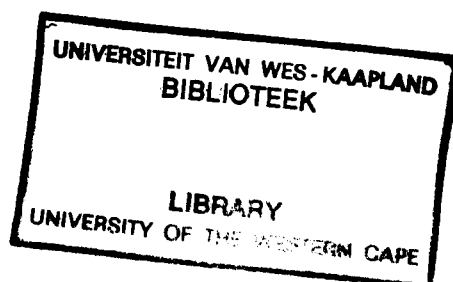


**AN EXPLORATION OF THE DEVELOPMENTAL PROCESS OF  
FEMININE SEXUALITY IN WOMEN WITH SPECIAL  
REFERENCE TO THE FATHER-DAUGHTER RELATIONSHIP**

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## **ABSTRACT**

This study aimed to explore the developmental process of feminine sexuality in women with special reference to the father-daughter relationship. In this thesis the “feminine” is understood to be an intrinsic quality or value that is peculiar to women, it is the qualities that make her different from men. It is how she perceives her “femaleness” and how it influences her relating not only to herself but also to the wider world in which she finds herself. The father-daughter relationship is a very special relationship. The father is the first masculine figure in the young girl’s life. The thesis explores how and why the father is so important for the girl during the different stages of her psychosexual development. An in-depth examination of the relevant aspects of the theories of Sigmund Freud and Melanie Klein are used in the discussion on the psychosexual development of the girl. The study employed an intensive qualitative analysis of the data collected from semi-structured interviews with nine women. The interviews were divided roughly into two parts. In the first part the women were asked to speak about their relationship with their fathers. The second part explored how they felt about their femininity and how they felt about themselves as women. Specific dynamics and qualities important to both parts of the interview were highlighted and explored. Content analysis was used as a method of data analysis. Themes that were common and significant across the interviews with the nine women were elicited. These main themes were then discussed

with special reference to the literature previously explored. In conclusion, these results seem to indicate that for the healthy development of a woman's feminine sexuality she must have experienced the value and desirability of her femininity (as well as the appreciation of the feminine in the mother and her culture) through the relationship with her father.

## **DECLARATION**

The author hereby declares that this whole thesis, unless specifically indicated to the contrary in the text, is her own work.

Christine Morgan

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## CHAPTER ONE

### INTRODUCTION

One of the most unexamined relationships today is that which exists between fathers and daughters. It is a relationship full of expectations and disappointment, admiration and denial, love and abandonment. The manner in which the developing girl learns to relate to her father has long-lasting effects on her adult relationships with men as lovers, spouses, friends and work colleagues. The early development of the relationship with her father will also effect her sexuality, creativity, spirituality and ability to express and prove her ideas in the world.

The basis of the father-daughter relationship stems from many different types of fathering, each with its own complex issues. Leonard (1966) and Murdock (1990, 1994) have explored the different types of father-daughter relationships. Perhaps the most satisfying experience is that of the “*good enough*” father, who loves his daughter unconditionally and helps her become a self-sufficient woman who can reach her full potential in life. Perhaps the opposite extreme to this type of relationship would be the *absent* father, who abandons his daughter through emotional distance, neglect or death, thus leaving her vulnerable and longing for his love and guidance. The *over indulgent* father infantilizes his daughter, seeing her as a helpless baby, giving her everything she wants, consequently ensuring dependency on him. The *passive* father abdicates his role as provider and guide, leaving his daughter with a lack of self-respect for authority as she attempts to figure out life without him. The *seductive* father eroticises his relationship with his daughter. Even if he refrains from sexually abusing her, he ties her to him inappropriately through an unspoken but compelling connection. The *domineering* father demands his

daughter's submission and leaves her perpetually fearful and insecure.

The *addictive* father uses and abuses his daughter as his addiction dictates, leaving her shameful and striving for perfection as a defence against the imperfect relationship. Finally, the *idealised* father favours his daughter over his wife and other children and makes his daughter feel special and gifted.

These father-daughter relationships all have emotional consequences of their own. The daughter of an absent father may blame herself for him abandoning her and may spend years trying to win his or another's love. The pampered daughter is likely to be ill-equipped to cope on her own with the stresses of life, and may find a father-substitute to take care of her. The abused daughter is continually reminded of her father's violation of her body by her own inner pain. In her search for a relationship in which she will not be abused again, she often finds herself in relationships which merely repeat the past dysfunctional relationship she had with her father. The daughter of a passive father learns that she can rely on no one and may possibly, in her adult life, overcompensate for her father's lack of authority. The daughter of a domineering father may be easily intimidated into compliance. The daughter of an addictive father may wear herself out in an attempt to gain control over everything in her life. Lastly, the daughter who idealises her father, may identify so closely with him that she has little separate identity of her own.

While not the specific aim of this thesis, the literature which has been examined also elicits the many levels at which the feminine is considered inferior in society (Leonard, 1966; Murdock, 1994; Smith, 1990). Where there is a patriarchal authoritarian attitude which devalues the feminine by diminishing it to a number of roles or

attributes which come, not from woman's own experience but from an abstract view of herself - there one inevitably finds the "collective father overpowering the daughter, not allowing her to grow creatively from her own essence" (Leonard, 1982. p.10).

There exists a narrow vision of femininity, a narrow vision which is embedded in our culture and frequently perpetuated by fathers and mothers as well. It is Smith's (1990) contention that images allotted to women in our patriarchal culture have been influenced by men's inadequate relation to the feminine.

Central to Jung's (1989) theory of femininity was that every woman has a masculine side, often hidden in her unconscious psyche. Conversely, every man has a feminine side, which is frequently unconscious and unavailable to him. Achieving a balance means becoming aware of this contrasexual side, to value it and to express it in the appropriate situations.

The present study represents an attempt to explore the immensely complex relationship between the father and daughter and how this relationship effects the development of her feminine sexuality. The thesis is comprised of five chapters reporting on various aspects of the study. The first being this brief introductory chapter.

Chapter two entails a survey of the literature relevant to the present study. The aim of this chapter is to examine the literature which is related to the relationship between father and daughter and what effect the relationship has on the development of the woman's femininity.

Chapter three focuses on the methodology used in the present study.

This chapter includes a detailed discussion on the design, sampling technique, methods of data collection and analysis.

In the fourth chapter findings from the qualitative data collected are used to provide a comprehensive picture of the relationship between father and daughter as well her understanding of her femininity.

In chapter five the results are discussed. It also looks at how these results compare with literature in this area.

In the final chapter concluding comments and recommendations for future research are put forward.

## **CHAPTER TWO**

### **LITERATURE REVIEW**

#### **2.1 DEFINITION OF FEMININITY**

The concept of femininity has been the subject of much debate and research (Biller 1974). Despite this, it remains a vague and poorly defined concept. Much of the theorising about the development of femininity has also been influenced by negative conceptions of feminine behaviour, for example, the notion that women are too emotional to make rational decisions. This lack of a definitive definition is illustrated by various diverse comments given by different theorists set out below.

Lamb (1976) states that there has been a tendency to define and understand femininity in negative terms and/or as the opposite of masculinity, for example, stressing passivity and dependency. Biller (1974) adds that femininity has traditionally been defined 'to involve passivity, dependency, an internal focus on a world of emotion and fantasy rather than an inclination towards thought and action' (p. 107).

Horney (1967) asserts that because women are often defined only from the male vantage point, all female behaviour has to conform to masculine standards. This male-dominated reality often results in women being completely unaware of their own value as women and, with society's reinforcement, it may even result in women adopting masculine values. Women may thus feel propelled to pursue masculine ideals whilst totally ignoring their own very special female capabilities. Biller (1974) agrees with this when he states that

femininity is 'often found to be negatively associated with adjustment among females' (p.107).

Feminine behaviour has also been defined in positive terms. Biller (1974) contends that

femininity in social interaction can be related to one's skill in interpersonal communication, expressiveness, warmth, and sensitivity to the needs of others (p.107).

Parsons, Adler and Meece (1984) differentiated masculinity and femininity on the basis of the predominance of instrumental needs, interests and functions in the former and of expressive needs, interests, and functions in the latter. Men are seen as assuming more technical, executive and judicious roles. Whilst women are seen as more supportive, integrative and tension-managing.

Spieler (in Alpert, 1986) describes qualities that are commonly regarded as "female". These are

encompassing, embracing, unifying, emotionality, warmth, caring, interconnectedness, intuition, expressiveness, maintaining attachments, contextuality, co-operation, interdependency, and the ability to enjoy temporary relinquishment of boundaries between self and other and to permit commingling (sic) of "male" and "female" dimensions of the personality (p.40).

In contrast, she goes on to say that in the western culture, qualities associated with maleness include

...aggression, instrumentality, rationality, activity, individuality, separation, linearity, division, dominance, hierarchical authority structure, and the tendencies both to value distinct boundaries in thought and in relationships and to value objectivity and detachment in approaching questions ( p.40).

It is important to note that qualities that are considered male or female occur to varying degrees in people of both sexes. However people vary in their awareness of and ability to make use of both male and female frameworks. Women who possess both positive feminine and positive masculine characteristics and secure sex-role orientations are most able to actualise their potential. It may therefore be assumed that women who have pride in their femininity, are independent and assertive as well as nurturant and sensitive are most likely to achieve interpersonal and creative fulfilment.

Different cultures may understand femininity differently. In this regard Mead (in Chodorow, 1989) writes that cultures emphasise and reinforce behaviour according to many types of criteria. Chodorow (1989) explains further,

Although one culture may have different expectations for male and female behavior, the criteria of differentiation may bear no relation to the criteria of differentiation in

other cultures. Male and female personality in one culture may be poles along one continuum of behavior, which is itself differentiated from the continua of behavior of other cultures (p.24).

In this paper femininity is regarded as being based on a positive feeling about being a female and a particular patterning of interpersonal behaviour. It is how women relate to their inner world as well as the wider world. It is how women use their very special feminine qualities and attributes in their lives. Whether or not a woman enjoys housework or chooses a career should not be used as the definitive criterion for assessing her femininity.

In consequence, the thesis will see "the feminine" symbolically as a way of "being", as an intrinsic principle of human existence. It is how the woman perceives her "femaleness" and how she relates to it. It is not merely identity and sex role differentiation but an ongoing sense of being female and the meanings she associates and attaches to her "femaleness".

This perception of the feminine closely relates to the theory put forward by Carl Jung. It therefore makes sense to examine these aspects of his theory.

## 2.2 ASPECTS OF THE "FEMININE" IN JUNGIAN THEORY

Western culture has characterised certain aspects of reality as "masculine" and others as "feminine". Sometimes the source of this categorisation can clearly be traced to biological differences between



the sexes, or to different positions held by women and men in society. Greenfield (cited in Samuels, 1985) is of the opinion that at a certain point the categories of “masculine” and “feminine” take on a life of their own. She explains: ‘.....culture elaborates upon simple differences until an entire *mythos* is created’ (p.188). Many gender stereotypes come out of a long tradition of myth, and are thus invested with great psychological significance.

These mythic structures of culture evolve unconsciously over a period of time. They are woven into the cultural fabric of a society, they become a part of the cultural heritage of each person born into that culture. Smith (1990) writes that

myth, as a product of the collective psyche, parallels dreams and fantasies as products of the individual psyche. Myth-creating is an extremely complex cultural phenomenon.....In creating a holistic world view, mythologizing gives meaning to the human condition. Myth as a product of the processes of projection and introjection, will contain psychological truths (p. 21).

Consequently it can be said that myths are both the reflection of the psychic content of people who are sharing a particular culture and a formulating force in the shaping of the psychic contents of those people.

A useful way of psychologically analysing cultural myths, stereotypes and images is to reduce them to their most basic underlying principles in the manner of Jungian psychology. Greenfield (in Samuels, 1985) writes that Jung’s method of pulling together disparate segments of

experience into single, unified metaphorical structures called archetypes helps to define the essential features of cultural stereotypes.

Smith (1990) claims that the concept of the archetype is Jung's most important contribution to psychoanalytic theory. As it is an extremely complex notion and an in depth discussion of the concept is not within the scope of this paper, it will only be discussed briefly. Jung (in Smith, 1990) in his explanation of archetypes states

The concept of the archetype, which is an indispensable correlate of the idea of the collective unconscious,<sup>(1)</sup> indicates the existence of definite forms in the psyche which seem to be present always and everywhere (p. 122).

