read by young

adults, and published no earlier than 1980 to be used in this study.

After the panel made 18 recommendations, 15 titles were randomly selected. These books were read by the researcher. The books were located by first using local libraries. If a title was unavailable, then the book was obtained through interlibrary loan. During the reading a checklist (See Appendix A) was completed for each book.

The checklist included three sections. The sections were:

1. Consequences on the young adult.
2. Consequences and symptoms of problem drinking.
3. Consequences on spouse.

These sections listed the possible effects and symptoms of parental drinking in excess. For every consequence or symptom found in the book, a check mark was made. Each section listed a set of feelings and behaviors common among children of problem drinkers, problem drinkers, and spouses of problem drinkers.

The checklist was developed by adapting the Children of Alcoholics Screening Test (CAST) (See Appendix B). The CAST is a self-reporting measure of the effect on a child of a parental drinking problem. It has also been used to validate a parental diagnosis

of alcoholism. Other consequences of parental drinking were identified by Woodside(1988).

The consequences and symptoms of excessive drinking on the drinker were largely an adaption of the Michigan Alcoholism Screening Test (MAST) (See Appendix C). According to Allen, Eckardt and Wallen (1988), the MAST is the oldest and most commonly used self-reporting device (p. 587).

The third section of the checklist contained the consequences of excessive parental drinking on the spouse. These consequences were adapted from Cohen (1981) and Forrest (1986).

Chapter IV
Analysis of the Data

The data were analyzed by compiling the checkmarks for different symptoms and consequences found in each book. A total was then figured for all 15 books. At that time it was determined whether the hypotheses were supported or not supported by the data gathered. An annotation for each book was written by the researcher. The annotations (See Appendix D) include a short synopsis of the book, description of the adolescent

Table 1

Number of Consequences of Parental Drinking on
Young Adult Characters in 15 Books

<u>Book Titles</u>	<u>No.</u>
<u>With Westie and the Tin Man</u>	5
<u>No Kidding</u>	7
<u>Up Country</u>	15
<u>No Place for Me</u>	4
<u>The Moonlight Man</u>	4
<u>Them That Glitter and Them That Don't</u>	5
<u>Just One Friend</u>	5
<u>Cowboys Don't Cry</u>	9
<u>Jemmy</u>	4
<u>Runaway</u>	7
<u>Wilted</u>	7
<u>The Summer of Sassy Jo</u>	3
<u>The Caretaker</u>	8
<u>Whither the Wind Bloweth</u>	8
<u>Center Line</u>	11

and parent with a drinking problem and any other central characters, and the final resolution of the plot.

As shown by data in Table 1, all of the books contained a minimum of three consequences on the young adult children depicted. The first hypothesis is, therefore, ²⁰accepted. ✓

There were 22 consequences on young adults listed on the instrument. The titles that contained the most consequences were Up Country and Center Line. Up Country had the most realistic character portrayal in the sample. The main character of the book, Carl, exhibits many of the classic characteristics of a COA. Carl worried about his mother. When a policeman comes to his house late one night he automatically assumes the man has come to tell him his mother is dead. Carl often laid awake at night thinking about the drinking and the fact that he had no one to rely on but himself. Carl is not popular with his peers. He keeps a safe emotional distance from all people.

At one point Carl can no longer pretend that the situation is not hurting him. He is disgusted with his mother for bringing home yet another drunken man. Carl's mother is sexually promiscuous. The two fight, and Carl ends up getting slapped. He wants to be free of all the problems in his life. He thinks that if he

can only make enough money to get away from Milwaukee and go to college, his mother's drinking will no longer affect him.

After his mother is forced into treatment by a judge, Carl goes north to stay with relatives. It is there that he learns how adversely affected he was by his mother's drinking. He begins to trust his aunt and uncle. In the end, when Carl's mother gets out of treatment, he feels he must go back to live with her, to support her. After talking with several people, Carl at the last minute decides he can not risk his own future to take care of his mother. He has learned that she must be responsible for herself. Carl understands that he must stay where he feels most loved and cared for.

Up Country ended more realistically than any of the other books because even though Carl is not living with his mother, he has come to the realization that having lived with her has left marks on him that only he can remove. The story is told with great skill. Reading this book was a vicarious experience for the reader. The author used humor well to express the bittersweet emotions that Carl must cope with as his mother's condition slowly deteriorates.

In Center Line, the main story of the book could be identified as "life on the run". The five brothers

set out on their own to get away from their drunken and abusive father. The very beginning of the book is devoted to establishing that the father is alcoholic and that the drinking has made him an abusive and uncaring man. While the boys are on the run, several of them express how angry they are about their father's drinking. The boys have had to protect one another from his physical abuse. They feel that their father does not love them. One brother has taken over the role of mother and keeps house and does the cooking. Another brother has a drug problem.

The most common consequences on the young adult characters are outlined in Table 2.

