

1985

A Content Analysis of Books Depicting Adopted Teenagers in Adolescent Novels Published Between 1965-1981

Myrna Griffith
University of Northern Iowa

Let us know how access to this document benefits you

Copyright ©1985 Myrna Griffith

Follow this and additional works at: <https://scholarworks.uni.edu/grp>



Part of the [Education Commons](#)

Recommended Citation

Griffith, Myrna, "A Content Analysis of Books Depicting Adopted Teenagers in Adolescent Novels Published Between 1965-1981" (1985). *Graduate Research Papers*. 2916.

<https://scholarworks.uni.edu/grp/2916>

This Open Access Graduate Research Paper is brought to you for free and open access by the Student Work at UNI ScholarWorks. It has been accepted for inclusion in Graduate Research Papers by an authorized administrator of UNI ScholarWorks. For more information, please contact scholarworks@uni.edu.

Offensive Materials Statement: Materials located in UNI ScholarWorks come from a broad range of sources and time periods. Some of these materials may contain offensive stereotypes, ideas, visuals, or language.

A Content Analysis of Books Depicting Adopted Teenagers in Adolescent Novels Published Between 1965-1981

Find Additional Related Research in UNI ScholarWorks

To find related research in UNI ScholarWorks, go to the collection of [School Library Studies Graduate Research Papers](#) written by students in the [Division of School Library Studies](#), Department of Curriculum and Instruction, College of Education, at the University of Northern Iowa.

Abstract

Since adolescents can find answers to their questions by reading fiction, fiction that portrays teenagers like themselves, adolescent books on the subject of adoption may serve as a source of current information on adoption and society's attitudes of searching. This researcher proposed that an annotated bibliography be developed in this study. The technique of content analysis was used and young adult fiction titles were selected which might enable the young adult readers to determine if they can find answers to some of their questions about their birth parents and whether to search for them.

A CONTENT ANALYSIS OF BOOKS
DEPICTING ADOPTED TEENAGERS
IN ADOLESCENT NOVELS PUBLISHED
BETWEEN 1965-1981

A Research Paper

Presented to the

Faculty of the Library Science Department

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

Myrna Griffith

July 10, 1985

Read and approved by
Elizabeth Martin

Gerald G. Hodges

Accepted by Department
Elizabeth Martin

Date

July 18, 1985

TABLE OF CONTENTS

	Page
LIST OF TABLES	iii
 Chapter	
1. INTRODUCTION	1
PROBLEM STATEMENT	2
HYPOTHESIS	3
ASSUMPTIONS	4
LIMITATIONS	4
DEFINITIONS	5
2. REVIEW OF LITERATURE	7
3. METHODOLOGY	20
4. ANALYSIS OF DATA	22
5. SUMMARY, CONCLUSIONS, AND RECOMMENDATIONS	33
 APPENDIXES	
A. BOOK WITH ADOPTION THEMES	40
B. DATA GATHERING INSTRUMENT--STUDY SAMPLE	41
C. DATA GATHERING INSTRUMENTS--COMPLETED FORMS	42
 BIBLIOGRAPHY	 53

LIST OF TABLES

Table	Page
1. Sex of the Adopted Teen	22
2. Age at Adoption	23
3. Age at Disclosure	23
4. Disclosure Setting	24
5. Who Did the Disclosure?	25
6. Adopted Parents Are "Real" Parents	25
7. Adopted Teens Feel Apart of Themselves Is Missing	26
8. Adopted Teens Fantasizes about Birth Parents	27
9. Adopted Teen Wonders Why He/She Was Given Away	27
10. Adopted Teen Wonders What Birth Parents Look Like	28
11. Decision to Search	28
12. Difficulty with Agencies	29
13. Adoptee Finds All of the Answers Searched For	30
14. Adoptee Finds Answers to Why Birth Mother Gave Him/Her Away	30
15. Adoptee Has Missing Piece Completed When Answers Are Found	31
16. Other Brothers and Sisters	31
17. Birth Order	32

Chapter 1

INTRODUCTION

There are many reasons why couples choose to adopt children and one of the greatest reasons is to fulfill the desire couples possess to be parents. Adoption has been fulfilling this need throughout history. In the era of Biblical times, adoption was a method in which adults became parents. An example of this is when Pharaoh's daughter took Moses from the river to become "her son."¹ Society accepted a child as being adopted into one's family as long as the child was never referred to as other than being the adoptive parents' natural child.

Although many adoptees consider their adopted families as their "real" families,² many still have a need to search for their birth parents. This need comes from their questioning of "who am I?" "who was my first mother?" or "do I look like someone else?"

Society has shown diverse change in its attitudes toward the adoptees' need to search for their biological parents. As early as four thousand years ago, it was taboo for the adoptee to inquire about his birth parents. During the Babylonian era, "his tongue would be cut out if an adoptee dared to openly say that he was not born to his parents. And if he went farther, in search of his

¹Exodus 2:10.

²Jill Krementz, How It Feels to be Adopted (New York: Alfred A. Knopf, 1982).

biological family, he would be blinded in punishment."³ Even as recently as the past fifty years, from the 1920's to the 1970's, society continued to reflect a taboo attitude, during which adoption was not openly discussed in homes and the task of searching for adoptees' biological parents was not encouraged.

However, within the past decade, the fact that society's attitudes toward the adoptees' search for their biological parents are shifting is being reflected in the media. Newspapers and television depict adoptees struggling in their search for their birth parents. Their struggles include their emotions of confusion, fear of possible rejection, disappointment, and other mixed emotions. Adoptees also face the legal dilemmas of closed files and changing laws. For example, the Iowa legislature has recently debated the issue of open or closed files which puts adoptees in another emotional upheaval.⁴

PROBLEM STATEMENT

Since adolescents can find answers to their questions by reading fiction, fiction that portrays teenagers like themselves, adolescent books on the subject of adoption may serve as a source of current information on adoption and society's attitudes of searching. This researcher proposed that an annotated bibliography be developed in this study. The technique of content analysis was used and young adult fiction titles were selected which will ^{might} enable the young adult readers to determine if they can find answers to some of their questions about their birth parents and whether to search for them.

³ Arthur D. Sorosky, M.D., Adoption Triangle (Garden City, New York: Anchor Press/Doubleday, 1978), p. 25.

⁴ The Des Moines Register, April 8, 1985, p. T1.

HYPOTHESES

The hypotheses tested were:

- H¹ Sixty percent or more of the books will portray the adopted teen as a female.
- H² Sixty percent or more of the books will portray the adopted teen as being adopted before the age of three.
- H³ Sixty percent or more of the books will portray the teen as being told at the age of five or earlier that he/she is adopted.
- H⁴ Sixty percent or more of the books will portray the disclosure of adoption as being done in a loving setting.
- H⁵ Sixty percent or more of the books will portray the disclosure of adoption being done by the parents.
- H⁶ Sixty percent or more of the books will portray the teens as feeling that their adopted parents are their "real" parents.
- H⁷ Sixty percent or more of the books will portray the teens as feeling that a part of themselves is missing.
- H⁸ Sixty percent or more of the books will portray the teens as fantasizing about their birth parents.
- H⁹ Sixty percent or more of the books will portray the teen wondering why his/her birth parents gave him/her away.
- H¹⁰ Sixty percent or more of the books will portray the teen wondering what his/her birth parents look like.
- H¹¹ Sixty percent or more of the books will portray the teen making the decision to search.
- H¹² Sixty percent or more of the books will portray the teen as having difficulties with adoption agencies and other legal agencies concerning the issue of closed files and not disclosing any information.

H¹³ Sixty percent or more of the books will portray the teen as finding all his/her answers.

H¹⁴ Sixty percent or more of the books will portray the teen finding the answer to why his/her birth mother gave him/her away.

H¹⁵ Sixty percent or more of the books will portray the adoptees as having the missing piece completed after finding the information about who their birth parents are and why they gave them away, when the search is concluded.

H¹⁶ Sixty percent or more of the books will portray the teens as having other siblings in their adopted family.

H¹⁷ Sixty percent or more of the books will portray the adopted teen as the oldest child.

ASSUMPTIONS

The main assumption that underlied this research is that at one time or another, all adoptees have wondered about their biological parents: who they are, what they are like, what they look like, and why they gave their children up for adoption.

All adoptees have answered for themselves whether the longing deep inside to find their biological parents is strong enough to lead to seeking answers to such questions.

The second assumption is that teenagers read fiction books about teens like themselves to find answers for their own lives.

LIMITATIONS

1. There was a limited amount of fiction books with an adopted theme that are in print and available to the researcher.
2. The books were not about transracial adoptions which include whites adopting blacks or the reverse, white or blacks adopting

oriental children, or the adoption of children of a mixed race.

3. The books were selected only from those published between 1965-1981, for young adults and available in specific libraries.

4. The books did not portray the adoptee as living in an orphanage or a foster home.

5. The criteria focused on the content of the books, but not whether the character in the books made appropriate decisions.

6. The analysis of the books was limited by the researcher's personal knowledge and understanding of adoption and adopted children and ability to analyze.

DEFINITIONS

For this research the following definitions were used:

Adoption: "legal process through which parental rights are transferred from the birth parents to the adoptive parents."⁵

The adoptive parent thus raises the child as one's own.

Adoptee: the person who entered the family by means of adoption.

