

CHAPTER 2

A LITERATURE REVIEW

1. INTRODUCTION

In the past the phenomenon of incest has predominantly been viewed from a traditional, modernist, linear perspective. In this study, however, incest is investigated from a postmodern, social constructionist perspective. This approach implies the reevaluation of the traditional definitions and descriptions of the phenomena of incest and incestuous fathers. However, this epistemology of 'multiple realities' implies that a variety of theoretical points of view on incest and incestuous fathers should be taken into account, with the one explanation not necessarily more valid than the other.

The beginning of the eighties was marked by an 'explosion' of literature on child sexual abuse (Conte, 1982). Contributing to this explosion were results from major research efforts conducted during the latter half of the seventies (example Finkelhor, 1979) that broke through deep-seated cultural denial about the scope of the occurrence of intrafamilial sexual abuse. Therefore, the discussion of literature on incest in this chapter will include a large amount of literature dating from the seventies and the eighties.

Furthermore, due to the limited scope of this study as well as the magnitude of existing literature on the victims of incest, the researcher aims in this chapter, to

discuss existing literature more specifically in terms of father-child incest and incestuous fathers.

2. DEFINING INCEST

It is essential to investigate the concept of incest with respect to what is understood by the term before attempting to discuss it in depth. However, it is important to take note that incest can be defined on different levels. Most of the available literature has defined incest from a linear, modernist perspective. The following discussion, therefore, includes definitions of incest as defined from a modernist perspective.

During the Middle Ages the meaning of incest was paradoxical: when used literally, the word signified the abominable sin of consanguineous sex; when represented allegorically, it signified a mystical union with God (Donavin, 1993). According to Bronson (1989) incest is the sexual contact between an adult with a child within the family relationship. Bronson however fails to define the nature of the adult/child relationship as well as excludes the child-child incest relationship.

Sexual abuse researchers define incest as “sexual acts, which may or may not include intercourse, between members of a family other than a husband and wife” (Becker, 1994, p. 176). Finkelhor (1979) defines incest as sexual experiences between family members, including sexual propositions, exhibition, sexual fondling, hand-genital or oral-genital contact, mutual masturbation, and

intercourse. Family members, according to him, included step relations as well as cousins and in-laws.

Incest is defined in South African law as

unlawful and intentional sexual intercourse between male and female persons who are prohibited from marrying each other because they are related within the prohibited degrees of consanguinity, affinity or adoptive relationship (Snyman, 1989, p. 327).

However, only the following types of relatives are prohibited from marrying (Cronjé, 1990):

- Consanguineal relations in a direct line, that is, blood relatives who share a common ancestor and who are ascendants or descendants in the direct line, such as parents and children, and grandparents and grandchildren.
- Consanguineal relations in a collateral line, that is, blood relatives who share a common ancestor and one of whom is only a generation away from the common ancestor, such as siblings, uncles and nieces, and aunts and nephews.
- Affinal relations in the direct line, that is, a man and the blood relatives of his ex-wife and a woman and the blood relatives of her ex-husband, for example, a man and his former mother-in-law, a woman and her former grandfather-in-law, and a step-parent and step-child.
- Parents and their adopted children.

South African law does not outlaw sexual relations between step-relatives other than a stepparent and stepchild. Thus, sex between a stepsister and her stepbrother, between a step-uncle and his step-niece, and between a step-granddaughter and her step-grandfather, is not deemed to be incestuous in law (Cronjé, 1990).

From the literature, it appears that there are difficulties in defining precisely what 'incest' should encompass. Two sources of confusion are the many varieties of sexual activities and the numerous types of kinship between victims and perpetrators. In this research, the term incest is consistent with the more distinctive definition of incest used by Cole (1992) that includes any sexual contact or behaviour for the purpose of sexual stimulation, between an adult (or another child in a position of power over the victim) and a child related within a family structure. This child can be related biologically, can be an adopted or stepchild or can be a child under the guardianship of the incest perpetrator. The sexual contact can include contact such as sexual fondling, indecent exposure, masturbation, hand-genital contact, oral-genital contact, or intercourse, as well as such activities as showing erotic materials or making sexually suggestive comments to a child.

3. TYPES OF INCEST

This study focuses specifically on father-child incest. However, to create an understanding of incest, a brief discussion of other types of incest is also included.

Sadock and Sadock (2003) state that father-daughter incest is the most frequently reported and acknowledged form of intra-family sex. Other types of incestuous relationships that have been known to practitioners and researchers include father-son incest, mother-son incest, mother-daughter incest, brother-sister incest, incest with extended family members such as uncles, aunts and grandparents, and multiple incest.

3.1 Father-daughter incest

Considerable evidence indicates that father-daughter incest does not usually involve violence or severe force. Rather it is a deliberately planned event. In her study of 80 victims of incest by their fathers or stepfathers, de Young (1982) found that only 8 percent were raped. Likewise, Russell (1986) found that in 68 percent of the cases no physical force was involved.

Most acts of incest perpetrated by fathers involve coercion without physical force. De Young (1982) described various aspects of such relations. These include 'evolved incest,' in which the father pays special attention to his daughter, while making increasingly intimate sexual advances as time passes, and 'devious behaviour' incest in which fathers molest their daughters while they are asleep. Fathers also patronise, use 'courting behaviour' and bribe their daughters to participate in incestuous acts. Incestuous fathers generally adopt the role of a suitor with their daughters. Herman and Hirschman (1981, p. 109) wrote that incestuous fathers "courted their daughters like jealous lovers, buying them flowers, expensive jewelry, or sexy underwear." This 'courting behaviour' also involves talking about sex with their daughters, leaving

pornographic material for them to find, exhibiting themselves to their daughters, and spying on their daughters while they were undressing. These behaviours are designed to obligate and eroticise daughters, while exciting and gratifying fathers. In addition, de Young (1982) indicated that secrecy is often used by incestuous fathers to perpetuate the 'affair'. Usually, all such interchanges between father and daughter are initially devoid of physical violence and threats.