Table 2

Most Common Consequences of Parental Drinking
on Young Adult Characters in 15 Books

Consequence	No.
Worry, anxiety over the parental drinking problem.	13
Says or feels that parent drinks too much.	11
Taking over chores/responsibilities because of drinking parent.	9
Feeling alone, scared, nervous, angry, or frustrated that a parent was unable to stop drinking.	8
Withdrawal from nonfamily members because of embarrassment or shame of parent drinking problems.	7

The book that contained the least number of consequences was The Summer of Sassy Jo. This book differed from Up Country in that Sassy Jo was abandoned

by her alcoholic mother when she was a young girl. Sassy Jo had been raised for seven years by her father. After her father died she was staying with her aunt. Sassy Jo and her aunt were not getting along, and Sassy's mother wanted her for the summer. Sassy Jo spends the summer with her mother who is now recovered. During the summer Sassy remembers many unpleasant memories from the days after her mother left. Sassy Jo has been hurt more from abandonment than from alcoholism because she was so very young when her mother last lived with her.

The consequences on the checklist that were not found or were found infrequently during the content analysis are listed in Table 3.

Table 3

Consequences on Young Adult Characters
of Parental Drinking Which Were Least Common or Not
Found In 15 Books

<u>Consequence</u>	<u>No.</u>
Marry a heavy drinker.	0
Extreme misbehavior to get attention.	1
Fetal Alcohol Syndrome.	1
Loss of sleep thinking about parental drinking.	1
Mistrust of self and others due to parental broken promises.	2
Suicide or contemplating suicide.	2
Becoming alcohol/drug abuser.	2

The one consequence that was not depicted in any of the books analyzed was that the COA marry a heavy

drinker. Research has shown that this is very common. In this research, however, no young adult married. There was one book whose main character was asked to marry a person. It was impossible to determine whether this person was a heavy drinker because of shallow character development.

This researcher was surprised to find that so few of the young adult characters living with problem drinkers became involved with drugs themselves or committed or contemplated suicide. Another surprise was that more characters did not display extreme misbehavior to get attention. The fact that so few characters used misbehavior to get attention could be attributed to the fact that COA tend to be extremely responsible. They take over care of the alcoholic and his/her responsibilities in order to make life smoother. COA tend to parent their parents.

Fetal Alcohol Syndrome is a medical condition that has been identified fairly recently. However, The researcher found enough evidence to suggest that Dory of Just One Friend suffered from that condition. Dory attended special classes and showed a lack of understanding of the consequences of her behavior. The author never stated that her condition was Fetal Alcohol Syndrome, but it was implied. In the book, Dory thought about her "slow" brothers and sisters and

her mother never taking care of herself when she was pregnant.

Table 4
Number of Symptoms and Consequences of Problem Drinkers in 15 Books

Book Titles	No.
<u>With Westie and the Tin Man</u>	6
<u>No Kidding</u>	4
<u>Up Country</u>	12
<u>No Place for Me</u>	3
<u>The Moonlight Man</u>	7
<u>Them That Glitter and Them That Don't</u>	4
<u>Just One Friend</u>	4
<u>Cowboys Don't Cry</u>	8
<u>Jemmy</u>	5
<u>Runaway</u>	3
<u>Wilted</u>	4
<u>The Summer of Sassy Jo</u>	5
<u>The Caretaker</u>	13
<u>Whither the Wind Bloweth</u>	8
<u>Center Line</u>	5

Table 4 lists the number of symptoms and consequences the problem drinker suffered in the 15 books analyzed. The researcher predicted that a majority of the 15 books would contain four or more symptoms and/or consequences of alcohol abuse on the drinker. Thirteen of the 15 books contained the minimum number of consequences or more. For that reason, the second hypothesis is accepted.

The titles with the most symptoms and consequences on the drinker were Up Country and The Caretaker. The Caretaker contained the most realistic portrayal of a

problem drinker. The portrayal of the young adult who lived with this drinker was not as strong. Mark is almost never angry with his father. He seems to take the boozing in stride. Somehow that rather flip attitude does not fit well with Mark's behaviors. Mark thinks about his father's drinking often. He spends most of his time taking care of his father or his father's business. He behaves as if he is his father's father. At the same time though he does not show anger about it or think angry thoughts. Perhaps that is why Up Country is such a strong book. The author has skillfully captured the characteristics of both the alcoholic and the young adult.

Runaway and No Place for Me were the books that contained the least consequences on the drinker. Each book had three of the consequences or symptoms from the checklist. Runaway was a high-low reader that lacked deep character development in general. This researcher did not find it surprising that character development was superficial or that the best character development was used for the teenager living with a drunken father. No Place for Me was a story about Copper. The author does not develop the character of the drinking mother. Instead the story deals mainly with how Copper felt being passed from relative to relative because her mother was in treatment for alcoholism. Copper had

terrible feelings of abandonment. Very little was discussed in the book about what life was like before her mother went to the clinic. Life before treatment for her mother was portrayed as chaotic at best.

Tables five and six list the most prevalent and least prevalent symptoms and characteristics of the drinker from the checklist.

Table 5

Most Common Symptoms and Consequences
of Problem Drinkers in 15 Books

Symptom or Consequence	No.
People expressing concern about the drinking.	12
Admits a drinking problem.	9
Is or has been in treatment (clinic or AA).	8
Fighting with spouse or children while intoxicated.	8
Problems at work.	7
Money problems because excessive amounts are spent on alcohol.	7

The number of books that portrayed people expressing concern about the drinker's drinking did not surprise this researcher. It is most often the outsider looking in, who sees the problems of a family. Twelve of the fifteen books contained this consequence. The other three books had characters that were so isolated from other people that if anyone had noticed the problem, there would not be the opportunity to express concern.