Archetypes are the essential link between the collective unconscious within the individual psyche, and the collective psyche. They can be viewed as universal patterns of thought and structures of information to be found within human experience as expressed in different cultures.

derived from common experience which eventually rests upon the universality of the human genetic code, and the similarities to be found within the environments inhabited by humans (p.123).

<sup>(1)</sup> The collective unconscious is a deeper level of the unconscious than the personal unconscious; it is the unknown material from which our consciousness emerges. It is the psychic contents which are not common to one individual, but to many (i.e. the collective psyche (Fordham, 1966).

The two most common archetypes are that of the mother and the father. These archetype forms are constructed from the individuals' own experience with their respective parents and the absorption from culture and myths of the concept of the mother and the father.

The individual's own experience cannot be separated from the cultural context because individuals experience their own parents within the context of these cultural norms. The mother and father archetypes of the collective psyche consist of everything that is common to human existence. The two archetypes are important to how men and women understand themselves and to how they relate to others. Jung (1989) stated that the male, in the process of identification with the father, has to repress the feminine side of his nature into the unconscious where it forms a constellation which he called the anima. The female represses the masculine side of her personality into her unconscious where it consolidates as the animus.

Fordham (1966) explains that the animus in women is derived from three roots: the collective image of man which a woman inherits; her own experience of masculinity coming through the contacts she makes with men in her life; and the latent masculine principle in herself i.e. the masculine element in women.

Jung (1989) states that the animus does not personify itself in a single figure, but as a plurality of persons.

The animus is rather like an assembly of fathers or dignitaries of some kind who lay down incontestable, "rational", *ex cathedra* judgements (p.96).

From this one would expect the unconscious of women to show aspects essentially different from those found in a man. He writes (1989)

If I were to attempt to put in a nutshell the difference between man and woman in this respect, i.e., what it is that characterises the animus as opposed to the anima, I could only say this: as the anima produces moods, so the animus produces opinions, and as the moods of a man issue from a shadowy background, so the opinions of a woman rest on equally unconscious prior assumptions (p.95-96).

Full individuation for Jung entailed bringing the *anima* or *animus* out of the unconscious and into the conscious to achieve a state of androgyny.

In order to gain further understanding of the development of a feminine sexuality it is necessary to explore what other theorists have put forward.

### 2.3 THE DEVELOPMENTAL THEORIES OF FEMININITY

A major part of the debate in understanding femininity is trying to answer the question, how do women come to think of themselves as being essentially feminine? A child is provided two sets of stimuli by the parents (i.e. male behaviour and female behaviour) to be "programmed" by the brain into two different complexes of behaviour. The child's task is to identify with one and reject the other; the parents' conscious or unconscious role is to provide the means whereby little girls identify with the feminine model and little boys with the

masculine one.

There are three main theories on the development of femininity, which are the cognitive-developmental, the social learning and the psychoanalytic theories. The first two theories will be discussed very briefly. The psychoanalytic theories of Sigmund Freud and Melanie Klein are discussed in greater detail as they provide an in-depth and comprehensive analysis of the psychodynamic evolution of the development of femininity in women.

### 2.3.1 The Cognitive Developmental theory

The Cognitive-developmental theory builds on the work of Piaget (1952) and says that gender is based on the anatomical sex of the child and is thus a physical property of people that has to be learnt in the same way as other unchanging physical properties. Children below the age of four or five years cannot appreciate the unchangeable character of physical objects: cats can become dogs at will, water poured into different-sized glasses has changed its volume; girls can become boys. Thus a little girl first of all develops the idea that she is a girl and later (by the age of five or six) appreciates that gender is invariant, that everyone has a gender and that gender is primarily a question of physical sex differences. Kohlberg (1981) claims that young children conform with traits associated with their sex in order to bolster their sense of themselves as male or female. Once the idea of a stable feminine gender identity is developed, the young girl begins actively to prefer feminine activities and objects. The thinking followed in this theory is: I am a girl; therefore I like girl things; therefore doing girl things is rewarding (Kohlberg, 1981).

### 2.3.2 The Social Learning theory

The Social Learning theory contends that the development of gender identity involves a learning process that is essentially the same as other learning processes. This conformity is the result of social conditioning, of boys being taught to be masculine and of girls being taught to be feminine. Thus a little girl observes her parents performing feminine and masculine roles, but when she imitates the various behaviours she sees, she is only rewarded for those considered appropriate to her gender. Through such differential reinforcement, feminine behaviours come to be positively evaluated and masculine ones rejected: I want rewards; I am rewarded for doing girl things; therefore I want to be (am) a girl. The result is a generalised tendency to imitate all same-gendered "models". Mischel (in Sayers, 1986) termed this "observational learning". Another proponent of this theory, Simone de Beauvoir (1953) writes

One is not born, but rather becomes a woman ... it is civilization as a whole that produces this creature, intermediate between male and eunuch, which is described as feminine.... the passivity that is the essential characteristic of the "feminine" woman is ... a destiny imposed upon her by her teachers and by society....  
(p.23).

Mischel and de Beauvoir are not alone in putting forward this theory of the genesis of existing psychological differences between the sexes. It is a view regularly expressed by feminists and others who reject biological determinists explanation of these differences.

### 2.3.3 Freud's theory of the psychosexual development of the girl

Although Freudian psychology, with its emphasis on freedom from repressive sexual morality contributed largely to the ideology of the Woman's Liberation Movement (Friedan in Mitchell, 1984), his concepts of "penis-envy" and the "castration complex" (1905b) in feminine sexuality have aroused considerable antagonism. His theory is seen to have perpetuated sexual differences and the oppression of women.

Mitchell (1984) in defence of Freud argues that feminists, in their attempt to break out of what they see as the trap of biological determinism, have extracted Freud's theory of sexuality from its broader context, the theory of the unconscious. The term "penis-envy" for example, does not refer only to an anatomical organ, but to the value and meaning attached to it, relevant to a specific culture and historical period. Freud's terminology cannot be taken literally, it refers to unconscious symbolism. It is on his theory of the unconscious that there is the greatest contention. Feminists argue that Freud failed to take the social context into account when attempting to explain sexual differentiation. For example, Firestone (in Mitchell, 1974) interprets the Oedipus complex in terms of the literal power in the nuclear family. Both mother and child are oppressed by the father, who is the agent of punishment and conditional love.

Mitchell's (1974) response to this is that Freud never denied the power, or excluded the social context, but his interest was in how it was reflected in mental life. He argued that it had a psychological effect,

Freud was concerned with how social reality (patriarchal culture...) came into being, how it was reborn in each individual and how each individual reacted to it in his

mental life. Firestone, Greer, Feges and Friedan all assume that social reality is there and somehow the individual comes afterwards (Mitchell, 1974, p.350).

Freud developed a theory of unconscious processes to explain the reproduction of sexual differences, that goes beyond simple social determinism. He felt that sexual differences were the result of irrational, unconscious psychological desires that would defy the notion of conscious rational choice (Lacan in Mitchell, 1984). The unconscious condenses, displaces, and symbolises psychic experience into the visual and sensory images of dreams and fantasies.

In order to fully understand and appreciate Freud's theory of feminine sexuality it is necessary to detail the development of the Oedipus complex from its earliest formulations.

#### 2.3.3.1 The development of the theory of the Oedipus complex

Freud's discovery of the Oedipus complex followed an intricate and, at times, confusing path. Freud's early notion of the female Oedipus complex was simplistic, merely an inversion of the male Oedipus complex. It did not explain the complexities, ambivalence and contradictions inherent within the girl's relationship to her father and to her mother. It assumed a basic natural heterosexuality. It was only later on in the development of his theory of sexuality that he discovered the importance of pre-oedipal bi-sexuality, the significance of the mother as first love-object and the specific neuroses attached to feminine hysteria (Mitchell, 1974).



In tracing Freud's thoughts on the subject of the Oedipus complex it is necessary to start in 1897 when writing of the death-wish. He comments that 'It seems as though this death-wish is directed in sons against their father and in daughters against their mother' (Freud, quoted in Mitchell, 1974, p.61). A few months later, in a letter to his friend and confidant, Wilhelm Fleiss, Freud says

I have found, in my own case too, falling in love with the mother and jealousy of the father, and I now regard it as a universal event of early childhood....we can understand the riveting power of Oedipus Rex,....the Greek legend seizes on a compulsion which everyone recognises because he feels its existence within himself (Freud, quoted in Mitchell, 1974. P61).

Sophocles' Oedipus Rex provided Freud with the descriptive concept that was mentioned in *The Interpretation of Dreams*

It is the fate of all of us .... to direct our first sexual impulse towards our mother and our first hatred and our first murderous wish against our father (Freud, 1900, p.364).

In Freud's writings, Dora (1905), Little Hans (1909), and the Rat Man (1909) he hinted at the operations of the Oedipus complex before it had been formulated as a theory. In the Dora analysis the patient repudiates her heterosexual wish for her father, in favour of her homosexual attachment to her father's mistress. At that stage Freud failed to see the importance of this combination of homo- and heterosexuality.

Little Hans gives confirmation of a child's sexual fantasies. As Mitchell (1974) points out, Hans' feelings for his parents are a neat expression of the Oedipus complex within the nuclear family. However, the Oedipus complex is not about the nuclear family but is rather a description of the exchanging relationships and taboos necessary for society, expressed, in this case, within the specific context of the nuclear family.

In the Rat Man the term "complex" comes to mean 'the totality of repressed unconscious ideas that surround an emotionally coloured event' (Mitchell, 1974, p.63). Thus for the first time the term includes the notion of unconsciousness.

Freud's Introductory Lectures of 1917 herald the first full abstract presentation of the Oedipus complex, but it remains a descriptive presentation, consisting primarily of a re-telling of Sophocles' version.

The main points stressed in this presentation are:

That the two primary wishes of the complex are to do away with one's father and to take one's mother as a wife. Because the son wants to have his mother all to himself, he sees the father as a nuisance.

The second point Freud made is that the erotic nature of the boy's tie to his mother is shown by his undisguised sexual curiosity about her and her body.

The third point was that the little girl is seen as having an affectionate attachment to her father and a need to get rid of her mother (i.e. at this

stage the girl's complex is merely an inversion of the boy's).

Fourthly, contrary to what science has postulated, a human's first choice of an object is an incestuous one (i.e. the mother) and severe prohibitions are required to deter this tendency from realization.

The fifth point concerns the realization that at puberty, when the sexual instincts make their demand, the old familiar incestuous objects are taken up again and freshly cathected with libido. It is from this time onwards the individual becomes a member of a social community.

Freud's publication of the "Wolf Man" in 1918 saw the Oedipus complex elaborated to its 'highly complicated role as the instigatory moment for the individual of human culture' (Mitchell, 1974, p.65.).

This is the first time that Freud described a "negative" or "inverted" Oedipus complex, which was his first step in abandoning the exclusively male model that had accounted for the Oedipal situation of girls, up to and including his Introductory Lectures of 1917.

In "The Ego and the Id" (1923) Freud theorises about what he had learnt from the three case histories. In this work he postulated a complete Oedipus complex. He states that the little boy develops an object-cathexis for his mother, which proceeds side by side with an identification with the father. The boy's sexual wishes in regard to his mother become more intense and the father is perceived as an obstacle to them. From this time on his relationship with his father is ambivalent. The boy, however, also displays an affectionate feminine attitude to his father and a jealousy and hostility to his mother.

At the dissolution of the complex a father-identification and a mother-identification will be produced. The father-identification will preserve

the object relation to the mother and will replace the object-relation to the father. The mother-identification will do the reverse. The relative strength of the two identifications will reflect the preponderance in the individual of one or other of the two sexual dispositions.

Freud saw the outcome of the complex as being the formation of '.....a precipitate in the ego, consisting of these two identifications in some way united with each other' (1923, p.34). This is the super-ego. The more powerful the complex and the more rapidly it succumbs to repression, the stricter will be the domination of the super-ego over the ego.

In "The Ego and the Id" Freud (1923) suggests that the procedure outlined for the boy is the same for the girl but in reverse. However to understand the development of the Oedipus complex in the girl an understanding of the castration complex is necessary.