Birth parent: "the person who helped conceive and/or give birth to a child and who surrendered his/her legal parental rights."⁶ The terms biological parents and birth parents will be used synonymously with the latter used most often. The adoptees use the latter term instead of natural or biological parents because they feel their adoptive parents are natural parents or they would not have been able to raise them.

⁵Triadoption Library (Westminister, CA: Westminister Community Services Center, n.d.), p. 4.

⁶Ibid.

Adoptive parents; "the people who have legally assumed parental rights and responsibilities of the child."⁷

Disclosure: the act of telling the child he/she is adopted.

Search: the process or investigation where the adoptee looks through legal documents and questions individuals until they find the person or answers they need.

Four stages of search: steps the adoptee proceeds through during his/her search.

Threshold: the beginning of the search.

Obsession: the adoptee can think of nothing else but the search.

Limbo: all leads seem futile or when the terror of what is on the other side is immobilizing.

Reunion: the meeting of the birth parents.⁸

Adolescents: young people between the ages of twelve and nineteen. Adolescents will be used synonymously with "young adults" and "teenagers."

Young adult literature or novels: in this study only, those books recommended for adolescents and identified as YA novels in the Boone, Oskaloosa, and Ottumwa Public Libraries and F in the UNI Library Youth Collection.

Content analysis: an objective, systematic, and quantitative method of describing content.⁹

⁷Ibid.

⁸Betty Jean Lifton, Lost and Found (New York: Dial Press, 1979), p. 79.

⁹Tekla K. Bekkedal, "Content Analysis of Children's Books," Library Trends, vol. 22 (October, 1973), p. 110.

Chapter 2

REVIEW OF LITERATURE

There has been very little research on the adopted child.¹⁰ Most of the research that has been done has been in regards to the adoptive parents or the adoptive family as a whole. The fact that so little research can be found on the adoptee may reflect the fact that society believes that the need to be a parent is more important than fulfillment of the needs of a child. Jill Krementz felt this was true to the extent that she chose to interview children from the ages of eight to sixteen and let all the children tell their stories in their own words. In her book, one person stated it this way:

The thing that bothers me is that nobody ever listens to the kids - to their feelings. It's always the birth parents, the adoptive parents, and the adoptees over eighteen who do all the talking. People think that kids under eighteen aren't mature enough to understand their own feelings.¹¹

Her book further exemplifies that there is little research that acknowledges the adopted child's position.

There is also a lack of literature specifically relating to the content analysis of teenage books with the subject of adoption as the central theme. It was possible, however, to find two articles which discuss adoption books, but neither went into any great depth.

One article was published by Orphan Voyage which is an organization that helps adoptees find their birth parents. This article is an annotated

¹⁰Sorosky, p. 13.

¹¹Krementz, p. 28.

bibliography of books reviewed by Orphan Voyage.¹² The titles included in this publication were not used in this study because they were adult fiction and non-fiction books.

The second article written by Pat Tipton Sharp discussed books for younger children as well as teenagers. She felt that

most adolescent books about adoption are didactic, problem-centered novels while the majority of the younger children's books on the topic are sweet stories emphasizing the special nature of the family relationship.¹³

She believes that both types are an "unrealistic view of adoption."¹⁴

To gain a greater understanding of the adoptee and content analysis, the researcher decided to do a literature review in both areas. To gain greater insight and understanding of the adoptee and why one searches for birth parents, the researcher needed to become familiar with the process of adoption. Likewise, the researcher needed to know how adoptees feel about being adopted, how they feel about their birth parents, why they feel the need to search, and how society views the adopted.

To be able to do a content analysis, the researcher needed to do a literature review in this area. Content analysis provides a reliable approach to research of adolescent literature, because it is an

¹²Adoption Portrayed in Books Published Between 1949 and 1977
(Cedaredge, CO: Orphan Voyage, n.d.).

¹³Pat Tipton Sharp, "Adoption Books over Two Decades," Top of the News, (Winter 1982), p. 153.

¹⁴Ibid.

objective, systematic, and quantitative method of describing content.¹⁵ The investigator can move away from titles to an objective description of a systematically selected group of books.¹⁶

A content analysis must be reliable. For this to be so, another researcher must be able to apply the same procedures to the same data and achieve the same results.¹⁷ This requirement makes a content analysis replicable.

When a content analysis is done, the researcher must state exactly what he/she really wants to know. These goals are then clarified and redefined in the hypotheses section. Next, the researcher works with the material to gain insight and knowledge into what is being researched. This intense investigation gives the researcher knowledge into the types of items that need to be investigated. It is during this in-depth investigation that the researcher can sharpen and expound on the hypotheses. Thus, the hypotheses should state the problems, the findings should express the hypotheses, and the evidence of the search should reveal the findings.¹⁸

The adoption procedure begins when a couple or individual notifies the adoption agency that they are interested in adopting a child. Forms are filled out, and a home study is done. The home study is very important.

¹⁵ Bernard Berelson, Content Analysis in Communication Research (Glenco, IL: The Free Press, 1952), p. 18.

¹⁶ Bekkedal, p. 110.

¹⁷ Klaus Krippendorff, Content Analysis (Beverly Hills: Sage Publications, 1980), p. 21.

¹⁸ Berelson, p. 164.

Aside from oral testimony of the parties, the home study is the only means by which the judge can get a sense of what the adopted child's new life will be like if the adoption is granted. It is hoped that the study information will be objectively and professionally prepared, so that at the final hearing the adoption petition will be evaluated with the best interests of the child in mind.¹⁹

The legal significance of home study is that it may give the judge and state authorities information that indicates the placement, adoption, and child care laws of the state are being complied with by various parties in the adoption.

Once the child is placed in a home, the family has a waiting period of up to one year (in Iowa) before the adoption is final.²⁰ During this time, the birth parents can relinquish their consent for adoption and ask for the child back or the judge can allow or deny the adoption. At the close of the waiting period, the family goes to court to hear the judge issue a decree which says that the child is legally theirs.²¹

In adoption agencies in the United States, a confidential file is kept on every case. A file is kept on the prospective parents starting with the initial form filled out by hopeful parents. Another file is prepared for each birth parent. These records are then brought together after the child is placed in the adoptive home. These records contain a great deal of information including medical, legal, personal, and family information.²²

¹⁹William Meezan, Adoption Without Agencies (New York: Child Welfare League of America, Inc., 1978), p. 173.

²⁰Ibid., p. 199. ²¹Ibid. ²²Sorosky, p. 19.

After the adoption has been legalized by a court action, this combined record is sealed by the agency and placed in an inactive file. This record can be opened anytime, by the agency, to answer questions from the adoptive parents, the adoptee, or the birth parents. Many times the extent of the contents revealed varies, such as no identifying information (i.e. address or name) is ever released to any parties involved.²³

This adoption agency record should not be confused with the sealed file which contains the original birth certificate, which includes information regarding the birth father and mother. The child, although legally relinquished and placed for adoption, retains his true identity until the judge, in court, legalizes the adoption, issues an adoption decree, and orders a new birth certificate be made. This certificate places the names of the adoptive mother and father in the place provided as the birth parents of the child. At that time, the original birth certificate is removed from the local and state files, sealed, and refiled in the Bureau of Vital Statistics.²⁴

After a decade of secrecy and forbidden discussion of adoption,²⁵ the early 1940's marked a change in society's attitude toward adoption to that of being a means of "providing a sense of fulfillment in the lives of infertile couples."²⁶ Because of these beliefs, when adoptions were arranged, agencies advised the parents not to disclose the adoptive status to the child and to treat the child as if born to them. The

²³ Ibid.

²⁴ Ibid.

²⁵ Ibid.

²⁶ Ibid.

interests of the adoptee were held secondary to the interests of the adopters, who were seen as doing a favor for the child by taking him/her into their home. The motto in this time period was "a home for every child."²⁶ By the middle 1940's, the parents began revealing the adoptive status to their child with explanations that his/her birth parents had died²⁷ and that the adoptee was the "chosen baby." This latter explanation gave the children the feeling that the birth parents rejected or deserted him/her.²⁸

In the mid-50's, the Child Welfare League of America made a statement that the following information on the birth parents be made available to the adoptive parents at the time of adoption:

facts about the birth parents, emphasizing human strengths, which will help the adoptive parents to accept the child and eventually to give him/her positive information about his/her birth parents.²⁹

In the 1960's, the majority of the agencies began to realize the importance of keeping a carefully recorded history of the background information on each child and providing adoptive parents with nonidentifying data on the birth parents: nationality, education, health factors, physical characteristics, occupations, talents, and abilities.³⁰

During the 1970's, experts advocated that the adoptive parents should be provided with all of the background information on the birth parents except for their identification. The Child Welfare League of America became concerned and published its 1971 Guidelines for Adoption

²⁷Ibid.

²⁸Ibid., p. 35.

²⁹Ibid., p. 87.

³⁰Ibid., p. 35

³¹Ibid.