Sadock and Sadock (2003) add that in many cases of father-daughter incest, the daughter may appear to be pleased when her father approaches her sexually as she has had a close relationship with him throughout her childhood. According to de Young (1982) the idea that the daughter seduces her father is an often used defense but only rarely the true scenario. First, even if the daughter is a willing participant, she is generally too young to give effective consent (Sullivan, Schaeffer & Goldstein, 1979). Sullivan et al. argue that the age of consent presumes a complete understanding of the incestuous act and all its consequences and ramifications. But even if the daughter is old enough, she is subjected to undue influence, and further the act is incestuous. Thus her consent is negated or disregarded. This principle of negating the daughter's consent is also valid for father-son incest.

3.2 Father-son incest

Some controversy seems to exist with respect to the nature of the father-son incestuous relationship. Groth (1982) states that father-son incest should not be viewed as homosexual activity. Koppers (1995) reiterates that these

abusive fathers are not homosexual. However, the South African National Council for Child and Family Welfare (1988, p. 9) refers to father-son incest as a “complicated homosexual relationship”. They add that fathers who are incestuously involved with their sons “display various forms of socially unacceptable behaviour” (South African National Council for Child and Family Welfare, 1988, p. 9).

Alcohol abuse is also prevalent in father-son incest (South African National Council for Child and Family Welfare, 1988). Renvoize (1982) claims that quite frequently a father sexually assaults his daughter as well as his son. De Young (1982) states that there is a general parental tendency to minimise the experience of the son altogether. This is consistent with the myth that sexually abused boys, unlike girls, do not suffer serious problems as a consequence of the father-son incest. De Young further argues that evidence to the contrary exists and that these sons may have serious problems as a consequence of the father-son incest.

Unfortunately, minimal research has focused on father-son incest and as such the depth of information on this type of abuse is not as clear as for father-daughter incest.

3.3 Mother-son incest

While Sadock and Sadock (2003) and the South African National Council for Child and Family Welfare (1988) suggest that incest between mother and son is extremely rare, others (Groth, 1982; Robertson, 1989) contend that, although

this type of incest is seldom reported, the frequency of occurrence should not be underrated. Friedman (1988) stated that generalisations about incestuous behaviour, or its absence, tend to be slanted toward gender-specific perspectives, and that professionals may look with greater scrutiny for the potential sexual misbehaviour of fathers while discounting or ignoring that of mothers. He suggested that these factors and the theoretical perspectives underlying them might contribute to underreporting of sexual abuse by females.

According to Justice and Justice (1979) the absence of the father may sometimes cause the mother to seek a substitute person who will fill her need for companionship and affection. She looks to her son to fulfill this need for emotional gratification and eventually the relationship between mother and son may become highly intimate and seductive. De Young (1982) adds that the boy is often in a role reversal with the 'missing' father. The South African National Council for Child and Family Welfare (1988) also supports the notion of an absent father in cases of mother-son incest.

Rist (1979, p. 688) states that mother-son incest seems to be the result of extreme pathology characterised by "the absence of early closeness between mother and son". Rist also lists the following as conditions that are typically present with mother-son incest:

- a) A loss of the father, through absence or extreme weakness, at an early age;
- b) Overt seduction by the mother;
- c) Loss of other sexual outlets to the adult son;
- d) Loss of control in one or more family members (Rist, p 688).

Mother-son incest has been romanticised in literature and is often regarded as noninjurious to the son. However, this is not the case. Masters and Johnson (1976) conclude that this form of incest is injurious and results in creating serious problems in sexual adjustment for the son in adult life.

3.4 Mother-daughter incest

Very few cases of mother-daughter incest are reported (South African National Council for Child and Family Welfare, 1988). Groth (1982) proposes that this incestuous relationship should not be considered primarily homosexual. "The same-sex factor may facilitate the symbolic identification with the victim and thus be more of a narcissistic victim choice than a homosexual one" (Groth, 1982, p. 231).

Renvoize (1982) describes a case of a daughter whose mother was seductive while her father was overtly sexually abusive. The daughter perceived her mother's seductive behaviour as more damaging than her father's actual molestation. It appears that in the case of mother-daughter incest, the mother usually initiates the incest and that the effects of the incest are as traumatic as for father-daughter incest.

3.5 Brother-sister incest

Between 1983 and 1992, the rate of juvenile arrest for forcible rape increased by more than 20% (American Academy of Child and Adolescent Psychiatry, 1999) suggesting an increase in both intrafamilial and extrafamilial sexual abuse by juveniles. Nevertheless, brother-sister incest is still poorly studied

compared with father-daughter incest. Ascherman and Safier (1990) underline that, in spite of its prevalence and sequel, brother-sister incest is a poorly understood and infrequently researched phenomenon.

Some authors have suggested that sibling incest may be less harmful than other types of incest. Others have stated that an age difference of 5 years or more between the victim and the brother increases the amount of emotional damage (Laviola, 1992). According to de Young (1982) the short-term effects appear to be minimal. Some participants (victims included) regard the relationship as pleasurable, especially if there is a feeling of closeness to the offending sibling.

