

EMPOWERMENT AND DE — EMPOWERMENT IN FATHER — DAUGHTER INCEST: ON
BREAKING CYCLES OF SILENCE

by

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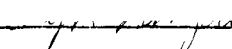
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Empowerment and De-empowerment in Father-Daughter Incest:
Breaking Cycles of Silence

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ABSTRACT

This study examined the roles that disclosure and social reaction to incestuous experiences play in the incestuous process and its effects. Attention was devoted to the relationship between event parameters and their prospective effects, as well as to the barriers of communication that sexually victimized women come up against in trying to break the "cycle of silence" which typically surrounds their experience. This thesis incorporates the notion of "power" in addressing the above issues, particularly how the perpetrator is "empowered" and how he becomes "de-empowered".

A sample of 33 adult volunteers (all female) responded to a questionnaire which combined open and close-ended questions, Semantic Differential items, and social reaction matrices in order to assess the respondents' attitudes to the event, the disclosure and their present situation.

Results revealed that a clear distinction can be made between communication patterns in childhood and adult years in terms of disclosure. When children informed family members of their experience, reaction and support were minimal. In turn, the victim felt mixed emotions, including a great deal of confusion. However, in adulthood, accessibility to helping professionals (e.g., social workers) broadens their disclosure network. The need to communicate with as many individuals as possible about their experience was evident, and at that later

point, reaction and support to the event were deemed favourable. The survivors claimed to have a more positive self-image and proposed an optimistic future.

Disclosure is thus discussed as an important aspect in the "de-empowering" process of the perpetrator, as well as in assisting in the recovery process of the victim. Recommendations are made, directed particularly at breaking down contemporary barriers of communication for victims of sexual abuse. Future research directions emerging from this exploratory thesis are also articulated.

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DEDICATION

To those courageous women who shared their experiences with me

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CHAPTER I

INTRODUCTION

Past research in the area of child abuse has focused predominantly on the physical aspects of maltreatment, with child sexual abuse, as recently as ten years ago, regarded as a rather uncommon problem. Scholars such as Freud and Kinsey devoted considerable attention to child sexual abuse as early as the turn of the century, but stopped short of expressing alarm about the problem. In the late 1970's, however, official reports of sexual abuse began to "mushroom at a more rapid rate than reports of other forms of abuse" (Finkelhor, 1984:1). Sexual abuse emerged as one of the most pervasive forms of child abuse.

SIGMUND FREUD

It is tempting to suggest that the attitudes and beliefs prevalent in the Victorian period precluded the issue of childhood sexual abuse becoming public. Certainly, its absence from discussion was not due to lack of awareness of its existence. Freud came across the 'secret' of incest early in his career, and it was Freud "who first opened up the subject of childhood sexuality, to the dismay and shock of his Victorian peers" (Renvoize, 1982:35). After hearing female patients describe incidents of sexual molestation with male relatives (predominantly fathers), Freud began to formulate a theory of child sexual assault. Since most of his patients who disclosed

this information were said to suffer from 'hysteria' – a Victorian ailment commonly affecting and/or ascribed to many middle-class women – Freud developed the theory that hysteria was a neurosis caused by sexual assault (Gubberman and Wolfe, 1985; Rush, 1980). His theory of the female neurosis was put forth in 1896 with the publication of two works – 'The Aetiology of Hysteria' and 'Studies on Hysteria' – in which he proclaimed that at the origin of every case of hysteria, there existed a childhood sexual trauma (Herman, 1981).

Freud subsequently became troubled with his findings, at least in part because of what it implied about the behavior of otherwise 'respectable' family men, i.e., fathers (Herman and Hirshman, 1977; Shultz, 1980). If what his patients were disclosing were true, then incest was not confined to social outcasts and the poor, but must be very much a part of the well-respected 'patriarchal' family (Gallagher, 1985; Herman, 1981). According to Herman (1981), Freud recognized the implicit challenge this gave to patriarchal values and therefore refused to identify fathers publically as sexual aggressors. Rush (1980) added that Freud was

unable to admit that women could contribute beyond the role of passive wives and mothers, and held along with others that they were inherently defective. As a result, he could not acknowledge that they suffered from sexual abuse and social inequality and discrimination (95).

Freud's revised theory specified the problem as being female in nature, concluding that his patients' accounts were mere figments of their imaginations, based on their own sexual

desires for their fathers (Russell, 1986). It was argued that the little girl desired her father and a penis which she herself could never possess, which in turn resulted in her fantasies and seductive behavior. Thus, the oedipal relationship of females shifted responsibility for incestuous acts from the father onto the daughter, as the oedipus theory postulates a strong impulse in every child for physical union with the parent of opposite sex. Finkelhor (1984) states that "the focus on the sexual interests of the child tended to put blame on the child's seductiveness and not on the adult's irresponsibility" (p.11). Some have expressed the belief that Freud abandoned his seduction theory of males (which incriminates the incestuous father), and adopted the oedipal complex in females (where seduction was a fantasy, thus incriminating daughters), in order to restore his credibility among his colleagues (Crewdson, 1988; Masson, 1984). Freud's decision to do this, according to Masson (1984), a psychoanalyst, was a "personal failure of courage and a momentous about face that would affect the lives of countless patients in psychotherapy from 1900 to the present" (Crewdson, 1988:40).

ALFRED KINSEY

Halliday et al. (1986) suggest that it was not until the 1950's that the belief that children fantasize and over-react to sexual abusive events surfaced once again with reports from Alfred Kinsey and his associates. Kinsey had gained

international fame with his work on previously taboo subjects such as masturbation, extramarital sex and homosexual contacts among men, which received enormous attention. On the other hand, the finding that grown men frequently permit themselves sexual liberties with children while grown women do not, made virtually no impact upon the public consciousness, even though this finding was repeatedly confirmed by other investigators (Herman, 1981:16).

Kinsey "never denied the reality of child sexual abuse but did as much as he could to minimize its importance" (Herman, 1981:16). Kinsey was skeptical about reports from female victims who responded negatively to abusive childhood sexual experiences. According to Herman (1981), Kinsey displayed a "less said the better" attitude on this subject. Herman (1981) argued that the huge amount of information contained in interviews conducted by Kinsey and his colleagues remained buried in the files of the Institute for Sexual Research - "the public, in the judgement of these men, was not ready to hear about incest" (p.18).

Kinsey tried to assure the public that they should not be upset by these events of abuse and that his reports did not actually reflect abuse, but "cultural conditioning" (Herman, 1981; Russell, 1986). In Kinsey's (1953) words,

It is difficult to understand why a child except for cultural conditioning, should be disturbed at having its genitalia touched or disturbed at seeing the genitalia of the other persons, or disturbed at even more specific sexual contacts....Some of the more experienced students of juvenile problems have come to believe that the emotional reactions of the parents, police officers and other adults who discover that the child has had such a contact, may disturb the child more seriously than the sexual contacts themselves (p.121).

What Kinsey has described above is understandable in so far as it argues for tolerance regarding different sexual practices and restraint in official reactions. Certainly it was consistent with Kinsey et al.'s expressed hopes to liberalize contemporary sexual attitudes which, according to them, were too restrictive. However, Kinsey and his associates missed an important point – that of the disturbing power differential between men and children, and the exploitative aspects of incest.

THE WOMEN'S MOVEMENT AND MEDIA RESPONSE

Despite their bold advances in other areas, Freud and Kinsey found little cause for concern with the "reality" of child sexual abuse. Others took the accounts at face value and found a pervasive phenomenon across all segments of society. Two such powerful forces – the Women's Movement and the Children's Protection Movement – came together in the 1970's in an effort to raise public awareness regarding sexual abuse. Both groups had gained a great deal of credibility, and had grown in their social and political influence (Finklehor, 1984; Gallagher, 1985; Renvoize, 1982).

Until recently, women had kept such experiences as rape, wife abuse and incestuous encounters a secret – no one wanted to hear, let alone discuss such an issue. The rise of feminism saw women talking to one another about such events, sharing their experiences, and realizing that they were neither alone nor the ones to blame (Gubberman and Wolfe, 1985; Kendrick, 1988). As a

manifestation of this more open attitude, women began to write about their experiences. Confessional books about such experiences began to appear (Kendrick, 1988). Finkelhor (1984) notes that, between 1978 and 1982 (when the knowledge/information explosion occurred), at least a dozen books appeared on the subject of sexual abuse, half of which were personal accounts.

A number of these books are noteworthy: Katherine Brady's (1979) Father's Days; Louise Armstrong's (1978) Kiss Daddy Goodnight; Charlotte Allen's (1980) Daddy's Girl; and Linda Halliday's (1982) The Silent Scream. Like Sylvia Fraser's (1987) My Father's House, these accounts all seem to have the same message for their reader: one can become a survivor of abuse and eventually recover from such victimization. Foucault's (1978) notion of the intrinsic relation between knowledge and power is important here as it is really the lack of information flow that helped reaffirm the power status quo. By breaking the impediment to information flow – partly through such personages as Freud and Kinsey, who challenged the repressive aspects of the Victorian era and allowed us to talk about sex – the Women's Movement encouraged women to look at the darker side of both sex and power, as epitomized in child sexual abuse.

One significant change that has occurred over the last few years is that books are now being written for an audience of possible victims: children. For example, Oralea Watcher's book, No More Secrets for Me is targeted at younger victims of abuse

(Twitchell, 1987). Women's magazines such as, Redbook, Women's Day, Glamour, and Good Housekeeping have also made room for such an issue to be explained to their readers. Good Housekeeping in (Oct, 1988) and Glamour in (Nov, 1988) both dealt with the issue of mothers who go to jail to protect their children from abusive fathers - a new problem that a number of women are facing with respect to child custody. In Good Housekeeping (Oct, 1988) Jacobbi and Wright described the scenario as follows:

A divorced mother has custody of her child, but her ex-husband has liberal visitation. The child gives the mother reason to believe that the father may be sexually abusing the child. Terrified by the possibility, the mother goes to court to request that custody be reconsidered and that the father's visitation be either terminated or supervised. The father denies the allegations and a messy and costly battle ensues. In the end the father is allowed to continue to see the child as before (p.158).

The mother is then faced with a very difficult decision - does she allow unsupervised visitation with her husband, despite fears that the child may be in danger, or does she obey the court and go against what has been ordered? If she decides to do the latter, she risks being found in contempt of court and sent to jail.

Elizabeth Morgan of Washington D.C., a successful surgeon and author of several books, decided to defy the court in exactly such a circumstance, and hid her five year old daughter, only to face a jail sentence. Glamour (1988) ran an article on her bitter fight with the courts to save her daughter from her ex-husband.

Local and national papers in Canada also reported the Morgan case. The Toronto Star (Kastner, Sept.25, 1988), for example, ran a full page special report on it, indicating that Elizabeth planned to stay in jail - a pledge that she has made to keep her daughter safe and protected. Kastner reports that Elizabeth claims that she is not fighting a custody battle, she is really "waging war on the D.C. government to protect her child" (p.A6). More recently, President Bush signed into legislation a special short-term Bill designed specifically to free Elizabeth Morgan without compelling her to describe her daughter's whereabouts. Meanwhile, her ex-husband continues to press charges - the case continues. (The Toronto Star, Kastner, Oct.15, 1989)

The newspaper has been a powerful medium for survivors of incest to tell their personal stories of hope and healing. Full-length articles on incest have appeared in popular newsmagazines such as Newsweek, People, and Time (Twitchell, 1987). One survivor explained her coming forward by noting that "she wants other victims to consider that, like her, the nightmare of incest can be put behind them" (Toronto Star, Nov. 15, 1988). After persevering with court proceedings, the offender in her case was finally convicted and she was given a financial award by the Victims Compensation Board to cover pain and suffering, legal and therapy fees, and tuition for future schooling. Other articles have been written by mothers who have discovered, to their shock and dismay, that their own children were being victimized by incestuous abuse (see Vancouver Sun Oct. 27, 1988).

The visual media have followed suit. From talk show panel discussions (e.g., Phil Donahue, Oprah Winfrey), to weekly serials (e.g., In the Heat of the Night), to prime time movies (e.g., ABC-TV's Something About Amelia, 1984), incestuous abuse is garnering TV attention. Films such as To a Safer Place and Nightengale Roars, each depict one incest victim's journey to healing and survival.

The National Film Board's presentation of To a Safer Place (1987) focusses on Shirley Turcotte, who was sexually abused by her father from infancy to adolescence, until she eventually escaped by leaving home. The film shows Shirley visiting her sister and two brothers, all of whom also suffered from their father's brutality. Returning to the old family home in Winnipeg, she tries to piece together a broken and distorted childhood. Her purpose for doing the film was simple: breaking the cycle of secrecy and silence, and hoping it would encourage others in the same situation to do the same.

Like Turcotte, Constance Nightengale (in Nightengale Roars: An Incest Survivor's Journey to Freedom, 1988) also returns to her family home in order to confront her past and, in doing so, begins her own healing process. According to Jane Henriques, who produced the film, Constance felt it was very important that she tell her story publicly because one of the key aspects of her and other survivor's experiences was a feeling of guilt and shame. Both of these are eliminated once the victim comes to terms with the experience not being their fault.

In sum, a burgeoning number of books, magazines, television shows, newspaper articles and films have drawn attention to what had earlier been a difficult issue to discuss. According to Porter (1984), "the result of all of this has been a considerable upsurge of interest, both in recognizing sexual abuse of children, and in clarifying how and when to get help in dealing with the problem" (p.xix).

PREVALENCE AND INCIDENCE

It is important to point out that there are no clear standard definitions of 'child sexual abuse' and 'incest'. Different researchers incorporate varying definitions to best fit their research purposes, making it very difficult to establish any one as all-inclusive or pre-emptive. De Young (1982) notes that some researchers adopt the criterion of "sexual intercourse with a blood relative" in order to establish a case of incest (e.g., see Martin, 1958; Rascovsky and Rascovsky, 1950; Wahl, 1960; Weinberg, 1955); others more broadly include any sexual contact short of intercourse between relatives (see Rinehart, 1961; Tompkins, 1940; Weiner, 1962). Other researchers have also included cases of sexual advances or even sexual interest between blood relatives in their incest studies (Bender and Blau, 1937; Howard, 1959). The defining attribute is not the "extent" of the behavior, according to these researchers, but in the motivation behind it (De Young, 1982).

Family demographics have changed over the years, with divorce widespread and re-marriage and re-coupling quite common. This is noteworthy, since a consistent finding in the sexual abuse literature is that children are at higher risk of abuse when they live with a step-father or mother's boyfriend than with a biological father (Finkelhor, 1979, 1984; Miller, 1976; Russell, 1984). It is for this reason that some researchers have specified that sexual behavior need not necessarily be between blood relatives to be classified as incestuous in nature, i.e., it is the role relationship which is most important. "They believe that in those cases in which a person has served as a family member, such as an adoptive, foster or step-parent; and in cases in which a person is considered to be like a family member, such as a very close friend, sexual behavior between that person and that child may be considered incestuous" (De Young, 1982:2). Clearly, the way one defines 'incestuous abuse' will influence how often one will find it.

According to Russell (1984), "prevalence" refers to the percentage of girls who were victimized by incest at some time in their lives i.e., level of risk within specified populations, while "incidence" is defined as the number of cases that occur within a specific time period – usually one year i.e., a rate per time statistic (p.59).

In one set of nationwide incidence data, the numbers of cases reported to the American Humane Association (AHA) increased from 1,975 in 1976 and 4,327 in 1977 to 22,918 in 1982

(Finkelhor, 1984:1).