Nine drinking parents admitted that they had a drinking problem. Eight parents went for some type of treatment. Those numbers are somewhat misleading because some parents quit on their own but did not admit they had a problem or get treatment. In one book, The Moonlight Man, the father admits he has a problem but takes no action to get help and makes no promise to do so. The young adult in this novel, however, did not grow up living with the alcoholic. She could, therefore, look at her father's drinking as a curiosity. She did not need to despise her father because he had very little to do with her life. None of the novels had a child character living with an alcoholic who admitted a problem and still did not get help. This researcher believes that situation is much more common in reality.

Table 6

Least Common or Not Observed Symptoms and Consequences
of Problem Drinkers in 15 Books

Symptom or Consequence	No.
Suicide or contemplating suicide.	0
Constant colds.	0
Injury due to accident.	0
Drinking before a social gathering.	0
Extreme impatience when waiting for a drink.	0
Tolerance.	1
Blackouts.	1

This researcher understands that some of the symptoms or consequences in Table 6 were not found because the stories were never told from the point of view of the drinker. Most of the stories were told by the young adult, and the young adult was typically not present when the drinker was drinking. Most of the drinkers drank by themselves or at bars. There were almost no social gatherings.

The fact that tolerance and blackouts were found in only one book was unusual. One explanation of why those symptoms were not found more often is that tolerance is very hard to determine unless the person making the determination knows how much alcohol the drinker ingests and is present to observe the drinker's behavior. Blackouts, on the other hand, are often known only to the drinker. Other people may have no idea that the drinker can not remember what he did after drinking a great deal. Further, he is unlikely to tell anyone about it.

In Table 7 the number of consequences of parental problem drinking on the spouse are listed. The third hypothesis is accepted because 12 of the 15 books contained at least one consequence to the spouse of the drinker.

This researcher felt that there would be a lower incidence of consequences on the spouse of the drinker

Table 7

Number of Consequences of Problem
Drinking on the Spouse

Title	No.
<u>With Westie and the Tin Man</u>	1
<u>No Kidding</u>	1
<u>Up Country</u>	1
<u>No Place for Me</u>	1
<u>The Moonlight Man</u>	1
<u>Them That Glitter and Them That Don't</u>	0
<u>Just One Friend</u>	1
<u>Cowboys Don't Cry</u>	1
<u>Jemmy</u>	0
<u>Runaway</u>	1
<u>Wilted</u>	3
<u>The Summer of Sassy Jo</u>	0
<u>The Caretaker</u>	5
<u>Whither the Wind Bloweth</u>	4
<u>Center Line</u>	2

because the novels themselves tend to focus on the relationship between the drinker and the young adult. For that reason there is less character development of the nondrinking parent. After reading the books the researcher has determined that many of the spouses were absent due to divorce, desertion, and separation. In addition, there were many spouses who had died when the children were young. In one book the spouse died of injuries suffered in an automobile accident. The drinker had been driving the truck, and it was implied that he was drunk at the time of the crash. Other spouses were said to be dead and little if any explanation was given. Writers may have used that

method to keep the book focused on the drinker-young adult relationship. By having a well or better developed spousal character, an added relationship had to be dealt with. A death made the story more manageable, less complicated.

Table 8

Most Common Consequences of Problem
Drinking on the Spouse

Consequence	No.
Is absent due to separation, desertion, divorce.	7
Worry about drinking spouse, income and health.	4
Try to get drinker to quit by nagging, or hiding alcohol.	3

This researcher was surprised that more spouses were not depicted nagging the drinker or hiding the alcohol.

Table 9

Least Common or Not Observed Consequences
of Problem Drinking on Spouse

Consequence	No.
Hospitalized for psychiatric problems.	0
Suicide or contemplating suicide.	0
Stress related illnesses.	0
Drink heavily themselves.	0
Low self esteem.	1
Isolated from nonfamily or even family.	1
Depression or chronic fatigue.	1
Feel responsible for drinker or drinking problem.	1

The only consequence not found in any of the 15 books that surprised the researcher was the spouse

drinking heavily. One book showed no consequences to the spouse. Them That Glitter and Them That Don't was interesting in that the spouse did not drink but constantly seemed out of control. She came up with crazy schemes to make money. She left the child rearing to her teenage daughter. At the end of the book she makes it clear to her daughter that she will never really support the daughter if the daughter does not accept the family as it is. The mother was an example of a "dry drunk", someone who does not drink, but displays the same characteristics as an alcoholic.

Chapter V

Conclusions, Recommendations and Summary

This researcher hypothesized that a majority of the 15 books would contain certain numbers of consequences resulting from living with a parent with a drinking problem. The actual percentage of books meeting or exceeding the minimum number of consequences was 80% or above. This researcher concluded that there was a high level of realism between the experiences of children of alcoholics and the portrayal of the same in the 15 young adult novels published after 1979.

