

**Mother-Daughter Relationship in Alice Tuan's
Last of the Suns (1994) and Ralph Peña's *Flipzoids* (1996)**

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Introduction

This paper is a psychoanalytic feminist reading of mother-daughter relationship in Alice Tuan's *Last of the Suns* (1994) and Ralph Peña's *Flipzoids* (1996). Both plays portray the conditions of the immigrants in the West and their reaction to the mainstream culture there. Psychoanalytic feminism "is concerned with the internal mechanisms of the socio-cultural organization of gender and sexuality."¹ The combining between feminism and psychoanalysis helps understand the female character better than depending on only one approach. The bond between mothers and daughters is so deep and affects the development of female identity as "women tend to define their own identities through relations with others, and the most basic relationship for women is the relationship with their mothers."² Many times "a mother and a daughter may see themselves through each other."³ This relationship is a basic aspect of family relationships as "the mother is the pillar of the family, and how she resolves to conduct herself, whether it be based on the traditional ideals or not, determines the outcome of her family and the future of her

children.”⁴ So, it is important to understand the nature of this relationship. The paper discusses the factors of ambivalence in this relationship and its result on the female characters.

The major feature of the relationship between Ni Lee and her daughter Twila in *Last of the Suns* and between Aying and her daughter Vangie in *Flipzoids* is: ambivalence. Psychological ambivalence is “the simultaneous possession of both positive and negative feelings for the same person.”⁵ Ambivalence “is comprised of two opposing forces or sets of experiences-connection, interdependence, and mutuality on the one hand versus disconnection, struggle for autonomy, and misunderstanding on the other”⁶; it is the mix of love and hatred at the same time. The first force of ambivalence is the force of love. There are reasons for the harmony between a mother and her daughter. Firstly, mother’s love of her children is natural and need not be explained. Secondly, the mother sees herself in her daughter: “when a mother gives birth to a daughter she is in a sense reproducing herself. When she looks at her daughter she sees herself.”⁷ This idea is stressed as “studies also suggest that when a mother looks at her daughter, she sees herself. She is constantly reminded of her mistakes, yearnings, dreams, successes, and failure”⁸

In *Last of the Suns*, when Twila tries to reconcile with her mother, she reminds her of this similarity “I’m like you.”⁹ Mothers achieve their dreams through their daughters. That’s why Ni Lee gets into debt to achieve her daughter’s dream; in fact she realizes her own dream through Twila.

This is the same case in *Flipzoids*. In the Philippines, when Vangie was young, there was no gap between her and her mother; they used to dream of a better life every night. Aying reminds her daughter of her dream when she was nine:

Aying: You wanted to live in a cement house.

Vangie: With long, wide stairs and screened window ... and water that came out of a faucet.

Aying: It was the only way you would go to sleep.

Vangie: I was forcing myself to dream about it. And I didn’t just want it for myself. *I wanted you there with me.*, in the big cement house, walking up and down the wide staircase, you and me Aying ... all the way up ... and then down again .. up ... and down ... and would never get tired because outside, the neighbors were watching us through the screened window, their eyes bulging with envy. And they were saying, “look. Look at them. They are blessed. They have TWO floors and window that keep out the flies”¹⁰ (emphasis added).

This quotation makes it quite evident that the mother is part of her daughter's dream. The bond between the Filipino mother and her Filipino girl is so deep.