Extrapolating from these figures, the National Incidence study attempted to estimate the number of new cases of sexual abuse known to professionals, and concluded with a figure of 44,700 for the year starting in April 1979 (Finkelhor, 1984:1). Obviously any such estimates are problematic in terms of estimating the true scope of the problem (Finkelhor, 1986; Finkelhor and Hoatling, 1983). Many reports of child abuse are never passed on to child protective agencies, and State Authorities, in turn are unable to give complete information to the AHA.

Weinberg in his study, published in 1955, estimated that there were 1.1 cases of incest per million people in the United States in 1930 (Butler, 1985; Crewdson, 1988; Russell, 1986; Schultz, 1980; Weinberg, 1976). Russell (1986) points out further that Franco Ferracuti (1972) estimated that between one and four cases of incest per million persons occurs every year throughout the world (p.59). Clearly, "true" incidence rates for incest are as elusive as those for prevalence noted above.

AMERICAN PREVALENCE STUDIES

Prevalence studies of child sexual abuse were conducted as early as 1929 (see Hamilton, 1929), although the largest of the studies was that by Kinsey and his associates in 1953 where more than 4,000 American women were interviewed. Twenty-four percent of the subjects were found to report pre-adolescent sexual

contact with an older male i.e., before puberty (Finkelhor, 1986; Herman, 1981). Russell (1986) took the Kinsey data one step further. Interpolating from Kinsey's data on the proportion of incest cases, Russell (1986) found that two to three percent of females in the Kinsey study reported being sexually abused by a relative before the age of 14 (p.64).

More recently, Finkelhor surveyed a group of college students in New England; of the 530 female students who responded, 19% of the women indicated having been sexually assaulted prior to the age of 16 by older men (Crewdson, 1988; Finkelhor, 1986; Herman, 1981; Rush, 1980; Schlesinger, 1986). Finkelhor's definition of child sexual victimization included incestuous abuse, enabling Russell (1986) to calculate that approximately 10% of the 530 females in Finkelhor's sample were victimized by a relative. In a second study by Finkelhor of 334 female parents in the Boston metropolitan area, 15% of the women reported having been sexually abused before the age of 16, and approximately a third of these involved a relative (Russell, 1986:66).

Russell (1983), in turn, studied a random sample of 930 women in the San Francisco area. Her study was based on the accounts of 187 incest experiences obtained from interviews with 152 incest victims (Russell, 1986:10). According to her findings, 16% of the 930 women had been sexually abused by a relative before the age of 18, and 4.5% had been sexually abused by their fathers before this age (Russell, 1983; Schlesinger,

1986). Russell (1986) found that 38% of the women questioned reported an experience of sexual abuse before the age of 18 (this included relatives, acquaintances and strangers) and 28% before the age of 14 (Crewdson, 1988; Porter, 1984;). Wyatt's (1985) sample of 248 women in Los Angeles, although smaller than Russell's, reveals a comparable prevalence of incest.

A CANADIAN PREVALENCE STUDY

One recent Canadian study, described in The Report of the Committee on Sexual Offences Involving Children and Youth (otherwise known as the Badgley Report), was commissioned by the Committee in 1979 and completed in 1984. Its purpose was "to enquire into the adequacy of the laws of Canada in providing protection to children from sexual offences and make recommendations for improving that protection" (Robertson, 1988:1). "As part of its research, the report commissioned a random national survey of 2,138 individuals, 94% of whom responded to a written questionnaire" (Kendrick, 1988:83). The results of this poll indicated that approximately 1 in 2 of the females (54%) under the age of 18 had been victims of unwanted sexual acts (Badgley, 1984). The Badgley Report's definition of 'unwanted sexual acts' included exposures, being sexually threatened or touched, and/or being the victim of an attempted or completed sexual assault (Robertson, 1988; Schlesinger, 1986). Among the female victims,

18% of the assaults were perpetrated by a stranger; 10% involved a close relative (sibling, parent or grandparent); 14% involved other degrees of blood relatives or family members, such as step-parents; 1%

involved persons in a position of trust, such as a teacher and 57% involved someone else known to the victim (Kendrick, 1988:85)

One can see that there is definite variation in the incidence of incestuous child abuse among the studies conducted so far. The range is anywhere from 2 to 16%. Much of this variation is undoubtedly due to definitional differences, differences among regional areas examined, and methodological factors. Nevertheless, Finklehor (1979) claims that,

what we are witnessing is a revolution in consciousness, a situation where, because of changed mores, professionals are more sensitive to identifying instances of sexual abuse and victims and their families are more willing than before to seek help (p.132).

PURPOSE OF THESIS AND CHAPTER SUMMARY

There are at least two schools of thought on the incestuous experience and the effects that it has had on the victim. One school views incest as harmful to the victim on a short term and/or long term basis, while the other school sees incest as a potentially positive experience in the child's life. The purpose of this thesis is not to debate the relative merits of these two positions, however, for it is conceivable and plausible that a range of effects from none to disastrous may emerge from that broad range of events and circumstances which might be considered 'incest' by one or another definition. Moreover, one focus of the current thesis was to investigate the relationship between event parameters and their prospective effects.

In addition, however, the thesis represents an exploratory undertaking into an additional set of variables which have not yet received adequate empirical scrutiny in the literature. Specifically, the thesis addresses the time between "the event" and "now". My particular interest was in the role that social reaction to the event plays in the incestuous process and its effects, as well as in examining the barriers of communication that victimized women face in trying to break the cycle of silence that surrounds such matters.

Accordingly, an effort was made to acquire as large a sample as possible of incest survivors. Three groups were solicited for participation in the research: (a) self-help group volunteers; (b) incest victims contacted through social workers, psychologists and friends; and (c) a volunteer sample recruited through newspaper advertisements. Utilizing such diverse target sources offered a pragmatic route to attaining as heterogenous a cross-section of individuals as possible to take part in the research. Data were gathered by a combination of survey and interview methods. In order to construct the basic research instrument, it was assumed that both the victim's actual experience and social reaction to it would play a role in constructing the 'effects' of incestuous abuse. This thesis explores how 'variations' in incestuous event and social reaction may intertwine over time to produce both short and longer term impacts.

Chapter II addresses the history of child sexual abuse - incorporating the issue of 'power'. Then the focus will change to the actual experience which will outline the different types of incestuous relationships and characteristics of participants involved. The issue of disclosure and reactions by family members will also be discussed and, finally, the impact of the experience on both a short and long term basis will be addressed.

CHAPTER II

LITERATURE REVIEW

HISTORY OF CHILD SEXUAL ABUSE

Historical documentation of the sexual abuse of children can be found in The Best Kept Secret by Florence Rush (1980), in which she claims that sexual victimization and exploitation of female children, particularly by family members, is not a new phenomenon, but as old as Western Civilization.

Nevertheless, our notion of what "childhood" is today is very different from what was believed in the past. Children were not set apart from adults as they are now (i.e., no diminished sense of responsibility). The young child worked and was expected to act and behave as a little adult at a very young age. Therefore, "because children were not accorded a special status, there was not much concern about whether sex between adults and children was good or bad" (Crewdson, 1988:35). Postman (1982) claims that the idea of "childhood" was one of the great inventions of the Renaissance. Further, "childhood both as a social structure and a psychological condition emerged around the sixteenth century and has been refined and nourished into our own times" (Postman, 1982:xii).

The Bible and the Talmud both encouraged "sex between men and very little girls in marriage, concubinage and slavery" (Rush, 1980: 17). The Talmud held that a female child of "three

years and one day" could, with her father's permission, be betrothed by sexual intercourse (Rush, 1980:17).

The Biblical female child was strictly her father's property. In turn, marriage as well as prostitution were seen as largely economic transactions. An interested buyer could purchase a daughter from her father for a specified amount (Rush, 1980). Once the transaction was complete, the buyer now became the new owner of the goods – i.e., the daughter.

Rape during the biblical period was not sanctioned the way it is today. It was seen as a crime of 'theft' (theft of the father's property) especially if the act took place with an unbetrothed female. As punishment for stealing the woman's virginity (i.e., damaged the father's 'goods'), the rapist was required to compensate financially the female's father, thereby erasing the wrongdoing.

It is important to note "there was no biblical prohibition against prostitution, only against the child who defied her father's authority" (Vander Mey and Nell, 1986:7). Nevertheless, according to Rush (1980), if an acceptable monetary transaction between the buyer and the seller occurred, the sexual act between the unbetrothed female and the man was respected. It was only when the daughter gave such freely of herself without her father's consent that she was coined a 'harlot'.

According to the Talmud, females were encouraged to marry between the ages of twelve and twelve and one half. A male child

however, when he reached the age of thirteen (age of majority), was able to make his own decisions as to his future – a clear double-standard. Therefore, within the confines of Hebrew law, men who were having sexual relations with very young girls were neither uncommon nor socially unacceptable.

With the rise of Christianity, what is now considered sexual abuse with children continued at high rates. Rush (1980) claims that,

Christian Knights, Noblemen, Crusaders and Princes of the Church regularly ravished women and children and for money and power little Christian girls were regularly traded in marriages (p. 30).

This attitude of males having sexual relations with young females also prevailed in France during the thirteenth through sixteenth centuries. Rush (1980) states, for example, that in thirteenth century France, "parents gave their daughters in marriage when money and opportunity presented itself" (p. 20). Feldman (1974) provides the following rationalization as to why parents at this time engaged in such behavior with respect to their daughters: Parents claim that

this is due to the fact that persecution and exile overcomes us everyday and if one can afford to give his daughter a dowry, he fears that tomorrow, he may not be able to do this and his daughter will remain forever unmarried (p.178).

The nineteenth century, with its industrial advancement, did not provide much help for the sexually victimized female. The attraction for little girls still prevailed, pornography became widespread, and child prostitution grew. It wasn't until the

late 1880's that Josephine Butler, the first crusader against sexual exploitation of females, spoke out in British Parliament about the issue being problematic, and that real notice was taken (Rush, 1980).

Rush (1980), throughout her book, tries to illustrate that child sexual abuse is not a new issue. As Vander Mey et al. (1986) point out, "what is different today is that the sexual use of children by adults (especially fathers and other males) has come under attack by women's rights and children's rights groups" (p.8).

As Gil (1980) claims, "what is needed to prevent such victimization of children, is a re-definition of childhood and the rights of children, rejecting the notions that children are property and not persons in their own right" (p.381). If the perpetrator feels that his victim is his property to do with as he feels fit, victimization will continue to occur.

One needs to be sensitive to past standards in so far as what we now construe as "children" and "sexual abuse" were not seen in the same terms as before. In turn, it is important that one remains descriptive with respect to patriarchy and the sense of property it entailed. In the 1980's, however, our view of the situation is different: we do not believe in persons as property, but we do believe that there is a power differential between parents and children, and we do perceive parental exploitation of children for sexual purposes as abominable and criminal, in both the moral and legal sense.

A FEMINIST INTERPRETATION: THE ISSUE OF POWER

The feminist interpretation of incestuous behavior focuses most centrally on the issue of "power". Susan Brownmiller (1975) argues that incestuous victimization of children should really be viewed as 'father-rape' (p.281), and its legitimization an unfortunate and offensive remnant of patriarchy: "In patriarchal societies, women were men's original corporal property and children wholly owned subsidiaries" (p.281). And although a blatant sense of "ownership" is not an accepted part of contemporary family life, feminists argue that the notion that the father rules the household is still ingrained in our society. Arguments against incest abuse being 'rape' have been put forth by Finkelhor (1978), who claims that rape is generally a one time occurrence and involves force. However, Vander Mey et al. (1986) describe such victimization as rape, "because a parent abuses his position of dominance sexually exploiting a child while at the same time, disrupting a child's sense of security and progress toward autonomy which families are to foster" (p.38).

Herman and Hirshmann (1977) see all societies as patriarchal, and claim that in this particular structure, both women and children are viewed as property. With respect to father-daughter incest, they "suggest that if fathers were not the dominant, authoritarian figures that they are, then father-daughter incest would not occur" (Vander Mey, 1986:39). Feminists claim that a number of men see the family as a

'private' institution where fathers have inordinate control and authority over women and children and can treat them as they see fit:

The seduction of daughters is inherent in a father dominant family system where the man expects to have his will obeyed as head of the household and expects his family to provide him with domestic and sexual services. When patriarchal beliefs about rights of fathers provide further excuse for initiating sexually gratifying relationships within the family, it is not hard to see how many 'Mr. Averages' can manage to overcome all the social and emotional barriers to committing incest with their daughters (Nelson, 1982:69).

Further, it is believed that as long as the male reigns superior (i.e., power is in the hands of one such individual) within the family structure, incestuous behavior will continue to occur. In this sense, it is the patriarchal system itself which can be blamed for providing men the power to control their so-called sexual property: in turn, men have linked their power with sexuality. Therefore, it is these large disparities between males and females in our society, that contribute to this on-going process of incestuous abuse (Finkelhor, 1984; Herman, 1981; Rush, 1980). Vander Mey et al. (1986), like Herman and Hirshman (1977), conclude that feminists in general explain the incestuous relationship as stemming from 'patriarchy' (for a more indepth discussion on patriarchy and female violence', see Golding, 1988).

Feminists see differences in the socialization of males and females within the system as being the problem, and the change that is prescribed is social change (Clark, 1986; Finkelhor, 1984; Herman, 1981; Schlesinger, 1986). Lorene Clark (1986) for

example, is one feminist author who believes that this issue should be addressed immediately. With reference to the Badgley Committee's Report on Sexual Offences Involving Children and Youth (1984), she argues that, "males in our society are inappropriately socialized and ... changes in male sexual socialization and the construction of masculinity and virility have to be instituted if the problem is ever to be eliminated" (p.106). Further, she believes that patriarchy must be 'dismantled' and paternalism must go with it. Therefore, the problem of child sexual abuse is typical of the nature of contemporary sex roles and relationships, and fuelled by the existing social structure.

FATHER-DAUGHTER INCEST

Father-daughter incest is the type of incest most commonly reported to authorities; in turn, it is the type most commonly studied and about which most is known (Crewdson, 1988; DeVine, 1980; Justice and Justice 1979; Lester, 1972; Lukianowicz, 1972; Meisalmann, 1978; Sgroi, 1982; Lawton-Speert & Wachtel, 1982). Although this thesis will examine various types of incestuous abuse with female victims, the focus will be on father-daughter incest. From a feminist perspective, such behavior epitomizes patriarchy – a father exploits his power and abrogates his proper social role for sexual gratification and self-interest at the expense of his victim. As mentioned earlier, the feminist focus is on "power". Although most investigations of incest have

focused on how that power is reified and wielded, the current thesis also examines how the perpetrator is "de-empowered", the relationship terminated, and the trauma resolved.

FAMILY ENVIRONMENT

Lustig et al. (1966) see incestuous relationships as being prevalent in the 'dysfunctional family'. They suggest that the incestuous event "serves a tension-reducing function within the dysfunctional family and involves at least unconscious participation and/or sanction by the parent not overtly involved" (p.32). Lustig et al. (1966) claim that "... an instability in the family structure ... generates continuous uncertainty of the family's ability to satisfy its members and stay together" (p.32). In other words, this kind of family uses incest to maintain itself and, in turn, to preserve the family unit. Such families have very real fears of desertion and deprivation (Cormier et al., 1962; DeVine, 1980; Glaser et al. 1988; Kaufman et al. 1954; Nakashima et al. 1977; Renvoize, 1982; Rosenfeld, 1977; Schlesinger, 1986). The potential realization of such fears, and, in turn, the possible alteration of the present family structure, becomes very threatening to this unit (Lustig et al., 1966). Family members make a desperate attempt to stay together at any cost, even if this involves engaging in incestuous acts. The secrecy of this form of victimization, and the danger of discovery, further bonds family members together. Family members, especially those in 'power' positions, seek expression and gratification of their wishes

within the family rather than through role relationships (Butler, 1985; Friedlander, 1947; Lustig et al. 1966). Many researchers claim that a multi-generational 'victim to victim' pattern is quite common with the dysfunctional family (Finkelhor, 1979; Renvoize, 1982; Rosenfeld, 1979; Summit and Kyrso, 1978).