However, the long-term effects found in some studies support the contention that brother-sister incest is harmful. Abrahams and Hoey (1994) reported recurrent failure in social and workplace settings as well as general dissatisfaction with life. In a retrospective study of adult respondents, common effects included mistrust of men and women, chronic low or negative self-esteem, sexual response difficulties, intrusive thoughts of incest (Laviola, 1992), continuous self-blame, and repetition of the victim role in relationships (Wiehe, 1997). Rudd and Herzberger (1999) compared 14 adult victims of brother-sister incest with 15 adult victims of father-daughter incest and discovered numerous similar consequences, including depression, drug or alcohol problems, eating disorders, suicidal feelings, sexual promiscuity, flashbacks and nightmares.

Characteristics of the families in which brother-sister incest occurs have received a little more attention to date. In retrospective studies such as Laviola's (1992), women described their families as dysfunctional in child-rearing practices, relational patterns among family members, family rules, and response patterns to family stressors. Discipline often involved verbal or physical abuse. Rudd and Herzberger (1999) observed a lack of parental supervision and frequent physical abuse by the parents as well as by the brother. Worling (1995) reported that, compared with adolescent non-sibling sexual offenders, adolescent sibling incest offenders experienced significantly more parental physical punishment, a more negative and argumentative family environment, greater feelings of parental rejection, heightened marital discord between parents and less overall satisfaction with their family relationships.

3.6 Incest by other family members

According to the South African National Council for Child and Family Welfare (1988, p. 10), "[t]oo few instances of incestuous behaviour involving grandfathers, uncles, aunts, nieces and nephews have been studied to form a composite picture". Furthermore, it is a societal belief that older men are no longer interested in sex and as such grandfather-granddaughter incest is seldom suspected (Renvoize, 1982).

Margolin (1992) argues that the presence of a step grandfather increases the risk of incest. The findings of a study conducted by Margolin also suggest that the majority of incestuous grandparents are non-custodial and that the victims are usually girls. Margolin adds that incestuous grandmothers are thought to

be extremely rare. Molestation by aunts, like grandmothers, is also considered very uncommon (Margolin, 1994).

As with grandfathers, in the majority of cases, incestuous uncles were also sexually abusive fathers. Robertson (1989) contends that cousins are sometimes sexually abusive and that these are typically young, single relatives who have frequent contact with the victim or who live in close proximity to the victim.

3.7 Multiple incest

More than one perpetrator and/or more than one victim can be involved in an incestuous relationship. The victims may be abused either simultaneously or consecutively (Kaplan, Sadock & Grebb, 1994). Robertson (1989) asserts that incest is seldom directed against only one child if the child has siblings who are also present. This is especially so if the children are all of the same sex, but applies even where the siblings are of opposite sexes. The South African National Council for Child and Family Welfare (1988, p. 10) proposes that “when the incest taboo has been broken once in a family, it is easy to do it again”.

From the literature, father-daughter incest appears to be the most frequently reported and acknowledged form of intra-family sex. However, it seems that the frequency of occurrence of other types of incestuous relationships should not be underrated.

4. GENERAL CHARACTERISTICS OF INCESTUOUS FATHERS

A significant number of researchers conclude that there is no demographic profile of incestuous fathers. Rather they are a complex, heterogeneous group of individuals who look like everyone else (Groth, 1982; Meiselman, 1978; Smith & Saunders, 1995). Expectations and beliefs about personality characteristics that must be present in incestuous fathers are likely to be inaccurate and therapeutically counterproductive. Groth (1982, p. 229) agrees that there are no unique personality features distinguishing incestuous fathers from other individuals, but contends that these fathers tend to have some general characteristics in common.

These characteristics relate to each other as follows:

- A general relating to life in which fantasy and passive dependency (submissiveness) replace active strivings (assertiveness), especially in interpersonal relationships, with the result that the incestuous father experiences himself more as a helpless victim of external forces and events than as a person in control of himself and in charge of his life, that produces
- An intrinsic feeling of isolation, separateness, and apartness from others – the incestuous father experiences himself psychologically as a loner, lacking any consistent sense of intimate attachment, belonging, or relatedness to others, which in turn results in
- An underlying mood state of emptiness, fearfulness, and depression which combines with a sense of low self-esteem and poor self-confidence to make

him oversensitive to what he interprets as criticisms, put-downs, exploitations, and rejections from a hostile and uncaring world; then

- This lack of psychological comfort, security, and pleasure in life, and his deficient empathetic skills, prompt him to regress from anxiety-producing adult relationships, to substitute fantasy for reality, and to replace adults with children who symbolise his own immaturity.

5. TYPES OF INCESTUOUS FATHERS

Although Meiselman (1978, p. 111) queries the practicality of devising a classification for incestuous fathers, she suggests that, for academic reasons, it be done to recognise that incestuous behaviour arises in a variety of personality types and social settings. This in turn indicates different patterns of motives that may have significance for children, as well as implications for public policy and treatment. It is important to note that in this section, some of the terms that will be used to define and describe the different types of incestuous fathers will be used from a psychiatric perspective. However, these terms will be included in order to create a broader understanding of incestuous fathers.

Meiselman (1978, p. 111) distinguishes the following types of incestuous fathers:

5.1 The Endogamic type

Incestuous fathers of the endogamic type are fathers with an “ingrown personality type...who confines his sexual objects for family member [and who] resorts to incest with a daughter/son...because he does not cultivate and does not crave social or sexual contacts with women outside the family” (Weinberg cited in Meiselman, 1978, p. 107). Summit and Kryso (cited in Vander Mey and Neff, 1986) add that these incestuous fathers are typically nonimpulsive people who are otherwise socially well adjusted. They are men who’s “sole social deviancy is their sexual behaviour” (Renvoize, 1982, p. 72). Renvoize (1982) found that the endogamic type is the most prevalent type of incestuous fathers. According to him, these incestuous fathers can, in the majority of cases, be helped successfully.