Thirdly, a mother and a daughter are of the same gender, so they understand each other well compared to the relation between different genders such as mother-son relationship where the son is treated as "sexual other."¹¹ Sharing the same gender strengthens the bond because "mothers and daughters are both women, a bond is formed by identifying with each other as members of the same sex, as potential allies."¹² No wonder that mother's perception of their daughters' bodies tends to shape their daughters body images.¹³

Fourthly, a daughter is the eye witness on the difficulties her parents face in order to bring her up. When the girl experiences these difficulties, she appreciates her mother's role and this leads to "acknowledgement by the daughters of their mothers' experiences that have been disregarded by a sexist, racist, and classist society."¹⁴ Mothers oppress their needs and desires for the sake of their daughters; Ni Lee suffers many years financially in order to achieve her daughter's dream of being an Olympic champ. Ni Lee stresses this idea:

Ni Lee: Sometimes, Twila, know-it-all, people want to spare you pain. I am your mother I want good things for you, better than anything I ever had."¹⁵ It is generally believed that "the role of mother is in some ways universal: she is a woman who produces, nurtures and guides her children into adulthood."¹⁶ Mothers' role is not only limited when their daughters are young but it extends when they are adult as well. The mother is a source of protection for her daughter; "the mother is the caregiver, mentally, psychologically and physically, whom the daughters identify with the most."¹⁷ Daughters confide their mothers and share their problems with them. Twila is twenty four now but she is in a bad need for her mother: "I need a mother right now. May I sit with you, mother?"¹⁸

The second force of ambivalence is the force of conflict. The writer traces three reasons for the struggle between Ni Lee and her daughter Twila and between Aying and her daughter Vangie. The first reason is the cross-cultural differences between the different immigrant generations. It is important to take into consideration racial and economic oppression when studying mother-daughter relationship as "racial domination and economic exploitation profoundly shape the mothering context, not only for racial ethnic women in the united states, but for all women."¹⁹

The older immigrant generation represented in Ni Lee and Aying is different from the younger generation of Twila and Vangie. The older generation is the passive "encapsulated" hybrid who cannot easily adapt to the Western lifestyle²⁰. This type cannot easily adapt to the host society. Facing marginality, some immigrants feel puzzled and dissatisfied with the situation.

This leads them to be passive or "encapsulated". They fail to assimilate to the host society and suffer from separatism. They are never *at home* because there is no such a home. The surrounding environment does not consider them part of it, so they behave as such. They are passive because they do not exert efforts to reconcile with themselves or the society around them. They could be isolated from society but need reconciliation. These older persons immigrated to the West when they were old enough and it is not an easy task for them to adapt to the Western lifestyle at that stage of their life.

Ni Lee sticks to tradition all the time. She agrees that Yeh Yeh (her step-father) stays with them and that she takes care of him because this is her *duty* according to the Chinese values. She asks her husband: "If you could bend a tiny arch, it would spring such joy in me. I bend for you, letting Yeh Yeh stay here all our lives. Why can't you bend for me?"²¹ Ni Lee comes to America as a scholar of mathematics and then gets married to Ho Ping. At first, she believes that America is her chance because "here, anything is possible with hard work"²², but when she says this, she restrains tears; she realizes that life is not easy at all and that the West is not paradise for *all* immigrants. She realizes this ugly truth but it is too late; she has to work so many hours and, with her husband, they get into debt to achieve their daughter's dream of being an Olympic champion. She suffers a lot because of her daughter's failure and departure.

Aying is similar to Ni Lee. She is the old immigrant who comes to the West when she is old and cannot adapt to the American lifestyle. This is because "unsuccessful hybrids will be sterile, will fail to strive, or turn out to be freaks"²³; they came to the West when they are old and believe it is too late to melt into the host society. The so apparent aspect of Aying's character is her nostalgia for her homeland. She goes to the beach every day and dips her feet in water because "it brings me closer to my home."²⁴ Everything around her reminds her of her home: "I see everything. All color blue."²⁵ She always performs a song of her rituals and repeats it. She is from Pagudpud, the Philippines. She remembers the minutest details about her family members and her town. She never forgets her home as "I took it with me."²⁶ She remembers the moment of travel and seeing off her house:

Aying: ... Before I ride the plane, I walk around our house three times.

Very slowly, very slowly three times. I stop at the *acacia* tree and stand under the branches, very long time also, so I count her leaves. I stop by the fence, and I listen to the neighbor's pig. I stop in the middle of my kitchen and I touch the black bottom of my favorite *kaldero* (cooking pot). I stand there, very long time also, and I smell my mother's cooking. I will take this, I say I will take that. Stop here, for a while. Stop there, a little longer²⁷ (emphasis in original).