This study investigated the reality of children of alcoholics as manifested by certain behaviors and thought patterns included in young adult fiction. The first hypothesis stated that a majority of the books would contain three or more consequences to the young adult living with a problem drinker. One-hundred percent of the books contained at least three. The average number of consequences in the 15 books was 6.8. One explanation of such a high percentage is that young adult fiction tends to exhibit a deeper characterization of the main adolescent character. Parents tend to be less well developed characters.

The second hypothesis predicted that there would be at least four symptoms and/or consequences of alcohol abuse suffered by the drinker. Actually 86.6% of the books contained a minimum of four. The average number of symptoms and consequences was 6. These data were surprising when one considers that young adult problem novels such as these are written mainly about the hurtful or broken relationship between a young adult and an alcoholic parent.

The lowest number of consequences depicted in the 15 novels was suffered by the spouse of the drinker. In the majority of these novels the spouse was not present due to divorce or death. When a spouse was present, he/she was generally, at least at the beginning of the novel, not able to support or protect the teen from the alcoholic parent. In Runaway, Kathy, the daughter of an alcoholic, forces her father by her actions to get help. Her mother is never really developed as a character. No explanation is ever given for Kathy's mother allowing her two daughters to be physically and emotionally abused by their father.

Authors of young adult fiction generally characterize COA in a realistic manner. However, the resolutions of these same stories seem too idealistic to be real. One-third of the parent drinkers are neither treated for their drinking problem nor do they

recognize that they have a problem. In these five books the teenager at the conclusion of the story does not live with the alcoholic but instead: 1. leaves the alcoholic home, 2. is put in a detention facility, or 3. the alcoholic is given an ultimatum and abandons the family. The remaining two-thirds of the novels end with the alcoholic at some stage of sobriety. Readers might be given the deceptive idea that the consequences of having lived with an alcoholic parent can be alleviated if: 1. a new place to live away from the alcoholic can be found, or 2. the alcoholic stops drinking. Studies in the literature review suggested that is not the case. In only 20% of the novels does the adolescent either join Alateen or get professional help. In Just One Friend Dory gets professional help but only after incarceration in a reformatory.

Recommendations

In the future as more research is completed about the effects of excessive drinking on nondrinking loved ones, a better checklist might be developed. One behavior exhibited by two alcoholic mothers was sexual promiscuity. Promiscuity was alluded to in two other novels. It was not included on the checklist because it was not found in the literature more than once. Whether the women were promiscuous because they were intoxicated or were intoxicated because they were

promiscuous can not be determined. It is difficult to determine the difference between a symptom and a consequence. That is the nature of psychosocial maladies. Which came first, the chicken or the egg?

A longitudinal study designed to determine whether authors use the latest clinical information available to them when they write this type of novel might be helpful. The population in further studies might be more strictly defined. The population of this study yielded a diverse group of novels. Six of the books dealt with youths who lived with the alcoholic during the majority of their lives. The young adult in four of the 15 books left home or were forced by authorities to leave home after living the majority of their lives with an alcoholic parent. In one book, the adolescent was abandoned when she was a preschooler and was now trying to build a relationship with her currently sober mother. Three of the novels were about young adults who must leave the home because the alcoholic parent is institutionalized for treatment. In one book a young adult, whose sober parent divorced the alcoholic parent, made the first extended visitation to the alcoholic. If the population was restricted to novels with parental alcoholism as the central theme, the results might have been different.

Future researchers might want to determine which characteristics and symptoms of alcohol abuse are most common. In this study 40% of the alcoholic parents were mothers. At the same time 53% of the adolescent children were female. It might be interesting to find out if there is a difference in how male and female children of alcoholics adapt themselves to the abusive situation.

All of the novels evaluated told powerful stories of survival, growth and hope. Each one examined some issues that were common to all adolescents. The one novel that was most skillfully written was Up Country. The story best personified the struggle of surviving with an alcoholic parent and the love-hate relationship the teenager had with the drinking parent. This story was bittersweet in that the young adult had planned for the day he could escape from living with a drunk. When at last the chance really comes, he is surprised by how much he wants to be there for his mother. In the end though, he makes the choice that is in his best interest instead of his mother's. That decision marks the beginning of his recovery, taking care of himself, and letting his mother fix her own problems.

The results of this study might be useful to authors doing research before writing a problem novel that includes an alcoholic parent. It might help them

create more believable characters. Children of alcoholic characters in this study who were very lightly touched by the alcoholism seemed to be veneered people.

Any person who guides young readers or actually chooses books for young readers might find the results of this study helpful. Some of the novels are not primarily about alcoholic parents but provide many issues for readers to consider and discuss. Every school library should have some books that portray children rising above the problems of their parents. Since alcoholism is so rampant in our society and yet is really the most accepted form of drug abuse, the novel is an effective method of informing COA that they are not alone. The novel can provide alternative viewpoints and philosophies to readers who might be looking for them.