Meiselman (1978) states that there are two reasonably distinct kinds of incestuous fathers with endogamic orientation. The first is a father with a personality disorder, and the second, a father who belongs to an isolated subculture.

Although the characteristics of incestuous fathers have already been discussed in general terms, the more specific characteristics of these two kinds of endogamic incestuous fathers will now be discussed.

5.1.1 The endogamic type with personality disorders

5.1.1.1 Emotional and sexual dependency

Weinberg (as cited in Justice and Justice, 1979) described the endogamic type incestuous father as a father with an intra-family orientation. According to Robertson (1989) the endogamic type incestuous father is strongly opposed to extrafamilial sexual affairs. He therefore turns within the family in an attempt to meet his emotional and sexual needs (Justice & Justice, 1979). The husband will first turn to the wife to meet his needs. When their marital relationship deteriorates and sex discontinues between them, he will displace his unfulfilled needs from his spouse to his daughter or son.

Furthermore, this type of incestuous father uses intrafamilial sex in an effort to satisfy needs that he has never learned to fulfill through close interpersonal contact. This corresponds with the South African National Council for Child and Family Welfare's (1988) description of the incestuous father who has minimal extrafamilial contact with an extreme intra-familial orientation. Justice and Justice (1979, p. 66) explain that in a healthy family, sexual relationships are excluded from the cultural goal of "togetherness" of the family. However, according to them, the incestuous family has become so "ingrown" that the incestuous father is unable to seek sexual release outside the family if his needs are not being met. Meiselman (1978) reports that researchers have found the tendency to limit social and sexual contacts to the family, as the most prominent characteristic of endogamic fathers with personality disorders.

5.1.1.2 Economic dependency

According to Lukianowitz (1972) this type of incestuous father usually comes from a disorganised or broken home with poverty as a prominent characteristic. The number of lower working class families in her own sample encouraged Lukianowitz to put forward the influential theory that incest is an accepted practice in the lower class groups. However, Justice and Justice (1979) found that many incestuous fathers were respected citizens who included judges, doctors, teachers and foremen. Meiselman (1978) also argues that poverty is not necessarily a special characteristic of the background of endogamic fathers with personality disorders. Rush (1980, p. 138) is of the opinion that

we may hear of more occurrences among the scrutinised poor, but when discovered and dealt with in a middle-class home, the problem is usually buried in the private files of a psychiatrist's office.

5.1.1.3 Early emotional deprivation

Endogamic fathers with personality disorders have also been found to have suffered an absence of parental figures, whether physically or emotionally. According to Justice and Justice (1979) these fathers often had to take care of their parents rather than vice versa. Brooks (1982) states that incestuous fathers often come from homes where the mother was unavailable emotionally and/or physically. Incest then becomes a means of gratification for early unsatisfied oral dependent needs. Riemer (as cited in Meiselman, 1978) notes that such absence may de-emphasise the value of parent-child relationships and may cause the father to see his daughter as just another female.

According to Groth (1982) father-child incest is an attempt of the incestuous father to compensate for a feeling of emotional deprivation. Justice and Justice (1979) conclude that an incestuous father longs for intimacy, a sense of belonging and closeness that he has never experienced because of the kind of parents that he had as a child and because of the way in which he was raised. He longs to be close to someone and has strong unmet needs for warmth. However, he struggles to distinguish affection from sexuality and therefore, turns to father-child incest to meet these needs.

5.1.1.4 Father-son relationship-ambivalence

Weiner (as cited in Meiselman, 1978) observed a strong ambivalence felt by endogamic fathers with personality disorders towards their own fathers. Their fathers were often harsh and authoritarian. According to Williams and Finkelhor (1990) rejection by their fathers is a common characteristic of incestuous fathers. Weiner (as cited in Meiselman, 1978, p. 85) adds that endogamic fathers with personality disorders equally feared and admired their own fathers, but felt the lack of the ungratified father-son relationship. Such fathers are purported to identify with their daughters or sons in a sexual relationship thus, obtaining the longed for “paternal warmth and affection”.

5.1.1.5 Incest model

According to Cohen (1983, p. 157) these incestuous fathers may also have acquired the incestuous behaviour through social learning. The father may have observed incest in his own family (Cohen, 1983) or he might have a pain-filled story of his own victimisation (Groth, Hobson & Gary, 1982). According to

Renvoize (1982) a father that has experienced incest during his childhood may become an incestuous parent. Groth et al. argue that the incestuous father, who has also been a victim of incest, has had a dysfunctional learning history upon which was built a system of dysfunctional identification with and modeling of his incestuous father.

5.1.1.6 Dominance versus ineffectiveness

This type of father is one who overcompensates for his feelings of powerlessness by adopting an extremely rigid, controlling, authoritarian position as the undisputed head of his household (Groth, 1982). According to Justice and Justice (1979) power and control are bywords in this father's orientation to his family. He applies strict discipline to his family and rules over his family an authoritarian manner.

However, Maisch (1973) found that although these fathers were tyrants within the home, outside the family circle the incestuous fathers were subdued. Herman and Hirschman (1981, p. 74) are of the opinion that when these men face superior authorities or people who have, in a certain situation, more power (such as prosecutors, police, therapists, etc.) they become "generally ingratiating, deferential, even meek". They maintain that these incestuous fathers merely assess situations with great shrewdness and alter their behaviour and attitudes accordingly and present themselves as "pathetic, helpless and confused" (Herman & Hirschman, 1981, p. 74).