Aying tries to “retrieve a lost past.”²⁸ This nostalgia is “an essentially anti-hybrid desire to keep an idealized version of the past intact.”²⁹ She gives her father’s photo to Redford and tells him how her father calls her “kampupot” (a local flower). She wants to be buried in her town, Pagudpud with her mother. She describes two Philippino games, patintero and pitik and asks him to play with her. She counts in Philippino: “isa, dalwa, tatla, apat, . . .”³⁰ Aying does not know why she is in America: “Why are we here?”³¹ She goes to church in America because the bell there is like the church bell in her village; no wonder that she asks Redford to go to church. She tells him a story from her cultural heritage (the story of Santiago and Esmeralda).

Aying cannot adapt to the American lifestyle; she does not know how to use the camera, she was fined because she violates the law in America, thinking she was in the Philippines. She goes here and there with no aim. Her homesickness is so apparent, but she tries to relieve this, asking Redford to teach her how to adapt to the American lifestyle. The older generation is the medium of homeland culture and the younger generation is the medium of the Western lifestyle. Redford tries to play this role: he uses his shoe string to show her how to untie the knots to her country one by one.

Immigrants lose the practices of their cultural heritage bit by bit, whether rapidly or slowly, consciously or unconsciously depends on their psyche. It is not an easy task to keep different cultural elements such as language, foods, clothes, different habits. For passive hybrids, this loss goes very slowly and with great resistance because “all national traditions can also be regarded as strange forms of ritual or magic, of powerful discourses which effectively bar access to those who are not already initiated.”³² It is not an easy task to eliminate homeland memories. Aying tries to forget but she fails as she is haunted by her memories. Memories entail nostalgia; “It is because this New World is constituted for us [immigrants] as place, a narrative of displacement, that gives rise so profoundly to a certain imaginary plentitude, recreating the endless desire to return to ‘lost origins’, to be one again with the mother, to go back to the beginning.”³³ The result of this nostalgia is that: Aying dies of a broken heart.

The younger generations do without their homeland traditions in order to assimilate in the host society, simply because it is their home now. The writer calls this type of immigrants the **one-wing hybrid** because this immigrant does without his/her homeland, believing this is the best way to melt into the host society. H/She is like the bird which loses one of its two wings; it can hardly fly. The one-wing hybrid thinks this assimilation is the best way to gain acceptance in the host society. S/he tries to mimic the people of the mainstream culture in everything, whether this is suitable to the customs and traditions of his/her original people or not. In many cases, this immigrant has never been to motherland. Those hybrids live all their lives in the West, not feeling nostalgic

to their people and culture. They get ripped of their cultural heritage believing this is the best way to survive in the West.

Twila and Vangie represent this type of immigrants. Twila is expected to be an Olympic champion, her family suffers a lot financially and socially to achieve this dream, but she fails and consequently she runs away because she cannot face her family. During her five-year escape, she assimilates into the American lifestyle completely; she loses her virginity and misquotes Confucius. Twila is Americanized. The father and daughter's contradicting opinions about tradition reveal their controversy; Twila thinks tradition is a burden; unlike her father who believes it to be a fort against the hostile world:

Twila: ...

Tradition is a *wrap of reality*

...

Ho Ping: The world is cruel, Twila

Twila: You don't gonna tell me that

Ho Ping: And tradition, Twila.. *tradition is a pillow ... a place to sleep with the cruelties more comfortably*³⁴ (emphasis added).