#### 2.3.3.2. The development of the castration complex

In 1908 Freud first formulated the castration complex in "On the Sexual Theories of Children". He described the girl as feeling 'totally inferior because she lacked something, and the boy felt temporarily inferior to his phallically more powerful father' (Mitchell, 1974, p.76).

"In Ego and the Id" Freud (1923) presents an account of the ego forming itself in a struggle between the "real" world, the world of the id and the world of the super-ego. By overcoming the libidinous demands of the id, through the formation of the super-ego, the ego assists the aggressive urges of the id. This is because the libido and the death-drive are the conflicting drives of the id. The ego becomes vulnerable to these aggressive urges. At the same time the super-ego is

aggressive and therefore, to create it and then to ward off the danger of its creation the ego had to itself become more lovable (Freud, 1923). This is seen in the child wanting to be loved by one or other of its parents. The anxiety that the ego experiences in relation to the superego is a result of the notion that 'The superior being, which turned into the ego ideal, once threatened castration....' (Freud, quoted in Mitchell, 1974, p.80).

This fear of castration leads to an identification with the castrating agent and, with the aid of ones own aggressive drives, to incorporate him (i.e. the father) into ones own personality as an internal authority figure, the super-ego. Just as the ego feared castration by the father it now feels the equivalent threat from the super-ego. Thus, Freud says '....it is possible to regard the fear of death, like the fear of conscience, as a development of the fear of castration ' (Freud, quoted in Mitchell, 1974, p.81) The little boy fears castration if his (forbidden) incestuous desires for his mother are not abandoned, thus, he represses the idea of incest. It is the acceptance of symbolic castration that dissolves the Oedipus complex and castration anxiety develops into moral anxiety (Freud, 1924).

As Mitchell (1974) points out, the concept of castration is the link between narcissism and the Oedipus complex. The phallus is the bridge in the move from auto-eroticism to object-love, as it symbolises the ability to connect with the mother. Thus, the threat of castration is the greatest threat to the ego's narcissism and the child's object relations. In the case of the girl the pre-oedipal recognition of castration is all important.

It is the notion of castration that compelled Freud to realise that the

distinguishing moment between the sexes is not at puberty (as he proposed in "Three Essays on the Theory of Sexuality" in 1905), but rather at the phallic stage when the girl realises she is without the penis and begins to envy it, and the boy, seeing the female's lack, fears the loss of his own.

In his 1924 paper "The Dissolution of the Oedipus Complex" Freud welds together the Oedipus complex and the castration complex. In this paper the Oedipus complex of the female is not developed beyond the statement that the girl ends her object love for her mother when she accepts the applicability of castration to all females. Freud here admits that the insights into the girl's Oedipus complex are still '.....unsatisfactory, incomplete and vague' (1924, p.179).

In "Some Psychological Consequences of the Anatomical Distinction between the Sexes" (1925), "Female Sexuality" (1931) and "Femininity" (1933) Freud developed the notion of an Oedipus complex in girls different to that in the boys.

Both the boy and the girl take the mother as their first object. This is the result of the mother's feeding and nurturing the child. This phase of first attachment is, however, far more important for girls than for boys. As Freud (1933) states '....we cannot understand women unless we appreciate this phase of their pre-Oedipus attachment to their mother' (p.119).

The girl's libidinal relations to her mother can last beyond the fourth year of life and persist through all three phases of infantile sexuality. They take on the characteristics of these phases and, thus, express themselves by oral, sadistic-anal and phallic wishes. These wishes

represent active as well as passive impulses and are ambivalent. The first sexual experiences the child has in relation to its mother are of a passive character (she is fed, dressed, washed etc.). Part of the libido clings to these experiences, enjoying the satisfaction bound up with them. Another part strives to turn them into activity, i.e. '...the child tries to do itself what has just been done to it...' (Freud, 1931, p.236)

During the phallic phase the passive sensations are due to cleaning, touching, rubbing etc. and the active wishful impulses culminate in clitoral masturbation. It was Freud's (1931) contention that not only must the girl move from her mother to her father as love-object but her sexual activity must also move from masculine to feminine, i.e. from clitoral masturbation to vaginal satisfaction.

Freud (1933) postulated that the turning away from the mother is accompanied by hostility and ends in hatred. The hostility, and subsequent moving away are the result of a number of factors as Freud (1933) states, 'We are given a long list of accusations and grievances against the mother which are supposed to justify the child's hostile feelings' (p.122).

Firstly the child feels she received too little milk from the mother, Freud contends that this 'is construed against her as lack of love' (p.122). This is probably because the child's anxiety for its earliest nourishment is insatiable and the fact that she never gets over the pain of losing the mother's breast.

Secondly, sibling rivalry occurs because the child's demands for love are excessive, no sharing is easily tolerated. Freud (1933) states that this is due to oral frustration because

the mother could not or would not give the child any more milk because she needed the nourishment for the new arrival (p.123).

The child begrudges the unwanted intruder and rival of maternal care.

Thirdly, the notion that, during the phallic period, the mother often forbids pleasurable activities with the genital, the very activities that she herself introduced to the child through cleaning, weaning, soothing etc.

The girl "gives up" her mother because these factors are compounded by the little girl's realization of castration. When she discovers that she has no penis and that, contrary to her phallic world view, her mother has no penis, she holds her mother responsible for this lack (Freud, 1933).

On the sight of the male genitals the girl at once notices the difference, between herself and the male. She feels that she has been wronged, consequently she desires the penis and falls victim to penis envy. Freud (1933) felt that the discovery that she was castrated was a "turning point in the girl's growth" (p.126). At this point Freud (1933) proposed three possible lines of development. The first being sexual inhibition or neurosis, whereby the girl, who has been able to obtain sexual pleasure by excitation of her clitoris gives up her phallic sexuality. Her self-love is mortified by the comparison with the boy's genitals and as a result, she becomes dissatisfied with the clitoris and repudiates her love for her mother. This is because her love was directed towards the phallic mother. The outcome is that sexual trends



in general are repressed.

The second option is that the girl in defiant rebelliousness against the unwelcome fact of castration clings to her clitoral activity, as well as clinging to the hope of getting a penis and the fantasy of being a man which is termed the Masculinity Complex (Nagera, 1969). In this way femininity is avoided. The last option is the "normal" response whereby giving the mother up and the abandonment of clitoral masturbation there is a lowering of the active sexual impulse and a rise of passive ones (Freud, 1924).

The active trends (which involves taking the mother as love object) having proved unrealizable, are abandoned by the libido. The transition to the father-object is accomplished with the help of passive instinctual impulses. The girl turns to the father as a result of the wish for him to give her a baby. This movement is the result of an analogy between penis, faeces and baby. Mitchell (1974) explains this

Children believe that babies are born anally, like faeces: the straining, the release, the production of something new out of oneself is a prototype of birth. The faeces produced for the mother ...are offered as a gift....At the same time the faeces, a column that stimulates the membrane of the bowel, is - in psychic terms - a forerunner of the penis....(p. 103-104).

Freud (1933) claims that faeces-money-gift-baby-penis are treated in the unconscious as though they mean the same thing, and are also represented by the same symbols.

With the transference of the wish for a penis-baby onto her father the girl enters the dynamics of the Oedipus complex. Freud (1933) remarks on the feelings that the girl has for her mother,

Her hostility to her mother, .....is now greatly intensified, for she becomes the girl's rival, who receives from her father everything that she desires from him (p.129).

In the case of the female, in contrast to the male, the complex may slowly, over time, be abandoned or dealt with by repression or its effects may persist far into women's normal mental life.

#### 2.3.4 Melanie Klein's theory of femininity

Melanie Klein has made an important contribution to the discourse on female sexuality (1928, 1945). To explain her position it is necessary to mention certain revisions she brought to Freudian theory that led to a new orientation in psychoanalysis.

She identified an early stage of the Oedipus complex in a child's development. In her psychoanalytic work with children she recognised the presence of genital excitation in the first few months of life, thereby refuting Freud's sequence of stages. In 1945 she detailed differences between her own theory and that of Freud in this regard

As I see it, the boy's and girl's sexual and emotional development *from early infancy onwards* includes genital sensations and trends, which constitute the first stages of the inverted and positive Oedipus complex; they are experienced under the primacy of oral libido and mingle

with urethral and anal desires and phantasies. The libidinal stages overlap from the earliest months of life onwards (Klein, 1945).

As she states the oral impulses are the initial urges which, along with the urethral and anal zones, overshadow the genitals for a period. Therefore genital excitations are in part linked with pregenital phantasies. However in the second half of the first year genital stirrings strengthen, and the wish for genital gratification comes to include the wish to receive and to give a child. It is to this phase that Klein attributes the origin of the unconscious equation of breast, penis, faeces, child and the theories of infantile sexuality, which Freud had discovered and related instead to the three to five year old child (Klein, 1945).

Klein (1928) acknowledged the presence of the primary instincts of life and death identified by Freud. However she gave greater importance to the death instinct which she saw manifested in the child's aggressive and cruel impulses. Klein (1928) also developed the concept of "unconscious phantasies", which are inborn and therefore present in the infant from the beginning of its life; they are the most primitive psychic formulations inherent to the operation of the instinctual urges. Unconscious phantasies are associated with the infant's experience of pleasure or pain, happiness or anxiety. They involve its relationships with important objects. The mother, on whom the child is extremely dependent, becomes a good or hostile image in the unconscious phantasies. Klein (1928) sees the mother as an internal bodily space containing the breast, the children, and the father's penis. These elements of the masculine and the feminine are confused in the mother and differentiated only at a later Oedipal stage.

Klein (1928) disagrees with Freud that the woman's wish for a child is secondary to her wish to possess a penis. The little girl's frustration at no longer having the mother's nourishing breast makes her hate her mother and want to steal the father's penis from her and introject it in herself. Klein (1945) writes,

The frustration experienced at the mother's breast leads both boy and girl to turn away from it and stimulates the infant's desire for oral gratification from the penis of the father. The breast and the penis are therefore, the primary objects of the infant's oral desires.

And elsewhere

As a result of the process of weaning, the girl child has turned from the mother.....The genital now begins to influence her mental development (Klein, 1928).

Contrary to Freud's theory, Klein contends that the little girl does not want to possess the father's penis as her own masculine attribute, but rather to introject the penis as an object of oral satisfaction. The nucleus of early Oedipal conflict lies in the transition from the cathexis of the frustrating breast to that of the penis. In the genital aspects of the girl's early Oedipal phantasies the oral desire for the paternal penis is seen as belonging to the mother, who keeps it inside her body. The little girl wishes therefore to sadistically attack her mother in order to steal from her the object she desires for herself. She fears that the mother's retributions will destroy her own internal organs.

Klein (1945) wrote that the girl's

fear of having her body attacked and her inner good objects injured or taken away by a bad retaliating mother plays a prominent and lasting part in her anxieties. This, as I see it, is the leading anxiety situation of the girl.

The girl's grievances against her mother for withholding the penis from her and sending her into the world as an incomplete creature (penis envy) are based on her need to deny her attacks on the mother's body and on her rivalry with both parents. She protests that she was never greedy, never usurped the mother's position with the father, and never robbed her of the father's love, penis and children.

It was Klein's (1928) contention that little girls at this stage have vaginal sensations and not just clitoral sensations (as stated by Freud). She writes

I am led to conclude that not only an unconscious awareness of the vagina, but also sensations in that organ and the rest of the genital apparatus, are aroused as soon as the Oedipus impulses make their appearance (p.77).

The phantasies that accompany the vaginal urges have a specifically feminine character. Klein (1945) explains,

The female child is brought under the sway of her Oedipus impulses not indirectly, through her masculine tendencies and her penis envy, but directly, as a result of

her dominant feminine instinctual components (p.196).

Thus since the little girl's phallicism is largely a secondary and defensive phenomenon, she develops penis envy at the expense of femininity. She disowns her vagina and thinks that only the penis has genital qualities. She hopes that her clitoris will grow into a penis, but she is disappointed.

Klein (1928) was of the opinion that the way in which the infant related to the maternal breast would determine penis envy. The penis can also be the object of intense aggression due to the frustration it causes the little girl. By projecting this aggression into the penis, it becomes dangerous (the bad penis), cruel and threatening. The introjection of the penis forms the nucleus of the paternal superego in both sexes. Because of her receptive female instinctual impulses the little girl tends to introject and keep the father's penis, i.e. the Oedipal object. Through submission to the introjected father the girl's superego becomes still more powerful and more severe than that of the boy. The girl has to face more obstacles than the little boy in forming a superego through introjection of the parent of the same sex.