Lustig et al. (1966) state that the incestuous relationship between father and daughter represents a role reversal, which in turn dissolves the boundaries between the generations. The child satisfies the father's needs while assuming a more protective role toward her mother. In this sense, the dysfunctional family produces an environment whereby the parents' wishes and fantasies are acted out on the child, whose existence and stability, in turn, are well protected from the external environment.

Many authors see the dysfunctional family as a culturally isolated group with little or no involvement in community-based activities (Beavers, 1976; Lustig et al., 1966; Sgroi, 1982). Sgroi (1982) notes that these families and their members develop few skills for coping with the outside world that are effective or adequate to meet the complex demands of daily living (p.32). Some view the outside world as hostile, and with suspicion. When such families are isolated from the community in which they live, opportunities for intervention are initially non-existent.

'Power' is all-encompassing to the incestuous family. It can be exerted by its members - and especially by its perpetrators -

in both predictable and unpredictable fashion. Also, according to a number of authors, family rules in incestuous families are strict and difficult to change (Finkelhor, 1979; Reimer, 1940; Renvoize, 1982; Rosenfeld, 1977; Sgroi, 1982; Weinberg, 1955). Further, family members do not "equally or freely" participate in the decision-making process with respect to family matters (Lawton-Speert & Wachtel, 1982). Nonetheless, on the whole, the main goals for the person in power are to meet his/her own needs while simultaneously maintaining control within a closed family system (Sgroi, 1982:33). However, the system can be broken down by the perpetrator becoming de-empowered; in turn, the relationship can begin to dissolve and the effects confronted.

Furniss (1984) incorporates "family systems theory" to explain the secret life of the abusive family. Like Lustig et al. (1966), he argues that at the root of father-daughter incest is a dysfunctional family arrangement (Glaser, 1988). However, he claims that, "in this particular arrangement, the parents suffer from 'emotio-sexual' problems which lead to inter-generational confusions surrounding dependency and sexuality" (p.38). According to Furniss (1984) then, "the origin of the incest is thus a parental conflict that becomes incorporated into a pervasive muddling and obscuring of family relationships serving the end of preserving the family against the pressures that threaten to smash it up" (Glaser et al. 1988:38). Furniss (1984) expressed it this way:

Despite different aetiological and precipitating factors, the underlying process in the relationship leading to the incest pattern was always the hidden

'emotio-sexual' tension or conflict between the parents who are locked in an unequal emotio-sexual partnership and the distance in the mother-daughter relationship. The inability of the parents to deal with the specific confusion between their sexual and emotional problems and their introduction of a taboo against the acknowledgement of the tension and conflict in the family sets the scene for the incest (p.300).

Furniss (1984) suggests that there are two distinct forms of family pathology characteristic of the incestuous relationship: (1) conflict avoidance; and (2) conflict regulation.

Nakashima and Zakus (1977) also classified incestuous families into two groups: (1) the classical incest family; and (2) the multi-problem incest family.

To those on the outside, the classical family looks like it is functioning normally with no major psychological or family disturbances. The majority of reported cases of incest are found in this particular family type (Cormier et al, 1962; Nakashima et al, 1977). Nevertheless, upon further examination, communication between its members both emotionally and psychologically has been damaged. According to Nakashima et al. (1977), the classical family tends to take on the following characteristics:

an early marriage of long duration with many children, the absence of acting-out behavior by the children, the absence of extra-marital affairs by the parents, a pattern of rigid, restrictive control by the father of the social life of his female children and limited contacts with the outside world by the family as a whole and by its individual members (p. 697).

Furniss' (1984) first type of family pattern – conflict avoidance – to some extent parallels the classical family,

especially with respect to the family presenting an 'idealized and moral' picture of its members to the external world. Furniss (1984) claims that, for this type of family, sexual estrangement threatens to produce a break-up of its members. With the daughter taking over the mother's role, the tension is reduced and the family remains intact. There is, however, no overt acknowledgement among the family members of what is happening. Mothers representative of this type are, "emotionally-rigid and overmoralistic while providing basic care, yet failing to meet the emotional needs of their daughter" (Glaser et al. 1988:39). Fathers are viewed as emotionally immature and threatening.

In the multi-problem family, the incestuous relationship represents only one expression of the family's dysfunctional nature; it is the family's other problems that become evident to the community and social agencies. According to Nakashima et al. (1977) all members of this family engage in acting-out behaviors within the community. Parents may have engaged in assault, drug dependency and impaired driving, while the children may have become involved in sexual promiscuity, drug dealing and arson (Nakashima et al, 1977:697). This family type is once again separated from the community.

The family dynamic described as 'conflict regulation' (Furniss, 1984) is similar to the multi-problem family in being "disorganized and argumentative, frequently violent, possessing weak generational boundaries, and with role confusions being prominent" (p.39). This form differs from the multi-problem

family in that although family members are open among themselves about what is going on, they hide it from the outside world.

The two family types discussed here, (the classic and the multi-problem) both share a common trait – sexual difficulties between parents. As Nakashima et al. (1977) note, most cases consist of infrequent or no sexual contact at all. The fathers turn to their daughters as sexual partners, particularly if the wife is sexually rejecting.

Although incestuous relationships can develop in any family, high risk incest situations arise in families where alcohol abuse is present, where the father is dominant, and where social isolation exists (Justice and Justice, 1979; Renovize, 1978; Specktor, 1979; Tormes, 1968; Vander Mey et al, 1986).

THE FATHER: THE USUAL PERPETRATOR

The reasons why a father might engage in incest with his daughter has fascinated many researchers over the years, and case histories and personality characteristics have been gathered and assessed. Although the intent and purpose of this thesis is not specifically to provide reasons why fathers engage in such a relationship, a description of the typical perpetrator of sexual abuse may help provide a more complete picture.

Incestuous fathers frequently have been found to have grown up in an environment where poverty was prevalent (Reimer, 1940). They come from emotionally deprived backgrounds, where desertion of one parent was usually evident (De Young, 1982; Finkelhor,

1979; Meiselman, 1978). As well, physical and/or sexual abuse by their father was often reported (De Young, 1982). As a result, emotional scars from their childhood tended to be carried over into the marriage relationship.

Little can be said about the father's intelligence, since incestuous behavior crosses all educational and intellectual boundaries (Vander Mey and Nell, 1982). Typically, he begins to engage in this behavior in his late thirties or early forties (Cormier et al, 1962; Henderson, 1972; Nakashima et al., 1977; Sarles, 1975), i.e., at about the time the offspring of those married in their early twenties are entering adolescence. Histories of psychotic and psychopathic behavior among incestuous fathers are rare (Gebhard et al., 1965; Lustig et al., 1966; Meiselman, 1978). However, alcohol abuse has been associated with the act (Sgroi, 1982).

Although the literature reveals that incestuous fathers are more likely to be of low socio-economic status and possess a poor employment history (Gebhard et al., 1965; Lukianowicz, 1972; Reimer, 1940; Summit, 1979; Weinberg, 1955), it is unclear whether this is so because of real class differences in the prevalence of incest, or whether differences in the level of scrutiny to which they are exposed on a day to day basis lead to differential discovery (see Meiselman, 1978).

RATIONALIZATIONS FOR INCESTUOUS BEHAVIOR

Before the incest is initiated, the father must come to define this type of relationship as "normal". According to De Young (1982), he accomplishes this through the development of a complicated rationalization system (p.12).

Some fathers claim they are sexually educating their children (Justice and Justice, 1979); other incestuous fathers state that it was their daughter's fault: she encouraged him (Cormier et al., 1962; Gebhard et al., 1965; Lukaniowicz, 1972). Incestuous fathers have often cited alcohol as a catalyst for getting closer either physically, emotionally or sexually (Justice and Justice, 1979). Further, the belief that daughters are their father's property and therefore should be subject to their needs and desires is often alleged by this type of father (Finkelhor, 1979; Meiselman, 1978; Rush, 1980).

Other rationalizations have included that of sexual liberation (Justice and Justice, 1979) as well as duty and responsibility. The incestuous father sometimes sees himself as an elitist, a tyrant, a lover or a protector in justifying his behavior (see Justice and Justice, 1979).

THE DAUGHTER

Various authors conclude that the majority of abused females are abused by fathers, or by other men acting in father roles (Finkelhor, 1979; Forward, 1978; Geiser, 1979; Landis, 1956; Meiselman, 1978). Because of definitional variation, the average

age of the daughter's first sexual encounter varies across studies from 7 to 12 years (See Berliner, 1977; Finkelhor, 1979; Forward, 1988; Herman and Hirshman, 1977; Meiselman, 1978; Muldoon, 1979; Russell, 1983; Wyatt, 1985). They tend to have normal intelligence, yet they are below average with respect to school performance (Maisch, 1972; Meiselman, 1978; Weinberg, 1955). It is the oldest daughter who is most susceptible to sexual victimization by the father (De Young, 1982; Meiselman, 1978; Specktor, 1979; Tormes, 1968; Weinberg, 1955).

MOTHER: THE THIRD PARTY

According to Forward (1978), the mother often participates in the incest as a passive collaborator; she is the silent partner. It has been reported that the majority of mothers in the father-daughter dyad actually 'set-up' the scene for victimization to occur (Forward, 1982; Meiselman, 1978). For example, the mother may begin by withdrawing emotionally, sexually or physically; thus, the daughter is often left to fulfill these needs in order to keep stability within the family (i.e., a role reversal occurs). The literature suggests that mothers unconsciously develop these coping strategies to deal with the abuse and their unhappiness.

Like the incestuous father, the mother is also likely to have experienced a background of deprivation and/or desertion (De Young, 1982; Maisch, 1972; Meiselman, 1978), as well as prior sexual abuse (Halliday, 1986). These mothers, on average, married at a young age (De Young, 1982), had unstable marriages,

and displayed passive and dependent personalities with authoritarian husbands (Cormier et al., 1962; Kaufman et al., 1954; Meiselman, 1978).

As the above reveals, extant literature has examined in some detail the incestuous family's environment, as well as the typical character of family members. There is a considerable gap, however, regarding the family situation prior to the abusive act, as well as in the social dynamic following its discovery and cessation. For instance, how does the victim feel about herself and the perpetrator prior to the act occurring? If this question were explored further over various time periods in the victim's life, useful information could be obtained with respect to changes in the victim's feelings.

BEYOND THE NUCLEAR FAMILY

Although the discussion thus far has focussed particularly on the incestuous father-daughter dyad, the same power-differential presents itself with step-fathers, grandfathers, uncles and some brothers (eg., where a considerable age differential exists) who engage in incestuous behavior. These individuals all possess power which can be used to exploit their female victims for their own satisfaction. As such perpetrators are included in the present study, a brief examination of them will be made.

FATHERS VERSUS STEPFATHERS

Although biological fathers are reported to be the most frequent perpetrators of incest (Finkelhor, 1979; Machotka et al., 1967; Meiselman, 1978; Renvoize, 1978; Specktor, 1979), Sagarin (1977) claims that if reporting rates were increased, stepfather-daughter incest would appear proportionately more often. In Russell's sample (1984b) of 930 women, for example, 1 out of every 6 women who had a stepfather as their main parent indicated being sexually victimized by him in her childhood years, while "only" 1 out of every 40 women whose biological father was the primary parent was subject to such abuse. Finkelhor and Giles-Sims (1984) make the same point: stepdaughters are at a much higher risk than children who live with their biological fathers. Finkelhor (1980) suggests that females with step-fathers are five times more likely to be abused than females with their natural father. Other studies lend further support to the above (De Young, 1982; Gruber and Jones, 1983).

GRANDFATHER - GRANDDAUGHTER INCEST

The incidence of this type of incest is difficult to estimate, as it is infrequently reported. Tsai et al. (1979) found that just under 10% of their sample of 118 sexually abused women had been abused by their grandfather, while an earlier (1978) study revealed 11% had been molested by their grandfathers. Forward (1982) indicated a similar figure, while Meiselman (1978) reported that five women in her sample of 58

psychotherapy patients (or 8.6%) indicated that they had an incestuous relationship with their grandfather.

UNCLE – NIECE INCEST

Even fewer studies dealing with uncle-niece have been reported. Tsai et al. (1979) indicated that approximately 7% of the women in their University of Washington sample had been victimized by an uncle, while Lukianowicz (1972) reported that 4 out of 29 respondents had been molested by an uncle. Meiselman (1978) found that 5 out of 58 women in her sample were victims of this type of abuse.

SIBLING INCEST

Sibling incest is rarely reported, making estimates difficult to establish. The most common of sibling incest is between brother and sister; when reported, trauma is often prevalent (Forward, 1988; Sgroi, 1983; Weeks, 1976; Weiner, 1962). Researchers typically attempt to differentiate between sibling incest and "normal" child sex play and experimentation; the former is more "intimate, threatening and exploitative".

Finkelhor (1980) recorded that 13% of his college sample of 796 reported sibling victimization; Tsai et al. (1979) reported 8.5% of their sample of 118 female victims had been molested by their brothers; Meiselman (1978) said that 8 out of 58 (14%) of her victims experienced such abuse.

CHARACTERISTICS OF INCESTUOUS ABUSE

DURATION OF SEXUAL CONTACT

As with the age of onset of the victim, conclusions regarding how long incestuous relationships last are highly study-specific. Initial sexual contact has been reported soon after birth, or as late as adolescence. Further contacts may vary from a single incident to daily, weekly or sporadic occurrences that can last over years (De Francis, 1969; Meiselman, 1978). Weinberg (1955) indicated that 74% of the relationships he studied lasted less than one year, while 13% lasted more than three years. However, Maisch (1972) reported that 71% of his 1500 cases studied went on for more than a year, with the average length being three years. Harbourview Sexual Assault Centre found that 29% of the cases went on for between one and five years (Renvoize, 1982).

Various incest researchers have stated that the duration of the incestuous event has no consistent relationship with the amount of damage done to the victim (Halliday, 1986; Meiselman, 1978). Regardless of how long the relationship continued, it is important to trace the victim's feelings about herself and the perpetrator over specific time periods (i.e., from before the abuse to the time when the abuse is occurring) in order to see what type of pattern develops and why.

WHERE THE ABUSE OCCURRED

In Russell's study (1983) of 930 women, 38% of incestuous abuse cases occurred in the shared home (perpetrator and victim). In a further 18% of the cases, the main location mentioned was the incest victim's home; 12% said it was in the perpetrator's home; 7% in a car and in 25% of the cases, some other place was mentioned (p.101). Thus, in two-thirds (68%) of the cases where the location was mentioned, the abuse took place in the home of either the victim, or the perpetrator, or both (Russell, 1983).

It has been established above that the incestuous event can take place in a number of different locations; however, a larger question should be addressed here with respect to the victim's understanding of what was happening to her. Did the victim have any notion of what sex was all about? As well, did the victim associate any particular events with the other person's sexual interest in her?