Service. It recommended that the adopted parents be given all pertinent background information including the reason for the birth parents' relinquishment of the child for adoption.³²

Experts vary in the age they recommend adoptive parents should tell their child about the adoption, but the most common belief is that the adoptees should be told at an early age sometime before they enter school, and be told by the parents. This lessens the shock of finding out by accident outside the family. Adoptees feel shock and bewilderment when told by a nonfamily member, which may cause tension between the child and parents and often leads to feelings of resentment.³³

Triseliotis, in his study of adoptees, found that adoptees who were told about their adoption by their parents when they were ten years old or younger were "significantly more satisfied than those who were told over the age of ten." The adoptees who were told of their adoption at the age of ten or younger said the stage of disclosure and why they were told gave them, at the time, a feeling of well-being - no shock or upset feelings were experienced. Those told around the age of four to eight expressed the greatest satisfaction.³⁴

The study went on to point out that when disclosure of the adoption was done in a hostile and retaliatory manner, the child experienced feeling that it was shameful or terrible. Similar feelings began to develop in those adoptees whose parents treated the subject with secrecy and evasiveness.³⁵

³² Ibid., p. 36.

³³ Ibid., pp. 89-91.

³⁴ John Triseliotis, In Search of Origins (London: Routledge and Kegan Paul, 1973), p. 20.

³⁵ Ibid.

Adoptees who were told or found out after the age of ten felt a deep sense of shock, and it had a profound effect on them. Revelation at this late stage had a stunning effect, shaking their entire life and self-image, leaving most of them confused and bewildered. They felt the need to reassess their whole life and to start re-discovering themselves. The later the adoptees are told the greater the distress and confusion.³⁶

Triseliotis polled 68 adoptees to find the average age at which disclosure of their adoption was told to them and by whom. The results indicate that although it is recommended to disclose the adoption of a child at a young age, over half of them, in fact, learned about their adoption when they were sixteen or over. Beyond the age of ten, the greatest probability was that the child would find out from sources outside of the family.³⁷

Finding out about their adoption from outside sources was considered as negative and unhelpful by all adoptees in this group. The most frequent outside sources were other children or documents that adoptees came across accidentally.³⁸

The homes of the adoptees are like the home of those children who are born to the parents. Most adoptees feel their adopted homes and parents are their true parents. The researcher found this was the general consensus of adoptees. In Jill Krementz's book, one person stated, "My mother is the person who raised me and mothered me - who gave me food and shelter and love while I was growing up."³⁹

³⁶Ibid.

³⁷Ibid., p. 19.

³⁸Ibid., p. 26.

³⁹Krementz, p. 53.

Despite the fact that adoptees feel this way, they also have a part of them that they feel is missing. They feel they do not have a complete sense of connectedness with the past. "There's a blank wall drawn across it. They feel cut off from a piece of themselves by that wall, to make the connection that will tell them where they have come from, what set them on the road to where they are."⁴⁰

Since adoptees feel this wall is present, they fantasize about their birth parents. Many think about their birth mothers more than their birth fathers. They wonder what they look like. They ask questions such as, "Do they think about me on my birthday?" and "Why did you give me up for adoption?" Often they fantasize about their reconciliation.⁴¹

It is during adolescence when people begin to discover aspects of their identity.⁴² An individual's identity is made up of perceptions of his/her physical appearance, the friends he chooses, family relationships, religious beliefs, the influence of his race, nationality, cultural traditions, and his perception of how others perceive him. Adopted individuals, when they start to think who they are, may become confused. On one hand, they are the children of their adoptive parents; on the other hand, they are the children of two unknowns. They do not know who their ancestors were nor their nationality; they have never seen other people who look like them. Thus, to some degree the identity

⁴⁰Jane Askin, Search: A Handbook for Adoptees and Birth Parents (New York: Harper & Row Publishers, 1982), p. XIV.

⁴¹Krementsz, p. 53.

⁴²Jeanne Du Prau, Adoption (New York: Julian Messner Publisher, 1982), p. 73.

of an adopted person remains incomplete.⁴³ Erik Erikson described this search for identity as the essential task of adolescent development, and failure of the process results in a state of identity confusion.⁴⁴

Erikson describes epigenetic development as the process made up as a series of experiences. Each new experience in life builds upon past experiences and is then followed by another different experience. He viewed the process as developing simultaneously along three dimensions: psychobiological, psychosocial, and psychohistorical. The psychobiological dimension includes the conscious and unconscious understanding of one's physical makeup and how it relates to the experiences. The psychosocial dimension encompasses the influences and effects of the environment, both within and outside the family structure. The psychohistorical dimension includes that part of man that relates to his sense of genealogy, an essential concern that views man as going through a cycle of life stages which are connected to the previous and future generations through the phenomena of death and birth.⁴⁵

Arthur Sorosky, in his book, The Adoption Triangle, found that adolescent and adult adoptees are more vulnerable to the development of identity conflicts than their non-adopted counterparts. It was these findings that led him to believe that the adoptee, who was ignorant of his true background, would be handicapped in the psychohistorical dimension of identity. This would occur despite a healthy, nurturing relationship with his adoptive parents, peers, and others. The extent of the handicap varies from individual to individual according to intelligence, innate

⁴³ Ibid., p. 74.

⁴⁴ Sorosky, p. 110.

⁴⁵ Ibid., p. 24

curiosity, and temperament.⁴⁶

Erikson also believes that a sense of identity is established through identification with the parents, especially the one of the same sex. In the case of the adopted adolescent, the process is complicated because he has been cut off and remains on the other side of the adoption barrier. Adoptees appear to be particularly prone to the development of identity confusion.⁴⁷

During this period of confusion, the adoptees begin to feel that they need to know where they came from. Many times they have asked questions about their origins but to no avail. Many answers are not complete, because the answers the adoptive parents have been given are incomplete answers. It is because of so many unanswered questions that adoptees begin their search for the past.

Once a decision is actually made to search there are four stages of the search which the adoptee goes through.⁴⁸ The first stage is at the threshold—the actual beginning of the search. Many times the adoptee makes the decision to search but the hardest part is actually starting, complicated by the fear of what he/she might find.

The second stage is obsession in which he/she can think of nothing else. Stage three is limbo, when all leads seem futile or when the terror of what is on the other side of the veil is immobilizing. This stage can last for several years because of road blocks caused by sealed records, or after they have found all of the information, the adoptee may

⁴⁶Ibid., pp. 13-14.

⁴⁷Ibid., p. 110.

⁴⁸Lifton, p. 79.

be indecisive about meeting the birth parents. The last stage is the actual reunion with or meeting the birth parents. This does not always result in finding their answers.

The adoptees want to find in their search the circumstances which caused their relinquishment. They also need information concerning their birth and if they have brothers and sisters.⁴⁹

The result of a survey by an Arizona search organization indicates that the majority of the searchers have been females. An organization in Arizona was formed because of adoptees' need to find answers and support from each other. A survey was taken of ninety-six adoptee members of the organization. The survey noted that of these people searching, 80% were women and 20% were men.⁵⁰ This is logical since it is the girls who persistently ask their adoptive mothers questions concerning biological continuity. One source states that women tend to be more in touch with their feelings. They are the ones who face becoming mothers, and who yearn for some knowledge of the woman who went before them in childbirth - an experience they cannot, many times, share with their adoptive mothers.⁵¹

Betty Jean Lifton also suggested that for men, the decision to search requires getting in touch with feelings that are difficult and often ignored. Men suppress their need to know about themselves and are reluctant to recognize the rage they feel toward the woman who gave them up. The concerns of men are in the world of material things. They do not derive identity from their relationships. They are not as interested

⁴⁹Triseliotis, pp. 39-40.

⁵⁰Askin, p. 152.

⁵¹Lifton, p. 79.

in defining and looking at biological and social ties.⁵² For men, the search is not essential for they feel that today and the future are the only things that are important.

Once the adoptee decides to begin the search, he/she begins the battle against sealed records. Those who were adopted through an agency can get nonidentifying information about their birth parents. Adoptees know the day they were born, and sometimes they know the name of the city in which they were born. However, their original birth certificate and adoption papers which identify both sets of parents at the time of adoption remain in the sealed file. In all but four states, the law forbids the adopted person to see their sealed file.⁵³

The teenage adoptee, who is indecisive about whether to search, may turn to books for answers. Teenagers search for books whose characters are living with the same kind of problems as their own. Literature becomes a way of seeing themselves and suggesting possible alternatives to their own problems.⁵⁴ Frequently young people gain consolation and understanding through seeing similar problems disturbing the hero or heroine in a short story. They visualize themselves living vicariously with the characters as they seek to overcome dilemmas. For most people the act of reading is like any type of human experience, a form of role-playing.⁵⁵

⁵² Ibid. ⁵³ Du Prau, p. 88.

⁵⁴ Robert Carlson, Books and the Teenage Reader (New York: Harper & Row Publishers, 1971), p. 40.

⁵⁵ Dennis Thomison, Readings about Adolescent Literature (Metuch, NJ: The Scarecrow Press, Inc., 1970), p. 36.

Chapter 3

METHODOLOGY

To begin the content analysis, the researcher needed a list of young adult fiction books to test the hypothesis. Using the limitations set forth in Chapter 1, the list was developed from selection tools which had adoption as a subject within its contents.

Junior High Catalog-1980 and Senior High Catalog-1981 were selected with their supplements-(1981,1982 for Junior High Catalog) because they are the sources that best identify books for ages 12-19. A check was made in the analytical section under subject of Adoption-Fiction for a list of books. Five books were identified in the Junior High Catalog. The Senior High Catalog and its supplements did not list any fiction books under the subject of adoption.

Books to Help Children Cope with Separation and Loss by Joanne E. Berstein had a chapter entitled "Reading About Separation and Loss: An Annotated Bibliography for Young People-'Who Will Take Care of Me?'" with a subtitle 'Understanding Adoption.' Four books were selected from the bibliography. The selection was made by their identification of fiction and age level of being between 12-19.