It is difficult for her to identify herself with her mother on the basis of an anatomical resemblance owing to the fact that the internal organs .....do not admit of any investigation or test by reality (Klein 1945, p. 19).

According to Klein the sexual development of the child is inextricably bound up with his/her object relations and with all the emotions which from the beginning mould his/her attitude to the mother and father. Klein (1945) highlights this when she writes

Anxiety, guilt and depressive feelings are intrinsic elements of the child's emotional life and therefore permeate the child's early object relations, which consist of the relation to actual people as well as to their representatives in his inner world. From these introjected figures - the child's identifications - the super-ego develops and in turn influences the relation to both parents and the whole sexual development. Thus emotional and sexual development, object relations, and super-ego development interact from the beginning (p.86).

It can be said that the main difference between Klein and Freud's theories regarding the development of femininity lies in the concept of the girl's original femininity, the concept of penis envy as a secondary formation and the formation of the superego.

In conclusion it can be said that all three theories - the cognitive-developmental, the social-learning and the psychoanalytic - take the actual processes that are involved in the emergence of adult femininity and masculinity as being fundamental. All assume that some identification with the same-sexed parent has to take place and is the main precursor of the desire to be seen as feminine or masculine.

#### 2.4 THE NATURE AND RELEVANCE OF THE FATHER-DAUGHTER RELATIONSHIP

It is important at this stage to clarify what is meant by the concept "father-daughter relationship". Leonard (1966) defines "fathering" as

Nurturing, protection, affection, guidance and approval given by the father to his child: it is his availability to give love and to be loved (to be used as a love-object): to be admired, emulated and obeyed (p. 326).

As the young girl grows up, her emotional and spiritual growth is deeply affected by her relationship to her father. He is the first masculine figure in her life and is influential in the way she relates to her masculine side of herself and ultimately to men. Since he is "other," i.e. different from herself and her mother, he contributes towards the shaping of her differentness, her uniqueness and individuality. The way he relates to her femininity as well as his own feminine side will affect the way she grows into womanhood.

One of his roles is to lead the daughter away from the protection of the mother and the home into the outside world, and at the same time help her to cope with the world and its conflicts. Leonard (1982) contends that the father's attitude toward work and success will colour his daughter's attitude. She states

If he is confident and successful, this will be communicated to his daughter. But if he is afraid and unsuccessful, she is likely to take over this fearful attitude (p.11).

The father projects ideals for his daughter. He provides a model for authority, responsibility, decision-making, objectivity, order and discipline. As she grows up she internalises these ideals and actualises them in herself (Kohut, 1971).



Murdock (1990) agrees with Kohut when she states

....the father defines the feminine and this affects her sexuality, her ability to relate to men, and her ability to pursue success in the world (p.29).

She goes further,

Whether a woman feels that it is all right to be ambitious, to have power, to make money, or to have a successful relationship with a man derives from her relationship with her father (p.29).

A young girl's relationship with her father helps her to see the world through his eyes. She must also see herself through the mirror in his eyes. As she seeks his blessing and acceptance she gauges her own capability, intelligence, and self-worth in relation to him and to other men. Approval and encouragement by the girl's father leads to positive ego development.

## 2.5 THE ROLE OF THE FATHER IN THE FATHER-DAUGHTER RELATIONSHIP

Although the emphasis in this paper is on the role and qualities of the father with regard to his relationship with his daughter and what contributions he makes to the development of her femininity, it is not intended to minimise, in any way, the importance of the mother-daughter relationship and the role that the mother plays. The aim is rather to stress the significance of the father's role in enabling the girl to progress successfully to, and through, the pre-oedipal, oedipal, genital

and adolescent phases of development and ultimately to the attaining of a healthy sense of femininity.

It seems from the available literature that in the past the primary concern has been centred on understanding the complex intrapsychic changes in the girl's psychosexual development with little attention being paid to the availability or suitability of the father as a love-object.

A review of the literature reveals few papers concerned with the father-daughter relationship. Leonard (1966) writes in this regard that in the literature where family life has been the main consideration, the father's role has been discussed in very general terms, but little or nothing has been discussed concerning his participation in the rearing of daughters. Leonard (1966) points out that although there have been a few authors who have published case material illustrating some or other pathological aspect of the father-daughter relationship (namely Hug-Helmuth, 1917; Isaacs, 1945 and Kaplan, 1951; Seidenberg & Papathomopoulos, 1962; Sperling, 1953; Weissman, 1964; Sharpe, 1927) not much reveals a comprehensive picture of the normal father-daughter relationship.

In the extensive work done by Winnicott on child development he has very little to say on the role of the father. What he does elude to is the role the father plays in supporting the mother in her role as caregiver when he writes, '...he must give mother moral support, to be the backing for her authority...' (1957, p.83).

Burlingham and Freud's (Machtlinger cited in Lamb, 1976) view on the importance of the father's role is clearly stated

The infant's emotional life and relationship to its father...is an integral part of its emotional life and a necessary ingredient in the complex forces which work towards the formation of its character and personality.

Hetherington (1973) agrees and says that the loss of a father has adverse effects on the formation of a secure gender identity for both boys and girls. He found that

the effects of father absence on daughters appear during adolescence and manifest themselves mainly as an inability to interact appropriately with males (p.52).

Billar in Lamb (1976) is of the opinion that the girl's feminine development is influenced by how the father differentiates his "masculine" role from her "feminine" role and what type of behaviour he considers appropriate for his daughter. In a study by Mussen and Rutherford (1963) it was found that fathers of highly feminine girls encouraged their daughters more in sex-typed activities than fathers of unfeminine girls did. It was their conclusion that

masculine fathers who actively encourage and appreciate femininity in girls are particularly able to facilitate their daughter's sex-role development (p.600).

Murdock (1990) feels that if fathers gave their daughters the kind of encouragement they gave their sons, in sports, in school and in being generally self-sufficient, then even if the girls did not accomplish anything outstanding, they still would have developed qualities which

would be important for the rest of their lives. She is of the opinion that it is not enough for fathers to merely pat them on the head and say, "Aren't you a sweet thing".

Biller (in Lamb, 1976) points out that the girl's constitutional predisposition's can play an important part in influencing father-daughter interactions. The girl who is temperamentally responsive to social interaction and is very attractive may make it easy for the father to encourage her positive feminine development. Similarly, the father of a girl who is physically large may reject his daughter if she does not fit his image of the physical characteristics of femininity

Several studies indicate that fathers overwhelmingly prefer sons to daughters (Coombs & McClelland, 1975; Herzog, 1981; Hoffman, 1977; Pedersen, 1975 cited in Spielner, 1984). If this initial preference persists and leads a father to reject his daughter or her femininity, the girl may be unable to acquire predominantly good self and paternal object representations, thereby contributing to difficulties in her subsequent relationships with men.

Significant research ( Fisher, 1973, Hetherington,1972,) has been carried out on the consequences that the father-daughter relationship can have on the woman's marriage. Biller (1974) cites a report by Luckey who found that women who were satisfied with their marriages perceived their husbands as more similar to their fathers than women who were not satisfied with their marriages. Biller states

The female's ability to have a successful marriage is increased when she has experienced a warm, affectionate relationship with a father who has encouraged her

positive feminine development (p.113).

Paternal deprivation in early childhood may also be associated with infrequent orgasms among women. Research done by Fisher (1973) studied the sexual feelings and fantasies of almost 300 middle class married women. A central theme that emerged from the study was that women who experienced few orgasms were found to have had a poor and superficial relationship with their fathers. There was a high incidence of early loss and of frequent separation from the father among this group. Fisher (1973) concluded that these women were more preoccupied with the fear of loss of control than high-orgasmic women were, and this was associated with their lack of security and lack of trust in their fathers during childhood.

Obviously there are great cultural variations in the role of the father and how he carries out these functions. In many cultures there has been a tendency to "excuse" the father from much active participation in the day-to-day running of the family. He nevertheless remains the "head of the family". His occupation usually determines the social and economic status of the family and his ethical and spiritual values guide the children. Thus while mother copes with the day-to-day problems, she is to a large extent a substitute for the father's authority. It would seem that what Winnicott (1957) stated is still to a degree true to-day, that is that the father is "the human being who stands for the law and order which mother plants in the life of the child" (1957, p.83).

Leonard (1966) points out that because of the status the father has in the family it is probable that he, more than the mother, serves as a superego model for girls as well as boys. However, due to the limited participation in the family by the father, especially in regard to child

rearing, he may remain more of an image than a real person.

## 2.6 IMPORTANT STAGES OF DEVELOPMENT IN THE FATHER-DAUGHTER RELATIONSHIP

There are periods in the developing girl's life when she needs her father more than at other times. These are critical moments in her psychosexual development.

The first period in a girl's life, when the father's presence and the quality of his participation is of particular importance, is during the pre-oedipal stage.

Spieler (1984) who has done research into this stage of development states,

I believe that girls during the pre-oedipal period need reliable, nurturing, affirming and attuned relationships with available fathers if they are to successfully enter the oedipal phase and to ultimately resolve its conflict (p.63).

If these qualities are met the girl will be more likely to feel safe enough to direct the eroticism of her emerging oedipal self on to him when entering the oedipal phase and thus to fully resolve the oedipal conflict. However, if her representation of her father is fragmented because of deficits arising in her early relationship with him rather than unified and whole, she may fear entering the oedipal phase. This may possibly result in her remaining in a pre-oedipal attachment to him and to her mother or she may enter the oedipal phase both loving and hating or fearing him.

Spieler (1984) states that this split would probably prevent the girl from understanding why her father cannot fulfil her oedipal longings and from acquiring a more realistic understanding of both his admirable attributes and his imperfections.

Spieler (1984) illustrates the effect that this may have on the developing girl when she writes,

Unless these distortions in her view of him are corrected, she is likely to enter adulthood with both unrealistic expectations and deprecating and over-idealizing views of men which will interfere with true intimacy (p.64).

Kohut (1971) also considers the father particularly important when there has been a severe empathic failure on the part of the mother in her pre-oedipal relationship with the child. In such instances, it is important that the child can turn to the father for the mirroring and idealization which Kohut considers essential for the development of a cohesive self.

It has been shown (Neubauer, Burlingham and Freud cited in Spieler, 1984) that when a father is absent from the home during his daughter's pre-oedipal years the daughter may compensate for the loss by recreating or maintaining his existence in fantasy. Spieler (1984) states, "If his absence persists, it is likely that the girl's memories, fantasies, and images of her father will be and remain distorted" (p.68). Thus it would seem that the girl has a specific need for a father during the pre-oedipal period.

Spieler (1984) cites an interesting study done by Stolorow and Lachmann where they show that an attending and involved father is integral to the pre-oedipal girl's acquisition of a whole, realistic and predominantly good paternal object representation. The study is of a young woman (Anna) who's father was taken to a concentration camp when she was four years old. Based upon their study of the changing nature of the transference of Anna, Stolorow and Lachmann (in Spieler, 1984) her, the father absence was more significant than the responding change in her mother.

From an exploration of her (i.e. Anna) fantasies concerning the loss, her overidealised pre-oedipal paternal object representation was revealed

The father Anna had lost was not primarily the sexual father-as-lover of the fully blossomed oedipal phase; rather, he was the strong, powerful, glorious, presexual father-as-protector of the phallic phase from whom she sought shelter against a threatening world, reparation for her narcissistic wounds, and a sense of having value (Stolorow & Lachmann, quoted from Spieler, 1984)

The authors concluded that as a result of Anna's defensive splitting of her paternal object representation and the repression of an image of a loving father, she was unable to experience herself in adulthood as lovable and valuable to men. It would seem that she needed the awareness of her father's love and a whole and realistic mental representation of a loving father in order to recognise the love of other men (cited in Spieler, 1984).



It would seem that in the absence of a father with whom the young developing girl can interact, direct her libidinal impulses and to feel protected by, she will create and maintain an image of a father in an effort to provide herself with the love of a man which she needs in order to progress in her development.