MULTIPLE VICTIMIZATION

'Multiple incest' is defined here from the victim's perspective, whereby the female has had incestuous relationships with more than one relative. Halliday (1986) claims that if a child is sexually abused by one offender, and if nothing has been done about it in terms of acknowledgement, further abuse is possible due to the "vulnerability" that the abused child carries with her, that is then sensed by other abusers and used

to their advantage. What is important here is to find out how one stops this cycle of revictimization. As well, it is necessary to understand whether the victim sees that what is going on is "wrong"? If she does feel that something is not right here, then at what point and from what source is this understood?

It has been argued that when a daughter is sexually involved with two or more relatives in sequential fashion, suspicion arises that the female participant might somehow be creating the incest situation, particularly the second time around (Meiselman, 1978). Some studies have concluded that this occurs where the child is victimized by the father early in life, and later on by the step-father (See, for example: Machotka, Pittman and Flomenhaft, 1967; Rinehart, 1961). Meiselman (1978) claims that this same situation can recur in the second marriage, as the roles and personality characteristics within the family remain the same. In her sample of 930 women, Russell (1983) reported that 24 or 2.6% had been victimized by more than one relative. "Seventeen of these women were incestuously abused by 2 relatives, 4 by 3, 2 by 4, and 1 by 5 relatives" (p.93). These victims tended to display vulnerable characteristics prior to abuse, and hence were unable to halt subsequent victimization.

Meiselman (1978) noted that in 13 of 58 cases examined, the patient reported being involved with more than one relative; 11 of these cases claimed that 2 relatives were involved (p.74). Janoff-Bulman and Frieze (1983) add that a negative self-image

develops in victims of incestuous abuse. The victim often blames herself, and a sense of worthlessness prevails, thereby placing the victim at a greater risk of victimization.

TERMINATION OF INCEST

The incestuous relationship may be brought to a close in many ways. One route, reported infrequently, involves the daughter actually confronting the father and refusing to go along with it. Alternatively, the daughter may become pregnant. Termination can also result from telling authorities - legal or social - about what has occurred.

Meiselman (1978) believes the most common way for the sexual victimization to end is for the daughter to leave home. Both Weinberg (1955) and Meiselman's samples (1978) indicated a strong likelihood for incest victims to leave home prior to the age of 18 with the aid of an individual outside the direct family, e.g., a boyfriend or other relative.

THE SECRECY STAGE OF THE EXPERIENCE

As De Young (1982) points out, "what turns incest into an especially exploitative and harmful type of victimization is the secretkeeping techniques used by the perpetrator" (p.37). Secrecy enables the perpetrator to escape persecution and allows for the repetition of the abusive behavior. If the incestuous event goes on for years, the pressure on the victim to keep it a secret is incredible and, for the perpetrator, essential. It is

during this period that reality becomes distorted, morality is redefined and the family role structure is altered (p.37).

FORCE AND THREATS

In some cases, physical violence by the perpetrator is used on the victim in order to prevent disclosure. In De Young's (1982) sample of 60 female victims of paternal incest, 22 (37%) were victims of repeated physical abuse within their families, while 11 (18%) more were victims of occasional physical abuse (p.37).

For more authoritarian/patriarchal fathers, the mere threat of physical violence is enough to keep the victim quiet. The victim reacts in a passive manner to this, obeying her father as always. Meiselman (1978) notes that "a girl who is accustomed to obeying such a father is most likely to go along passively with his demands for sexual activity, for physical resistance is unthinkable to her and leaving home is a very frightening prospect" (p.149).

The perpetrator in some instances will make threats against other siblings and/or on the mother in order for the child not to tell. The victim at this point feels a great deal of responsibility in keeping the family together, and keeps the experience a secret. A number of researchers claim that the most profound threat a perpetrator (especially a family member) can use on the victim is the threat of abandonment or separation (De Young, 1982; Renvoize, 1982; Sgroi, 1982). It is likely that one

or both parents experienced some kind of separation or abandonment in their family of origin, and now impart this separation anxiety to their own families.

Cantwell (1981) argues that "threats may be so traumatizing to a child that all resistance is obliterated, especially when the father threatens such things as imprisonment of the victim, harsh physical punishment, divorce, or fatal harm to the victim's mother (Vander Mey, et al., 1986:85).

PROMISES AND GIFTS

Some perpetrators may bribe their victims with gifts or promises on the condition they do not tell. In many instances, the father or stepfather acts like the victim's lover: he becomes possessive of her, protects his daughter from outside relationships, and gives gifts in order to protect the bond between them (Cormier et al, 1962; De Young, 1982; Meiselman, 1978; Weinberg, 1955). The father becomes very affectionate and pays a great deal of attention to the child; thus, the child may enjoy the attention, and may not know of any other kind.

OTHER TECHNIQUES

A couple of other techniques have been used on victims to keep the event secretive, they are as follows;

- 1) The perpetrator deceives the victim into believing that what is occurring is normal and moral. Isolation of the family is important in this instance.
- 2) The perpetrator may feed on the victim's guilt, especially if she realizes what is happening is wrong; in turn, silence is ensured (De Young, 1982:41).

THE INCESTUOUS PROCESS

Based on the available literature, one can summarize the general process that unfolds in the incestuous family.

We understand that the father is likely authoritarian and dominating in his approach to family matters (Finkelhor, 1979; Glaser and Frosh, 1988; Halliday, 1986; Lustig et al., 1966; Meiselman, 1978; Sgroi, 1982; Weinberg, 1955) and that his sexual desires are not being fulfilled, either because his wife withdraws sexually, or becomes physically and/or emotionally incapacitated (Cormier et al., 1962; De Young, 1982; Lustig et al., 1966; Meiselman, 1978). The father then starts looking in the direction of the eldest daughter, who is about 10-12 years old (Berliner, 1977; Finkelhor, 1979; Russell, 1983; Wyatt, 1985), although the age may be lower with the first encounter (Forward, 1988; Herman and Hirshmann, 1977; Meiselman, 1978). The daughter is very dependent on the father and may not yet be old enough to understand what is going on (Sgroi, 1982). What is happening seems to be okay, and the incestuous father starts developing rationalizations that make it seem so very justifiable and unharmful (De Young, 1982). No one defies him anyway. The first occurrence between the father and daughter seems easy, as the mother is conveniently absent (De Young, 1982). In turn, further opportunities arise, and through bribery, threats, promises and/or gifts, the father creates a private world that is accountable only to him.

DISCLOSURE

In many cases the existence of the incestuous relationship is not disclosed to anyone, or the secret is carried for years after the relationship has ended (De Young, 1982). But some victims do decide to tell someone about the relationship prior to termination. As De Young (1982) points out, most of these victims disclose the relationship 'symbolically'. That is, "they put themselves into a position to be questioned about their behavior and their family life - i.e., running away from home, school problems etc, which would force some adult authority to pay attention to them" (p.42).

Unintentional disclosure occurs particularly with younger children if they mention the relationship to a teacher or parent, without intending to bring about an end to the abuse (Glaser et al., 1988:70). This kind of disclosure is used by a child who wants to reveal the secret, as the experience by the child is viewed as perhaps frightening and confusing. It is not unusual for the child, when questioned further about the abuse by others, to retract what was said earlier, because of the fear, guilt and confusion which keeps her bound to the relationship (De Young, 1982; Glaser et al., 1988).

The victimized daughter may be faced with threats and bribes in order not to disclose the act. Thus, she may be reluctant to disclose the activity. If she does decide to disclose on her own without outside help, she will generally do it when she matures,

usually in adolescence. This is a time when she gains independence and in turn is able to avoid the incestuous family. The father at this point is likely to leave the daughter alone as he sees the opportunity for exposure is there. Intentional disclosure by the victim to others inside or outside the family, generally means that she would like the abuse to stop. Reasons for disclosing are varied: increased threats and pressure; emotional and physical discomfort; and the fear of abuse of other siblings (Glaser et al, 1988).

Overall, the literature in this particular area is minimal with respect to the victim's feelings and/or reactions to disclosure. Nor has this process been scrutinized in terms of the "power" concept, i.e., how family context and activity weave together to create empowering and de-empowering on both sides. Of particular interest here is the process of disclosure – letting go of the secret – and how it is crucial to breaking the cycle of power. Whether disclosure is intentional or not, how are those individuals who are being told about the event reacting towards the victim? In turn, do their reactions to the victim's story provide support or reinforce the victim's fear and guilt in being involved in such a relationship? This takes us one step further into examining the victim's feelings towards herself and the perpetrator once disclosure occurs.

FAMILY REACTIONS TO DISCLOSURE OF INCEST

One should be aware that when disclosure occurs, reactions by others to the event will vary.

PERPETRATOR

Perpetrators are most likely to react with 'absolute denial'; as the consequences of exposure (eg. legally and socially) are great. Perpetrators rarely admit voluntarily to having engaged in incestuous activities. Perpetrators react most often in a hostile manner towards the victim following disclosure. They allege the daughter is a liar, and argue that nothing really happened. Sgroi (1982) claims that,

After disclosure, the perpetrator can be expected to exploit his/her power position to the fullest to control the child and other family members while undermining the credibility of the allegation and/or neutralize the negative effects or consequences that may ensue (p.22).

MOTHERS

Sgroi (1982) points out that 'self-interest' and 'self-protection' are powerful human motives, especially where abuse is disclosed. After disclosure, the mother may initially show signs of fear and shock, distress for her child, anger towards the perpetrator, and blame herself for not stopping the abuse (Cormier et al., 1962; Glaser et al., 1988; Halliday et al., 1986). If the mother then is faced by the abuser's denial, this will clearly confuse the situation and, in turn the mother may disbelieve the child. She has after all, had no prior

knowledge of the abuse, and may believe that her husband could not do this to their child. Daughters on the other hand, feel that their mothers knew what was happening to them, yet still deny it. As a result of this the daughter blames the mother for the abuse and anger and hostility prevails (Glaser et al., 1988; Renvoize, 1982; Tsai and Wagner, 1978).

Mothers who knew about the abuse and were complicit, and mothers who were told by the victim but did not believe her, will react with a great deal of guilt and protect themselves (Sgroi, 1982). The mother is now put in an awkward position with respect to whom she protects. Sgroi (1982) summarizes the consequences that the mother must face:

If the perpetrator provides the mother with economic support, social status or emotional support, the choice may be painful indeed. If the perpetrator has been violent or abusive toward the mother in the past, she must fear physical retribution as well as loss of previously mentioned supports. If the perpetrator reacts to disclosure by exerting pressure on the child's mother, her reaction will also be affected by the type of pressure exerted (p.23).

Under such circumstances, it is understandable if the mother is unable to deal with such pressure and takes a passive position, allowing the perpetrator more control over the family situation. Halliday (1986) found that approximately 90% of the mothers will either disbelieve the child and stay with the offender, or kick the victim out (p.60). The reaction of the mother to the child's disclosure is very important in the recovery process of the victim (Halliday, 1987).

SIBLINGS

The siblings of the victims can also react to the discovery of the victimization in a number of ways. They may react protectively and show concern for the victim, but may also react defensively (Glaser et al, 1988). Once again, as was true of the mother, siblings are often forced to choose between believing the perpetrator or the victim, and this cannot help but be traumatic for the victim's brothers and sisters. The family unit is divided, and everyone is expected to declare allegiances.

RELATIVES

Extended family members (grandparents, uncles, aunts, cousins) will also experience mixed emotions with respect to the disclosure: shock, denial, protection. Their response to this will be based on a number of factors, predominately closeness to the abuser and the victim. These individuals may put pressure on the family to deny the incest and not cooperate with agencies to which the disclosure has been reported; once again, self-protective reactions are present (Sgroi, 1982).

Parents of children who have been sexually victimized by someone other than a parent (extended family member) tend to react in more of a protective way toward the victim (Sgroi, 1982:22). Once again, the protectiveness of the parents depends on the relationship between victim and perpetrator: the closer the relationship, the more mixed the reactions may be – guilt, fear of exposure and denial.

It is important to look more closely at the reactions of those individuals who are being told about the experience and in turn, the effects that it has had on the victim both emotionally and/or psychologically and the impact that it has had on the recovery process.

LONG TERM EFFECTS

The literature regarding the effects of sexual victimization contains a great deal of contradictory data. Some earlier researchers see minimal effects (Rascovsky and Rascovsky, 1950; Yorukaglu and Kempf, 1966) and assert that the abuse is not as traumatic as indicated (Constantine, 1977; Henderson, 1983; Ramey, 1979), while Meiselman (1978) and others have viewed the effects of the traumatic act on the child as enduring. Still others, such as De Mott (1980), believe that such an experience has a positive impact on the child. More recently, clinicians have been able to substantiate their ideas on the impact of abuse with scientific studies – clearly marking that for victims of sexual abuse, the risk of long-term effects is present. Victims of incest tend to have problems in adulthood establishing satisfactory interpersonal skills with males and females, particularly their partners (De Young, 1982; Finkelhor and Browne, 1986; Sgroi, 1982). As well, very few incest victims claim to have satisfactory relationships in adulthood with the perpetrator and other family members (De Young, 1982; Meiselman, 1978; Sgroi, 1982). Clinical and non-clinical literature both

support the finding that victims of an incestuous relationship experience depression as adults due to childhood abuse (See, Bagley and Ramsey, 1985; Briere and Runtz, 1985; S. Peters, 1984; Sedney and Brooks, 1984).

A number of incest victims have reported feelings of anxiety, tension, and sleeping problems in adulthood years (see Bagley and Ramsey, 1985; Briere, 1984; Sidney and Brooks, 1984). Victims still feel isolated and stigmatized in their adulthood years, and a number of victims claim to have poor self-images (Bagley and Ramsey, 1985; Briere, 1984; Courtois, 1979; Herman, 1981). Other problems noted with victims in adulthood years involve trust, control, assertiveness and guilt (De Young, 1982; Finkelhor and Browne, 1986).

There has also been a strong association found between childhood sexual victimization and later abuse of drugs and alcohol (see Benward and Densen-Gerber, 1975; Briere, 1984; Peters, 1984; Spivak, 1980).

Sexual problems seem to be the most often reported by victims of incestuous abuse (De Young, 1982; Finkelhor and Browne, 1986). It is claimed that frigidity (De Young, 1982, Meiselman, 1978), promiscuous behavior (Courtois, 1979; De Young, 1982; Herman, 1981; Meiselman, 1978), prostitution (James and Meyerdine, 1977; Silbert and Pines, 1981) and further sexual victimization in adulthood (see Briere, 1984; De Young, 1982; Fromouth, 1983; Miller et al., 1978; Russell, 1984) can be found with prior victims of abuse. The literature has explored the

issue of sexual dysfunction as a result of the incest experience, yet has not looked into whether and how the pattern with respect to the victim's feelings toward sexuality has changed over time, e.g., how does the individual presently feel about sexuality?

Although we know a fair amount about who is involved and how it happens, at least among the lower classes, we actually know very little about how the abuse ends and how it becomes resolved. The feminist focus on "power" is an important one here, and a valuable extension of this is a focus on how we "de-empower". Foucault (1978) explains the inherent "knowledge-power" connection, and in the current context, we can see that "successful" strategies among incestuous fathers involve cementing their power in the situation by cutting off the information flow – keep the wife ignorant; make her dependent and hence powerless; make the incest "our little secret" through bribery, threats and/or promises. If one is to be de-empowered, it will be done through holding the relationship to the penetrating light of publicity – someone must tell. But why don't they? Or if they do, whom do they tell, what happens, and with what effect?