Vangie is the same type as Twila. The intimate relationship between her and her mother Aying changes when they come to the West. Now the girl becomes Americanized, she is Filipino-American and not just Filipino. There is a wide gap between the mother and her daughter; Aying cannot adapt to the American lifestyle. She insists to live as if she were in the Philippines. She remembers when she receives her daughter's letter:

Aying: (She takes out a worn letter from her pocket.) Evangelina, when I receive your letter that you are bringing me here, I show it to all the neighbors. Look, I say, my daughter, she is taking me to America. *I was very happy*³⁵ (emphasis added).

But on coming to America, she finds it so difficult to adapt to life there: "I have a different picture in my head."³⁶ Aying represents the homeland culture and tradition which the daughter cannot understand. Vangie has no contact with her homeland culture except her mother, so she cannot understand her mother's awkward behaviors; on the contrary, urges her to melt:

Vangie: Melt Aying. Melt. Become part of the Pot, part of the soup.

That is what it's all about. Everything we worked for. All of that, so we can become part of the soup.

The Americans want immigrants to melt in the pot: "the continued use and celebration of the term 'melting pot' refers to the homogenizing effect as a liberating experience for immigrants and minorities."³⁷ The one-wing hybrid calculates it wrongly because "the freedom from origins that some formulations of hybridity hypothesize is not so much freedom, but something more like a temporary suspension."³⁸ In fact, regardless of the length of years

the immigrants stayed in the U.S. the complete assimilation is impossible for people of color.”³⁹

But Aying cannot melt: “There is nothing for me here.”⁴⁰ She asks her daughter to send her back to her homeland: “You please send my body back to Pagudpud”⁴¹, she talks about her body as her soul is already there. Aying wants to tell a story from her cultural heritage to the audience since “storytelling becomes the medium to reconcile the mothers with their respective inner selves, as central figures rather than as subordinates in the family narrative, as well as in the outside world”⁴² But Vangie hates her mother’s stories and stops her because “You don’t tell them anything good, Aying. Your stories give people the impression that we’re barbarians.”⁴³ Aying tries to refresh her daughter’s memory about their life in their homeland but the daughter refuses remembering because these memories are “rotting”⁴⁴; Vangie insists on killing her memory since these memories are an obstacle against her melt in the new society. Vangie cannot see that her mother is not young to easily adapt to the new society: “*Anaheim is not for old people*”⁴⁵ (emphasis added). Vangie cannot accept this because “it is difficult for the children to understand why the parents do not learn English and adapt American values even when they have lived in the U.S. for decades.”⁴⁶ Assimilation is easy for the younger immigrants but this is not the case with their parents.

The second reason for the conflict between mothers and daughters is the social and economic problems they face; “the societal pressures and expectations often distort the reality of the mother-daughter relationship.”⁴⁷ Ni Lee experienced racial and economic oppression and does not want Twila to face the same experiences. To protect her daughter from facing these experiences, Ni Less encourages Twila to establish her sense of agency and gain success in society. Actually, this strengthens the mother’s agency herself since “the notion of agency is significant, given that the role of mother is often the sole source of power granted to a woman in a society or culture; moreover, a woman’s role as mother allows her a certain amount of agency and status denied to childless women.”⁴⁸ Agency means the power to resist and change the status quo and Ni Lee tries to liberate her daughter from poverty and low social rank. To achieve this ambition for a better status, “the multi-ethnic mother is neglecting, pressuring, and pushing her family to be something that they never really capable of being in the first place.”⁴⁹ Mothers yearn to upward mobility and when they fail to achieve the American dream, they think that their children are the second chance to do so; “parents strongly desire their sons and daughters to raise their family prestige.”⁵⁰ When Twila fails, these “unattainable social expectations”⁵¹ distort this relationship:

Twila: Talk to me, Mom. I’m not a ghost. I’m not a demon. I’m twenty-four years old now, Mom. (struggle) Even if I was world champion,

my career (struggle) would be over by now. I wasn't cut...for ice... Mom, I'm here, I'm alive. I hate the world, too. *I'm like you.*

Ni Lee: Don't touch me.

Twila: I'm like you, Mom.

Ni Lee: NO! You're not. You're not like me! Look at you. You disgust me.