The Book Finder by Sharon Spredemann Dreyer has two volumes. In Volume One the researcher used the subject index and located the subject of adoption. Three books were selected from the listing under the subheading-Explaining. These books were chosen because they were

identified by age appropriateness and as being fiction.

In Volume Two, two books were selected under the subject of "adoption" and subheading "feeling about." Three books cited in this source were cited in an earlier source. A list of books was made from these above mentioned sources and included seven books.

The researcher then went to the card catalog of the UNI Library in the Youth Collection and selected books from the subject of Adoption-Fiction. Books were immediately eliminated if they had E for Easy as a call number. If they were identified with F or Fic, the annotation was then read to determine the age of the character in the book. From this source seven books were selected but four were duplicates of titles already selected.

The researcher had access to the Boone, Oskaloosa, and Ottumwa Public Libraries and, therefore, checked these card catalogs and used the same procedure described above to obtain a list of young adult fiction books with the theme of adoption. A list of ten books was compiled from these sources. A cross-check with previous titles was made to eliminate duplicate titles. The search yielded thirteen titles but only eleven titles (Appendix B) were located in the libraries consulted for this study.

The hypotheses were used to develop the data gathering instrument (Appendix A). The data gathering instrument was used to analyze each of the eleven books.

Chapter 4

ANALYSIS OF DATA

Eleven books were identified from sources mentioned in the methodology chapter. These books were then selected and read. A data gathering instrument was then used to compile the following results.

H¹ Sixty percent or more of the books will portray the adopted teen as a female. H¹ was accepted because eight of the eleven books or 73% portrayed the adopted person as being a female.

Table 1

Sex of the Adopted Teen

Sex	Number of Books	%
Female	8	73
Male	3	27

H² Sixty percent or more of the books will portray the adopted teen as being adopted before the age of three. This was accepted because all of the books or 100% of the books portrayed the teen as being adopted at age one or earlier.

All of the adopted teens were adopted before the age of three. In fact all were adopted at a year or earlier. Many did not state an exact age but did indicate the adoptee was adopted as a baby. The oldest child who was adopted was the age of one.

Table 2

Age at Adoption

Age	Number of Books	%
Younger than three	11	100
1 year	1	9
6 months	1	9
5-6 months	1	9
a few months	1	9
3 months	1	9
5 weeks	1	9
5 days	1	9
a baby	4	36
Older than three	0	0

H³ Sixty percent or more of the books will portray the teen as being told at the age of five or earlier that he/she is adopted. This hypothesis was accepted since seven of the eleven books or 64% of the books stated that the teen has always known he/she was adopted or was told at or before the age of five.

Table 3

Age of Disclosure

Age	Number of Books	%
5 years or younger	7	64
later age	4	36

Those adoptees who were told at later than age five were shocked and deeply hurt. This reflects the literature review which reported that disclosure done at an early age did not produce shock or bewilderment for the adoptee.

In two books, Tell Me My Name and Marathon Miranda, when the adoptees were told at a later age they both ran away. Another book,

Requiem for a Princess, portrayed the teen as having left town to "sort out her emotions." In the last book, Kate's Story, Kate escaped within herself and not relating to anyone, not even her family. In all four of these books when the adoptee was told it was usually by accident and/or in a hostile manner.

H⁴ Sixty percent or more of the books will portray the disclosure of adoption as being done in a loving setting. This hypothesis was rejected because only 55% of the books described the disclosure as being done in a loving setting.

Table 4
Disclosure Setting

Setting	Number of Books	%
Loving	6	55
Hostile	2	18
Other	1	9
Never described	2	18

Six of the eleven books portrayed the disclosure as being done in a loving setting. In Marathon Miranda and Requiem for a Princess, both described the disclosure as being done in a hostile setting. Two books, About David and Brothers by Choice, stated that the adoptees had always known that they were adopted but never described the disclosure setting, Tell Me My Name described the teen as finding her original birth certificate in her adopted parents' personal papers.

H⁵ Sixty percent or more of the books will portray the disclosure of adoption as being done by the parents. H⁵ was accepted because 73% of the books portrayed the adoptees as being told about their adoption by their parents.

Table 5

Who Did The Disclosure?

Disclosure done by	Number of Books	%
Parents	8	73
Family members	0	0
Other people	2	18
Found papers	1	9

Eight of the books described the adoptee as being told that he/she was adopted by his/her adopted parents. Kate's Story and Requiem for a Princess described the adoptees as being told by someone outside of the family that they were adopted. One was a family friend; the other was a classmate who told the adoptee. One book, Tell Me My Name, described the adoptee as finding the original birth certificate, as mentioned above.

H⁶ Sixty percent or more will portray the teens as feeling that their adopted parents are their "real" parents. This was accepted because the adoptees in 82% of the books did feel their adopted parents were their "real" parents.

Table 6

Adopted Parents Are "Real" Parents

Adoptees "real" parents	Number of Books	%
Yes	9	82
No	2	18

Nine of the eleven books described the adoptees as feeling their adopted parents were their "real" parents. Of the two books where the adoptees did not feel this way, Kate's Story, described the teen as feeling her adopted father as being her "real" father but never her

mother. Her father died as the story began and she never could feel close to her mother. In the other book, About David, the adoptee never felt close to his parents. He harbored much bitterness and shot and killed them. With 82% of the books stating the adoptees did feel their adopted parents were their "real" parents, this reflects the study reported in the literature review that most adoptees do feel their adopted parents are their "real" parents.

H⁷ Sixty percent or more of the books will portray the teens as feeling that a part of themselves is missing. This proved to be true; hence it was accepted.

Table 7

Adopted Teens Feel Apart of Themselves is Missing

Part missing	Number of Books	%
Yes	9	82
No	2	18

Eighty-two percent of the books portrayed the adoptee as feeling a piece is missing from his/her lives. All nine of the books that portrayed this described it in the way the literature review pointed out and the way actual adoptees have presented it.

H⁸ Sixty percent or more of the books will portray the teens as fantasizing about their birth parents. Seventy-three percent of the books portrayed the adoptee as fantasizing about his/her birth parents. This hypothesis, too, was accepted because like the literature reported the fantasies were of rich parents, poor parents, and parents without faces.

Table 8

Adopted Teens Fantasizes About Birth Parents

Fantasizes	Number of Books	%
Yes	8	73
No	3	27

Eight of the eleven books described the teens as fantasizing about their birth parents, whereas, three books never portrayed the teen as wondering about birth parents.

H⁹ Sixty percent or more of the books will portray the teen as wondering why his/her birth parents gave him/her away. This hypothesis was accepted because 82% of the books did portray the adopted teen as wondering why his/her birth parents gave him/her away.

Table 9

Adopted Teen Wonders Why He/She Was Given Away

Wonders why	Number of Books	%
Yes	9	82
No	2	18

In nine of the eleven books, the adoptees all wondered why their birth parents gave them away. In eight of the nine books, the adoptee questioned this in regards to the birth mother; in only one book, The Secret Lover of Elmtree, the adoptee questioned this of his birth father.

H¹⁰ Sixty percent or more of the books will portray the teen wondering what his/her birth parents look like. H¹⁰ was rejected because only 55% of the books showed the adoptee as wondering what their birth parents look like.

Table 10

Adopted Teen Wonders What Birth Parents Look Like

Wonders what birth parents look like	Number of Books	%
Yes	6	55
No	5	45

Six of the eleven books described the adopted teen as wondering what his/her birth parents look like. All of these adoptees who wondered what their birth parents looked like did look for them with only one not finding her answer.

¶¹¹ Sixty percent or more of the books will portray the teen making the decision to search. This was accepted since 64% of the books did describe the adopted teen as making the decision to search.

Table 11

Decision To Search

Decided to search	Number of Books	%
Yes	7	64
No	4	36

Seven books out of the eleven described the adopted teen as making the decision to search. In the four books that portrayed the adopted teen as not wanting or needing to search, two of the teens were males. Of these two, one book, The Secret Lover of Elmtree, illustrated the birth father as locating the adopted teen. Of the four books portraying the teen as not wanting or needing to search, three books illustrated the adopted teen as running away. In their adventures of running, they sorted out their emotions and confused feelings.

H¹² Sixty percent or more of the books will portray the teen as having difficulties with adoption agencies concerning the issue of closed files and not disclosing any information. This hypothesis was rejected.

Table 12
Difficulty With Agencies

Difficulty	Number of Books	%
Yes	4	36
No	1	9
Did not search	6	54

Four books out of eleven books portrayed the adopted teen as having difficulty with the adoption agencies and other legal agencies. The difficulty was with closed files and not being able to disclose any information to the adoptee.

Only one book described the adoptee as not having problems with legal agencies. Find a Stranger, Say Goodbye described the adoption as being a private adoption and the parents had all of the papers the teen needed for her search. The parents happily and willingly gave her all of the papers.

For six books, the adoptees did not search. This influences the results because the researcher can not apply these books to having difficulty with agencies or not having difficulty.

H¹³ Sixty percent or more of the books will portray the teen finding all of his/her answers. This hypothesis was also rejected.