CHAPTER III

DEFINITIONS, METHODS AND PROCEDURES

This chapter explicates the design, method and procedure used to investigate the experience, social reaction and personal impact of prior victims of incestuous relationships. As well, the rationale for choosing the particular measures used will be articulated.

OPERATIONAL DEFINITIONS

The operational definition for incestuous child sexual abuse used in this study is derived from Sgroi (1983), who defines the issue from a psychosocial perspective.

Incestuous child sexual abuse is used to denote any form of sexual activity between a child and a family member or extended family member as well as step-parents and surrogate parent figures (i.e., common-law spouse) (Sgroi, 1983). This concept clearly emphasizes a difference in power between perpetrator and victim in this type of relationship, rather than a biological relation per se. The adult is the one in control of the situation due to his age and experience, while the child lacks such status and is therefore vulnerable. The sexual experience is defined as "abusive" in so far as informed consent rarely is given by the victim; therefore, it is viewed as unsolicited, coercive and threatening.

THE QUESTIONNAIRE

The research design chosen was influenced by ethical considerations with respect to conducting research on such a population and was scrutinized and endorsed by the Simon Fraser University Ethical Review Committee. It was necessary to ensure that confidentiality would be upheld, considering the extremely sensitive issue under discussion. As well, respondents who were victimized as children may not have informed their own children about their prior abuse, and this knowledge could have detrimental effects if discovered. Accordingly, it was necessary to create a design that would not be intrusive to the participant, but allow her the time to answer the questionnaire in a nonthreatening environment (in the privacy of her own home and on her own time).

The survey approach was considered the most efficient choice in applying the measurements of this questionnaire due to the exploratory nature of the questions posed and the complete protection of the participants needed.

The questionnaire (see Appendix A) began with a series of questions dealing with basic personal and demographic information. Respondents were then asked open and closed ended questions which fell under three categories (a) the event/experience; (b) the reaction; (c) the impact. For example, questions asked under the "event" category were as follows: Who was involved?, How long did this relationship last? As far as

reactions to the event, respondents were questioned about when they realized what was happening to them was wrong, and to whom (if anyone) they described their experience. The questioning then moved to how the individual had coped or dealt with what had happened. A Semantic Differential scale was utilized in all three sections to assess the respondent's attitude towards each concept.

THE SEMANTIC DIFFERENTIAL

The Semantic Differential scale is used by researchers when there is an interest in measuring the latent meaning attached to particular images. Osgood, Tannenbaum and Suci (1957) developed this scaling technique. By using this scaling device, the image of virtually any meaningful entity, whether a company, an institution, or an incest experience, can be assessed and compared with that of other topics (Arleck and Settle, 1985:148). This scale was used in the current study to provide comparative information over time concerning how the victim felt about "herself", "the perpetrator" and "sexuality" from the time prior to the incest experience until the present. As the nature of such an issue is highly sensitive and emotional, the scale helps to provide information about the feelings of incestuous victims. Selection of this particular scale was based on its ability to portray images clearly and effectively, its succinctness, its applicability to any concept, and its demonstrated utility in the research realm of attitude analysis.

As mentioned above, this scale provides an indirect measure of the meaning attached to a particular concept by the respondent. Bailey (1987) claims that the Semantic Differential scale can be a useful measure when examining a sensitive concept without biasing the subject's answers by questioning him or her directly about it, or if one wanted to measure tacit feelings about a particular concept or word (p.359).

The Semantic Differential comprises a series of 7-point scales with two opposing adjectives (i.e., "good" and "bad") at the ends of each scale. Respondents are asked to check the point on each scale which corresponds to their feelings about the concept. The middle category represents a neutral stance.

Osgood et al. (1957), "have reported a great deal of research on the application of this Semantic Differential approach to the measurement of a wide variety of concepts and recently have used it with different cultures" (p.82). Osgood (1965) found that from a number of Semantic Differential studies which were factor analyzed, three basic dimensions were being measured time after time (i.e., people were reacting to these concepts in terms of these three dimensions). These dimensions being measured were: (a) evaluation (eg. good - bad, kind - cruel); (b) potency (e.g., strong - weak, large - small); and (c) activity (eg. fast - slow, active - passive). It has been argued that the evaluative dimension (which is an affective dimension) is the one most heavily weighted in people's judgements, and behavior, while potency and activity are more

purely cognitive (Oskamp, 1977).

In the current study, each respondent was provided with 9 pairs of adjectives (5 - evaluative; 2 - potency; 2 - activity) and were asked to use these adjectives to express how they felt about themselves, the abuser and sexuality through four time periods. The nine pairs of adjectives were intentionally placed in random order, and balanced to preclude the creation of response sets.

Pearson correlations were then run on the adjectives chosen from the Semantic Differential and compared to Osgood's factor scores of the three dimensions in order to examine the consistency of the researcher's scores against Osgood's (see Appendix B). The researcher's scores, on the whole, were consistent with Osgood's factor scores, although all three dimensions were weighted on the evaluative dimension.

To supplement information gained by the Semantic Differential, each respondent was also asked several open-ended questions about each concept – the victim, the abuser and sexuality. This allowed the respondent more flexibility in expressing further feelings on the issue.

DESCRIPTION OF SAMPLE

Despite the extensive prevalence of incest in society, acquiring samples of individuals willing to participate in research on the topic is no easy task. Accordingly, several

initiatives were undertaken in an attempt to acquire as large and heterogenous a sample as possible.

The first initiative involved meeting with private psychologists, social workers and self-help co-ordinators who might provide access to respondents undergoing some form of counselling as a result of their experience. One therapist agreed to introduce and explain the research to her clients. The participants who responded were located throughout Canada – British Columbia, Saskatchewan, Ontario and Newfoundland. Although these participants are selected due to their involvement in counselling, programmes in which they were involved showed 'variation' with respect to who ran them, and the type of people involved in them.

As the aim in this study was to maximize the heterogeneity of individuals selected, a second set of responses came from individuals who answered classified newspaper advertisements placed by the author in, Burnaby Now, Surrey Now, New Westminster Now, Coquitlam Now, North Shore News and East and West Ender. The ad was worded as follows:

Sexual Abuse – S.F.U. graduate student conducting research interested in females who have experienced an incestuous relationship, confidential interview – call Thursdays and Fridays 2:30-5:00 p.m.

These respondents may or may not necessarily have been participants in therapy. Variability of subjects was of importance here not only in terms of experience, reaction and impact to the experience, but also in terms of location and other demographics. As the volunteer respondents telephoned,

calls were screened for age, sex, type of abuse and understanding of the questionnaire involved. Brief interviews took place from questions in which the participant was asked to elaborate briefly on her experience, substantiating questionnaire information. In this way case histories of the female victims were gathered concerning their experience of the abuse as well as the social reaction over time to the incestuous abuse. Conversing with such individuals brought out this needed information. After describing the questionnaire to the individual, the researcher then asked if interest were still present with respect to participation and, if so, a questionnaire with a consent form would be mailed out (See Appendix A). Each participant was asked at the end of the call if they knew of anyone else who was subject to such victimization and if they would be interested in participating. If interest was indicated, additional questionnaires were mailed out. It was hoped that a snowball sample might thereby be generated.

Biernacki and Waldorf (1981) claim that snowball or chain referral sampling is a method that has widely been used in qualitative sociological literature (p.141). This type of sampling is best utilized with sensitive subject areas, whereby, in this particular case, it is likely that incest victims will know other victims; therefore, further data can be obtained from these other sources. For instance, on the whole, victims of incest through disclosure to friends, self-help groups and family will come across others who have shared their experience;

therefore, validity with chain referral sampling tends to be quite good. Before sending out further questionnaires, the researcher had to ask in only a few cases to whom these questionnaires would be given. The majority of respondents voluntarily disclosed their referrals. Each participant was guaranteed anonymity and most completed the questionnaire with a great deal of care. The researcher, in return, had promised a copy of the study results.

SURVEY PROCEDURE

The questionnaire – which combined open and closed ended questions, the Semantic Differential, and social reaction charts – was mailed out to interested respondents. Respondents were also provided with two self-addressed stamped envelopes, one for the consent form and the other envelope for the questionnaire, as confidentiality was of utmost importance. They were also encouraged to contact the researcher if any further clarification was needed with respect to any of the questions asked. Finally, it was noted that although answers to all questions would be appreciated, the respondent could choose to omit any questions that she felt were too intrusive.

CHAPTER IV

RESULTS

RESPONSE RATE

A total of 157 questionnaires were distributed to adult incest victims/survivors. The highest response rates were observed among those who responded to one of the newspaper advertisements, and with whom I had direct contact; of 23 such persons, 15 (or 65%) returned completed questionnaires. Some of these respondents indicated that they would be willing to pass on questionnaires to others, and an additional 52 questionnaires were sent along for those persons; 10 completed questionnaires (or 19%) were actually returned. Finally, eighty-two were distributed on the author's behalf by either private psychologists, social workers and/or self-help group co-ordinators. Only one respondent from this group was dealt with directly by the author and she returned the questionnaire. Among the others, the response rate was 8 out of 81 (10%). Thus, the newspaper advertisements coupled with direct interaction proved to be the most successful strategy for soliciting participants.

THE SAMPLE: A DEMOGRAPHIC PORTRAIT

A total of 33 questionnaires were completed and returned. The average age for the females in this group was 34, with a

range from 21 to 54. Thirty-nine percent of these women were married; 31% were single; 27% separated and 3% widowed. Forty-nine percent were employed full-time, and an additional 18% were employed part-time. Overall, therefore, the sample may be characterized as employed and married.

THE EXPERIENCE - CHARACTERISTICS OF INCESTUOUS ABUSE

MOST SIGNIFICANT ABUSER

All the respondents were asked to identify, from a list of 13 possibilities, those individuals who sexually abused them. As well, they were asked to identify the "most significant abuser" whom they would keep in mind when answering the rest of the questionnaire. Forty-nine percent of the women reported that their father was their most significant abuser, followed by other relatives i.e., uncle (18%), step-father (15%), brother (9%) and grandfather (9%).

MULTIPLE VICTIMIZATION

Thirty-nine percent of the women (n=13) indicated that they had been abused by only that one significant individual. However, 27% (n=9) reported that they had been victimized by two individuals, while another 27% (n=9) indicated that they were abused by three different individuals. One individual (3%) indicated six different abusers; another (3%) indicated seven.

AGE OF VICTIMIZATION

In 39% (n=13) of the cases of incestuous abuse, respondents reported being victimized for the first time before the age of five; in 45.6% (n=15) of the cases, such abuse started between the ages of five and nine; and in 15% (n=5), it began between the ages of ten and fifteen. The mean age for commencement of incestuous abuse in this sample was 6.2, while the median was 6, with approximately 70% occurring in the range of three to nine years of age.

AGE DISPARITY BETWEEN PERPETRATORS AND VICTIMS

The age range of the perpetrators was 16 to 75, with a mean of 39 and a median of 37. The age disparities between the incest perpetrators and their victims in this survey were as follows: 24% (n=8) of the perpetrators were 40 years or more older than their victims; 67% (n=22) (the largest group), were 20 to 39 years older; while 9% (n=3) were 5 to 19 years older.

FREQUENCY AND DURATION OF ABUSE

Respondents were asked whether the sexual victimization occurred on just one occasion or more than once. Of those who responded, 9.3% (n=3) reported that the abusive situation was a one time experience, while the rest of the respondents 90.6% (n=29) indicated that it occurred many more times. Of those women who reported that the victimization occurred more than once, the information available indicated that 14.8% (n=4) of the respondents said that it lasted months, while 85% (n=23)

claimed that it had occurred over a period of years. It is important to point out here that, as a number of questions in this particular study relate to a period long ago (i.e., when the victim was little), some respondents were unable to recall the exact details of their experience. Therefore, one is often confronted by a number of missing cases in the statistical information.

PLACE OF SEXUAL ABUSE

Respondents were asked about the location where the incestuous abuse typically occurred. In 50% (n=16) of the cases, the abuse took place at the victim's home; 12.5% (n=4) indicated that it took place outside of the home; while 37.5% (n=12) reported that it took place both at home and some other location.

PERPETRATORS' SEXUAL INTEREST IN VICTIM

Factors associated with perpetrators' interest in their victims varied. Seventy-six percent (n=25) of the respondents noted that the other person's sexual interest in them increased when one parent (typically the mother) was away. Forty-six percent (n=15) reported that 'bed-time' was the time for the abuse to occur. Alcohol consumption also seemed to encourage such victimization, as was indicated by 39% (n=13) of the women. Drugs, depression and parental arguments were also frequently noted. Most respondents reported that at least two of the above mentioned events seemed to coincide with the other person's

sexual interest in them.

POSSIBLE REASONS FOR SUBMISSION

Respondents were asked to indicate why they submitted to the abusive relationship. Respondents were encouraged to select as many reasons that were applicable to their situation, and 70% of the sample reported between one and four responses out of a possible eight (mean=4). Seventy percent (n=23) reported that they really did not understand what it was all about. Two other answers frequently selected were that the victim did not know what else to do (n=22; 67%), and/or that she felt she was supposed to do this (n=19; 58%).

WHO KNEW ABOUT THE RELATIONSHIP?

Eighteen women (55%) reported that another person knew about the sexual relationship during the time the incest was continuing. Of those eighteen, 44% (n=8) indicated that either a brother or sister knew; 39% (n=7) claimed a parent was aware, and 17% (n=3) said that it was someone else outside of the nuclear family.

SOCIAL REACTION TO THE RELATIONSHIP

The period of time referred to as "social reaction" involves (a) a determination on the part of the victim that she is indeed a victim, and that "something is wrong"; (b) a decision and action to tell someone; and (c) a reaction on the part of that/

those other(s).

WHO DEFINES INCESTUOUS ABUSE AS WRONG?

Eight of the twenty-nine respondents (28%) learned that what had happened to them was inappropriate either when they told someone else about the experience and saw their reaction, or listened to others discuss the issue of incest in a critical manner. One respondent claimed,

I knew something was wrong when I saw my mother's reaction to the news; however, I felt happy about a possible chance to get out of it.

Another victim described her feelings in terms of the inappropriateness of the relationship in the following manner,

I realized at the age of 9 that things my friends were talking about were things I not only knew about, but had experienced. I felt alienated from them, different, although I told them nothing.

Six (21%) other women reported that it was not until they sought counselling for problems that arose later in life (e.g., sexual dysfunction), that they realized the impact of their earlier experience. Another six (21%) respondents claimed that they knew the relationship was wrong due to the perpetrator's abnormal/abusive behavior and reactions at the time of the incident(s). Five (18%) additional women claimed that it was due to the "secretive" nature of the relationship that they knew something was wrong. The final three (11%) women reported that, "it was just a gut feeling that what was going on was not right".

DISCLOSURE - CHILDHOOD AND ADULTHOOD YEARS

The process of disclosure about their victimization involves the choice of whom to inform, and a reaction by the recipient to the information. Tables 1, 2A and 2B, and 3A and 3B, indicate what respondents revealed happened to them in this regard.

Table 1 indicates who it was the victim chose to inform, and it is clear that a distinction can be made between communication patterns in childhood and adult years. Certainly it is apparent that, as children, comparatively few children had access to helping professionals other than family doctors and the police; most of their contact was within a limited network comprising parents, siblings, other relatives, peers and their teacher. To the extent that such professionals were present in their lives, the children tended to tell them. A minority reported informing members of their family about what was happening. Tables 2A and 2B suggests some of the reasons why the pattern above was found. Only a minority of family members reacted in a manner respondents recalled as positive and supportive. In contrast, a majority of helping professionals were recalled as reacting supportively, although it is noteworthy that there were few such individuals in the children's lives at the time.