Girls whose fathers are absent emotionally (as, for example, when they are ineffectual in their relationships or are defending against unwanted aggressive or libidinal impulses) respond similarly to girls whose fathers are actually physically absent. Leonard (1966) states that when a father is absent or fails to participate, the daughter lacks adequate opportunity to integrate the fragments of experiences which constitute her relationship with him into a whole and authentic mental representation. These views are endorsed by Menaker (1982) who writes that,

women who felt unappreciated as little girls by fathers who either withdrew defensively because of their own fears of sexual feelings, or were truly contemptuous of women, or were absent through death or over-commitment to work and career, have great difficulty in adult life in relationships with men (pp.79-80).

The other important period where the father is important to the developing girl is during adolescence. The daughter, during this period, must move away from her father, the object of her idealisation in the oedipal phase, to the outer world. Leonard (1982) states that it is not merely enough that the mother is available for identification. The girl also needs the reassurance from her father that he sees her a young developing female, so that she can have confidence that males

her own age will also accept her.

If she fails to do this she may continue to depend on him into adulthood, unconsciously binding her sexuality to him. Or she may find that the only way to separate from him is to reject him. Either response will affect her ability to have an ongoing, healthy experience of her own sexuality (Murdock 1994; Leonard, 1982).

Hetherington (1973) states that adolescence is a precarious time for girls. Most feel very insecure and awkward about the development of their breasts, the onset of the menstrual cycle and all the other aspects of their sexual maturation. The girl is sensitive to how her father responds to her emerging sexuality. She may wonder if he will still love her if she is no longer his "little girl". She wants to be physically and sexually attractive to boys her age, but at the same time she doesn't want to lose her father's love.

A daughter is very sensitive to her father's remarks about her body, weight and appearance. Murdock (1994) says that if the father makes negative remarks about his daughter it may result in negative feelings about her body that may continue into adulthood. On the other hand, a healthy admiration by the father will help her to accept her emerging sexuality as normal and desirable. This will contribute to her confidence that she will be sexually attractive to a male when she is ready to enter into a relationship. She will also feel reassured that she has her father's permission to do so.

Spieler (1984) also makes the point that the girl's relationship with father is the first intimate relationship with a man. If she finds her father,

reliable, available, attuned and nurturant, she is likely to acquire a mental representation of him which is whole, realistic and predominantly good (p.64).

From this it can be said that girls need the affirmation of their father from a very early age, but perhaps especially so during the critical stages of psychosexual development.

## **CHAPTER THREE**

### **THE PRESENT STUDY**

#### **3.1 AIMS**

The present study endeavoured to explore the relationship between the father and his daughter and attempt to identify how this relationship effects the development of the woman's feminine sexuality.

#### **3.2 RESEARCH QUESTIONS**

##### **3.2.1 Hypothesis**

It is hypothesized that women who experience their fathers as affirming and appreciative of their value and importance as little girls during the oedipal period of development, have a healthy and well developed sense of their feminine sexuality.

##### **3.2.2 Alternate hypothesis**

The alternate hypothesis states that the relationship between the father and his daughter has no effect on the development of the woman's femininity.

#### **3.3 METHODOLOGY**

This study made use of qualitative interviews wherein participants were asked to explore aspects of their relationships with their fathers as well as to explain how they saw themselves as women. Content analysis will be utilised in the analysis of the information collected. It is felt that this approach is the most suitable in order to capture the richness,

complexity, and gestalt of the material required. In order to gather the information it is essential that the participants are understood as people with emotions and subjective experiences. Therefore, the more phenomenological approach, one in which the researcher tries to see the world from the participants point of view, is more likely to yield a better understanding of the relationship between the father and daughter as well as gauging a sense of the woman's femininity.

As Calder (cited by Mostyn in Brenner, Brown & Cantor, 1985) describes

....qualitative research is typically characterised by a period of intense interaction between the researcher and the subjects in their own milieu, thus encouraging people to reveal in their own words their feelings about the subject. These types of data do not lend themselves to descriptive quantitative analysis, since they are not only dependent on content but on the intuitions of the researcher about what is happening and why (p.121).

Patton (1987) is also of the opinion that quantitative methods of analysis do not capture the importance of understanding the meanings of human behaviour as well as the social-cultural context of social interaction.

It is imperative that the researcher endeavours to understand the empirical social world as it actually is for the participants in the research. Understanding and meaning of the phenomenon investigated emerges from in-depth analysis of detailed descriptions and verbatim quotations (Patton , 1987).

Consequently it was important to develop an empathic understanding with each of the participants by listening to their subjective experiences and to understand the connections between their personal perceptions and behaviour.

### 3.3.1 Design

As stated, the present study employed the qualitative method of content analysis which involved identifying coherent and important themes, examples and patterns in the data collected. Mostyn (in Brenner et al., 1987) states that the overall purpose of content analysis is 'to identify specific characteristics of communications systematically and objectively in order to convert the raw material into scientific data' (p.117).

This form of analysis is useful as a technique for analysing overt and covert communication. Inferences or interpretations are then made from the data obtained. In this regard Berelson (1971) writes

Content analysis assumes that inferences about the relationship between intent and content or between content and effect can validly be made, or the actual relationships established ..... This assumption that knowledge of the content can legitimately support inference about non-content events is basic to a central contribution of content analysis, namely, to illuminate certain non-content areas (p.18).

Thus in content analysis the interest lies not so much in the actual content but more in the areas to which the content is a cue, i.e. where it "reflects" or "expresses" or where it is "latent" in the manifest form.

Content analysis, it could be said, is a method of observation. Instead of observing people's behaviour directly, or asking them to respond to rating scales of some sort, or interviewing them, the researcher, using content analysis, takes the communications that people have produced and asks questions of the communications (Berelson, 1971). Therefore it is important to ask the questions, "What is this person actually saying ....." and "What this means is ....".

Mostyn (cited in Brenner et al., 1985) makes the point that content analysis is an ordinary everyday activity which people engage in when they communicate with each other. People try to find and understand the meaning behind what someone is conveying to them.

Content analysis, as a method of qualitative research, goes one step further than merely making inferences from "ordinary communication". It is interpretation that makes this activity different from ordinary communication. Freud (1900a) described interpretation as giving meaning to the content of what someone is trying to convey. Thus the interest is with the content as a reflection of deeper phenomena. Mostyn (in Brenner et al., 1985) explains, 'Words are treated as symbols and the data has attributes of its own; we are analysing both manifest and latent data - "the complex gestalt" (p. 116).

Consequently the overall purpose of content analysis is to identify particular characteristics of communications systematically and objectively in order to convert the raw material to scientific data. This raw material is the communications that participants convey in the interviews with the researcher. The data collected is then subjected to intense scrutiny to see if any regularities occur in terms of single words, themes or concepts. Conceptual categories are formulated which then

ultimately leads to hypotheses testing (Berelson, 1971; Brenner et al., 1987).

### 3.3.1.1 Interpretation

Interpretation is at the very crux of content analysis and it is therefore important to clarify it within the scope of this research. As already intimated the richness of content analysis does not merely lie in the selection of categories but rather with the interpretation of the material collected. Brenner et al. (1987) identify certain salient points in the explanation of what interpretation entails

to stand back from the problem and to gain a new perspective; work with contradictions; to explore new relationships, turn the problem around, perhaps even upside down; understand basic motivations and apply them; see behind rationalisations; ask and try to answer the question, what is the meaning of this? Give one's imagination and creative powers free rein; and allow intuition a chance to come to fruition (p.140 -141).

It is for the above reasons that content analysis will be used to reveal the dynamics of the father-daughter relationship as well as to ascertain what effect the relationship has had on the woman's femininity by analysing and interpreting the common themes across the data collected.

### 3.3.2 Sample

All participation in the study was voluntary and confidential. For practical reasons and for expediency the sampling plan made use of convenience sampling, that is, voluntary participants constituted the



final sample (Kalton, 1986). The researcher contacted three contact people (who did not take part in the interviews) and they forwarded a list of nine women. The researcher then made contact with these woman and explained that the interviews would involve her talking about her father and her relationship with him as well as how she felt about herself as a woman. Confidentiality was assured.

Below is a profile of each woman giving relevant personal information.

**Participant**

<b>A</b>	24 years of age. Employed as a Human Resource officer. Studying part time for a masters degree. Single. No children. Not involved in a relationship at present. Father is 56 years of age.
<b>B</b>	28 years of age. Employed as a teacher. Single. No children. Engaged to be married. Father is 57 years of age.
<b>C</b>	32 years of age. Employed in social services. Divorced. No children. Not involved in a relationship at present. Father is 55 years of age.
<b>D</b>	37 years of age. Married (for the second time). One child. Self employed. Father is 70 years of age.
<b>E</b>	33 years of age. Married with two children. Studying part time. Father is 66 years of age.

<b>F</b>	24 years of age. Employed as a Human Resource Officer. Married. No children. Father is 50 years of age.
<b>G</b>	36 years of age. Clerical work (part time). Married two children. Father is 68 years of age.
<b>H</b>	35 years of age. Has a play school. Married with three children. Father is 70 years of age.
<b>I</b>	29 years of age. Self employed architect. <u>Engaged</u> to be married. No children.

### 3.3.3 Procedure

The interviews were pre-arranged to suit each participant. Each of the nine interviews took place at the participant's house. The interview was between one and half to two hours in length and all nine were undertaken over a period of seven weeks.

The researcher spent a short time establishing rapport with the participant before each interview. The procedure to be followed was explained as well as the purpose of the study. It was explained that the interview would follow, roughly, two parts. During the first part she was required to talk about her relationship with her father, especially when she was young. The second part entailed her sharing how she felt about herself as a woman. Although a set of specific questions was not followed during each interview, certain areas were covered each time. If these areas did not surface spontaneously during

the interview the researcher asked the participant directly. (See Appendix A for the areas of interest). As far as possible the participant was encouraged to speak about her relationship with her father in her own way.

The interview began by obtaining personal information such as age, composition of her primary family, level of education, marital status, length of marriage/relationship, children and occupation. The age and occupation of the woman's father was also determined.

#### 3.3.4. Instruments of research

The present study used one method of data collection, namely interviews.

##### 3.3.4.1 Interviews

By means of qualitative semi-structured interviews the participants were first asked in a "conversational" manner to recall aspects of their relationships with their fathers. Some direction was given in that they were encouraged to recall from their earliest experiences with their fathers. In-depth exploration of important issues was encouraged.

In the second part of the interview participants were also asked to comment on how they felt about themselves and how they functioned in society as women. Open-ended questions and comments were posed in response to the participant's contributions in order to extricate the information required to test the hypotheses. This process kept the interaction focused, but also allowed participant's perspectives and experiences to emerge.

The use of semi-structured interviews allowed the researcher to explore the areas where there were gaps, contradictions and difficulties

in the participant's stories. Thus any questions, which were kept to a minimum, were tailored to explore in greater depth certain pertinent issues which may or may not have been raised by the participant.

The value of interviewing as a qualitative method of research is succinctly described by Filstead (in Brenner et al., 1987),

Qualitative methodology allows the researcher to "get close to the data", thereby developing the analytical, conceptual, and categorical components of explanation from the data itself - rather than from the preconceived, rigidly structured, and highly quantified techniques that pigeonhole the empirical social world into the operational definitions that the researcher has constructed (p.148).

Interviewing enabled the researcher to enter the participant's world, to understand the person's perspective, or as stated above to "*get close to the data*" (italics mine).

It was essential to capture the actual words of the participants when interviewing them. In order to accurately capture the information and allow the researcher to be attentive to the participants, the interviews were tape recorded. This aided the "conversational" approach to the interviews as the researcher did not need to be engrossed in writing down verbatim notes. It also communicated to the participant that the researcher was indeed listening to her. Attention could also be paid to the participant's non-verbal cues. Tape recording the interviews allowed the researcher to pay full attention to the on-going content of the interview, and to decide when it was appropriate to probe for further explication or clarification of what was been said.

Since quotations and the capturing of recurrent themes, are essential to content analysis full transcription of the interviews was carried out.

### 3.3.5 Analysis of data

The thematic categorisation and classification of results were based on the outline proposed by Seedat (1987). This process occurred through a dialogue with four basic steps:

3.3.5.1 An intuitive and holistic grasp of the data.

3.3.5.2 The emergence of similarities and themes.

3.3.5.3 Reflection, synthesis and transformation.

3.3.5.4. Classification of categories.

A brief explication of these four basic steps is presented below.