Summary

The purpose of this study was to determine the level of realism in young adult novels as evidenced by the inclusion of consequences of excessive parental drinking on the young adult, drinker and the drinker's spouse. It was predicted that the majority of young adult novels with a parent with a drinking problem would contain a minimum of: 1. three consequences of the excessive drinking on the young adult, 2. four

symptoms or consequences of the excessive drinking on the drinker, and 3. one consequence of the excessive drinking on the spouse of the drinker. A panel of experts was selected. Each panelist was asked to recommend ten young adult novels which contained a parent with a drinking problem. After the elimination of nonfiction titles and duplicate titles, there was a total of 18 books. From this pool a random sampling of 15 titles were analyzed. Each book was read, and a checklist completed. The checklist was a three page list of consequences and/or symptoms of living with an alcoholic.

All three of the hypotheses were accepted. One hundred percent of the novels contained at least three consequences of parental drinking on the young adult. Eighty-six and six tenths percent contained four or more symptoms or consequences of excessive drinking on the drinking parent. One or more consequences of excessive drinking on the spouse of a drinker was found in 80% of the sample. This researcher concluded that the level of realism regarding personal characteristics of drinkers and those who live with them was found to be very high.

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Appendix A

Sample Checklist

CONSEQUENCES ON CHILD

- _____ Worry, anxiety over parental drinking problem.
- _____ Loss of sleep thinking about parental drinking problem.
- _____ Wish, ask, encourage parent to stop drinking.
- _____ Feeling alone, scared, nervous, angry or frustrated that a parent was unable to stop drinking.
- _____ Fighting with a drunk parent.
- _____ Running away or threatening to do so because of a parent drinking problem.
- _____ Protect a family member from drunk parent.
- _____ Withdrawal from nonfamily members because of embarrassment or shame of parent drinking problems.
- _____ Feel guilt or responsibility for parent drinking problem.
- _____ Feels unloved by problem drinker.
- _____ Concern about health or safety of drinking parent.
- _____ Mistrust of self and others due to parental broken promises.
- _____ Stress-related illnesses from thinking about drinking parent.
- _____ Taking over chores/responsibilities because of drinking parent.
- _____ Suicide or contemplating suicide.
- _____ Becoming alcohol/drug abusers.

- _____Marry heavy drinker.
- _____Extreme misbehavior to get attention.
- _____Fetal Alcohol Syndrome.
- _____Fighting about the family system.
- _____Says or feels that parent drinks too much.
- _____Suffer violence by alcoholic.

CONSEQUENCES AND SYMPTOMS OF PROBLEM DRINKING

- _____Severe depression.
- _____Suicide or contemplating suicide.
- _____Feeling a loss of control.
- _____Neurological or liver problems due to alcohol.
- _____Constant colds.
- _____Injury due to accident.
- _____Problems at work.
- _____Legal trouble due to drinking.
- _____Fighting with spouse or children while intoxicated.
- _____Money problems because excessive amounts are spent on alcohol.
- _____Blackouts.
- _____Passing out after alcohol consumption.
- _____Drinking before noon.
- _____After heavy drinking, serious withdrawal symptoms appear. (DT's, severe shaking, hear or see things not really there.)
- _____Drinking to relieve stress.
- _____Drinking after promising to quit.
- _____People expressing concern about the drinking.

- _____ Drinking before a social gathering.
- _____ Gulping drinks.
- _____ Extreme impatience when waiting for a drink.
- _____ Attempt to cut down, but can not.
- _____ Tolerance.
- _____ Admits a drinking problem.
- _____ Is or has been in treatment (clinic or AA).
- _____ Deserts family.

CONSEQUENCES ON SPOUSE

- _____ Low self esteem.
- _____ Is absent (due to separation, desertion, divorce).
- _____ Worry about drinking, spouse, income, and health.
- _____ Drink heavily themselves.
- _____ Try to get drinker to quit (by nagging, or hiding alcohol).
- _____ Isolated from nonfamily or even family.
- _____ Cover up spouse's drinking, make excuses for drinker's behavior.
- _____ Depression or chronic fatigue.
- _____ Stress related illnesses.
- _____ Suicide or contemplating suicide.
- _____ Hospitalized for psychiatric problems.
- _____ Suffers violence by alcoholic.
- _____ Feel responsible for drinker or drinking problem.