As for adulthood disclosures, contact with individuals across all the role categories listed in Table 1 also show broad patterns of disclosure. The tendency almost seems to be to tell everyone, in a search for vindication and support. And as Tables 3A and 3B reveal, in adulthood their disclosures were generally

TABLE #1

Whom do Incest Victims Inform?

Person	CHILDHOOD		ADULTHOOD	
	In Life	Inform N (%)	In Life	Inform N (%)
Non-abusive Mom	25	10 (40%)	25	19 (76%)
Non-abusive Dad	5	0 (0%)	3	2 (67%)
Brother	13	3 (23%)	10	9 (90%)
Sister	22	9 (41%)	22	20 (91%)
Cousin	0	0	3	2 (67%)
Grandparent	7	1 (14%)	5	4 (80%)
Aunt-Uncle	10	3 (30%)	5	4 (80%)
Other Relative	5	0	9	7 (78%)
Close Friend	22	6 (27%)	31	29 (94%)
Teacher	25	5 (20%)	N.A	N.A
Work Friend	N.A	N.A	24	15 (63%)
Family Dr.	17	2 (12%)	24	15 (63%)
Social Worker	3	2 (67%)	7	7 (100%)
Psychologist	3	2 (67%)	9	9 (100%)
Psychiatrist	2	2 (100%)	10	10 (100%)
Other Prof.	0	0	7	7 (100%)
Clergyman	5	2 (40%)	3	2 (67%)
Other Adult	7	2 (29%)	19	18 (95%)
Police	7	4 (57%)	8	6 (75%)
Self-help Group	3	1 (33%)	19	18 (95%)
Other	3	2 (67%)	7	6 (86%)

TABLE #2A

Reaction to Incest in Childhood Years

REACTION

Person	Inform N	Positive N (%)	Negative N (%)	Pos,Neg N (%)	No Reaction N (%)
Non-abusive Mom	10	3 (30%)	5 (50%)	-	2 (20%)
Sister	9	4 (44%)	3 (33%)	-	2 (22%)
Aunt-Uncle	3	1 (33%)	1 (33%)	-	1 (33%)
Friend	6	1 (17%)	3 (50%)	1 (17%)	1 (17%)
Teacher	5	3 (60%)	-	-	2 (40%)
Psychiatrist	2	1 (50%)	-	-	1 (50%)
Police	4	2 (50%)	2 (50%)	-	-

TABLE #2B

Support to Incest in Childhood Years

SUPPORT

Person	Inform N	Yes N (%)	No N (%)	Yes and No N (%)
Non-abusive Mom	10	4 (40%)	5 (50%)	1 (10%)
Sister	9	4 (44%)	5 (56%)	-
Aunt-Uncle	3	1 (33%)	2 (67%)	-
Friend	6	1 (17%)	3 (50%)	2 (33%)
Teacher	5	3 (60%)	1 (20%)	1 (20%)
Psychiatrist	2	1 (50%)	1 (50%)	-
Police	4	2 (50%)	2 (50%)	-

TABLE #3A

Reaction to Incest in Adulthood Years

REACTION

Person	Inform N	Positive N (%)	Negative N (%)	Pos,Neg N (%)	No Reaction N (%)
Non-abusive					
Mom	19	10 (53%)	6 (32%)	2 (10%)	1 (5%)
Sister	20	15 (75%)	4 (20%)	-	5 (5%)
Aunt-Uncle	4	3 (75%)	-	-	1 (25%)
Friend	29	27 (93%)	1 (3%)	-	1 (3%)
Other Adult	18	16 (89%)	-	2 (11%)	-
Psychiatrist	10	9 (90%)	-	-	1 (10%)
Self-help Group	18	17 (94%)	-	-	1 (6%)

TABLE #3B

Support to Incest in Adulthood Years

SUPPORT

Person	Inform N	Yes N (%)	No N (%)	Yes and No N (%)
Non-abusive				
Mom	19	11 (58%)	7 (37%)	1 (5%)
Sister	20	16 (80%)	4 (20%)	-
Aunt-Uncle	4	3 (75%)	1 (25%)	-
Friend	29	28 (97%)	1 (3%)	-
Other Adult	18	16 (89%)	-	2 (11%)
Psychiatrist	10	9 (90%)	1 (10%)	-
Self-help group	18	15 (83%)	3 (17%)	-

TABLE #4

Primary Reasons for Termination of Relationship

Termination Reasons	N	%
Someone other than the victim stopped it	13	46
Victim's actions - avoidance, confrontation	8	29
No real reason (i.e., just ended)	5	18
Multiple reasons cited	2	7
TOTAL	28	100

met with support. Those individuals to whom disclosures were made tended to react more positively toward the victim and her situation, and provided a great deal of support.

TERMINATION OF THE RELATIONSHIP

Respondents indicate that the abusive relationship came to an end in a number of cases when someone other than the victim terminated the relationship (See Table 4). This included, for example, a mother or a relative becoming involved and putting a stop to the relationship, or the perpetrator stopping his abusive actions on his own, or the perpetrator moving away from the victim's environment.

A GENERAL OVERVIEW: A VICTIM'S FEELINGS OVER TIME

As mentioned previously, the semantic differential scale was used to examine how the victim felt about herself, the abuser and the concept of sexuality at different time periods in her life. Figure 1 provides a summary of the respondent's feelings using this scale.¹

Of those who responded, many saw their life in a positive manner prior to the abuse - "innocent, carefree and happy". The individual who abused them later on in life was responded to favourably. For instance, one woman claimed,

He was my dad. I thought the world of him and in my eyes he could do no wrong.

Sexuality at this time was viewed in neutral terms due to the young age of the child.

When the victimization began, victims recalled feelings of "fear, disgust, anger, confusion as well as feeling bad, dirty and ugly". A change in attitude also occurred towards the abuser at this time, who was now seen as "frightening". A number of women also saw the abuser as "strong, powerful and deceiving", and felt anger and confusion. One respondent claimed that she felt "ambivalent",

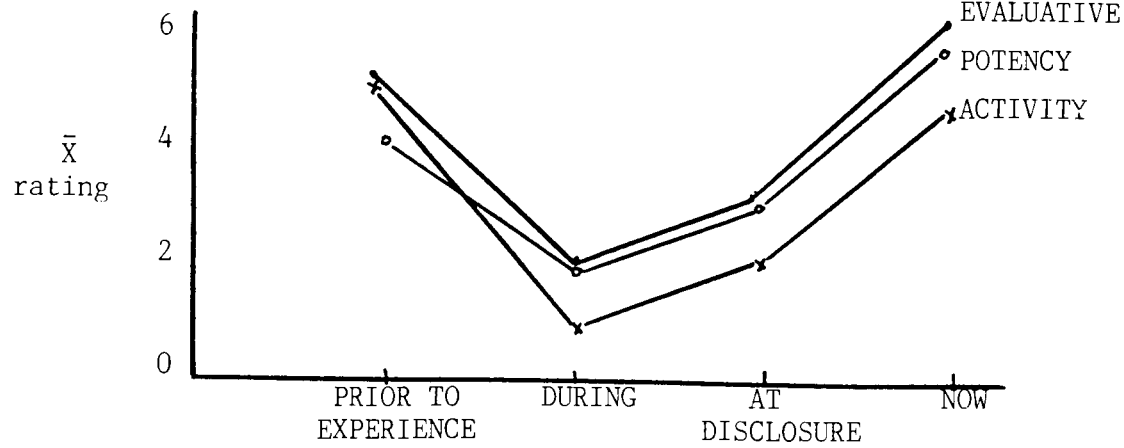
I loved him, he was my dad. I had to do as I was told, yet I knew what was happening was wrong and hated being

¹ In 10 of the 33 (30%) cases, respondents were unable to provide feedback on any of the questions prior to abuse. A common response was that since they were very young when the victimization began, they have had a difficult time remembering details prior to the experience. One respondent claimed, "I have a hard time remembering a life without incest as a child".

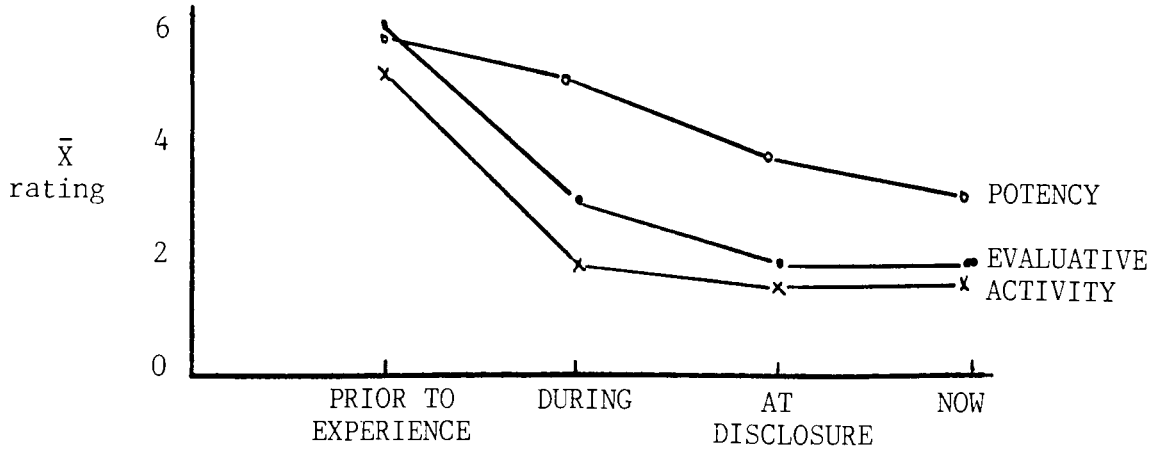
FIGURE #1

Semantic Differential Ratings of Self, The Abuser and Sexuality
Over Time.

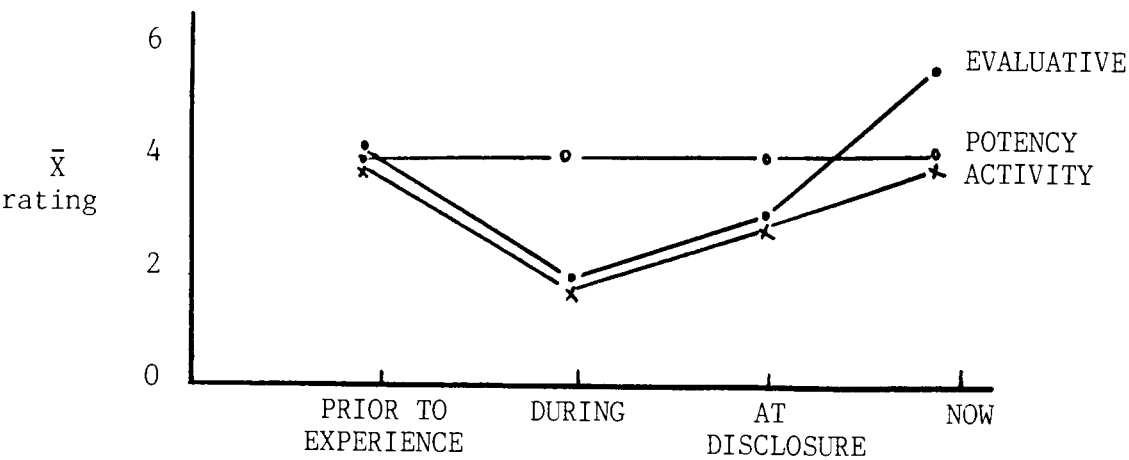
THE SELF



THE ABUSER



SEXUALITY



forced.

It may be noted this love-hate relationship is quite common among incest victims, (e.g., see, Transcripts, TVO, "Speaking Out", Oct. 27, 1988) especially those who were abused by a father. The child is caught in a "double-bind"; she experiences love from this individual, but he also hurts her very badly at certain times. Those women who commented on sexuality in this time period, saw it as "dirty, confusing and wrong".

Overall, disclosure to another person did not seem to help the victim's self-esteem. A number of women noted they felt "different" from other people, and believed it was only happening to them. They felt "ashamed, hurt and alienated". One woman reported the following,

I felt that it was my fault for letting it happen. I thought I was bad and dirty.

The negative image of the abuser continues through the disclosure period. A number of respondents said that they felt a great deal of hatred towards the other person. As well a number of other women claimed that they were confused due to their ambivalence about the abuser. Once again, negative feelings were evident towards sexuality. Most respondents described sex as "sickening and dirty". Others mentioned that they felt confused with respect to sex, in that they really did not know what it was all about.

At the time of completing the questionnaire, victims portrayed a more positive self-image and a fairly optimistic

outlook. One respondent stated,

I feel that I am strong as I have been through a lot.
Sometimes I still get depressed but these times are
fewer and farther between.

Generally, most women claimed that they felt "stronger, hopeful and more worthy". Quite a few respondents, indicated that they still experienced mixed feelings about themselves due to the experience. However, the victims still view the perpetrator in a negative manner - the hate and anger continues. A number of women expressed a great deal of pity for the abuser and believed that he was in need of desperate help. Sexuality, is still viewed in relatively neutral terms, although the trend over time is toward a renewed positivity about sexuality. This is evident in the following respondent's feelings,

In the past three years I have finally come to realize
that sex is healthy and enjoyable.

THE VICTIMS' PRESENT SITUATION

THERAPY

Seventeen (52%) of the women reported that they are currently seeking some form of counselling. Eight (47%) of these indicated they were attending both group and individual therapy, six (35%) women reported that they were attending only individual therapy, and the final three (18%) women said they were seeking help through group therapy. Questioned about why they sought therapy, a number of women responded citing adverse effects (i.e., depression, low self-esteem, self-hate, suicidal tendencies), and that they felt they needed help. Other

respondents claimed that they wanted to talk about it with others, so that they could get on with their life. Sixteen of the 17 (94%) respondents claimed that, overall, therapy had been beneficial in helping them come to terms with their incestuous experience.

ADVICE TO OTHER INCEST VICTIMS

All respondents were encouraged to provide some kind of advice to other victims who may have gone through similar experiences. The most frequent response was to communicate with as many people as possible (i.e., friends, family, helping professionals) about the victimization and realize that they are not to blame. In sum, they believed "disclosure" is the key to breaking the silence of this cycle.

CHAPTER V

DISCUSSION AND CONCLUSION

This thesis set out to examine a number of important issues in the area of incest – the relationship between event parameters and their prospective effects, the roles that disclosure and social reaction to the event play in the incestuous process and its effects, and the barriers of communication that abused women face in trying to break the cycle of silence in this matter. The feminist perspective on incestuous behavior – that of "power" and the whole process of "de-empowering" was adopted to bring about an understanding to some of these key ideas.

The sample of adult women was made up of volunteers from self-help groups and newspaper advertisements as well as referrals from helping professionals (i.e., psychologists, social workers). Various measurement instruments were used to assess their feelings and reactions to particular elements in the incestuous process (i.e., self, abuser, sexuality, social reaction). As heterogenous a cross-section of individuals as possible was sought for the research.

A semantic differential scale was used in order to provide comparative information over time concerning how the victim felt about "herself", "the perpetrator" and "sexuality" from the time prior to the incest experience until the present. This attitude measure has been viewed as being particularly effective when

examining sensitive concepts – participants are not as threatened as they might be by direct questioning of their experiences.