Twila: I'm like you inside. Inside I'm like ...

Ni Lee: Always, *always against me.* You're a loser. You haven't the flesh or mind for winning. You gave up ... YOU GAVE UP! I should have Known ... I saw demons in the park ... I should have known ...

Twila: Mom ... Mother ... Look at me ...
(Ni Lee does not look at Twila)
After all this ... my losing and ... and my hair? I'm much more. I'm a person. Please see ... I'm your flesh and blood.

Ni Lee: You are certainly not like me. YOU'RE NOTHING LIKE ME!⁵²
(italics added).

Are these expectations too high for Twila to achieve? Twila failed because she did not take into consideration how important her success is for her family:

Ni Lee: ... The chance to move upward was lost on you. Your falling on the night that could have taken you to the Olympics and WORLD FAME! ... better, bigger, greater than any Swedish prize for mathematics I could ever have ... access like no other Chinese family could have⁵³

Twila's failure has great impact on her mother. In her confrontation with Sonny, he tells her how her departure breaks her mother

Sonny: You're dead to Mom you know... fossilized that moment you tore off from the rink. How... how... how could you rip her heart out like that?

Twila: I'm not a machine! How to stop the madness.

Sonny: Couldn't show her face in public....⁵⁴

In her first appearance, she speaks as if addressing a press conference. She suffers from Twila's failure; she says, "I have no daughter ... Only a son."⁵⁵ Remembering her daughter's failure and departure causes severe pain that she cannot withstand; Twila is the Asian American hope but this hope vanishes. Now, the mother is like a shell: "Yes, tell her that she single-handedly killed ... she broke ... she lost ... she lost the face of her mother ... and only a shell ... only a half shell of her mother is left"⁵⁶. Ni Lee has a great disappointment towards her daughter.

Economic and social problems affect not only Ni Lee and Twila but Aying and Vangie as well. Yet, there is a big difference here; Vangie wants to change his mother's status and not vice versa as the case of Ni Lee and

Twila. Vangie wants to be Americanized as “the white uniform means nothing if you act like you come from a cave”⁵⁷ because “although the daughters may be American citizens, some of the struggles they encounter derive because of their minority status.”⁵⁸ Vangie comes from a very poor family in the Philippines. Her father is a steward and her mother is a tailor. She is the only nurse in the family, the highest position they can get. She immigrates to America to achieve all her dreams there and calls herself Vangie –instead of Evangelina- to be suitable for the host society. Poverty is one of the factors of expel in homeland. Many people are forced to leave their homeland for a better life. The daughter “rejects her mother’s experiences as invalid in changing social times.”⁵⁹

The difference between Twila and Vangie is that Vangie has a feeling of contempt for her mother; she is ashamed of the way the Americans look at her mother: “Every time you’re at a department store. People will ask you: ‘Do you work here?’”⁶⁰ She thinks that her mother is an obstacle against her trials to gain acceptance and prestigious rank in the American society. Vangie’s treatment towards her mother reflects a kind of matrophobia. Matrophobia is “the fear not of one’s mother or of motherhood but of *becoming one’s mother*”⁶¹ (original emphasis). So, “the fear comes from being condemned as the same role as the mothers. This ‘Matrophobia’ is therefore due to the social positions of the mothers that the daughters themselves most likely will simulate.”⁶² In other words, “the daughters refuse to allow their mothers’ fate to become theirs as well.”⁶³ On trying to gain acceptance in the mainstream culture, Aying does not want to be the kind of her mother; she does not want to be regarded as inferior, she rushes to assimilate into the guest society, unlike her “foreign” mother who is not willing to and cannot do that. For her, Aying is not the ‘ideal’ mother that should be blindly followed.