Appendix B
CAST

Sex: Male _____ Female _____ Age _____

- | Yes | No | Questions |
|-----|-----|--|
| ___ | ___ | 1. Have you ever thought that one of your parents had a drinking problem? |
| ___ | ___ | 2. Have you ever lost sleep because of a parent's drinking? |
| ___ | ___ | 3. Did you ever encourage one of your parents to quit drinking? |
| ___ | ___ | 4. Did you ever feel alone, scared, nervous, angry, or frustrated because a parent was not able to stop drinking? |
| ___ | ___ | 5. Did you ever argue or fight with a parent when he or she was drinking? |
| ___ | ___ | 6. Did you ever threaten to run away from home because of a parent's drinking? |
| ___ | ___ | 7. Has a parent ever yelled at you or hit you or other family members when drinking? |
| ___ | ___ | 8. Have you ever heard your parents fight when one of them was drunk? |
| ___ | ___ | 9. Did you ever protect another family member from a parent who was drinking? |
| ___ | ___ | 10. Did you ever feel like hiding or emptying a parent's bottle of liquor? |
| ___ | ___ | 11. Do many of your thoughts revolve around a problem drinking parent or difficulties that arise because of his or her drinking? |
| ___ | ___ | 12. Did you ever wish a parent would stop drinking? |
| ___ | ___ | 13. Did you ever feel responsible for and guilty about a parent's drinking? |
| ___ | ___ | 14. Did you ever fear that your parents would get divorced due to alcohol misuse? |
| ___ | ___ | 15. Have you ever withdrawn from and avoided outside activities and friends because of embarrassment and shame over a parent's drinking problem? |
| ___ | ___ | 16. Did you ever feel caught in the middle of an argument or fight between a problem drinking parent and your other parent? |
| ___ | ___ | 17. Did you ever feel that you made a parent drink alcohol? |
| ___ | ___ | 18. Have you ever felt that a problem drinking parent did not really love you? |
| ___ | ___ | 19. Did you ever resent a parent's drinking? |
| ___ | ___ | 20. Have you ever worried about a parent's health because of his or her alcohol use? |
| ___ | ___ | 21. Have you ever been blamed for a parent's drinking? |
| ___ | ___ | 22. Did you ever think your father was an alcoholic? |
| ___ | ___ | 23. Did you ever wish your home could be more like the homes of your friends who did not have a parent with a drinking problem? |
| ___ | ___ | 24. Did a parent ever make promises to you that he or she did not keep because of drinking? |
| ___ | ___ | 25. Did you ever think your mother was an alcoholic? |
| ___ | ___ | 26. Did you ever wish that you could talk to someone who could understand and help the alcohol related problems in your family? |
| ___ | ___ | 27. Did you ever fight with your brothers and sisters about a parent's drinking? |
| ___ | ___ | 28. Did you ever stay away from home to avoid the drinking parent or your other parent's reaction to the drinking? |
| ___ | ___ | 29. Have you ever felt sick, cried, or had a "knot" in your stomach after worrying about a parent's drinking? |
| ___ | ___ | 30. Did you ever take over any chores and duties at home that were usually done by a parent before he or she developed a drinking problem? |

Appendix C
MAST

YES NO

- ___ ___ Do you enjoy a drink or the use of other drugs now and then?
- ___ ___ 1. Do you feel you are a normal drinker or drug user? (By normal we mean you drink or use less than or as much as other people).
- ___ ___ 2. Have you ever awakened the morning after some drinking or other drug use the night before and found that you could not remember a part of the evening?
- ___ ___ 3. Does your wife, husband, a parent or other near relative ever worry or complain about your drinking or other drug use?
- ___ ___ 4. Can you stop drinking or using other drugs without a struggle once you have started using?
- ___ ___ 5. Do you ever feel guilty about your drinking or other drug use?
- ___ ___ 6. Do friends or relatives think you are a normal drinker or drug user?
- ___ ___ 7. Are you able to stop drinking or using other drugs when you want to?
- ___ ___ 8. Have you ever attended a meeting of Alcoholics Anonymous(AA) or Narcotics Anonymous(NA)?
- ___ ___ 9. Have you gotten into physical fights when drinking or using other drugs?
- ___ ___ 10. Has your drinking or other drug use ever created problems between you and your wife, husband, a parent or other relative?
- ___ ___ 11. Has your wife, husband (or other family members) ever gone to anyone for help about your drinking or other drug use?
- ___ ___ 12. Have you ever lost friends because of your drinking or other drug use?
- ___ ___ 13. Have you ever gotten into trouble at work or school because of drinking or other drug use?
- ___ ___ 14. Have you ever lost a job because of drinking or other drug use?
- ___ ___ 15. Have you ever neglected your obligations, your family or your work for two or more days in a row because you were drinking or using other drugs?
- ___ ___ 16. Do you ever drink or use other drugs before noon fairly often?
- ___ ___ 17. Have you ever been told you have liver trouble (Cirrhosis)?
- ___ ___ 18. After heavy drinking or other heavy drug use, have you ever had Delirium Tremens(DT's) or severe shaking, heard voices or seen things that really weren't there?
- ___ ___ 19. Have you ever gone to anyone for help about your drinking or other drug use?
- ___ ___ 20. Have you ever been in the hospital because of drinking or other drug use?
- ___ ___ 21. Have you ever been a patient in a psychiatric hospital or on a psychiatric ward of a general hospital where drinking or other drug use was part of the problem that resulted in hospitalization?
- ___ ___ 22. Have you ever been seen at a psychiatric or mental health clinic or gone to see any doctor, social worker or clergyman for help with any emotional problem where drinking or other drug use was part of the problem?
- ___ ___ 23. Have you ever been arrested for drunk driving, driving while intoxicated or driving under the influence of alcoholic beverages or other drugs?
- ___ ___ 24. Have you ever been arrested or taken into custody, even for a few hours, because of other drunk/drug use behavior?

Appendix D

Annotations

Adler, C. S. With Westie and the Tin Man. New York: MacMillan, 1985.

Greg is a teenager just being released from a juvenile corrections facility. He now must return to the custody of his mother who has had a serious drinking problem in the past. During the year of his incarceration, his mother has joined A.A.. The mother is living with and starting a business with a man that Greg has labeled the "Tin Man". Throughout the book Greg struggles against his past at the correctional facility, the reality of his mother's alcoholism, and the fact that the three of them need to get on to the business of living. Greg finally takes a huge personal risk by telling a friend he has made since coming home about his time in the facility. Greg is terrified that the friend will reject him. His friend thinks it over and tells Greg that she has decided that "People can change".