5.1.1.7 Sexual obsession

The commonly held view, that incestuous fathers have excessive needs for sexual intercourse has been disparaged by the Kinsey Institute (Herman & Hirschman, 1981). According to Renvoize (1982) some earlier studies indicated that incest does not usually occur until after sex has virtually ceased between husband and wife. However, according to Herman and Hirschman (1981) some case studies report approaches every night of the week to either one or more children in the family and according to Carnes (1983) most incestuous fathers are addicted to sex. Meiselman (1978, p. 99) found that some fathers were careless in their sexual behaviour in front of their children and others have a “pathological obsession with sex” which manifests in sexual fantasy and a readiness for experimentation that appears to have its origin in personality disturbance.

5.1.1.8 Paranoia

Meiselman (1978) states that paranoia could explain the hostility, suspiciousness and intellectual defense structures that are commonly ascribed to these incestuous fathers. This includes the intense involvement with his daughter and the concomitant jealousy as he regards her as his exclusive property (Herman & Hirschman, 1981; Justice & Justice, 1979; Groth, 1982). This is supported by Weinberg’s findings (Meiselman, 1978) that some incestuous fathers have histories of egocentric suspicious behaviour. Cavallin (as cited in Renvoize, 1982) consistently found the presence of paranoid traits in his endogamic patients.

5.1.2 The endogamic sub cultural type

According to Meiselman (1978) the Kinsey Institute described the subcultural type of incestuous fathers, as fathers, involved with older, post-pubertal daughters. These fathers are devoutly religious, moralistic, intolerant of devious sexual behaviour and very desirous of marrying a virgin. At the same time they lead very erratic lives to which they confess and for which they ask absolution in the context of fundamentalist religious beliefs. Such confessions relieve their feelings of guilt.

5.2 The psychopathic type

By definition, psychopaths are callous, selfish, manipulative, irresponsible, impulsive, sexually promiscuous and generally antisocial (Hart & Hare, 1997). The South African National Council for Child and Family Welfare (1988, p. 12) states that the psychopathic incestuous father is characterised by “indiscriminate sexuality, inability to form tender attachments with spouse and children and viewing them as objects”. According to Justice and Justice (1979) these fathers seek stimulation, novelty and excitement, have no appreciation or understanding of love and do not experience guilt. This concurs with the perspective that father-child incest is based on the selfish use of children for personal gratification (Herman & Hirschman, 1980). Here, the incestuous father sexually abuses his child because he believes that satisfying his own impulses is more important than the negative consequences for the child victim.

An underpinning of this type of incestuous father could be the general belief that a man's sexual impulses must be acted on. Groth (1978) defines the

psychopathic incestuous father as a person with poor impulse control with regard to sexuality; a low frustration level, he suffers from very low self-esteem and has to have immediate gratification of his needs. He is also insensitive to other people's needs and has little insight into, and understanding of, his own behaviour. Groth sees him as a psychological child in the soma of an adult.

5.3 The psychotic type

Although most incestuous fathers are emotionally disturbed, few have been found to be psychotic. According to Justice and Justice (1979) the vast majority of incestuous fathers do not have psychotic tendencies and only approximately 3 percent of incestuous fathers have symptoms of clinical psychosis. Lukianowitz (1972) also reported an absence of psychosis amongst his sample. Meiselman (1978) explains this by saying that psychotic fathers are hospitalised and not available in prison settings where most research studies are conducted.

5.4 The alcoholic type

The use and abuse of alcohol by incestuous fathers is widely mentioned by authors on incest. According to Justice and Justice (1979) from 10 to 15 percent of fathers who commit incest are alcoholics. Renvoize (1982) reviewed figures pertaining to alcohol and incestuous behaviour and quotes various researchers who found alcohol to play a 30 to 50 percent role in all cases. Maltz and Holman (1987) argue that incestuous fathers frequently turn to alcohol to avoid the pain they feel inside. Robertson (1989) proposes that the alcoholic incestuous father uses alcohol in an attempt to eradicate insecurity

and feelings of rejection from his spouse. One of the consequences is lowered inhibition that may lead to sexual relations with his child. This in turn results in feelings of remorse and guilt. “This causes him to drink to escape these feelings and the cycle repeats itself” (Robertson, 1989, p. 13).

Maisch (1973) warns that no specific causal connection should be deduced between alcohol and incest, because the same degree of alcoholism is evident in non-sexual criminal offenders. At best its function is the ‘normal’ – which is a lowering of inhibitions (Meiselman, 1978).

5.5 The pedophilic type

Groth (1978) states that although incest and pedophilia are not synonymous; as the first relates to sexual relations with a relative and the latter to sexual attraction to children, there is an overlap when incest occurs. Although the dynamics are similar, the pedophile is seen as a deviate individual, whereas the incestuous father is one factor in a dysfunctional family. However, Renvoize (1982) claims that it is more comfortable for researchers to see father-child incest as a problem of family dysfunction rather than to see the father primarily as a pedophile. Justice and Justice (1979, p. 89) state that the word pedophiliac literally means “lover of child”, or “one who has an erotic craving for a child”. Thus, the pedophilic incestuous father is primarily motivated by his sexual interest in children (Groth, 1978).