#### 3.3.5.1 An intuitive and holistic grasp of the data

The first step in the systematic and thematic analysis of the data was the achievement of a holistic and intuitive grasp of all the data collected. This was considered vital in order to remain true to the data and essence of the participant's attributions and views regarding their experiences with their fathers. Correspondingly, the researcher read the transcripts several times with a reflective attitude.

This allowed the data to "speak for itself" and allowed for an intuitive feel of the data. By the end of this phase the researcher had managed to retain the gestalt and sense of wholeness of the data. It was this holistic grasp that essentially set the tone for the rigorous analysis that followed.

### 3.3.5.2. The emergence of similarities and themes.

The second step entailed the researcher examining the transcripts for similarities and themes. The procedure for doing this entailed creating categories of emerging similarities which went together (Marshall, 1980). For instance, in the participant's relationship with their fathers, participants' phraseology like "I would never say anything that may hurt him, even when I felt strongly about it"; "Punishment was knowing that I had disappointed him"; "the family was there to serve his needs, he made that very clear" were placed together under one category, namely, "style of relating and authority".

### 3.3.5.3 Reflection synthesis and transformation

Having clustered similarities and common trends together, the researcher then proceeded to reflect rigorously on the central themes emanating from these clusters. Each cluster was examined systematically, allowing them to overlap and to be situated within the broader framework of the participant's experience of the relationship and their femininity.

The researcher transformed the meaning of each cluster from the everyday concrete language reflected in the raw data, into a synthesised language which took on the form of an encapsulating heading. Encapsulating headings like, "Controlling versus non-controlling", were employed to capture the essence of the clusters, as was the case with example cited above.

#### 3.3.5.4 Classification of categories

In the final phase the researcher classified all the thematic categories that emerged in order to understand the qualities of the relationship between the participants and their fathers as well as to understand their sense of their femininity.

#### 3.3.6 Reliability

Qualitative research recognises a complex and ever changing social world. It encourages the active engagement with participants and acknowledges that the understanding of the social world is constructed and that multiple realities exist for those taking part in the research process. Participants are encouraged to speak for themselves and their personal accounts are valued. Bannister, Burman, Parker, Taylor and Tindall (1994) illustrate the importance of this when they write,

The developing theory is thus firmly and richly grounded in personal experiences rather than a reflection of the researcher's *a priori* frameworks. In this way insight is gained to the meanings people attach to their experiencing (p.142).

Although this method of research has been criticised because it recommends, *inter alia* an interaction of participants and researcher which may result in biased reporting, it is felt that this research technique was the most valuable tool to elicit the information required. In qualitative analysis the researcher's central role is the direct engagement with the personally relevant research topics as well as the participants. In this process the participants are seen as "joint collaborators in the production of knowledge" (Bannister et al., 1994, p.143).

The information and knowledge gained from the research is merely one version of reality, a representation rather than a reproduction. There is also an emphasis on a critical evaluation on a number of levels. The researcher's reflection on both the process and experience of doing research and the ways in which the findings were constructed were important elements of the evaluation. This approach presupposes a change to all involved in the research, including the researcher (Banister et al., 1974).

The above authors are of the opinion that given the characteristics of qualitative research the notion of reliability is not appropriate. Their argument is that the essential notion in reliability is one of consistency, or 'the extent to which the measurement device or test yields the same approximate results when utilised repeatedly under similar conditions' (p.143).

However, replication in qualitative research is more to do with reinterpreting the findings from a different viewpoint or exploring the same issues in different contexts rather than expecting or desiring consistent accounts of the information collected.

### 3.3.7 Validity

Validating the results of qualitative content analysis, where intuition and interpretation play a major role in the analysis, is a problem. Krippendorff (1967) states that it is extremely difficult to establish validity in content analysis. He is of the opinion that the only type of validity that is relevant to content analysis is "semantical validity", or the degree to which a method is sensitive to the symbolic meanings in a context (this is a subjective judgement in which the researcher asks "Is it measuring peoples' feelings and opinions?") Mostyn (in Brenner et



al., 1985) agree with this when they write that attempts to correlate feelings and attitudes with other variables to estimate validity is unrealistic, 'since in most cases the qualitative research project is a one-off study, and variables cannot be realistically selected' (p.123).

Bannister et al. (1994) feel that validity, when doing qualitative research, has to do with the adequacy of the researcher to understand and represent people's meanings. They cite Marshall in explaining this

Validity .....becomes largely a quality of the knower, in relation to her/his data and enhanced by different vantage points and forms of knowing - it is, then, personal, relational and contextual (p. 143).

In order to enhance this process, the researcher kept a journal of the interviews. This self reflection enabled the researcher to critically evaluate and reflect upon the issues involved (i.e. related to the hypothesis) as well and the actual process of the interview. Most importantly it gave the researcher an opportunity to reflect on her own personal experience of conducting the interviews. In this way it allowed for the acknowledgement that the researcher is an individual and how her personal interests and values may have influenced the process of research from the initial idea to the conclusion of the research.

In summary, the thematic categorisation and classification of results yielded the following categories:

Part one: The relationship with the father.

1. The idealising or hero worshipping of the father versus the weak and ineffectual father.
2. Fathers who were emotionally attuned to their daughters as against those that were unattuned.
3. Relationships that were experienced as controlling versus those that were perceived as non-controlling in nature.
4. Repulsion versus attraction.

Part two: Perception of the self as a feminine being.

1. Women who were not in touch with their own femininity.
2. Achieving a balance between the masculine and the feminine

The ensuing chapter will focus on a detailed analysis of the data recorded.

## **CHAPTER FOUR**

### **RESULTS OF THE DATA**

In this chapter findings from the qualitative data are applied to examine the hypothesized importance of the father-daughter relationship in the development of feminine sexuality.

The chapter focuses on the results of the thematic categories which emerged from a content analysis of the information gathered during the interviews with the participants. Following the procedure outlined in the previous chapter, all the similar themes were clustered together and categorised under what was deemed appropriate encapsulating headings.

Four themes concerning the way the women perceived their fathers and their relationships with them emerged from the data (part one). It must be stressed that the data that emerged was the way that the women perceived their fathers, this was their reality. However it may not have been the father's reality or even actual reality. Two themes emerged concerning how the women saw themselves in relation to their femininity (part two).

The themes elicited were:

Part one:

1. The idealised or hero worshipping of the father versus the weak/ineffectual father.
2. Fathers who were emotionally attuned to their daughters versus those unattuned.
3. Elements of control versus non-control in the relationship.
4. The relationship was characterised by repulsion versus attraction.

Part two:

1. Women who were not in touch with their own sense of femininity.
2. Achieving a balance between the masculine and the feminine.

These themes were not present in the relationship of each woman and each cannot “fit” into a neat category. What did emerge is that the woman’s femininity is shaped by the early relationship with her father. Different combinations of the seven themes were found to exist in the women.

#### 4.1 MAIN THEMES

The following is a description of each theme as it emerged from the data collected.

##### 4.1.1 Part one

###### 4.1.1.1 The idealised hero versus the weak and ineffectual father.

The hero father was seen as being perfect in every sense. He would always protect and provide for his daughter no matter what. He offered her a sense of order, authority, protection, and power. He was portrayed as larger than life and his deeds were exemplary. A typical response regarding this was,

To speak about my dad is no problem at all, we are really very close. We are very similar in personality. He is someone that I have always admired and respected a lot.

I think that I have modelled myself on him more than on my mom. He is very dynamic, has endless energy, he never sits still. I admire this. He has a high position at

work which I admire as well. He is well respected and has been a good role model for me. He always has time for me, and every body else, he is my hero (participant F).

Another response was,

The very first thing that I can say about my father is that he is very big and very very tall, in all ways he is big...I take after him in a physical way. As a child and an adolescent I adored him and he me. I got on better with him than with my mom. .... Everybody knows him to be this incredibly kind, generous, giving man, which he is, he would do anything for his children, absolutely anything (I).

The opposite extreme of this are the fathers who were seen as weak and ineffectual in their lives and relationships. Concurrent with seeing their fathers as weak was a sense of shame and embarrassment about their fathers. They do not see their fathers as having given them anything useful or constructive in life. To a large extent he was seen to have abdicated his role of guide into the future. This left the daughters with a lack of respect for his authority. They did not have a sense of pride in their father and what he stood for. Fathers who were seen as weak were seen to be easily manipulated and lacking in any real authority. They were dominated by their wives (the woman's mother) and failed to mediate in arguments between mother and daughter, especially during adolescence. This resulted in feelings of having been betrayed by the father,

I feel that my father does love me, but having said that he is a very restrictive person, its very difficult for him to display any feelings at all, he is quite a dry person. He hasn't much self confidence. I feel that I am very different to him in my whole approach to life.....He really gives very little of himself, maybe that's because there is nothing really to give (B).

Further she says,

He is the kind of man who is happy to be in the middle, he is mediocre, he is a plodder, so for that I don't really respect him, I never really gained anything from him intellectually, his values are not my values....(B).

Another response,

If I think of a way of describing my father, the word that comes to mind is inadequate. That is the way I think that I have seen him throughout my life, inadequate as a person and inadequate as a father..... I have this image of him walking down the road kicking a stone, like a little boy, that is how I see him, my fantasy of him (C).

Further on she says,

He wasn't really present in my life, even when he was around he was not adequate, he didn't have a sense of responsibility to us..... I used to wish that he was like a real man, he couldn't do things like other men could,

silly things, like once he kept falling off the windsurfer when we were out one day and I can remember thinking that it would be nice to have a father who was a real man who could do things like that. God he was just so inadequate in so many ways (C).

The sense of shame and embarrassment evident in those that saw their fathers as weak and inadequate was not only in regard to occupational position or educational level. A sense of having to protect the family against outside scrutiny because of behaviour and attitudes that were perceived to be wrong and in conflict with the values of peers was evident. This was also true of the expression of emotions. The display of feelings was not encouraged. This was especially related to anger and sadness. When these feelings were expressed a sense of having to suppress the “undesired” emotion pervaded the family. It was especially important not to let outsiders hear or see the expression of these feelings. This was revealed in the following,

When I think about my family I think about shame and embarrassment, about things that ..... that are too awful to hear ..... not bad or anything, but like it was just so dead.....no expression of any emotion.....my father's personality pervaded the whole family.

Later she goes on

He could tell me that he was proud of what I had done but it was always hush hush, it took a huge effort, it really embarrassed him, so I never went to him or told him anything. I could feel the pressure that he experienced.

I used to feel that I had to protect him, the code that pervaded the whole family was to avoid embarrassment at all costs. It was like a shameful thing to be angry or sad or even happiness sometimes - they used to say shhh the neighbours will hear you! (B).

#### 4.1.1.2. Fathers who were emotionally attuned to their daughters as against those that were unattuned.

Emotionally attuned fathers were seen to be more aware of their daughter's feelings and difficulties. However this often resulted in "advice giving", and a desire by the father to solve the problem in a very rational manner which was not always desired by his daughter. These fathers were sensitive to issues that were important during critical phases of development. They allowed their daughters to openly express feelings about themselves and others. The women felt that their fathers could contain the expression of emotion and were in no way threatened by it. A dimension that seemed prominent in fathers was the inability to express emotions themselves (this seemed to be the case in all but one father). Most were seen to be "very closed.... Generally he never showed his feelings" was a typical response. Anger (towards the daughter) and sadness or showing vulnerability seemed to be the most difficult to express.

Examples of this were evident in the following extracts.

Dad seemed to sense when something was wrong, it was weird, not only when there had been an argument at home, but also if I was upset about something. He would ask straight out what the problem was. He would try to make me feel better, sometimes that was nice and other times .... Well, sometimes he couldn't .... And that



was also okay (A).

Another participant reported,

He did share how he felt, if he was stressed, worried or what ever, he would say so but not go into great detail with us kids about it. .... But if he didn't say anything I would pick up that something was not right and sort of ask him. He would say what was wrong but not get into a discussion with me about it (I).

