

clearly aligning herself with American feminist literary criticism. Rogers proposes that by looking to myth and the mythic journey critics may find new ways of reading literary madwomen, and writers may find new ways of liberating the literary madwoman from seclusion and silence.

Rogers takes her readers on a journey. *Finding the Plot* has a clear direction from the outset. Rogers means to persuade her reader that madness cannot be considered to bring female protagonists freedom. Rogers attempts to persuade her readers that the journey of female protagonists into madness is one of descent. Furthermore, she proposes to offer a framework for writers to follow which can liberate their female characters from this descent. Rogers' maternal journey offers interesting possibilities for the creation of new and active female subjects. However, personally I feel that it needs to be said that whilst the trajectory of the literary madwoman may oft' (if not always) be described as tragic, it also often breaks from traditional patriarchal endings for female protagonists. Rogers acknowledges this rupture (110-121), but argues that a better way forward for the literary madwoman can be found.

Rogers' voice is engaging, and *Finding the Plot* provides an insightful – and new—analysis of significant works of literature. I would recommend this book for academic researchers, teachers of literature, students and literary aficionados alike.

Mothers and Daughters

Dannabang Kuwabong, Janet MacLennan, and Dorsia Smith, eds.
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REVIEWED BY PATRICIA DREW

Relationships between mothers and daughters span decades, and exist in lived experience and memory. Mother/daughter connections may be intransigent or quite malleable; they can run the gamut from exceedingly supportive to incredibly negative. Given this variance, academics have a rich arena to explore. In 2000, Andrea O'Reilly and Sharon Abbey's edited collection revealed how social institutions and cultural norms shape women's daily mothering choices and, consequently, affect mother/daughter relations. Alice Deakins, Rebecca Bryant Lockridge, and Helen Sterk's 2012 reader explained how interpersonal communication creates and sustains mother/daughter relationships. The latest research addition, *Mothers and Daughters*, edited by Dannabang Kuwabong, Janet MacLennan, and Dorsia Smith Silva, adds

important nuance to this conversation by highlighting the range of issues faced by mothers and daughters across the globe. Chapters in this anthology include personal essays, scholarly analyses, fiction, and poems. Collectively, the readings demonstrate that individuals' hopes, interpersonal relationships, and culture help shape mother/daughter relationships, regardless of location or life phase. There are many worthwhile pieces included in the book, and those discussed in this review represent some of the most salient topics mothers and daughters encounter: relational changes; closeness; tensions; and, individuals' expectations.

Multiple chapters in *Mothers and Daughters* reveal relationship changes that occur as offspring turn into adults and enter into new social milieu and economic circumstances. In Laurie Kruk's short story, "The Wedding Collection," Lenore reflects on how her Ph.D. work is a world away from her working-class background where her mom sewed wedding dresses in the family's basement. Despite the educational and geographic gaps between their lives, Lenore's increased appreciation for her mother shines through. Batya Weinbaum's "Painting Through Ruptured Maternal Identity" similarly depicts relational changes; however, the empathetic daughter seen in Kruk's story is missing altogether in Weinbaum's poignant narrative. Weinbaum reveals how a once-close relationship suddenly and inexplicably dissolved when her daughter turned 18. The disappearance of their intense connection left Weinbaum feeling she had lost her child and herself. As Weinbaum grapples for answers through painting, she attempts to make peace with her daughter's decision. When read together, these two chapters display the range of relational changes that can occur as children grow up.

For other daughters, becoming an adult means increased similarity to their mothers. In "Costas (Or, If You Prefer, A Tale of Two Cafes)," Priya Parrotta Natarajan relates that childish mother/daughter conversations evolved into serious, creative interactions as the author grew into adulthood. Parrotta Natarajan's academic mother takes her daughter's environmental and activist concerns to heart, which enables the duo to remain firmly attached. Cheryl Chaffin's "Grandma's Husband: Parenting with My Mother" also highlights growing similarities between (grand)mother and adult daughter as they transform into feminists and work together to raise Chaffin's young son. Mutual respect is the hallmark of these relationships, and indicates that mothers and daughters can work to remain close throughout the life course.

Claims of lifelong mother/daughter closeness are reflected in Andrea O'Reilly's "Across the Divide: Contemporary Anglo-American Theory on the Mother-Daughter Relationship." O'Reilly rebuts commonplace claims that mothers and adolescent daughters naturally go through periods of conflict. O'Reilly demonstrates that the popular discourse of strife is, in actuality, a social construct based on patriarchal developmental theory. She argues that

daughters and mothers may remain connected by rejecting patriarchal dictates and self-devaluation. This viewpoint is a refreshing counterpoint to doomsday predictions that saturate both popular culture readings and academic work.

Other chapters articulate how actual mother/daughter relationships differ from personal expectations. Alma Simounet-Bey discusses coming to terms with disappointment in “The Worst Is Not the Worst: Memories of Motherhood and Multiple Miscarriages.” She reveals how her aspiration to have multiple children remained elusive when her pregnancies do not hold. Similarly, Donna Sharky’s “Isthmus” presents the bittersweet story of her daughter Alessandra’s life, from international adoption at age 8, to sweet early years together, through mental illness and, ultimately, Alessandra’s death. Despite the unknown traumas in Alessandra’s pre-adoption past, Sharky’s unwavering love for her daughter means providing support in unanticipated ways. Both of these touching chapters remind readers that women’s mothering hopes can be quite different from actualities.

Collectively, the chapters in *Mothers and Daughters* provide readers with a fresh, detailed understanding of the mother/daughter relationship. They reveal that, globally, mothers and daughters grapple with and reflect on this significant relationship throughout the life course. The editors suggest that there are transformative possibilities related to mother/daughter relationships. While *Mothers and Daughters* would benefit from an enhanced discussion of these possibilities; this edited collection represents an important addition to scholarship on motherhood and families.

References

- Deakins, Alice, Rebecca Bryant Lockridge, and Helen Sterk, editors. *Mothers and Daughters: Complicated Connections Across Cultures*. University Press of America, 2012.
- O’Reilly, Andrea and Sharon Abbey, editors. *Mothers and Daughters: Connection, Empowerment, and Transformation*. Rowman and Littlefield, 2000.