Carnes (1983) argues that these incestuous fathers of the pedophilic type are in essence addicted to children. According to the South African National

Council for Child and Family Welfare (1988) the pedophilic incestuous father is primarily attracted to children, both his own and children in general. He is typically immature and therefore, finds it less threatening to relate to children as opposed to adults. Justice and Justice (1979) agree that these incestuous fathers are emotionally and sexually immature and have overwhelming feelings of inadequacy and inferiority. They, therefore, want sexual activity with their children who will not belittle or reject them. Meiselman (1978) and Maisch (1973) are of the opinion that, although pedophilia is recognised as a possible factor in incest, its manifestation is rare.

5.6 The mentally defective type

Mentally defective incestuous fathers have been noted in literature but there is no evidence that these people are representative. Justice and Justice (1979, p. 91) state that “the vast majority of incestuous fathers are fully responsible for their actions, that is, they do not have brain lesion or organic damage that puts their behaviour outside their control...”

5.7 The situational type

Meiselman’s (1978, p. 110) last category, namely situational incestuous fathers, includes ordinary men who, faced with a stressful life event such as divorce, death, an accident or illness, temporarily break down to a “tempting daughter or step-daughter”. Justice and Justice (1979) have illustrated that incest is sometimes a matter of circumstance rather than a matter of personalities, but argues that the personality type for incest must be present for the

circumstances to precipitate the problem. In Meiselman's psychotherapy sample, this group represented 5 percent of the incestuous fathers.

Although other typologies of incestuous fathers may be equally valid, Meiselman's analysis is important in understanding the variety of personality types, motivational dynamics and social settings in which father-child incestuous behaviour arises. However, it is important to note that any of these categories of incestuous fathers can overlap or be blurred, i.e. they are not mutually exclusive. In real life human beings rarely fall neatly into any one category, but nevertheless classifications can be useful as long as one is aware of their limitations.

6. EMOTIONAL NEEDS OF THE INCESTUOUS FATHER THAT MOTIVATE THE INCESTUOUS BEHAVIOUR

The characteristics of the incestuous father have been discussed in some detail, but the question as to what motivates him to abuse his child remains. Most authorities agree that incestuous fathers are motivated by emotional rather than sexual needs. Groth (1982, p. 228) suggests that incestuous behaviour may fulfill a number of needs for the father:

- It may serve to validate his sense of worth and bolster his self-esteem.
- It may compensate for feeling abused or rejected by his wife or other women.
- It may serve to restore a sense of power and control to the father.
- It may gratify a need for attention and recognition.

- It may serve to meet a need for affiliation.
- It may temporarily strengthen his sense of identity.

7. THEORETICAL MODELS FOR THE OCCURRENCE (ETIOLOGY) OF FATHER-CHILD INCEST

Given the apparent universality of incest, there is an abundant literature on the factors that may lead to incest. Many attempts have been made by researchers, using different theoretical approaches, to understand its etiology. However, no simplistic explanation captures the etiology of father-child incest; rather, a complex pattern of variables must be considered (Finkelhor, 1986).

7.1 A Psychoanalytic perspective

Freud is the forerunner of the psychoanalytical orientation towards incest and the incest taboo. He was struck by the reports of incestuous childhood seduction among his patients and developed the idea that neurosis was, in fact, a result of these experiences. Freud, however, later modified his theory when the frequency of these reports became so high that he began to question their validity. This led to his postulation of sexual fantasies in childhood and the subsequent theory of the oedipal complex (Lystad, 1982).

Psychoanalysts contend that incest occurs when the daughter suffers from oral deprivation in the pre-oedipal stage. An incestuous relationship with her father is then established as revenge against her mother, who frustrated her oral needs and simultaneously as a way of satisfying her oral needs. The daughter

substitutes the father's penis for the mother's breast, which had been denied to her (Dixen & Jenkens, 1981).

In sum, father-child incest viewed from a psychoanalytic perspective is understood mostly in terms of the Oedipus complex - an unconscious fantasy originating in the child's intra-psychic experience (Titelman, 1998).

7.2 A Feminist perspective

A feminist perspective on father-child incest suggests that, because the incest taboo reinforces the absolute right of the father in the family, it is part and parcel of a patriarchal social structure that oppresses women (Firestone, 1970). Firestone emphasises that the father provides material support for his wife who in turn provides sexual services for him, and that he regards the children who are the product of this sexual union as his legal property. Feminists also assert that incestuous fathers have been socialised to use sex as a way to obtain power, express emotions and maintain a sense of adequacy (James & MacKinnon, 1990). Mothers, on the other hand, are viewed as relatively powerless within the patriarchal family structure and wider society. They are however, held responsible for the well being of their children by society and often by their daughters who frequently experience deep feelings of rage towards their mothers (Sen & Daniluk, 1995).

Firestone (1970) noted that children who grow up in this oppressive situation, sense that the father is powerful and the mother is powerless. They also learn that the father's love and approval is given to those who comply with his

wishes. The power of the father sets the stage for incest. Herman and Hirschman (1977) observed that the incest taboo is at the center of attempts that men make to control warfare among themselves. In a patriarchal society, women are regarded as possessions of men. The incest taboo is an agreement among men as to how women will be shared. By restricting access to certain women in the family, the incest taboo sets the rules that determine how males will settle their differences (Herman & Hirschman, 1977).

McIntyre (1981) argues that incestuous assaults enforce the dominance of the male and are another form of violence against women and children inherent in relationship promoted by patriarchy. Because women are powerless in a patriarchal society, Susan Butler (1978) claims that we need to look at women's oppression as a direct cause of incestuous assault.

In summary, feminists view incest as a forceful act performed by men who control and subordinate their spouses and their children (Barret, Trepper & Fish, 1990). They argue that father-child incest is a product of a patriarchal family structure (Vander Mey & Neff, 1986).