A more common theme was of the father not been attuned to his own emotions or his daughters. A frequent trend was one in which the daughter could sense that something was amiss with her father but was unable to ask him what the problem was. If she did ask, frequently the answer would be "Oh it's nothing that you would understand". A feeling of "being left out" and "not knowing what was going on" was a repeated utterance. An example of this is of the woman who explained her father's reaction to her if she had said or done something which he did not approve of.

He is a very closed person, you would never know, he would close the door, set his jaw, he would show his disappointment by being sad looking but he would never say to us you have really made me very sad or upset, so one would hope that you knew but you were never 100% sure (H).

Further on she adds,

.....it may have been better if he had raised his voice, got it over with and you would know where you were with him....(H).

It seems that it was also very difficult for fathers to deal adequately with their daughter's expression of emotion. The following extract sums this up,

There were so many unspoken codes with him. I couldn't speak to him about being angry, not only with him but with any one, or feeling lonely or sad, or whatever. I think that I did try but I remember cringing when I got no response, so I stopped trying somewhere along the way. (B).

There was a tendency to de-value the expression of emotion in the developing girl. This was expressed eloquently by the woman who saw her father as strong, "like a rock" and her mother as "...weak, emotional and not very secure...". She said,

....he adored how I was, that I was so strong and big, he would box with me, he encouraged the tom boy in me. He would tell people, proudly, that his daughter takes after him because I could cope with anything and didn't dissolve into an emotional state like my mother. So I saw my mother as being very weak, emotional and not very secure, manipulative and dependent, things like that, she has always been that for me (I).

#### 4.1.1.3 Relationships that were experienced as controlling versus those that were experienced as non-controlling.

Two different ways in which fathers were controlling in their relationships with their daughters was apparent. One was more benign than the other. On one extreme there was the father who erred on the side of rigidity. He was hard, cold and sometimes indifferent in response to his daughter. He would enslave his daughter through a strict authoritarian attitude. The emphasis was on obedience, duty and rationality. He insisted that his daughter have these same values. There was little emotional support in allowing her to do what she wanted to do, it had to conform to his expectations. This was highlighted by the following quotation,

When I was a teenager it was very difficult for me to get him to see what my needs were. To try to get him to have some idea what it was that I wanted in terms of my relationships with my friends. I think if he had his way, he would sort of, certainly keep every person away from me or anyone else in the family. He would have liked just us living on an island, with his precious cars. He could then order us around as he wanted. If he could keep people away for as long as he could, I think that would have made him very happy, he didn't understand the need to have outside interests. Not being able to have friends, specifically male friends, was very difficult" (E).

The other type of control was more insidious. Here the father used his "power" in a seemingly positive manner. However it resulted in a

feeling of powerlessness by the maturing woman.

Looking back I feel that my mom's weakness was a lot due to him because he never gave her the strength to do things like he did with me. I think that he kept her weak so that he could feel like the provider which he does absolutely fantastically, we couldn't want for anything. His whole generosity has a very controlling aspect to it without any strings attached like he would never use it against you, like he wouldn't say I gave you that so can't you do that for me, he would never do that. But it was something that established his role and position in the family that is why he needed to do it so much. It is very hard even though I find it claustrophobic sometimes and it makes me really mad I feel I can't tell him, I can't upset him or hurt his feelings. I find it hard to criticise him because he seems so good on the outside (I).

Both these forms of control were very apparent in the relationships that women had with their fathers, however the degree to which they were evident differed. The examples above are possibly the two extremes.

The perception that fathers allowed their daughters to make their own decisions in life and acknowledged their independence from an early age also has to some extent two extremes. On the one hand is the perception of the father who was a constant presence in the background of his daughters life, offering advice, guidance etc. when it was needed. One participant's perception of her father highlights this phenomenon.

My dad is incredibly hard working, he didn't set a

standard when I was growing up but he expected the same amount of effort that he would put into something.

As long as he could see that I was working that was okay. He never rewarded us with gifts, he made it clear that we achieved only for ourselves (A).

The other side was the father who was so disengaged that he offered no support or guidance to his daughter. There was no encouragement to perform or help her to set appropriate goals or to develop skills for her future. This is illustrated in the following passage,

He wasn't very involved in my schooling, sport or life in general I suppose. I don't think he had any expectations of me. I knew that I could do a lot better than I did. I did enough to get me through. I never felt pressurised by him to do better (G).

Another example is in the following quotation

I sometimes think that if he had pushed me a little bit it would have been better, I think I could have succeeded even more. A lot of the time I sort of made my own decisions without any in-put from him. He never pushed in any direction, it was always left up to me. He never encouraged me to go to varsity, I had to find out about all of that on my own, he was more worried how to pay for it. When I applied for a loan I had to do it all myself, he did stand surety, but it would have been nice to have him do the enquires with me, you know just that support would have been great. .... He never said go out

there and do exactly what you want to do, I'll be here if you need me (F).

#### 4.1.1.4 Relationship characterised by attraction versus repulsion.

This phenomenon involves the women's perception of their father's reaction to them as they were growing up. This involves both an emotional and physical level. When asked about early memories of their fathers, replies centred around "his tallness or size", "his chest", "the desire to be close to his body". Without exception there were visceral longings for the father's body, a desire to be held and to be loved. One woman described the size of her father's hands and how she loved it when he held her chin and brushed her hair (I). Another has early memories of her father lying with her until she fell asleep at night (H). Yet another says that she used to sleep between her parents, snuggling up to her father for comfort (F). With the exception of one woman (I) who admitted to having had sexual dreams about her father in the past, the women acknowledged a very early feeling of being drawn to their father for protection and comfort.

The quality of this aspect of the relationship changed as the developing girl got older. The degree to which the father acknowledged this change in his daughter and his reaction to it varied across the women's stories. However there were common themes that emerged.

One common perception was that the father could not cope with his daughters changing body during adolescence. One participant's disclosure captures the feeling that the father was unable to cope with his daughter's physical development. She reported an incident when she was about 12 years of age she had run from the bathroom to her

bedroom with no clothes on. She recalled, “he made a sign of revulsion, I remember it very clearly, I remember feeling quite embarrassed and wanting to hide from him” (C). She has always felt that he was troubled or disturbed by her body. She reported that she often felt his uneasiness when she was around especially if she was not fully dressed, or e.g. in low-cut tops. This remains her perception of him. She says that even at present she feels uneasy with him around sometimes, and would “never dream of being around him in my dressing gown, or a revealing top” (C). Although nothing overt has taken place it is her perception that he is repulsed by her body.

Another seemingly common reaction of the father was the failure to react or acknowledge the development of his daughter. It was almost as if he wanted to deny the fact that she was becoming a woman. The focus of attention within their relationship remained on her academic and athletic achievements. An example of this is the following,

my father has always seen me as his little girl. He didn't seem to notice that I was developing breasts and menstruating. Talk would always be around school, sport, friends and stuff like that. .... He hardly ever complimented me on what I was wearing or my hair. The message was always “you're so smart, you can take on anything.” I still don't think he notices (I).

#### 4.1.2. Part two: Perception of the self as a feminine being.

##### 4.1.2.1 Women who were not in touch with their own sense of femininity.

A dominant theme emanating from most of the interviews was that the feminine spirit of many of the women was displaced. Although all saw themselves as having a feminine sexuality some were totally unaware of and cut off from their feminine side. They saw the feminine as feeble and a hindrance in achieving their desired goals in life. These woman identified with the masculine ideals of power and control and felt that they would not be able to succeed in the male dominated society unless they adopted masculine values. This led to the devaluation of feminine feeling and intuition and that for something to be worthwhile it had to be concrete, difficult and quantifiable. The extreme of this is in one participant who so wanted to be like her father that she tried to deny that she was a girl until she was confronted with the changes in her body. Even then she tried hard to be asexual by wearing bisexual clothes. She saw the feminine as “.....all emotion and weakness and like my mom and I didn’t want to be like that” (I).

Another participant felt that the quality that she most cherished about herself was her ability to hide her feelings. She felt that emotions got in the way of relating to people. She says,

.....even at work no matter what I am going through personally no body would ever know how I feel. I just smile and go on as though nothing is wrong. I will select who I want to let know how I feel. ....



My motivation is to succeed in my career. I believe in myself and feel that I want to get what I want. I feel very driven, I have to do something, my mind has to be busy all the time (F).

Some women who had chosen to seek success in the male-oriented work world seem to have chosen this path to dispel the myth that the woman was the “weaker sex”. It was very important to them that they prove that they are intellectually competent and are both emotionally and financially independent. Their lives seemed to be geared towards getting the job done; climbing the corporate or social ladder; achieving prestige, position, financial equity and feeling powerful in the world.

One of the participants summed this up when she explained that her life goals were,

...I know what I want but it will just take time and hard work, I just have to be patient. If I see something that I want then I have to have it. My drive is heading towards my career, industrial psychology, I want to reach the top. I don't want to get married for the sake of getting married. I want to be independent. I don't want to be like my mother who never achieved anything at all by staying at home. I must be completely financially independent. I am not looking for relationships, if it comes along then all good and well. But most important for me is to have the security of position and possessions (F).

The above was re-iterated by two other women (E and D) who

explained their motivation for this need to achieve was because they felt that they had to show the world that they were as good as everyone else. The following illustrates this,

All my life my father has criticised me no matter how hard I try. It is never good enough, even now that I am 37 years old, he still treats me like a child. I run my own business and he still tries to tell me what to do in front of clients. It drives me wild. I take great relish in telling him how much money I have made on certain deals. I guess it's what keeps me going, funny isn't it! (D).

#### 4.1.2.2 Achieving a balance between the masculine and the feminine.

Few of the women interviewed seemed to have a good balance of both masculine and feminine qualities. Most were still battling to achieve this. Some had adopted the "masculine" approach of rational, logical thought where emotions play no part. As well as placing supreme importance on *doing*, anything less than doing "important work in the world" had no intrinsic value. Interestingly there was a common trend that this compulsive need to achieve and try new things failed to produce the desired reward these women were seeking. The following highlights this point,

I reach a level where I feel that I excel and then I give it up and move on to the next thing, I don't know why I am like that, the challenge is there and then I change. .... I am never really satisfied with my performance, I feel that I can always do better, I feel that I must set my sights high and in that way I am continually improving myself,

making myself a better person(F).

Another participant reiterated this,

...achievement is important but I try so many things and, you know, without sort of taking one plan and continuing and seeing it through to the end. I sort of go halfway and lose interest and then try something else. But I need to do my best. I won't settle if I don't feel that it was not my best. I'm never satisfied just doing something for the sake of doing it..... I don't think that I am ever satisfied with what ever I do, it is always a case of I could have put in more effort (E).

Coupled with this need to achieve was an assertion that the woman had to "do it on her own" as she could not rely on anyone. Perhaps this is most eloquently illustrated by a married woman who responded, ".....I am the only person that is going to get things done I realise that, I have to look after the whole family. They all depend on me" (G). When asked what she considered an important value to live by, her response was, "Always do what you can rather than ask someone else. I don't rely on anyone, I must do it myself" (G).

It was evident from the results that where the father had failed to provide for his daughter in a particular area of her life she attempted to, unconsciously, correct the deficiency as an adult. When asked about her intimate relationships a woman whose father had been an inconsistent and inadequate presence in her life, replied,

I've not had the greatest success with men! I seem to

choose men who get bored with me and cannot commit themselves to a long term relationship. My ex-husband was the same, in the beginning he was attentive and really showed that he cared about me..... he used to tell me I was claustrophobic, I was too demanding of his time....(C)

Others were aware that their partners had similar qualities to their fathers. This was usually the case in those women who had overidentified with their fathers and held them up as an example to emulate.

The woman who saw her father as a role model because he was “dynamic and full of energy” described her husband in very similar vein,

Geoff is an achiever, a go-getter, not afraid of hard work, someone who is good at what he does, he is a successful person. I consider my dad like that so obviously I would look for someone like that in a partner. What I see in my dad. A carbon copy of my dad (A).

Others instinctively felt unfulfilled and had or were embarking on an attempt to connect with their feminine qualities and achieve some sort of balance in their lives.

This process, of trying to find equilibrium between the two sides of oneself, was very eloquently described by one woman who had felt very affirmed by her father, but this had to some extent lead to her devaluing her mother and thus her own feminine side. She explained:

The thought of being a girl was weak, sissy and terrible. I hated love scenes in movies and dolls and anything feminine. My father is the opposite, he is as solid as a rock and tall and strong and he looks after the family and that is who I wanted to be and that is how I was and he adored how I was.....(I).