Brooks, Bruce. No Kidding. New York: Harper and Row, 1989.

During the twenty-first century Sam, a fourteen-year-old has committed his mother for treatment of alcoholism. He has also placed his younger brother in foster care. He must now decide whether the foster family will be allowed to adopt his brother. Sam is making all these family decisions as if he were the father. It is only after his mother is released from treatment and feigns a slip that Sam must admit that he is only a child and has never been allowed to experience childhood because he was always taking care of others. He also must admit that he has not been as unaffected by his mother's abuse of alcohol as he would like to believe.

Carter, Alden R. Up Country. New York: Putnam, 1989.

Carl Staggers moved into the basement to get away from his mother who is an alcoholic. Her drinking and promiscuity are driving Carl to make big plans for the day he can get away and have a better life. He is the brains behind a theft ring in Milwaukee. His mother

gets in trouble for assaulting a man. Then she gets arrested for drunk driving. She must choose between jail or treatment. While she is in treatment, Carl goes "up country" to stay with relatives. He slowly begins to appreciate the dependability of things "up country". Just before his mother is released, the police find a large stash of stolen goods in Carl's basement. He must now pay restitution and feels he must go back to live with his mother when she is released. He has a growing sense of all that he will leave behind to take a gamble on his mother's new found sobriety. At the last minute in court he decides that it is in his best interest to stay "up country". He has learned that his mother must take care of herself, and he must take care of himself.

DeClements, Barthe. No Place for Me. New York: Viking Kestrel, 1987.

While her mother is at a clinic for treatment of alcoholism, Copper is being dumped by her stepfather. She gets bounced from relative to relative. The last relative is Maggie, who is said to be a witch. Copper learns about manipulation of people and labels. As her mother's treatment ends, Copper becomes anxious about her future being tied to her mother's sobriety. Aunt Maggie asks Copper if she would like to stay with her until her mother is settled. Aunt Maggie tells Copper that her home is here whenever she needs it.

Fox, Paula. The Moonlight Man. New York: Bradbury, 1986.

Catherine Ames is waiting for her father to pick her up at her boarding school. He calls her after three weeks and gives her directions, so that she can meet him for their vacation together. They will be spending the next five weeks together. This is the first time Catherine has spent more than two hours with him. Her father's alcohol problem is an ugly thing for Catherine to face. Over the course of the visit, Catherine sorts out who her father is, why her mother could not bear to live with him anymore, and what effect alcohol has had on her father. Catherine does find some answers in the five weeks she spends with her father. She can more clearly see why her mother and father divorced. The one task that Catherine finds most difficult is trying to determine where her father ends and his drinking problem begins.

Greene, Bette. Them That Glitter and Them That Don't. New York: Knopf, 1983.

Carol Ann dreams of becoming Carlotta Dell, a famous singer and composer. She has a lot of stumbling blocks to overcome. Her father is a weak man who abuses alcohol. Her mother is a gypsy, who frequently finds herself on the wrong side of the law. She is half gypsy and half Irish. To her peers and the people of the town she is a no count, thieving, half-breed. Only one person values Carol Ann. Mrs. McCaffrey teaches Carol Ann important music skills that will help her achieve her goals. On graduation night Carol Ann realizes that while she always was so afraid that she would be abandoned by her family, she was abandoned many years ago in a more chilling sense. Her parents do not show up at graduation. When Carol Ann mentions not seeing them there, her mother says she just did not much feel like going. It is then that Carol Ann decides that she has one other important person who will never give up on her, herself.

Hall, Lynn. Just One Friend. New York: Scribner's, 1985.

Dory is a high school student who has been attending special classes but is now going to regular classes. She is just looking for one friend. Dory needs a friend so desperately because her mother is an alcoholic, grossly overweight, and promiscuous. Dory admires Robin and wants her to be Dory's friend. In Dory's mind the only person standing in the way of her friendship with Robin is Robin's best friend, Meredith. Dory plans to get Meredith out of the picture temporarily, so that Robin can see what a good friend Dory can be. The plan Dory devises backfires and Meredith ends up dead. Dory ends up in a reformatory. There she learns some useful skills and finally makes a friend.

Halvorson, Marilyn. Cowboys Don't Cry. New York: Delacorte, 1984.

Shane and his father have just moved to the small farm left to Shane by his grandfather. Shane and his father have always lived and traveled along the rodeo circuit. The past four years have been lonely ones for Shane. Four years ago his mother was killed in a car accident. Shane sometimes wonders if his father was

driving drunk that night. Usually though he tries not to think about that. At the farm and in town at school, Shane is making friends and settling in. He begins to like the feel of being tied to a house instead of roaming from place to place. His father's drinking though becomes worse. One night his father comes back to the farm late. He is intoxicated and tells Shane to pack a few things, that they are leaving the farm. Shane gets very upset. He does not want to leave his new security behind. He races down the highway on his motorcycle, away from his father and, because he is so upset, he gets into a bad accident. His father abandons him that night. Later a letter comes that says he is trying to get straightened out and will return as soon as he can. Months later when Shane and his foster family go to a rodeo, Shane is about to be gored by a bull when his father saves him. The two of them then build a life together on the farm.