Table 13

Adoptee Finds All of the Answers Searched For

Finds answers	Number of Books	%
Yes	4	36
No	3	27
Did not search	4	36

Four of the eleven books illustrated the adoptee as finding answers to their questions. Three books portrayed the adoptee as not finding the answers. Four of these books influenced the results because the adoptees did not search.

H¹⁴ Sixty percent or more of the books will portray the teen as finding the answer to why his/her birth mother have him/her away.

H¹⁴ was rejected because only 36% of the books portrayed the adoptees as finding the answer to why ^{their} my mother gave ^{them} me away.

Table 14

Adoptee Finds Answers To Why Birth Mother Gave Him/Her Away

Finds answers	Number of Books	%
Yes	4	36
No	4	36
Did not search	3	27

Four books out of the eleven books portrayed the adoptee as finding the answer to why they were given away. Four books where the adoptee decided to search did not find the answer to this question. Three books again influenced the results of this hypothesis. Although the adoptee in the book of The Secret Lover of Elmtree did not search, because his birth father found him, he did find the answer to this

question.

H¹⁵ Sixty percent or more of the books will portray the adoptees as having the missing piece completed, after finding the information about who their birth parents are and why they gave them away, when the search is concluded. H¹⁵ was rejected because only five books or 45% portrayed this as happening.

Table 15

Adoptees Has Missing Piece Completed When Answers Are Found

Missing piece complete	Number of Books	%
Yes	5	45
No	0	0
Did not search	6	55

Five books out of the eleven books portrayed the adoptee as having the missing piece completed when they find the answers to "who are my birth parents?" and "why did my birth parents give me away?" Six books caused the results to be distorted because they did not search. Although seven books portrayed the adoptees as making the decision to search one book, Laurie decided, upon arrival at the adoption agency, not to search. In another book, Kate's Story, Kate finds incorrect answers in her search.

H¹⁶ Sixty percent or more of the books will portray the teens as having other siblings in their adopted family. H¹⁶ was accepted.

Table 16

Other Brothers and Sisters

	Number of Books.	%		Number of Books	%
Yes	7	64	biological	6	86
No	4	36	adopted	1	14

Seven books out of the eleven portrayed the adopted teen as having other brothers and sisters in their adopted family. Of these seven only one book, I'm Still Me, portrayed the adoptee's brother as being also adopted. Two of the seven books, Requiem for a Princess and Kate's Story, portrayed the biological sister as dying as a baby which is why the second child was adopted. All of these seven books portrayed the adoptee as the oldest child or the only child.

H¹⁷ Sixty percent or more of the books will portray the adopted teen as the oldest child. H¹⁷ was accepted.

Table 17

Birth Order

Birth Order	Number of Books	%
First born	9	82
Middle born	0	0
Last born	2	18

Nine of the eleven books portrayed the adoptee as being the oldest child. The two books that portrayed the adoptee as being born last was raised as an only child because they were adopted after the first baby had died, as mentioned earlier. Four more books also portrayed the adoptee as an only child. Until a closer look at the results, it had appeared that all eleven of the books reflected the adoptee as being the oldest when in fact two had been born last.

Chapter 5

SUMMARY CONCLUSIONS, AND RECOMMENDATIONS

Summary

The purpose of the study was to determine if young adult fiction books could serve as a source of current information on adoption and society's attitudes of searching. If fiction books could serve this purpose, an annotated bibliography of young adult fiction titles on the subject of adoption can be developed to enable readers to determine if adopted teens could find answers to some of their questions about their birth parents and whether to search for them. After selecting the books, they were read and the following annotated bibliography was developed.

ANNOTATED BIBLIOGRAPHY

Arthur, Ruth M. Requiem for a Princess. New York: Atheneum, 1967.

Willow is 17 years old and is shocked when a classmate tells her in an hostile manner she is adopted. Willow feels her adopted parents are her real parents but feels something is missing in her life. She wonders why her birth mother gave her away but is unable to ask her adopted mother. Willow does not search for her birth mother but is sent to spend some time with an older friend. It is here that Willow solves the mystery of a girl adopted in the 1600's that helps her rediscover who she really is and that her adopted parents are very important to her.

Bradbury, Bianca. Laurie. New York: Ives Washburn, Inc., 1965.

Laurie is a 16 year old senior who was adopted at the age of three months and was told by her parents at the age of five that she was adopted. She never questioned before why her birth mother gave her away or what she looked like until a new girl moves to town. Lisa looked enough like Laurie to be her sister. Lisa begins rumors that they are really sisters which stirs up emotions that begins Laurie questioning about her past. Her emotions begin to become too much for her that she asks her parents if she can search. Her parents reluctantly agree. Before she begins her search, Laurie receives a call from Lisa's mother who reassures her that Lisa is

not adopted.

As Laurie begins her long journey to the adoption agency, she recalls the phone conversation with Lisa's mother and the many fond memories of her adopted family. Upon arrival she decides to return home immediately for she feels she no longer has a need to search.

Carter, Mary. Tell Me My Name. New York: William Marrow and Company, 1975.

Sara is a 17 year old adoptee who discovers she was adopted by finding her original birth certificate in her adopted parents' personal papers. After finding these papers, she runs away to find her birth mother whom she lives with for awhile. At the end of the story, Sara feels she has completed her missing piece. She considers her adopted parents as her real parents, but keeps in very close contact with her birth mother and family.

Eyerly, Jeannette. A Girl Like Me. Philadelphia: J. B. Lippincott, 1966.

Laurie is 16 years old and has always known she was adopted. Her parents had told her many times at Christmas how she came to be their child, and she feels they are her real parents. It is not until her girlfriend becomes pregnant and is faced with the fact she must give up her baby, that Laurie begins to search. Although her birth mother has died, she is finally able to understand why her unwed mother gave her up for adoption.

Leach, Christopher. Kate's Story. New York: Four Winds Press, 1968.

Kate was nine years old when her father died. At that time a friend of the family told her she was adopted because she had assumed Kate's parents had told her. When Kate asked her mother, she said it was true and that she had been adopted after their own child had died.

After Kate's father died she never was able to be close to her mother and she never felt she was her "real" mother.

At the age of 16, she begins to search for her birth mother and encounters difficulties at the adoption agency and other legal agencies. It is about this time that a classmate convinces her that a movie star looks a lot like her.

Kate begins to believe she is her birth mother and becomes good friends with her. The movie star is very ill and dies before Kate is able to ask her if she is her birth mother. Kate attends the celebrity's funeral; when her mother finds out she is furious with her.

When Kate is arrested for being at a demonstration, her mother leaves her in jail until she "comes to her senses" about her searching and her obsession with the movie star.

Lifton, Betty Jean. I'm Still Me. New York: Alfred A. Knopf, 1981.

Lori was adopted when she was a few months old and was told she was adopted before she was five years old. She has fond memories of the story her parents told of her adoption. At 16 years old, her history teacher gives her class an assignment she feels she is

unable to do. The class assignment is to trace her family tree. She feels she cannot because she does not know who her birth parents are or their lineage. It is during her struggle of not knowing what to do about her assignment that she decides to search.

During her search she experiences all of the stages. When she decides to take the final step of meeting her birth mother, she is glad she did because her birth mother tells her story. As Lori returns home, she begins to realize that the problem that her brother had been having may have been because he was adopted, too. She tells her parents about her search to help them with her brother which draws the family closer together.

Lowery, Lois. Find a Stranger, Say Goodbye. Boston: Houghton Mifflin Company, 1978.

Natalie is a senior who has decided to search for her birth parents. She has always known she had been adopted but learns through her search that she was five days old when she was adopted. She considers her adoptive parents her "real" parents. They are understanding of her search and give her all the papers she needs for her search.

In her search she discovers her birth mother was a 15 year old unwed mother who has become a model. Natalie meets her birth mother and grandfather (birth father's father) who was the doctor who delivered her and made the adoption possible.

At the end of her search, she returns home feeling she has completed the missing piece she felt and is able to share the search with her parents and younger sister.

Pfeffer, Susan Beth. About David. New York: Delacorte Press, 1980.

David, 17, has always known he was adopted as a baby. The disclosure was never described and he never considered his adopted parents as his "real" parents. David always felt he had something missing in his life and wondered why his birth parents gave him away. He had decided to search but never did. David believed his adopted parents never considered him as their own child because for years they had seen several doctors to have their own baby. David finally believed his mother was pregnant, which he could not accept, so he shot and killed both of his parents and in turn shot himself.

Read, Elfrieda. Brothers by Choice. New York: Farrar Straus and Giroux, 1974.

Rocky had always known he was adopted. The actions of his father made him believe that because his brother, Brett, had been born to his parents that his father cared more for Brett. Because of a misunderstanding with his father, Rocky leaves home.

Rocky gets involved with the wrong people and owes them a lot of money. When Brett finds him, Rocky has a job to earn the money to pay his debt. Brett decides to stay and work to help earn the amount of money needed. When enough money is earned, Brett is kidnapped and Rocky must rescue him. All these episodes helped Rocky to realize that home and his adopted family are very important to him.

Roth, Arthur. The Secret Lover of Elmtree. New York: Four Winds Press, 1976.

Greg is 17 and was one year old when he was adopted. He was told at age five that he was adopted because his parents were about to have their own child. Greg has always believed that his adopted parents were his "real" parents.

Greg has wondered at times why his birth father gave him up for adoption, what he is like, and what he looks like.

Greg learns all of this, when his birth father finds him and tries to buy his love with money and expensive gifts. But Greg in the end returns the gifts and stays with his adopted parents.