She went on to explain how she started to become discontent with her life during late adolescence,

I started to look at things differently. I started reading and saw how emotions are a positive aspect to ourselves.

I went through a stage that everything masculine was bad, you know like the way the world is run. Logic and rationality was bad and emotions and intuition was good.

My femininity is still to do with that, it has to do with going with the flow, that you are not fully in control of things, the flowing of your emotions, menstrual flow and hormones and stuff like that. That you can't always control yourself and you must just go with that, the masculine is the opposite. I have tried to achieve some kind of balance although it slips up and down every now and then (I).

This concludes the report on the findings on the hypothesized importance of the father-daughter relationship with regard to the development of femininity in women. The following chapter will focus on a detailed discussion of the reported findings.

## **CHAPTER FIVE**

### **DISCUSSION OF RESULTS**

The findings of the study show that the relationship between father and daughter is important in the development of femininity in women. More significantly it identifies some of the qualities within the relationship that are vital for the development of a healthy feminine sexuality. It could be said that the research hypothesis stated, that is, that a father who affirms his daughter and values her special feminine qualities contributes towards the development of her healthy femininity has not necessarily been found to be correct. It would seem that where the father affirms only certain aspects of his daughter's personality, for example her achievements, and fails to value her feminine side, is contributing to difficulties which she may have in identifying with the feminine.

The research also shows that where the father does not value the mother's contribution by acknowledging her strengths, the daughter perceives the feminine to be weak and ineffectual and distances herself from her mother and the mother within. (i.e. she internalises and rejects a mother who is weak and ineffectual and strives to be more like her father).

It is the above points that will be highlighted in this chapter through a discussion of the results presented in the previous chapter. The discussion will focus primarily on results pertinent to the aims of the present study.

The data collected shows how a daughter learns about many aspects of her femininity from her interactions with her father. How she feels

about herself as well as her sexuality. This effects how she behaves in the company of males and what she expects from males derives largely from her interactions with her father. She learns how to act as a female to please him and from his reactions she learns how to please males in general. Consequently the positive experience between daughter and father is one of the foundation stones for her future intimate relationships.

Where this relationship with father is so powerful it may, as shown in the results, be to the exclusion of the mother. It has been shown that where the daughter receives the message from her father that: *You're not like other women; you're like me.* With this message she experiences a confusing double bind: *You're not like other women* implies that other women are somehow weak and inferior and the daughter is not; *you're like me* overtly suggests that she is strong, independent and gifted. At the same time, the covert message is, "You will do everything like I would" -this is an insidious and limiting message. Thus she readily identifies with her father's thinking and actions and feels that she and her father are superior to her mother and indeed to other women.

In this case the woman overidentifies with her father and organises her life around the masculine principle, either remaining tied to the "father ideal" (Jung, 1982) or to be driven from within by the introjected ideal father (or the inner male). It is this inner male or animus figure which dominates how the woman will relate to the world. Jung (1982) gives a description of how a woman dominated by her animus communicates,

..... the animus encourages a critical  
disputatiousness and would-be highbrowism, which,

however, consists essentially in harping on some irrelevant weak point and nonsensically making it the main one. Or a perfectly lucid discussion gets tangled up in the most maddening way through the introduction of a quite different and if possible perverse point of view. Without knowing it, such woman are solely intent upon exasperating the man and are, in consequence, the more completely at the mercy of the animus. "Unfortunately I am always right," one of these creatures once confessed to me (p. 97).

These woman are dominated by the need to control and to feel powerful. In this way the woman tends to devalue the feminine in the world as well as her own feminine side because she is cut off from her feeling and receptivity and the strength of her feminine instincts. She has remained 'in her attachment to her father - that is, in the Oedipus complex....' (Freud, 1933). The woman wants to identify with the glamour, prestige, authority, independence of the male world. The mother's approval does not matter as much because it is the father who defines the feminine and this affects her ability to relate to men and her ability to pursue success in the world.

Where the mother is totally dependent on her husband for fulfilment the developing girl feels that she has to be more independent and more self-sufficient to achieve anything. She depends on no one. She drives herself relentlessly, never allowing herself to be cared for. In the extreme she has little value for emotional relationships and she lacks empathy and compassion for those that are vulnerable.

There is a very fine balance the father has to achieve in the approval



and encouragement that he bestows on his daughter for this will ultimately lead to a woman's positive ego development. A lack of genuine involvement or negative involvement will also deeply affect a woman's sense of self. The results have shown how this may lead to feelings that the father is weak and inadequate or that he is not really interested in her as a worthwhile individual. The results have shown that for those women who felt that their fathers had failed to give them what they yearned for in one area or another - (as discussed in the findings, inter alia recognition of ideas, support for her choices, someone who they could look up to, support and guidance, and support of her dreams) - have projected these unfulfilled cravings onto others in her adult life. For example the woman who, throughout her childhood, wanted her father to be a constant and protective figure in her life tried to achieve this in her relationships, wanting people to take care of her and always to be there for her. There is a constant longing for another "daddy" to make up for what her father failed to give her.

Some of the women have identified on the ego level with the masculine or fathering functions themselves. Since their fathers do not give them what they need, they find they have to do it themselves. So they build up a strong masculine ego identity through achievement or fighting for a cause or being in control and laying down the law themselves. This helps the woman to develop professionally, but it also serves as a protective shell, an armour against the pain of rejection (because he doesn't meet her needs either through inadequacy or weakness) by their fathers. It also has the effect of shielding her from her own feminine feelings and her soft side. The woman's animus urges her on to greater heights and never allows her to let up or to permit herself to be loved, to feel satisfied or even to rest. This may lead to women becoming alienated from their own creativity, from healthy

relationships with men and from spontaneity and vitality of living.

If one has a look at Freudian theory (1933) it could be said that the woman who feels driven to achieve in the manner described above may be holding onto the wish to possess the desired penis which father has but she doesn't. If the penis represents male power it is this then that she so desires. The seeking of continual achievement may be recognised as a sublimated modification of this repressed wish.

During the resolution of the Oedipus complex the available and caring father helps his daughter differentiate herself from her first love-object (her mother). Part of her development task as she matures will be to resolve her early attachment to her father and transfer her love to another male. If the girl has remained in her attachment to her father - that is, in the Oedipus complex - her choice of a partner will be similar to her father. In order to facilitate this process the father must be willing to let go of his daughter so that she is free to love another. According to Samuels (1985) the father has a two fold task with his daughter: 'The father's first fertilization helped to make the female baby. His second helps to bring forth the female adult, who is then free to drop her father when and if she needs to' (p. 129)

The results show that where there is a fixation or regression in the father's own libidinal development this does not allow him to respond to his daughter's needs when she reaches the developmental stage of searching for a love object. Leonard (1965) states that these fathers cannot allow the oedipal relationship to develop. Consequently their daughters remain fixated at, or regress to, the preoedipal level (when the love-object is the mother). This is particularly true of the young woman whose perception of her father was one of embarrassment at her body, although she did not feel that there was anything sexual in the

way he looked at her, she did feel that he “leered” at her. This woman’s father was not able to help her separate from her mother, possibly because he was not available to her as a love-object. She reported that her relationship with her mother has always been extremely acrimonious and yet ambivalent.

The data shows that for those women who idealised and overidentified with their fathers, it was difficult to relinquish the father because he was held up as a role model on which they shaped and lived their lives. These women had partners who had similar qualities to their father’s, qualities which they greatly admired in their father. In addition, those women who held their fathers in such high esteem and valued what he (i.e. the masculine) stood for, tended to have a poor or under developed sense of their own femininity. It was clear that certain aspects of their lives are unfulfilled. They feel insecure and distrustful in intimate relationships and are not able to express themselves emotionally. They feel uncomfortable with who they are as women, and continually try to achieve greater heights in their careers at the expense of other areas of their lives.

The importance of the father in the development of his daughter’s femininity is evident from the results of the present study. More importantly the study highlighted the areas within the relationship that are of formative value to the young girl who has to negotiate the difficult path to achieving a feminine sexuality.

## 5.1. LIMITATIONS AND RECOMMENDATIONS

The most obvious limitation of the study was around methodological issues. A second person to interpret the data may have added other dimensions to the study. This would also have countered any bias on the part of the researcher.

The study highlighted further areas of research within the father-daughter relationship. Specific types of father-daughter relationships and the effect that they may have on the developing girl would enable one to make comparisons in order to ascertain which is the healthiest for the woman.

As this study interviewed only the daughters, and obtained only the daughter's perspective of her father, future research could interview the father as well and acquire his perspective. The results would then represent both the father's and the daughter's reality.

Although not within the scope of this work, the role of the mother, as the girl's immediate example of the feminine and with whom she must identify with, is obviously extremely important. Further studies to investigate the triangular relationship would be enlightening.

## CHAPTER SIX CONCLUSION

The study established that the father plays a crucial role in the way the woman sees herself in relation to the world in which she lives. It has been shown that in order for the woman to develop a healthy sense of her feminine self, her father needs to acknowledge and appreciate her feminine nature. He must also acknowledge the strength and unique qualities of the mother. The developing girl needs to experience her father as an emotionally attuned person who does not reject his own feminine side.

It has been shown that women have two fathers - their personal fathers and their "internal fathers", or the fathers-inside-their-heads. In other words, the aspects of their fathers that they have internalised and which influences who they are and how they do things. The "internal father" is combined of aspects of the woman's personal father and the archetypal father. The archetypal father takes on a variety of personas and temperaments, depending upon the personal, religious and cultural images that the developing girl came into contact with. She may have internalised negative messages that bind her to the "internal father" that she continually strives to please. In this case it is difficult for the woman to "hear" what her own needs are. This may result, as has been shown in the study, in the woman living her life according to masculine principles and neglecting or, worse still, being so split off from her feelings that she is not able to feel the rich emotional component to healthy living. It is therefore essential that young girls find a middle course in the relationship with their father. In this way she can develop a positive father image within her self - one upon which she can draw upon for strength and guidance and which enable

her to appreciate the positive side of masculinity in both her inner and outer worlds.

The achievement of a healthy sense of femininity in women also greatly depends upon how her mother and father perceive and value the feminine aspects of life. It has been shown that where the feminine is de-valued the developing girl may reject that part of herself because she perceives it as weak and inferior. In order for the woman to appreciate her feminine nature it is essential that the feminine is seen, not only by her father, but by society as a whole to be of great worth and essential to healthy living. On a more personal level, fathers need to be aware of and cherish his feminine side. This is especially difficult because in the broader society and culture his own feminine side has been sacrificed to the ideals of the macho-masculine power and authority.

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## **APPENDIX A**

### **Interview schedule**

It should be noted that the interview process was not a fixed process. The questions below were areas of interest which the researcher felt would assist in obtaining the necessary information from the participants.

It was important to probe each of the questions fully and sensitively. Exploring the woman's feelings is of vital importance.

### **Part one.**

1. What is the earliest memory that you have of your father?
2. Did you and your father ever do anything special together?
3. What was the quality of your relationship like?
4. Was there a favourite in the family?
5. What was your mother's reaction to your relationship with him?
6. Did he show an interest in your schooling, sport etc?
7. Do you feel that he should more interest in your brothers?
8. What is your "warmest" feeling when you think of your father?
9. Have you ever fantasized about your father in anyway?
10. When you were a teenager how did your father respond to you, i.e. when your body started changing, going out with boys etc?
11. Did he ever comment on what you were wearing, show an interest in how you looked?
12. Was there a time when you felt that your father's attitude/attention towards you changed?

The second part of the interview related to the assessment of the woman's sense of her femininity, or her sense of being a woman.

13. How do you see yourself as a woman? What part of being a woman do you cherish most?
14. What are the important goals that you have? Do you have a philosophy to life?
15. Do you feel that you are your "own person" or do you feel compelled to follow the "flow"?
16. What is your idea of the "ideal woman"?
17. How do you feel about asserting yourself in all aspects of your life?
18. How do you see yourself in the world to-day? Are there aspects of yourself or your life that you would like to change/ do differently?
19. Are there aspects of yourself that you do not like and that haunt you?
20. What sort of situation or person really frightens/intimidates you?