Hassler, Jon. Jemmy. New York: Atheneum, 1980.

Jemmy lives on the edge of an Indian reservation. She is half Native American and half Irish. Jemmy has been raising her sister and brother since her mother died about six years ago. Her father has an alcohol abuse problem and does not work. When Jemmy's sister starts school on the reservation, her father tells Jemmy that she should drop out of high school so that she can take better care of her younger sister. Jemmy does not want to quit, but she does. Jemmy meets Otis and Ann. Otis has been commissioned to paint a mural. He chooses Jemmy to be his model of the "Maiden of Eagle Rock". Through Ann and Otis, Jemmy experiences friendship and a sense of family. She takes art lessons from Otis. After the mural is finished, Otis and Ann leave the area. Jemmy is left thinking trying to make sense of her father's new sobriety and the future of her family.

Kropp, Paul. Runaway. Saint Paul: EMC, 1982.

In this high-low novel, Kathy lives with her mother and father and younger sister. Her father is an alcoholic and is physically abusive to Kathy and her sister. After a fight with her drunken father, Kathy decides to leave home and stay with her grandparents. While she is away from home, her father joins A.A. After her grandfather has a heart attack, Kathy's

boyfriend and sister try to convince her that her father has changed. Kathy decides to go home.

Kropp, Paul. Wilted. New York: Coward, McCann and Geoghegan, 1980.

Danny is a 14-year-old who feels he is a hopeless case because of his family. His father is an alcoholic, and his sister is a high school drop out. He, his mother and younger brother are just trying to survive. Danny's father and mother fight a lot. Danny is trying to get to know a girl at school a little better. This girl though has been claimed already by the class tough guy. Danny is finding out good things about himself that he never knew before. One night Danny's mother gives his father an ultimatum, give up booze or get out. A few days later Danny's father gets out. He leaves the family. Danny and his younger brother find out that not only can they survive his leaving, but they can thrive.

Reading, J. P. The Summer of Sassy Jo. Boston: Houghton, 1989.

Fourteen-year-old Sara Jo has just moved in with her mother for the summer. Her mother, who deserted her when she was just five, had a very bad drinking problem. Sara's father is dead and Sara usually lives with her Aunt Mimi. Aunt Mimi and Sara have not been getting along lately. Sara Jo spends the summer learning to share her life with this mother she does not know. She must also share her mother with her new husband and baby daughter. It is a summer filled with choices and conflict for Sara Jo. At the end of the summer Sara Jo does not want to go back to Mimi's. She does not think that her mother wants her on a full time basis. Sara Jo and her mother learn to be honest with each other and end up living together permanently.

Roth, Arthur. The Caretaker. New York: Four Winds, 1980.

Mark is a seventeen-year-old who works with his father. In the winter the two of them run a business that looks after summer houses for wealthy people. This is the winter that Mark's father's drinking problem gets the worst it has ever been. To complicate matters, Pam is a runaway who has taken up residence

in one of the summer homes. Mark and Pam learn many lessons from each other before Pam goes back home to work things out with her parents. Mark's father finds sobriety at a clinic and joins A.A. The whole family finds some peace and happiness.

Schulte, Elaine. Whither the Wind Bloweth. New York: Avon, 1982.

Joanna was a popular girl in Kansas. Here in California she desperately wants to be part of the popular group. Her father's drinking has gotten worse since the move, despite his promise that it would get better. When Matt, a guy from the 'in' crowd asks Joanna to a party, she thinks her popularity problems are over. Unfortunately, a suicide, her father's worsening problem, and a brush with death lie ahead for Joanna. In the end, Joanna accepts Jesus and the knowledge that everything will work out somehow.

Sweeney, Joyce. Center Line. New York: Delacorte, 1984.

Shawn is preparing to start college in a few weeks. He comes home to find out that his drunken father has beaten another of his younger brothers. So, all five of the brothers decide to leave home. There are many problems living on the run. One brother leaves the group to be with the woman he loves. The other four end up in Florida. Shawn gets in a fight with Rick who bears so much shame about his mother's death that he can not bear to love or to be loved. Rick turns in his brothers to the police. In court, the brothers find out that their father never reported them missing and moved away. The judge gives Shawn custody of the other three with the condition that they all return to school.

ABSTRACT

This research was a content analysis study of young adult novels that contained a parent with a drinking problem. The researcher wanted to determine the level of realism regarding the characterizations of the child of an alcoholic, the drinker, and the spouse of the drinker. The hypothesis predicted that a majority of the books would include: 1. three or more consequence of drinking on the child, 2. four or more consequences or symptoms on the drinker, and 3. one or more consequences suffered by the spouse. A checklist that listed known consequences and symptoms of alcohol abuse was developed. A four member panel recommended books to the researcher. Fifteen books were randomly selected to be analyzed. All of the hypotheses were accepted. It was determined that there is a high level of realism in young adult fiction portraying alcoholic parents that were published between 1979 and 1989.