Wintrop, Elizabeth. Marathon Miranda. New York: Holiday Press, 1979.

Miranda's friend is adopted and learns she is adopted at the age of 13. She is shocked at learning this. When her parents decide to take a trip, she runs away to Miranda's family who are also on a trip. She uses this time to sort out her feelings and decides her parents are not all bad and decides to return home.

Conclusions

The purpose of the study was to determine if society's attitudes of adoptees searching for their birth parents was reflected in young adult literature. The study revealed that the adoptees wondered about their birth parents, what they were like, and why were they given away. Many adoptees did make the decision to search but after much thought or several dead ends, they gave up their search.

In seven books the adoptees did make the decision to search. Of these seven only four adoptees found their answers. Of the three adoptees who did not find the answers after they made their decision to search, all found their own solutions to their "missing piece." For one adoptee her solution was her adopted family; for another adoptee the solution was placing the missing piece in an image such as a movie star, and the last solution for an adoptee was to shoot himself and his adopted parents.

For the four adoptees who did not want to search, they solved their problem of the missing piece by relying on themselves and their adopted families.

It is the belief of this researcher that society feels that it is only natural for the adoptees to wonder about their birth parents, but it is not acceptable for them to search for their birth parents or to even search for their answers.

If society had accepted that many adoptees have a need to find answers, the books would have not only portrayed the adoptees as searching but also finding their answers. The answers need not always be what the adoptee would hope to find; the answers they find could make the adoptee feel very glad he/she was relinquished.

For the books that portray the adoptees searching for their birth parents, finding them and their answers, these books depict teens as being happier and more satisfied with their adopted homes and families. It is, therefore, the belief of this researcher that adopted teens who are contemplating searching and by reading the four books--Tell Me My Name, A Girl Like Me, I'm Still Me, and Find a Stranger, Say Goodbye, they may be able to make the decision to search. Each of these four books is realistic. Although only two books, I'm Still Me and A Girl Like Me, are the only books that portrayed the difficulties with the agencies and closed files, all four of the books do portray the outcome realistically.

All four books described the emotions the individuals experienced throughout their searches. Once each adoptee met his/her birth mothers and/or found his/her answers, some were disappointed, some liked them and remained friends, some just remained acquaintances, and some even found the parents had died. All of these endings of the searches are very realistic and could possibly happen.

These books do not give the reader false hope that everything is going to be wonderful at the end of the journey. They do show the adopted teen, who is questioning whether to search, that the missing piece in their life can be completed. The books cannot, however, make the decision for them; they only establish that they may be fulfilled if they search. The books illustrate that once the search is completed, the adoptees can then go on with their lives.

The books portrayed the hurt the adopted parents face when the adoptee tells them he/she is searching or has searched. But as the adoptee explained that he/she loved them and it was not meant to hurt them, it is just something he/she felt he/she needed to do, then the parents were understanding and supportive of the search. This situation brought the adoptee and his/her parents closer together.

The study reveals that books portray the adoptees in a realistic family setting. When the search is illustrated realistically, the adoptees may then be able to use fiction books with adoption settings to help them to decide whether to search. The study further shows that the books reflect the fact that attitudes are changing, but change is a slow process. Many of the books reinforce society's beliefs that searching for one's birth parents is neither recommended nor encouraged.

Recommendations

If this study were done again, the researcher recommends that it would include research on each author to determine if the authors are adoptees, adopted parents, or birth parents and what their attitudes of searching are. This information would then be compared with their books to find if it is reflected in the literature they write. For example,

the author of I'm Still Me is Betty Jean Lifton. She is an adoptee and believes the adoptees have the right to search which is reflected in this book:

A second recommendation for this study is to examine the attitudes of the individuals in the lives of the adoptee. The study should reveal whether the attitude of searching for one's birth parents influenced or hindered the adoptee's search.

A third recommendation for future study would be to study how the non-searchers solve their feeling of the "missing piece." This would need another hypothesis and a separate question on the data gathering instrument.

There are several uses one can make of the bibliography. The bibliography could be used in counseling. The counselor could read each of these books on the list to acquaint himself/herself with some of the problems an adoptee encounters. The books on the bibliography could be used in counseling as a form of bibliotherapy with their clientele.

This bibliography could be used in two areas of a sociology class. It could be used as part of a unit on different life styles of people. Its greatest use would be as a reading assignment. After the books are read, they then could be used as part of a class discussion of social issues that concern adoption, searching, and closed files.

Each of these four uses of this bibliography will not only enhance a teacher's lesson plan or help enlighten a counselor, but they also can broaden an individual's education. These books were not necessarily written just for the adoptee, but the non-adoptee can read and learn from them, too.

Appendix A

BOOKS WITH ADOPTION THEMES

- Arthur, Ruth. Requiem for a Princess. New York: Atheneum, 1967.
- Bradburn, Bianca. Laurie. New York: Ives Washburn, Inc., 1965.
- Carter, Mary. Tell Me My Name. New York: William Morrow and Company, Inc., 1975.
- Eyerly, Jeannette Hyde. A Girl Like Me. Philadelphia: J. B. Lippincott, 1966.
- Leach, Christopher. Kate's Story. New York: Four Winds Press, 1968.
- Lifton, Betty Jean. I'm Still Me. New York: Alfred A. Knopf, 1981.
- Lowery, Lois. Find a Stranger, Say Goodbye. Boston: Houghton Mifflin Company, 1978.
- Pfeffer, Susan Beth. About David. New York: Delacorte Press, 1980.
- Read, Elfrieda. Brothers by Choice. New York: Farrar Straus and Giroux, 1974.
- Roth, Arthur J. The Secret Lover of Elmtree. New York: Four Winds Press, 1976.
- Winthrop, Elizabeth. Marathon Miranda. New York: Holiday House, 1979.

Appendix B

DATA GATHERING INSTRUMENT

Bibliographic Data

1. Name of character _____
2. Sex of character Female Male
3. Age of character _____
4. Age at adoption _____
5. Age of disclosure of adoption _____
6. Was disclosure done in: a. loving setting b. hostile setting
 c. other d. never described
7. Who told the adopted teen? a. parents b. family members
 c. other people d. found adoption papers
8. Does the adopted teen consider his/her adopted parents as his/her "real" parents? yes no
9. Does the adopted teen feel a part of him/her is missing? yes no
10. Does the adopted teen fantasize about birth parents? yes no
11. Does the adopted teen wonder why birth parents give him/her away? yes no
12. Does the adopted teen wonder what his/her birth parents look like? yes no
13. Does the adopted teen decide to search? yes no
14. What stage of the search is he/she in? a. threshold b. obsession
 c. limbo d. reunion
15. Does the adoptee encounter difficulties with adoption agencies and other agencies during his/her search? yes no
16. Does the adoptee find answers to his/her questions?
 a. Why did my mother give me away?
 b. Will my birth mother/father meet me?
 c. Do I have other brothers and sisters?
 d. Do I look like my birth mother and her family?
17. When the adopted teen meets birth parents and/or finds answers, does he/she feel the missing piece is complete? yes no
18. Does the teen have other brothers and sisters? a. biological
 b. adopted
19. Where is the adopted teen located in the order of siblings?
 a. first born
 b. middle born
 c. last born

DATA GATHERING INSTRUMENT

Bibliographic Data
 Arthur, Ruth M. Requiem for a Princess, New York: Atheneum,
 1967.

1. Name of character Willow
2. Sex of character Female Male
3. Age of character 17 (assumption)
4. Age at adoption ^(as) was a baby
5. Age of disclosure of adoption 17
6. Was disclosure done in: a. loving setting b. hostile setting
 c. other d. never described
7. Who told the adopted teen? a. parents b. family members
 c. other people d. found adoption papers
8. Does the adopted teen consider his/her adopted parents as his/her "real" parents? yes no
9. Does the adopted teen feel a part of him/her is missing? yes no
10. Does the adopted teen fantasize about birth parents? yes no
11. Does the adopted teen wonder why birth parents give him/her away? yes no
12. Does the adopted teen wonder what his/her birth parents look like? yes no
13. Does the adopted teen decide to search? yes no
14. What stage of the search is he/she in? a. threshold b. obsession
 c. limbo d. reunion
doesn't apply
15. Does the adoptee encounter difficulties with adoption agencies and other agencies during his/her search? yes no
doesn't apply
16. Does the adoptee find answers to his/her questions?
 a. Why did my mother give me away?
 b. Will my birth mother/father meet me? doesn't apply
 c. Do I have other brothers and sisters?
 d. Do I look like my birth mother and her family?
17. When the adopted teen meets birth parents and/or finds answers, does he/she feel the missing piece is complete? yes no
doesn't apply
18. Does the teen have other brothers and sisters? a. biological
first baby girl died b. adopted
19. Where is the adopted teen located in the order of siblings?
 a. first born
 b. middle born
 c. last born

DATA GATHERING INSTRUMENT

Bibliographic Data
 Bradbury, Bianca, Laurie, New York: Grosvenor Washburn, Inc.,
 1965