7.3 The Precondition model

The precondition model is not a theoretical model the traditional sense of the word. However, due to the large amount of research that has been conducted by Finkelhor and Wolf into the area of incest, this model is included in the discussion of the etiology of father-child incest.

Finkelhor (1984) and Wolf (1985) developed the primary concepts of the Perpetrator Assault Cycle Model that contributes to the etiology of father-child incest. Finkelhor's aim was to produce a model that would address both the intra-perpetrator and situational aspects of child sexual abuse and which would be equally applicable to familial and non-familial incidents. His model amounts to the proposition that four preconditions need to be met before father-child incest can occur. Thus it is a theory about the necessary conditions for father-child incest. The four preconditions are: the individual must have a motivation to offend; the individual must be able to overcome internal inhibitors, the individual must be able to overcome external inhibitors; and the individual must overcome the resistance of the child.

In Wolf's model there are several discrete, yet overlapping stages through which incestuous fathers progress prior to their incestuous behaviour. The first is a sense of poor self-image, which is pervasive, and subject to being triggered by events external to the offender's self-perceptions. For example, incestuous fathers may receive feedback at their job, which is then interpreted negatively as a result of an already present negative self-image. When these negative feelings and self-perceptions surface, incestuous fathers will tend to expect that any interaction they have with others will be met with rejection. In order to avoid this rejection, they withdraw from others temporarily. However, as they continue to experience painful affect, incestuous fathers may begin to engage in fantasy, masturbation, and other sexual activities that they have found to be self-soothing.

As incestuous fathers fantasise, they may have already targeted an accessible child to 'groom' or to whom they can develop a self-nurturing relationship. Grooming behaviours (actual or emotional) may include bribes, coercion, and the establishment of dependency. The grooming behaviours may also serve to desensitise the children to increasingly intrusive forms of incest. After the incest incident, there may be a short, transitory period of guilt in which incestuous fathers may promise themselves they will not re-offend, and may make similar promises to their victims.

7.4 A Systems perspective

Lustig (as cited in Alexander, 1985) studied father-child incest from a family perspective and emphasised the mother-daughter role reversal and the lack of generational boundaries. However, although a family perspective focuses on the internal interactions of the family system, little attention has been given to the interaction of the family system within the context of its environment (such as the community). According to Alexander (1985), the interaction between the family system and its environment is important for two reasons.

First, the identification of the problem usually elicits the involvement of the community in the form of the courts and the welfare system, as well as the therapists. Second, the nature of the family's relationship with the environment may play a role in the occurrence and maintenance of the incestuous behaviour.

Alexander conceptualises the incestuous family as a closed system, maintaining that they do not have the characteristics of an open system, such as information exchange, negentropy and dynamic homeostasis. He postulates that families with father-child incest are frequently isolated and as such their informational exchange with the environment is less than that of an open system. He claims that without input from the environment, a system will avoid growth, differentiation and change resulting in a run down state with eventual death, that is, entropy. Hoffman (as cited in Alexander, 1985) states that too much interconnectedness, enmeshment, or homeostasis is often noticed in dysfunctional families.

According to Alexander the incestuous family is by no means the only type of dysfunctional family unit to be relatively deficient in information exchange with the environment, negentropy, and dynamic homeostasis. However, he contends that much can be understood about the occurrence of father-child incest if it is viewed in the context of a relatively closed system.

Lesniak (1993) describes the incestuous family as living in a state of entropy that may be characterised by chaos, unresolved intergenerational conflicts and ineffective internal information exchange. This prevents the differentiation of role, functions, and age-appropriate developmental tasks that normally serve to facilitate the growth of individuality and the sense of separateness. According to Lesniak, avoiding growth and change creates a climate of dynamic homeostasis that fosters strong dependency needs, violates each individual's sense of personal space, and discourages interaction with the environment.

Dixen and Jenkins (1981) note that incest is the primary method by which many dysfunctional families maintain their high degree of enmeshment. According to Faust, Runyon and Kenny (1995) researchers state that father-child incest is a symptom of a family system dysfunction. In this dysfunctional family system, the family members become distressed upon separating from the family of origin and seem unable to establish independent and socially appropriate relationships. This type of family environment allows for the development of father-child incest.

In sum, father-child incest, viewed from a systemic perspective, is not an end in itself but rather symptomatic behaviour of a family that, isolated from the environment, avoids defining separate roles and functions for its members and uses incest as merely one of the ways to avoid growth and change (Alexander, 1985).

This presentation of theories by no means exhausts all writings pertaining to explanations for father-child incest. However, it does indicate the range of approaches and perspectives available in literature. It also indicates that various theorists concern themselves with different aspects of father-child incest. Undoubtedly, as more data are collected on father-child incest, more theories may arise or older theories may need to be altered to accommodate research findings.

8. THE EFFECTS OF FATHER-CHILD INCEST ON THE INCESTUOUS FATHER

Due to the limited scope of this study, the researcher will mainly focus on the effects that father-child incest have for the incestuous father. The intention is by no means to negate or minimise the devastating effects that father-child incest might have on the victim and/or other members of the family in which the father-child incest occurs.

According to Meiselman (1978), the majority of incestuous fathers seem to feel intense guilt during and after the incestuous relationship. Justice and Justice (1979) add that many fathers experience intense guilt when discovered and might even become suicidal. Meiselman discusses a study of 26 incestuous fathers, conducted by Kennedy and Sangowicz. This study revealed that the incestuous fathers felt guilty about the harm that the incest caused their children. Furthermore, they were afraid of being rejected by their wives as they felt that they had betrayed them. The fathers also experienced high levels of depression and anxiety. Meiselman adds that the incestuous father may attempt to lessen his high levels of guilt and anxiety by justifying his incestuous behaviour. The father sometimes argues that the incestuous behaviour was not as serious as the child had contended and that he was merely providing affection or sex education for the child. The father may also maintain that his child was promiscuous and seductive and may insist that the child is fabricating the story and thus deny the allegations.