THE INCESTUOUS EXPERIENCE - THE EMPOWERING PROCESS

The data presented in this thesis indicate that according to the victim, the father is viewed as the "most significant abuser" (this included fathers cited as the only abuser as well as fathers in multiple victimization cases). Perhaps the reason for the father being singled out in this manner, particularly where the victim was subjected to a number of different abusers, is due to the fact that when a father engages in such activity with his daughter, the most devastating effects result (i.e., the trust element between father and daughter is damaged). Prior to abuse, the victim sees herself in a positive manner – "carefree, happy and innocent". However, confusion begins to result as the relationship develops between the victim and abuser.

Violation of trust, and age disparity between the perpetrator and victim as well as control of the information flow are important differentiations that can be made in terms of the power dynamic that exists between a father and his daughter in the incestuous relationship. As the interest of this study was to focus on these particular elements within this realm, it would be advantageous in the future to explore these differentiations among other perpetrators (i.e., uncles,

grandfathers) with respect to distinguishing the more crucial variable – that of severity of abuse and power of abuse.

Initial victimization in the present sample occurred predominately between the ages of 3 and 9 with the average age being 6. However, in a small amount of the cases, the abuse began at a later age – 10 to 15. Due to definitional variation, other studies have shown that the average age of the daughter's first sexual encounter varies across studies (See Berliner, 1977; Ellwell, 1980; Finkelhor, 1979; Forward, 1988; Meiselman, 1978; Russell, 1983; Wyatt, 1985). Future research in this area should consider pursuing those fathers who engage in this type of victimization when their daughters reach puberty. A comparison could be drawn between those perpetrators initiating the abuse at a later stage in their daughters life versus those where the relationship develops earlier on especially in terms of why they do it and the implications. It would also be interesting to explore the differences that the victims face in terms of reaction at these two time periods.

The present study revealed that victims were typically abused on more than "one occasion" – usually over a period of years. As mentioned earlier with the age of onset, it is difficult to make conclusions regarding the duration of the incestuous relationship as each study is unique in its own sense (See Maisch, 1972; Renvoize, 1982; Weinberg, 1955). However, both Halliday (1986) and Meiselman (1978) make it clear that the actual duration of the abuse has no consistent relationship with

the damage done.

A number of victims in this study claimed that the perpetrator's interest in them typically increased when the mother was away. De Young (1982) supports this notion by observing that the first and subsequent occurrences between father and daughter often happens when the mother is "conveniently absent".

Victims of such abuse submitted to the relationship as they really did not understand what it was all about – confusion was evident. The perpetrator is after all, usually, older and more experienced. Sgroi (1982) makes this exact point in her research, claiming that since the daughter is so dependent on the father at this time, she may not be old enough to understand exactly what is happening. The perpetrator at the time of the experience is seen in many cases as "frightening". This coupled with the view of the abuser being "strong, powerful and deceiving" is threatening to a child; therefore, submission is prominent.

Research in father-daughter incest claims that the father is typically authoritarian and dominating in his approach to family matters (Finkelhor, 1979; Halliday, 1986; Lustig et al., 1966; Meiselman, 1978; Sgroi, 1982). The "empowering process" of the father is an important issue here as it is necessary to understand that the father who engages in this type of relationship is one who uses his power to the fullest. Once this is acknowledged, one can suggest changes that can be made to

this family situation.

Feminists agree that some men view their family as their own "institution" whereby they have total control and authority over its members in all aspects of day to day life. Traditionally, fathers have been the breadwinners, therefore, they are not only socially but economically responsible for its members. Incestuous behavior is believed to be inherent in a family system where patriarchal values are stringently upheld. The "power" that the father wields provides him with the opportunity to engage in such activity. According to the feminist perspective, this type of behavior epitomizes "patriarchy" - i.e., a father exploits his power and abrogates his proper social role for sexual gratification and self interest at the expense of his victim. Therefore, it is believed that as long as the male of the household decides the fate of its members (i.e., has the power to control the situation), incestuous behavior will continue. A number of authors believe that it is these large disparities between males and females in our society in which the system has generated, that has contributed to this on-going process of incestuous abuse (Finkelhor, 1984; Herman, 1981, Rush, 1980).

Many authors see the incestuous family as an isolated group with infrequent or no involvement in community-based activities (Beavers, 1976; Lustig et al., 1966; Sgroi, 1982). When members of the family are isolated from the community, opportunities for outside assistance are rare. Isolation of family members is

important in deceiving the victim into believing what is going on is "normal" (De Young, 1982). The perpetrator as well defines for himself this relationship as normal; in turn he starts developing rationalizations (i.e., alcohol as a catalyst, seduction by daughter....) that make his behavior justifiable. These rationalizations allow the father to continue to abuse his power over the daughter. In essence, the perpetrator cements his power in the situation by cutting off the "information-flow". To be successful, it is necessary to keep the relationship "a secret". De Young (1982) claims that the "secret-keeping techniques" employed by the perpetrator make incest an especially exploitative as well as harmful act. The techniques (i.e., force/threats and/or promises and gifts) ensure the victim's obedience. Particularly, when threats are made against other family members, the victim feels that she must submit in order to keep the family together. Therefore, it is often problematic for the victim in terms of knowing where to turn for assistance, especially as in this study where 18% of the victims knew "something was wrong" by the secretive nature of the perpetrator's actions. Secrecy allows the perpetrator to escape detection, while at the same time allows for the repetition of the abusive behavior.

The mother "empowers" the father by being a "passive collaborator" in the incestuous family situation. A number of researchers have reported that the mother often withdraws sexually from her husband or becomes physically and/or emotionally incapacitated (Cormier et al., 1962; De Young, 1982;

Lustig et al., 1966; Meiselman, 1978). Therefore, the father looks towards his daughter to fulfill these roles. In order to help take away the perpetrator's control and power which exists in incestuous abuse, exposure of the relationship is necessary.

DISCLOSURE - THE DE-EMPOWERING PROCESS

The victims, now survivors, in this study indicated that their best advice to other victims would be to communicate with as many people as possible about their victimization. Therefore, disclosure, according to past victims, is necessary to bring about the end of the relationship as well as in the recovery process.

Nevertheless, it is known that, in a number of instances, the existence of the incestuous relationship is not disclosed to anyone or it is kept a secret for years after the relationship has ended (De Young, 1982). This is not surprising, as the victim is usually hesitant to tell as she has mixed-emotions about not only herself but the perpetrator and the incident.

In the present study, a number of victims in their childhood informed nuclear family members about their experience. Typically, the intention was to have someone intervene and put a stop to the relationship. As a result of mixed reactions, support for the victim was divided and this in turn, cannot help but affect the victim's self-esteem. The issue of sexuality as well remains confusing and further misunderstood by the victim.

In father-daughter incest, if the mother is told about the victim's experience, "self-interest" and "self-protection" become powerful human motives – denial and disbelief are common reactions (Sgroi, 1982). Therefore, the mother is often placed in an awkward position especially when she has to consider her economic support, social status or emotional support (Sgroi, 1982). Sometimes under such pressure, the mother takes a passive position, allowing the perpetrator to take control of family matters. Thus, if she decides to cast a blind eye to what is occurring, the father remains empowered.

A number of siblings (particularly sisters) in this study were informed of the incestuous experience and reacted with mixed emotion. Glaser et al., (1988) claim that siblings may react positively and show protection and concern for the victim, yet may also react defensively. Siblings, like the mother, who are caught up in this kind of dysfunctional setting, are often placed in a difficult situation – they must declare allegiance to either the victim or themselves.

Extended family members (i.e., aunt-uncle, grandparent) often experience mixed reactions – shock, denial and sometimes protection with respect to disclosure if it is made. This sample disclosed to very few extended family members in childhood years. Reaction and support depends on the relationship that the relative has to the victim and perpetrator.

It is important to point out that almost every respondent indicated that both a Teacher and Family Physician were present

during their childhood years. However, very few victims informed these two professionals. Of those who were informed, both Teachers and Doctors reacted positively, for the most part, to the disclosure, and in some way tried to support the victim.

Other helping professionals (i.e., Police, Clergymen, Psychiatrists) are not as accessible to children as are a Teacher and Doctor. Very few victims had these individuals in their life, yet when present, some positive reaction and support was available.

The issue of "no reaction" to a disclosure of sexual victimization and its implications are important to address at this time. In childhood, and to a lesser extent in adulthood years, "no reaction" did present itself as a response to disclosure. "No reaction" for the purpose of this study was intended to be a neutral response – an alternative and useful distinction being offered in the reactionary process. It seemed evident that respondents were considering this when addressing the question. However, it can be argued that "no reaction" can initiate a negative interpretation. Therefore, it would be interesting in future research to consider whether "no reaction" does in fact make a difference between a positive and negative response in terms of what is being judged.

This study concludes that disclosure to nuclear family members, particularly in childhood years, comes up against a number of communication barriers; however, once outside the family milieu, better reaction and more support is found.

There is a certain openness in adulthood years with respect to disclosure. The adult-victim, as well as informing family members, moves outside this realm to discuss her situation with close friends, helping professionals and especially those who share similar experiences. The barriers of communication begin to break down especially when the victim has moved away from the power-laden environment of the abuser – thus, the process of de-empowering the perpetrator has begun. Meiselman (1978) supports this notion by claiming that sexual victimization often comes to an end when the daughter leaves home.

Siblings show a dramatic increase in support for the victim at this time. It can be assumed that the sibling(s) as well has moved away from the abusive environment, thus more protection and a certain allegiance to the victim presents itself. However, the non-abusive mother indicates a somewhat more supportive role to her daughter perhaps as she still resides in the family home.

Helping professionals and self-help groups are sought out by the victim at this time. The present study indicates that half of these women are currently seeking some form of counselling. Therapy was sought by some due to the adverse effects (i.e., depression) that resulted from their incestuous experience, while others suggested that they wanted to discuss their past abusive relationship in order to put it behind them and get on with life. Depression, anxiety and tension, a poor self-image (see, Badgley and Ramsey, 1985; Briere, 1984), as well as problems involving trust, control and guilt (De Young, 1982;

Finkelhor and Browne, 1986) can all be symptomatic of past incestuous abuse. However, an overwhelming majority of this sample who sought counselling, claimed that it had been beneficial. Perhaps, this is the reason why a number of victims portrayed a more positive self-image and a fairly optimistic outlook for themselves in completing the questionnaire.

It is noteworthy to mention, that by focusing on victims who have already been or who are presently involved in therapy as this study did, that some reconstruction of what has happened occurs. Although a valuable reconstruction in itself, it would be interesting in a future study to distinguish and evaluate separately those individuals in preconstruction and post-construction stages in order to compare how they portray their situation over time. Further, in a pre-therapy situation, what one might expect in terms of how the individual reacts to her experience may in fact be quite different.

POLICY RECOMMENDATIONS AND OTHER IMPLICATIONS

As mentioned previously, professionals such as Teachers and Doctors provided support for the victim in childhood years, yet the informing rate was low. Perhaps more education is necessary in these fields in order to be more sensitive to the cues of sexual abuse. This area has been explored somewhat with groups such as the Ottawa-based Canadian Institute of Child Health and Out Reach Abuse Prevention of Toronto who have devised a kit available for Day Care Workers. The kit uses coloured pictures,

songs and games to help reach the sexually abused child. As well, other preventative educational programs for children such as the package developed by C.A.R.E. Productions of British Columbia for elementary schools and Green Thumb Players theatre production Feeling Yes, Feeling No are excellent tools in not only educating children but teachers and parents about this problem. Courses on "parenting" should also be a part of the school curriculum for both boys and girls. It is necessary particularly at this age to create an environment where sexual abuse can be discussed openly. Reaction, and in turn, support, can only change with further education.

Parents, should teach their child to respect and obey only those individuals who are good to them and that even people who know and love them can also hurt them. As parenting is a shared responsibility, it is necessary for both mothers and fathers to initiate directly discussions about sexual abuse. It is important that children have the knowledge to recognize sexual abuse in order to not be a victim. As well, parents should not ignore the danger signs. Gail Gould of Metro Toronto's Special Committee on Child Abuse, claims that there are dozens of indicators which could help parents recognize that their child is being sexually abused (i.e., sexual knowledge inappropriate for age; dramatic behavior changes; unusual fear of a particular individual) (Toronto Star, Aug. 8, 1988).

The notion of children as "property" needs to be eliminated (i.e., the patriarchal structure of power needs to be

dismantled). Feminists believe that the present differences in the socialization of males and females that exists within the present system are problematic to incestuous abuse and prescribe change as the answer (Clark, 1986; Finkelhor, 1984; Herman, 1981; Schlesinger, 1986). However, differences in male and female socialization practices are being examined in theory and research (Finkelhor, 1984; Gilligan, 1982).

The Canadian Children's Foundation implemented recently a twenty-four hour distress line for abused/troubled children (Kids Help Phone). This is another way of de-empowering the perpetrator and empowering the child-victim. Elliot Baker, a psychiatrist, head of the Canadian Society for the Prevention of Cruelty to Children claimed that, "It's a safe, anonymous, accessible and free source for kids. Because of that, it empowers kids, it gives them the chance to step out of what they are locked into" (Toronto Star, March, 22, 1988).

Marvin Glass, a professor at Carleton University proposes that due to the high prevalence of child sexual abuse, that maybe it is time to consider "licensing would-be parents" (i.e., a state-run program of compulsory licencing for all prospective parents) (Globe and Mail, Oct. 2, 1987). He discusses the stringent procedural elements adoptive parents go through when wanting to adopt a child (their lifestyles, opinions are judged by members of the Children's Aid Society) – criteria accepted by most Canadians. However, Glass is faced with opposing arguments to his suggestion. In his closing remarks he concludes that, "no

two adults have the right to undertake the difficult but extremely rewarding task of raising children simply because they are able to procreate and pass a blood test".

Although this study did not present data on a large number of women, it still examined those women who have been affected by the incestuous experience. This sample was to be as diverse as possible in terms of the victim's background/experience; however, this population did exclude, among others, women in institutions prisons and mental hospitals as well as those who have denied or repressed their past, or come to accept and deal with it.

Perhaps in the future with a bigger and more well-defined sample, more attention could be directed towards relating the the "variation" in the victim's experience (i.e., a breakdown of perpetrators) and social reaction with variation in effects. Since this study placed all perpetrators (i.e., uncles, fathers, grandfathers) due to its sample size into one large group, it would be interesting to look at for instance, the uncle-niece incestuous process over time and compare it to the father-daughter situation. Disclosure patterns as well as an assessment of the effects could be studied in terms of differences that occur when incest takes place within the nuclear family versus outside of this domain.

Appendix A

Incest Experience Questionnaire:

My name is Carolyn Langdon and I am doing my Master's thesis at Simon Fraser University in British Columbia, in the area of incest.

The following questionnaire asks for some information about your incest experience, the social reaction you experienced at the time, as well as how you feel at this point. I would appreciate your co-operation in this study and will be more than happy to answer any questions you have.

This project is under the supervision of Dr. T. Palys, School of Criminology at Simon Fraser University, and the questionnaire and procedures I am using for ensuring confidentiality have been scrutinized and endorsed by the Simon Fraser University Ethical Review Committee.

Because of the personal nature of the questions being asked, I have taken precautions to ensure that complete confidentiality will be maintained. If you are interested in participating in this study, please sign and print your name on this sheet below, which indicates to me that you have read and understood the instructions. If you would prefer to separate your signed consent form from the completed questionnaire, please feel free to do this as I have supplied two envelopes for this purpose.