1. Name of character Laurie
2. Sex of character Female Male
3. Age of character 16 (senior in high school)
4. Age at adoption 3 months
5. Age of disclosure of adoption 5 years
6. Was disclosure done in: a. loving setting b. hostile setting
 c. other d. never described
7. Who told the adopted teen? a. parents b. family members
 c. other people d. found adoption papers
8. Does the adopted teen consider his/her adopted parents as his/her "real" parents? yes no
9. Does the adopted teen feel a part of him/her is missing? yes no
10. Does the adopted teen fantasize about birth parents? yes no
11. Does the adopted teen wonder why birth parents give him/her away? yes no
12. Does the adopted teen wonder what his/her birth parents look like? yes no
13. Does the adopted teen decide to search? yes no
14. What stage of the search is he/she in? a. threshold b. obsession
 c. limbo d. reunion
15. Does the adoptee encounter difficulties with adoption agencies and other agencies during his/her search? yes no
16. Does the adoptee find answers to his/her questions?
 a. Why did my mother give me away?
 b. Will my birth mother/father meet me?
 c. Do I have other brothers and sisters?
 d. Do I look like my birth mother and her family?
17. When the adopted teen meets birth parents and/or finds answers, does he/she feel the missing piece is complete? yes no
18. Does the teen have other brothers and sisters? a. biological
brother b. adopted
19. Where is the adopted teen located in the order of siblings?
 a. first born
 b. middle born
 c. last born

DATA GATHERING INSTRUMENT

Bibliographic Data

Carter, Mary, Tell Me My Name, William Morrow
and Co., New York, 1975

1. Name of character (Sara) Janie Alexander
2. Sex of character Female Male
3. Age of character 17
4. Age at adoption 5 weeks
5. Age of disclosure of adoption 17
6. Was disclosure done in: a. loving setting b. hostile setting
 c. other d. never described
7. Who told the adopted teen? a. parents b. family members
 c. other people d. found adoption papers
8. Does the adopted teen consider his/her adopted parents as his/her "real" parents? yes no
9. Does the adopted teen feel a part of him/her is missing? yes no
10. Does the adopted teen fantasize about birth parents? yes no
11. Does the adopted teen wonder why birth parents give him/her away? yes no
12. Does the adopted teen wonder what his/her birth parents look like? yes no
13. Does the adopted teen decide to search? yes no
14. What stage of the search is he/she in? a. threshold b. obsession
other steps are never described c. limbo d. reunion
15. Does the adoptee encounter difficulties with adoption agencies and other agencies during his/her search? yes no
16. Does the adoptee find answers to his/her questions?
 a. Why did my mother give me away?
 b. Will my birth mother/father meet me?
 c. Do I have other brothers and sisters?
 d. Do I look like my birth mother and her family?
17. When the adopted teen meets birth parents and/or finds answers, does he/she feel the missing piece is complete? yes no
18. Does the teen have other brothers and sisters? a. biological
no b. adopted
19. Where is the adopted teen located in the order of siblings?
 a. first born
 b. middle born
 c. last born

DATA GATHERING INSTRUMENT

Bibliographic Data

Eyerly, Jeannette. A Girl Like Me. Philadelphia: J.B. Lippincott, 1966.

1. Name of character Laurie
2. Sex of character Female Male
3. Age of character 16
4. Age at adoption infancy
5. Age of disclosure of adoption always known
6. Was disclosure done in: a. loving setting b. hostile setting
Christmas c. other d. never described
7. Who told the adopted teen? a. parents b. family members
 c. other people d. found adoption papers
8. Does the adopted teen consider his/her adopted parents as his/her "real" parents? yes no
9. Does the adopted teen feel a part of him/her is missing? yes no
10. Does the adopted teen fantasize about birth parents? yes no
11. Does the adopted teen wonder why birth parents give him/her away? yes no
12. Does the adopted teen wonder what his/her birth parents look like? yes no
13. Does the adopted teen decide to search? yes no
14. What stage of the search is he/she in? a. threshold b. obsession
 c. limbo d. reunion
15. Does the adoptee encounter difficulties with adoption agencies and other agencies during his/her search? yes no
16. Does the adoptee find answers to his/her questions?
 a. Why did my mother give me away?
 b. Will my birth mother/father meet me? mother died
 c. Do I have other brothers and sisters?
 d. Do I look like my birth mother and her family? didn't state
17. When the adopted teen meets birth parents and/or finds answers, does he/she feel the missing piece is complete? yes no
Birth mother dies but finds answers that makes her complete.
18. Does the teen have other brothers and sisters? a. biological
no b. adopted
19. Where is the adopted teen located in the order of siblings?
 a. first born
 b. middle born
 c. last born

DATA GATHERING INSTRUMENT

Bibliographic Data

Teach, Christopher. Kate's Story. New York: Four Winds Press, 1968

1. Name of character Kate
2. Sex of character Female Male
3. Age of character 16
4. Age at adoption 6 months
5. Age of disclosure of adoption 9 years
6. Was disclosure done in: a. loving setting b. hostile setting
 c. other d. never described
7. Who told the adopted teen? a. parents b. family members
 c. other people d. found adoption papers
8. Does the adopted teen consider his/her adopted parents as his/her "real" parents? yes no
9. Does the adopted teen feel a part of him/her is missing? yes no
10. Does the adopted teen fantasize about birth parents? yes no
11. Does the adopted teen wonder why birth parents give him/her away? yes no
12. Does the adopted teen wonder what his/her birth parents look like? yes no
13. Does the adopted teen decide to search? yes no
14. What stage of the search is he/she in? a. threshold b. obsession
 c. limbo d. reunion
15. Does the adoptee encounter difficulties with adoption agencies and other agencies during his/her search? yes no
16. Does the adoptee find answers to his/her questions?
 a. Why did my mother give me away?
 b. Will my birth mother/father meet me?
 c. Do I have other brothers and sisters?
 d. Do I look like my birth mother and her family?
17. When the adopted teen meets birth parents and/or finds answers, does he/she feel the missing piece is complete? yes no
18. Does the teen have other brothers and sisters? a. biological
baby girl died before Kate was adopted b. adopted
19. Where is the adopted teen located in the order of siblings?
 a. first born
 b. middle born
 c. last born

DATA GATHERING INSTRUMENT

Bibliographic Data
 Lipton, Betty Jean. I'm still me. New York: Alfred A. Knopf,
 1981.

1. Name of character Lori
2. Sex of character Female Male
3. Age of character 16
4. Age at adoption few months old
5. Age of disclosure of adoption before age 5
6. Was disclosure done in: a. loving setting b. hostile setting
 c. other d. never described
7. Who told the adopted teen? a. parents b. family members
 c. other people d. found adoption papers
8. Does the adopted teen consider his/her adopted parents as his/her "real" parents? yes no
9. Does the adopted teen feel a part of him/her is missing? yes no
10. Does the adopted teen fantasize about birth parents? yes no
11. Does the adopted teen wonder why birth parents give him/her away? yes no
12. Does the adopted teen wonder what his/her birth parents look like? yes no
13. Does the adopted teen decide to search? yes no
14. What stage of the search is he/she in? a. threshold b. obsession
 c. limbo d. reunion
15. Does the adoptee encounter difficulties with adoption agencies and other agencies during his/her search? yes no
16. Does the adoptee find answers to his/her questions?
 a. Why did my mother give me away?
 b. Will my birth mother/father meet me?
 c. Do I have other brothers and sisters?
 d. Do I look like my birth mother and her family?
17. When the adopted teen meets birth parents and/or finds answers, does he/she feel the missing piece is complete? yes no
18. Does the teen have other brothers and sisters? a. biological
 brother b. adopted
19. Where is the adopted teen located in the order of siblings?
 a. first born
 b. middle born
 c. last born

DATA GATHERING INSTRUMENT

Bibliographic Data

Lourey, Lois. Finda Stranger, Say Goodbye. Boston: Houghton Mifflin Company, 1978.

1. Name of character Natalie
2. Sex of character Female Male
3. Age of character 17
4. Age at adoption 5 days
5. Age of disclosure of adoption always known
6. Was disclosure done in: a. loving setting b. hostile setting
 c. other d. never described
7. Who told the adopted teen? a. parents b. family members
 c. other people d. found adoption papers
8. Does the adopted teen consider his/her adopted parents as his/her "real" parents? yes no
9. Does the adopted teen feel a part of him/her is missing? yes no
10. Does the adopted teen fantasize about birth parents? yes no
11. Does the adopted teen wonder why birth parents give him/her away? yes no
12. Does the adopted teen wonder what his/her birth parents look like? yes no
13. Does the adopted teen decide to search? yes no
14. What stage of the search is he/she in? a. threshold b. obsession
 c. limbo d. reunion
15. Does the adoptee encounter difficulties with adoption agencies and other agencies during his/her search? yes no (private adoption)
16. Does the adoptee find answers to his/her questions?
 a. Why did my mother give me away?
 b. Will my birth mother/father meet me?
 c. Do I have other brothers and sisters?
 d. Do I look like my birth mother and her family?
17. When the adopted teen meets birth parents and/or finds answers, does he/she feel the missing piece is complete? yes no
18. Does the teen have other brothers and sisters? a. biological
 b. adopted
a sister
19. Where is the adopted teen located in the order of siblings?
 a. first born
 b. middle born
 c. last born

DATA GATHERING INSTRUMENT

Bibliographic Data

Pfeffer, Susan, About David, New York: Delacorte Press, 1980.