The third reason for the conflict is the girl’s trials to gain independence. In fact, the struggle to become independent from mother is a major issue in female identity development⁶⁴. This is because:

Balancing ambivalence’s dynamics of connection is its twin opposing force-disconnection or disidentification. While mothers and daughters are drawn to each other, they are also repelled by each other. Despite their biological similarity and resulting intense link to their mothers, daughters do not want to be their mothers’ mirror images. Daughters want to have their own individual identities distinct from their mothers’⁶⁵

Such independence develops the daughter’s identity because “when the daughters distance from the mother, they see in themselves personal characteristics that are and are not like their mothers, as well as some, which

they would like to inherit from their mothers.”⁶⁶ So, “recognition of intersubjectivity is a source of power.”⁶⁷

Struggle for independence is one of the motives of Twila: “What? That you have a big frozen hole in the middle of your heart that you wanted me to melt with the sear of fame and fill with medals to hang on walls?”⁶⁸. She has different plans for her future that contradict with those of her mother. But this is not the case with Vangie; she is older than Twila and has her own independent identity and needs nothing to prove.

Both plays end with no reconciliation. Twila’s exchange with her mother is the last hope of reuniting with her family. But Ni Lee refuses to accept her daughter again in the family. Aying died in America after her daughter refused to send her back to their homeland in the Philippines. Ralph Peña kills Aying as a message that the older generation will die sooner or later and before death one should play the role of a medium of cultural heritage. The loss of the mother is the loss of homeland culture and “the chance for the daughters to understand the mothers’ culture and identity greatly lessens.”⁶⁹ The death of the elderly immigrant is a cry to reconsider the bonds among them and their children and grandchildren.

In conclusion, mother-daughter relationship is a deep bond that affects the psyche of the female character, especially if this female figure is an immigrant. This relationship is dyed with ambivalence. On the one-hand, true love is the glue that sticks mothers and their daughters. Mothers see themselves in their daughters and regard their daughters as an extension of themselves; they are of the same gender, so, they can understand each other better than if they were of two different genders such as the relationship between mothers and sons. On the other hand, conflict runs deep in the relationship between Ni Lee and her daughter Twila and between Aying and her daughter Vangie. Mothers and daughters are from two different immigrant generations; the older generations find it so difficult to assimilate into the Western lifestyle unlike the younger generations who rush to assimilate into the mainstream culture of the host society as a way of survival in the West. In addition, the economic and social status of the family affects mother-daughter relationships; Ni Lee is ashamed of her daughter who fails to be an Olympic champion and Vangie is ashamed of the social status of her mother. This shame and contempt lead to a kind of matrophobia, the fear of her mother’s model. These two reasons push the mother and the daughter apart; their bond cannot go beyond these two different mentalities. Both plays end with no reconciliation between mothers and daughters to shock the reader and make him/her reconsider this relationship.

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Notes

- 1- Burke 1
- 2- O'Brien 1
- 3- Woo 8
- 4- Deloco-Fridley 57
- 5- Ghiglione 3
- 6- *ibid* 4
- 7- *qtd.* in Ghiglione 5
- 8- Brown-Guillory 2
- 9- Tuan Act II 109
- 10- Peña 163
- 11- *qtd.* in Glasman 4
- 12- Herrera 8
- 13- *qtd.* in O'Brien 39
- 14- *ibid* 16
- 15- Tuan Act II 113
- 16- Deloco-Fridley 180
- 17- Jang 39
- 18- Tuan Act II 109
- 19- Collins 45
- 20- *qtd.* in Wurgaft 57
- 21- Tuan Act II 108
- 22- *ibid* Act I 81
- 23- Trousdale 11
- 24- Peña 150
- 25- *ibid* 152
- 26- *ibid* 160
- 27- *ibid* 162
- 28- Trousdale 4
- 29- *ibid*
- 30- Peña 170
- 31- *ibid* 174
- 32- Stening-Riding 31
- 33- *ibid* 232
- 34- Tuan Act I 95
- 35- Peña 163
- 36- *ibid*
- 37- Dhakar 12
- 38- Tenerelli xxii
- 39- *qtd.* in Jang 48
- 40- Peña 162
- 41- *ibid*
- 42- Assif 18
- 43- Peña 151
- 44- *ibid* 152
- 45- *ibid* 162
- 46- Jang 44
- 47- Glasman 11
- 48- Herrera 10
- 49- Deloco-Fridley 182
- 50- Jang 35
- 51- *ibid* 12
- 52- Tuan Act I 97
- 53- *ibid* Act II 113
- 54- *ibid* Act I 84
- 55- Tuan 81
- 56- *ibid*
- 57- Peña 151
- 58- Jang 32
- 59- *qtd.* in Woo 8
- 60- Peña 152
- 61- *qtd.* in Herrera 14
- 62- Jang 30
- 63- Herrera 5
- 64- Glasman 260