The Therapist of this group is aware of the type and format of this questionnaire and has agreed to distribute it ONLY. She or he is NOT involved in the research in any other way. They will never see any of the completed questionnaires, as it will be your responsibility to seal and mail the completed questionnaire back to me. Also, you will never be personally identified in any reports of this study or other documents. Although answers to all questions would be appreciated, feel free to omit questions you do not wish to answer. As well, comments on any of the questions are welcomed.

I have read the above, understand what is being asked, and agree to participate in Ms. Langdon's research.

NAME (print):

SIGNATURE:

As well, if you are interested, I will send you a summary of the results of this project. Please check the box below and provide a mailing address in order for a copy to be sent to you.

Yes, I would like a summary of the results of this study.
My mailing address is:

School of Criminology
Simon Fraser University
Burnaby, B.C. V5A 1S6

SECTION I

Before proceeding to questions regarding your incest experience, I would first like to ask a few questions about you. This information is being requested merely to allow me to describe in general terms the sample of persons who participate in this research, and will not be used to identify particular individuals.

1. Are you: ☐ male
 ☐ female
2. In what year were you born? _____
3. What is your current marital status?
 ☐ single, never married
 ☐ married or cohabiting
 ☐ separated or divorced
 ☐ widowed
4. What is your current employment status?
 ☐ employed full-time
 ☐ employed part-time
 ☐ not-employed, but looking for work
 ☐ student
 ☐ other (please specify)

I would like you to consider yourself and your situation BEFORE your incest experience began in answering the following set of questions. Please use the rating scales provided. Here is how you use the scales:

If you feel the concept is closely related to one end of the scale (for instance, very fair) you should place your check mark as follows:

fair X _ : _ : _ : _ : _ : _ unfair

If you feel the concept is only slightly related to one or the other end of the scale (for instance, slightly strong), you should place your check mark as follows:

weak _ : _ : _ : X _ : _ strong

If you consider the concept to be neutral on the scale, both sides of the scale equally associated with the concept or if the scale is completely irrelevant, unrelated to the concept, then you should place your check mark in the middle space.

5. Please rate how you felt about YOURSELF prior to the incest experience:

valuable	—	:	—	:	—	:	—	worthless
bad	—	:	—	:	—	:	—	good
clean	—	:	—	:	—	:	—	dirty
delicate	—	:	—	:	—	:	—	rugged
brave	—	:	—	:	—	:	—	cowardly
sad	—	:	—	:	—	:	—	happy
severe	—	:	—	:	—	:	—	lenient
tense	—	:	—	:	—	:	—	relaxed
usual	—	:	—	:	—	:	—	unusual
weak	—	:	—	:	—	:	—	strong

6. Now indicate how you felt about the OTHER PERSON who later became involved in your incest experience:

valuable	—	:	:	:	:	:	:	worthless
bad	—	:	:	:	:	:	:	good
clean	—	:	:	:	:	:	:	dirty
delicate	—	:	:	:	:	:	:	rugged
brave	—	:	:	:	:	:	:	cowardly
sad	—	:	:	:	:	:	:	happy
severe	—	:	:	:	:	:	:	lenient
tense	—	:	:	:	:	:	:	relaxed
usual	—	:	:	:	:	:	:	unusual
weak	—	:	:	:	:	:	:	strong

7. And finally, how did you feel about SEX (ie. sexual activity)?

valuable	—	:	—	:	—	:	—	worthless
bad	—	:	—	:	—	:	—	good
clean	—	:	—	:	—	:	—	dirty
delicate	—	:	—	:	—	:	—	rugged
brave	—	:	—	:	—	:	—	cowardly
sad	—	:	—	:	—	:	—	happy
severe	—	:	—	:	—	:	—	lenient
tense	—	:	—	:	—	:	—	relaxed
usual	—	:	—	:	—	:	—	unusual
weak	—	:	—	:	—	:	—	strong

Now I would like to get some more information with respect to yourself and your situation, once again, BEFORE your incest experience began. Tell me how you felt at this time about (a) yourself; (b) the other person who later became involved in your incest experience; (c) your feelings on sex. You may want to leave this question blank for now and come back to it later.

(a) Yourself:

(b) Other person:

(c) Sex:

COMMENTS:

In this section, I would like to ask some questions about your incest experience. Please note that it is difficult to create questions that cover a wide range of experiences that different individuals have had. Consequently, any comments you might wish to add to amplify your views, write them in either at the end of the various sections or at the completion of the questionnaire. These additional comments will be read and much appreciated.

```

— mother
— father
— grandfather
— grandmother
— step-father
— step-mother
— brother
— sister
— other relative (e.g., aunt, uncle)
— please specify _____
— father's girlfriend or lover
— mother's boyfriend or lover
— other
— please specify _____

```

4. Over what period of time did this sexual relationship continue?

___ one occasion

___ more than one occasion, over a period of ___ months

___ years

95

6. Where did the sexual acts usually occur?

- ☐ at home
☐ elsewhere (please specify)
-

7. Please indicate from the list below if any of these events in your opinion seemed to be associated with the OTHER person's sexual interest in you.

- ☐ when he or she was drunk
☐ at bedtime
☐ when the other parent was away
☐ when he or she was on drugs
☐ when he or she suffered from depression
☐ after parental arguments
☐ other (please specify)
-

Please feel free to elaborate on any of these events that you have checked above;

8. Did you engage in this sexual behavior (check all that apply)

- ☐ because you were threatened in some way by the other person?
☐ because you were promised rewards of some type?
☐ because you didn't understand what it was all about?
☐ because you didn't know what else to do?
☐ because you felt that you were supposed to?
☐ because you enjoyed the attention or feelings that were involved?
☐ because you trusted the other person involved?
☐ other (please specify)
-

9. Think back to the TIME OF THE ACTUAL INCEST EXPERIENCE and tell me how you felt about (a) yourself; (b) the other person who was involved in this experience; (c) sex.

(a) Yourself:

(b) Other person:

[illegible]

10. How did you feel about YOURSELF during this experience?

11. How did you feel about the OTHER PERSON who was involved?

12. How did you feel about SEX (ie. sexual activity)?

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13. Was the sexual aspect of the incest relationship known to anyone other than you and the other person during the time the incest was continuing?
- _____ no, nobody else knew
- _____ no, but somebody should have noticed (who? _____)
- _____ yes, (who? _____)

14. Why did the incest relationship end? Please explain the circumstances of its termination:

COMMENTS:

SECTION III

1. Did you ever tell anyone about your incest experience while it was HAPPENING?

_____ no

_____ yes (who? _____)

2. Did you ever tell anyone about your incest experience AFTER the event?

_____ no

_____ yes (who? _____)

If your answer to both QUESTION 1&2 is NO, move on to QUESTION 6

3. If you did tell someone either at the time of the experience or after, how did that person respond to your statement?

4. Looking back, please indicate why you chose to tell that particular person noted in QUESTION #1 and not someone else?

5. Did telling someone about what was happening to you stop the abuse?

_____ yes

_____ no

Please continue on with question 8

6. If you DID NOT tell anyone else about your past experience, could you explain briefly your reasons for not saying anything?

7. What do you think would have happened if you had told someone?

CHART #1- CHILDHOOD RESPONSES

INDIVIDUALS	WERE THESE PEOPLE IN YOUR LIFE?	DID YOU TRY AND INFORM THEM ABOUT YOUR INCEST EXPERIENCES?	HOW DID THEY REACT?	DID THEY OFFER SUPPORT?
1. Non-abusive Mother	Yes ___ No ___	Yes ___ No ___	Positive ___ Negative ___ No Reaction ___	Yes ___ No ___
2. Non-abusive Father	Yes ___ No ___	Yes ___ No ___	Positive ___ Negative ___ No Reaction ___	Yes ___ No ___
3. Brother/Sister (circle one that you were really close to)	Yes ___ No ___	Yes ___ No ___	Positive ___ Negative ___ No Reaction ___	Yes ___ No ___
4. Other Relative(s) (Please specify) _____	Yes ___ No ___	Yes ___ No ___	Positive ___ Negative ___ No Reaction ___	Yes ___ No ___
5. Close Friend	Yes ___ No ___	Yes ___ No ___	Positive ___ Negative ___ No Reaction ___	Yes ___ No ___
6. Teacher at School	Yes ___ No ___	Yes ___ No ___	Positive ___ Negative ___ No Reaction ___	Yes ___ No ___
7. Family Doctor	Yes ___ No ___	Yes ___ No ___	Positive ___ Negative ___ No Reaction ___	Yes ___ No ___

CHART #1- CHILDHOOD RESPONSES CONT'D

INDIVIDUALS	WERE THESE PEOPLE IN YOUR LIFE?	DID YOU TRY AND INFORM THEM ABOUT YOUR INCEST EXPERIENCES?	HOW DID THEY REACT?	DID THEY OFFER SUPPORT?
8. Social Worker, Psychologist, Psychiatrist, or other helping professional (Circle the appropriate individual/s)	Yes ___ No ___	Yes ___ No ___	Positive ___ Negative ___ No Reaction ___	Yes ___ No ___
9. Clergyman/Rabbi/Priest	Yes ___ No ___	Yes ___ No ___	Positive ___ Negative ___ No Reaction ___	Yes ___ No ___
10. Other Adults (Please specify) _____	Yes ___ No ___	Yes ___ No ___	Positive ___ Negative ___ No Reaction ___	Yes ___ No ___
11. Police	Yes ___ No ___	Yes ___ No ___	Positive ___ Negative ___ No Reaction ___	Yes ___ No ___
12. Self-Help Group(s)	Yes ___ No ___	Yes ___ No ___	Positive ___ Negative ___ No Reaction ___	Yes ___ No ___
13. Other (Please Specify) _____	Yes ___ No ___	Yes ___ No ___	Positive ___ Negative ___ No Reaction ___	Yes ___ No ___

CHART #2- ADULTHOOD RESPONSES

INDIVIDUALS	ARE THESE PEOPLE IN YOUR LIFE?	DID YOU TRY AND INFORM THEM ABOUT YOUR INCEST EXPERIENCE?	HOW DID THEY REACT?	DID THEY OFFER SUPPORT?
1. Non-abusive Mother	Yes ___ No ___	Yes ___ No ___	Positive ___ Negative ___ No Reaction ___	Yes ___ No ___
2. Non-abusive Father	Yes ___ No ___	Yes ___ No ___	Positive ___ Negative ___ No Reaction ___	Yes ___ No ___
3. Brother/Sister (Circle one that you are really close to)	Yes ___ No ___	Yes ___ No ___	Positive ___ Negative ___ No Reaction ___	Yes ___ No ___
4. Other Relative(s) (Please specify) _____	Yes ___ No ___	Yes ___ No ___	Positive ___ Negative ___ No Reaction ___	Yes ___ No ___
5. Close Friend	Yes ___ No ___	Yes ___ No ___	Positive ___ Negative ___ No Reaction ___	Yes ___ No ___
6. Friend/Acquaintance at Work	Yes ___ No ___	Yes ___ No ___	Positive ___ Negative ___ No Reaction ___	Yes ___ No ___
7. Family Doctor	Yes ___ No ___	Yes ___ No ___	Positive ___ Negative ___ No Reaction ___	Yes ___ No ___

CHART #2- ADULTHOOD RESPONSES CONT'D

INDIVIDUALS	ARE THESE PEOPLE IN YOUR LIFE?	DID YOU TRY AND INFORM THEM ABOUT YOUR INCEST EXPERIENCE?	HOW DID THEY REACT?	DID THEY OFFER SUPPORT?
8. Social Worker, Psychologist, Psychiatrist, or other helping professional (Circle the appropriate individual/s)	Yes ___ No ___	Yes ___ No ___	Positive ___ Negative ___ No Reaction ___	Yes ___ No ___
9. Clergyman/Rabbi/Priest	Yes ___ No ___	Yes ___ No ___	Positive ___ Negative ___ No Reaction ___	Yes ___ No ___
10. Other Adults (Please specify) _____	Yes ___ No ___	Yes ___ No ___	Positive ___ Negative ___ No Reaction ___	Yes ___ No ___
11. Police	Yes ___ No ___	Yes ___ No ___	Positive ___ Negative ___ No Reaction ___	Yes ___ No ___
12. Self-Help Group(s)	Yes ___ No ___	Yes ___ No ___	Positive ___ Negative ___ No Reaction ___	Yes ___ No ___
13. Other (Please Specify) _____	Yes ___ No ___	Yes ___ No ___	Positive ___ Negative ___ No Reaction ___	Yes ___ No ___

SECTION IV

1. Are you currently seeking any form of counselling?

_____ yes
_____ no

If your answer to this above question is NO, then move onto QUESTION 7

2. If you are engaged in some form of therapy, please indicate what kind (ie. marital, family-group, individual etc)?

3. What made you seek this form of therapy?

4. Was this method of therapy recommended to you by:

___ family member
___ friend
___ religious figure
___ other
___ please specify _____

5. Have you made any progress with respect to your incest experience?

___ yes ___ no ___ not sure

6. Could you BRIEFLY tell me something about what therapy has done for you?

Please proceed to QUESTION 8

7. If you ARE NOT seeking any form of counselling, do you feel that you have come to terms in dealing with your incestuous experience?

___ yes ___ no ___ not sure

Please comment:

(a) Yourself:

(b) Other person:

(c) Sex:

9. How do you PRESENTLY feel about YOURSELF?

valuable	—	:	—	:	—	:	—	worthless
bad	—	:	—	:	—	:	—	good
clean	—	:	—	:	—	:	—	dirty
delicate	—	:	—	:	—	:	—	rugged
brave	—	:	—	:	—	:	—	cowardly
sad	—	:	—	:	—	:	—	happy
severe	—	:	—	:	—	:	—	lenient
tense	—	:	—	:	—	:	—	relaxed
usual	—	:	—	:	—	:	—	unusual
weak	—	:	—	:	—	:	—	strong

valuable	—	:	—	:	—	:	—	worthless
bad	—	:	—	:	—	:	—	good
clean	—	:	—	:	—	:	—	dirty
delicate	—	:	—	:	—	:	—	rugged
brave	—	:	—	:	—	:	—	cowardly
sad	—	:	—	:	—	:	—	happy
severe	—	:	—	:	—	:	—	lenient
tense	—	:	—	:	—	:	—	relaxed
usual	—	:	—	:	—	:	—	unusual
weak	—	:	—	:	—	:	—	strong

11. How do you feel about SEX NOW?

valuable	—	:	—	:	—	:	—	worthless
bad	—	:	—	:	—	:	—	good
clean	—	:	—	:	—	:	—	dirty
delicate	—	:	—	:	—	:	—	rugged
brave	—	:	—	:	—	:	—	cowardly
sad	—	:	—	:	—	:	—	happy
severe	—	:	—	:	—	:	—	lenient
tense	—	:	—	:	—	:	—	relaxed
usual	—	:	—	:	—	:	—	unusual
weak	—	:	—	:	—	:	—	strong

12. Is there anything you would advise other individuals to do who have experienced the same events as you have?

13. Please feel free to add any closing comments that you have:

THANK YOU FOR YOUR CO-OPERATION

Appendix B

TABLE 5

Factor Loadings Based on Osgoode's Research
Dimensions

Scale	Evaluation	Potency	Activity
valuable - worthless	.79	.04	.13
good - bad	.88, -.77	-.05, -.27	.09, -.33
clean - dirty	.82	-.05	.03
happy - sad	.76, .38	-.11, -.71	.00, -.34
strong - weak	.19, .46	.62, .81	.20, .37
relaxed - tense	.55, .39	.12, -.54	-.37, -.57
brave - cowardly	.66	.44	.12
rugged - delicate	-.42	.60	.26
usual - unusual	-.52	-.16	-.70

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