1. Name of character David
2. Sex of character Female Male
3. Age of character 17
4. Age at adoption baby
5. Age of disclosure of adoption always known
6. Was disclosure done in: a. loving setting b. hostile setting
 c. other d. never described
7. Who told the adopted teen? a. parents b. family members
 c. other people d. found adoption papers
8. Does the adopted teen consider his/her adopted parents as his/her "real" parents? yes no
9. Does the adopted teen feel a part of him/her is missing? yes no
10. Does the adopted teen fantasize about birth parents? yes no
11. Does the adopted teen wonder why birth parents give him/her away? yes no
12. Does the adopted teen wonder what his/her birth parents look like? yes no
13. Does the adopted teen decide to search? yes no
14. What stage of the search is he/she in? a. threshold b. obsession
 c. limbo d. reunion
15. Does the adoptee encounter difficulties with adoption agencies and other agencies during his/her search? yes no doesn't apply
16. Does the adoptee find answers to his/her questions?
 a. Why did my mother give me away?
 b. Will my birth mother/father meet me? doesn't apply
 c. Do I have other brothers and sisters?
 d. Do I look like my birth mother and her family?
17. When the adopted teen meets birth parents and/or finds answers, does he/she feel the missing piece is complete? yes no doesn't apply
18. Does the teen have other brothers and sisters? a. biological
no b. adopted
19. Where is the adopted teen located in the order of siblings?
 a. first born
 b. middle born
 c. last born

DATA GATHERING INSTRUMENT

Bibliographic Data
 Read, Elfreida Brothers by Choice, New York: Farrar
 Straus and Giroux, 1974

1. Name of character Rocky
2. Sex of character ___ Female Male
3. Age of character didn't say main character is 15, assumption that adopted teen is a year to three older
4. Age at adoption as a baby
5. Age of disclosure of adoption always known
6. Was disclosure done in: ___ a. loving setting ___ b. hostile setting
 ___ c. other d. never described
7. Who told the adopted teen? a. parents ___ b. family members
 ___ c. other people ___ d. found adoption papers
8. Does the adopted teen consider his/her adopted parents as his/her "real" parents? yes ___ no
9. Does the adopted teen feel a part of him/her is missing? ___ yes no
10. Does the adopted teen fantasize about birth parents? ___ yes no
11. Does the adopted teen wonder why birth parents give him/her away? ___ yes no
12. Does the adopted teen wonder what his/her birth parents look like? ___ yes no
13. Does the adopted teen decide to search? ___ yes no
14. What stage of the search is he/she in? ___ a. threshold ___ b. obsession
does not apply ___ c. limbo ___ d. reunion
15. Does the adoptee encounter difficulties with adoption agencies and other agencies during his/her search? ___ yes ___ no does not apply
16. Does the adoptee find answers to his/her questions?
 ___ a. Why did my mother give me away?
 ___ b. Will my birth mother/father meet me? does not apply
 ___ c. Do I have other brothers and sisters?
 ___ d. Do I look like my birth mother and her family?
17. When the adopted teen meets birth parents and/or finds answers, does he/she feel the missing piece is complete? ___ yes ___ no does not apply
18. Does the teen have other brothers and sisters? a. biological
brother ___ b. adopted
19. Where is the adopted teen located in the order of siblings?
 a. first born
 ___ b. middle born
 ___ c. last born

DATA GATHERING INSTRUMENT

Bibliographic Data

Roth, Arthur, The Secret Lover of Elmitree, New York:
Four Winds Press, 1976

1. Name of character Greg
2. Sex of character Female Female Male
3. Age of character 17
4. Age at adoption 1 year
5. Age of disclosure of adoption 5 years
6. Was disclosure done in: a. loving setting b. hostile setting
 c. other d. never described
7. Who told the adopted teen? a. parents b. family members
 c. other people d. found adoption papers
8. Does the adopted teen consider his/her adopted parents as his/her "real" parents? yes no
9. Does the adopted teen feel a part of him/her is missing? yes no
10. Does the adopted teen fantasize about birth parents? yes no
11. Does the adopted teen wonder why birth parents give him/her away? yes no
12. Does the adopted teen wonder what his/her birth parents look like? yes no
13. Does the adopted teen decide to search? yes no
14. What stage of the search is he/she in? a. threshold b. obsession
birth father finds him c. limbo d. reunion
15. Does the adoptee encounter difficulties with adoption agencies and other agencies during his/her search? yes no does not apply
16. Does the adoptee find answers to his/her questions?
 a. Why did my mother give me away?
 b. Will my birth mother/father meet me?
 c. Do I have other brothers and sisters?
 d. Do I look like my birth ~~mother~~ father and ~~her~~ his family?
17. When the adopted teen meets birth parents and/or finds answers, does he/she feel the missing piece is complete? yes no
18. Does the teen have other brothers and sisters? a. biological one brother and one sister
 b. adopted
19. Where is the adopted teen located in the order of siblings?
 a. first born
 b. middle born
 c. last born

DATA GATHERING INSTRUMENT

Bibliographic Data

Wintrop, Elizabeth, Marathon Miranda, New York:
 Holiday House, 1979

1. Name of character _____ (friend of Miranda)
2. Sex of character Female ___ Male
3. Age of character 13
4. Age at adoption 5-6 months
5. Age of disclosure of adoption 13
6. Was disclosure done in: ___ a. loving setting b. hostile setting
 ___ c. other ___ d. never described
7. Who told the adopted teen? a. parents ___ b. family members
 ___ c. other people ___ d. found adoption papers
8. Does the adopted teen consider his/her adopted parents as his/her "real" parents? yes ___ no
9. Does the adopted teen feel a part of him/her is missing? yes ___ no
10. Does the adopted teen fantasize about birth parents? yes ___ no
11. Does the adopted teen wonder why birth parents give him/her away? ___ yes no
12. Does the adopted teen wonder what his/her birth parents look like? ___ yes no
13. Does the adopted teen decide to search? ___ yes no
14. What stage of the search is he/she in? ___ a. threshold ___ b. obsession
does not apply ___ c. limbo ___ d. reunion
15. Does the adoptee encounter difficulties with adoption agencies and other agencies during his/her search? ___ yes ___ no *does not apply*
16. Does the adoptee find answers to his/her questions?
 a. Why did my mother give me away?
 b. Will my birth mother/father meet me?
 c. Do I have other brothers and sisters?
 d. Do I look like my birth mother and her family?
17. When the adopted teen meets birth parents and/or finds answers, does he/she feel the missing piece is complete? ___ yes ___ no
does not apply
18. Does the teen have other brothers and sisters? ___ a. biological
no ___ b. adopted
19. Where is the adopted teen located in the order of siblings?
 a. first born
 ___ b. middle born
 ___ c. last born

BIBLIOGRAPHY

Adoption Portrayed in Books Published Between 1949 and 1977.

Cedaredge, CO: Orphan Voyage, n.d.

Askin, Jane. Search: A Handbook for Adoptees and Birth Parents.

New York: Harper & Row, 1982.

Bekkedal, Tekla K. "Content Analysis of Children Books." Library Trends, XXII (October, 1973), 109-126.

Berelson, Bernard. Content Analysis in Communication Research.

Glencoe, IL: The Free Press, 1952.

Bernstein, Joanne E. Books to Help Children Cope. New York:

R. R. Bowker Company, 1983.

The Bible. Exodus 2:10. King James Version.

Carlson G. Robert. Books and the Teen-age Reader. New York:

Harper & Row, 1971.

The Des Moines Register, April 8, 1985.

Dreyer, Sharon Spredemann. The Book Finder. Circle Pines, MN:

American Guidance Service, Inc., 1977.

Du Prau, Jeanne. Adoption. New York: Julian Messner Publisher, 1982.

Junior High Catalog. New York: H. W. Wilson Company, 1980.

_____. First Supplement. New York: H. W. Wilson Company, 1981.

_____. Second Supplement. New York: H. W. Wilson Company, 1982.

Kremetz, Jill. How It Feels to be Adopted. New York: Alfred A.

Knopf, 1982.

Krippendorf, Klaus. Content Analysis. Beverly Hills: Sage

Publication, 1980.

Lifton, Betty Jean. Lost and Found. New York: Dial Press, 1979.

Meezan, William. Adoption Without Agencies. New York: Child

Welfare League of America, Inc., 1978.

Senior High Catalog. New York: H. W. Wilson Company, 1981.

Sharp, Pat Tipton. "Adoption Books over Two Decades," Top of the

News, XXXVIII (Winter, 1982), 151-154.

Sorosky, Arthur D. The Adoption Triangle. Garden City, New York:
Anchor Press/Doubleday, 1978.

Thomison, Dennis. Readings About Adolescent Literature. Metuchen, NJ:
The Scarecrow Press, Inc., 1970.

Triadoption Library. Westminister, CA: Westminister Community
Services Center, n.d.

Triseliotis, John. In Search of Origins. London: Routledge
and Kegan Paul, 1973.

ABSTRACT

Since adolescents find answers to their questions by reading fiction, fiction that portrays teenagers like themselves, adolescent books on the subject of adoption may serve as a source of current information on adoption and society's attitudes on searching. This research proposed that an annotated bibliography could be developed. The technique of content analysis was used and selected young adult fiction titles which will enable readers to determine if adopted teens can find answers to some of their questions about the birth parents and whether to search for them. The study revealed that fiction could help an adoptee make the decision to search if written realistically. The study also established that the society's attitude on searching is portrayed in the literature, the attitude of not recommending and not encouraging the searching of one's birth parents.