65- Ghiglione 6
66- Jang 31
67- Grice 46
68-Tuan Act II 110
69- Jang 46

علاقة الأم والابنة في مسرحيتي : "آخر الأجداد" لاليس توان (1994)

و "عائلة فلبينية مهاجرة" لوالف بينا (1996)

إعداد:

سلامة صلاح خلف خضر

باحث ماجستير

معلم لغة إنجليزية

مدرسة قاسم أمين الثانوية بنات

إشراف:

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أستاذ الأدب الإنجليزي

ورئيس قسم اللغة الانجليزية الأسبق

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تعنى هذه الدراسة بالقاء الضوء على العلاقة بين الأم وابنتها في مسرحيتي ،"آخر الأجداد" (1994) للكاتبة الصينية- الأمريكية اليس توان و "عائلة فلبينية مهاجرة" (1996) للكاتبة الفلبينية-الأمريكية رالف بينا. وتستخدم الدراسة المنهج النفسنسوي لتتبع هذه العلاقة وماتتصف به من تجاذب وتأثير ذلك على الأنتى المهاجرة.

إن حب الوالدين لأبنائهم حب فطري لا يحتاج لشرح أو تفسير لكن علاقة الأم بابنتها أعمق كثيرا من مجرد الغريزة الفطرية, حيث تنظر الأم لابنتها على أنها امتداد لها وترى نفسها في ابنتها وتتمنى أن تحقق ابنتها أحلامها وطموحاتها هي, خاصة تلك التي عجزت عن تحقيقها بنفسها و يزيد هذه الرابطة قوة وعمق أن الام وابنتها ينتميان لنفس النوع مما يسهل التفاهم بينهما, فالأم تؤثر على نظرة الابنة لجسدها وعلاقتها بالجنس الاخر. وبالطبع تكون العلاقة أكثر حميمية من علاقة الأم بابنها لأنه يعتبر "آخر" في النوع. لكن هناك أسباب للصراع والتوتر بين الأم وابنتها في هذين العملين الأدبيين. إن اختلاف الأجيال واحد من أهم الأسباب التي تؤدي للصراع, فالأمهات من جيل مهاجر سابق للجيل الجديد من المهاجرين, الجيل القديم عاش دهورا في بلده الأصلية ومازال مرتبطا بأرضه وعاداته وتقاليده, على النقيض من الجيل الذى وُلد وعاش في

الغرب ولا يكاد يبين صلة بموطنه الأصلي. كذلك تمثل الظروف الاقتصادية والاجتماعية التي تمر بها الأسرة عاملاً مؤثراً على طبيعة تلك العلاقة. وهنا يلحظ الكاتب نوعاً من "الماتروفوبيا" بين الأم وابنتها. والماتروفوبيا هي الخوف من تكرار نموذج الام, وليس الخوف من الأمومة نفسها بل الخوف من نموذج الأم التي تراها الابنة غير لائقة اجتماعياً وتشعر بالخزي والعار من كونها أمها. تنتهي المسرحيتان بنهايتين غير سعيدتين للأم والابنة مما يمثل صدمة للقارئ تدفعه للبحث بعمق عن طبيعة هذه العلاقة على أرض الواقع.