Furthermore, depending in part on how the father-child incestuous relationship ends, the effects of this relationship on the father may vary. The father may have to face criminal charges and the possibility of imprisonment, if the incest was publicly disclosed and brought to the attention of the law. He may face censure from his friends and society and might even be dismissed from his work. The discovery of incest may also result in separation as the marriage was probably already seriously strained prior to the discovery of the father-child incest (Justice & Justice, 1979). The father may also experience considerable anger and hurt if he feels a significant degree of attachment to his child. Thus, the father will also face the loss of his daughter/son, both as his child and sexual partner (Meiselman, 1978).

Meiselman (1978, p. 183) cautions that it would be “quite unwise to assume that disclosure automatically terminates the incest affair or prevents another one from occurring.” The father sometimes continues with the incestuous behaviour by simply moving on to the next child. However, some incestuous fathers experience a sense of relief when they are caught. They may welcome the opportunity to get control over their problems as their secrecy and hidden pain of years’ duration become exposed (Maltz & Holman, 1987).

9. INTERVENTIONS WITH INCESTUOUS FATHERS

An extended discussion of the treatment strategies that result from different theoretical approaches exceeds the scope of this study. Nonetheless, it is necessary to touch on some of the theories for treatment.

It has become dogma in the literature that incestuous fathers need only be identified and, once convicted of an offense, have only a small chance of re-offending (Furr, 1993; Marshall & Anderson, 1996). However, Simkins, Ward, Bowman and Rinck (1990) argue that treated incestuous fathers, recidivate less than untreated incestuous fathers. Marshall, Jones, Ward, Johnston, and Barbaree (1991) conducted a review of treatment-effectiveness literature and concluded that comprehensive cognitive/behavioral programs are the most effective forms of treatment for incestuous fathers.

Behaviorists assume that incestuous abuse is a function of learned behaviour and that therapy should be an educative process. Treatment techniques are specific and aimed at visible behaviour. Change can be measured and in an individual setting, new responses can be learned through exercise, role-play etcetera (Jones, 1982). Cognitive-behavioral intervention or 'cognitive restructuring' attempts to influence the emotions and behaviour of the incestuous fathers by challenging and changing their thought patterns (Willis, 1993). Willis argues that cognitive shifts will be reinforced if these fathers' behaviour is redirected, challenged, prescribed and/or vetoed at the same time. Components of cognitive restructuring may include, anxiety reduction, social skills etcetera. Willis stresses that incestuous fathers have to be willing to give up certain beliefs and behaviours and therefore, has to be committed to this work.

In addition to cognitive-behavioral treatment, generalisation and persistence of therapeutic effects can be enhanced through an active program of relapse

prevention such as advocated by Prithers, Marquis, Gibat, and Marlatt (1983). Such a program consists of a number of steps, carefully explored with each incestuous father, well before the end of active therapy:

- (1) *Avoiding overconfidence.* The incestuous father is encouraged to regard the need for treatment as perpetual and the need for caution extreme.
- (2) *Self-monitoring.* The incestuous father is coached to recognise early signs of deviant sexual arousal, especially those that initially appear harmless.
- (3) *Problem solving.* Rational problem-solving skills, such as brainstorming and evaluating options are taught to the incestuous father to help him in provocative situations.
- (4) *Environmental control.* The incestuous father is encouraged to implement lifestyle changes that can lower his risk of entering provocative situations.
- (5) *Cognitive restructuring.* Thought changing and substituting techniques are explained to the incestuous father so that he can re-label thinking errors and impose greater self-control.
- (6) *Coping skills.* The incestuous father is taught relaxation techniques; anger management skills; and impulse control techniques; he is encouraged to use physical exercise as a release and is coached in relapse rehearsals to prepare him for a sexual arousal 'emergency'. He is taught to practice such skills until they are over learned and become automatic. A card is often provided with instructions and reminders of techniques to practice and telephone numbers to call if an urgent situation arises.

One of the most controversial topics surrounding the matter of the treatment of incest is the role of the family in incestuous abuse and the parallel question of the family in later treatment (Friedrich, 1990). Family therapy is based on a study of the family as a system. It is assumed that family interaction is defective and the whole family is required to actively participate in changing the patterns of interaction so as to make these more effective (Jones, 1982). The incestuous father is, therefore, treated within the concepts of a dysfunctional system.

Many models of family treatment exist and are actively practiced. In terms of the Bowen family systems approach (Titelman, 1998), families pass on patterns of behaviour from generation to generation. In treatment, the incestuous father is taken back into his past and patterns of expectations are discovered. The father is assisted to break his fusion with his family of origin and to differentiate. This can only be successful if the client is able to separate his emotional reactions from his intellectual insights.

According to Alexander (1985), father-child incest viewed from a systemic perspective is not an end in itself but rather symptomatic behaviour of a family that, isolated from the environment, avoids defining separate roles and functions for its members and uses incest as merely one of the ways to avoid growth and change. Therefore, "an effective strategy of change, must confront the underlying family structure in order to eliminate the need for the symptom of incest" (Alexander, 1985, p. 87).

Other models of family therapy that have been developed include:

- Minuchin's structural family therapy;
- Haley's strategic therapy;
- The Mental Research Institute brief therapy method;
- Milan associates' systematic therapy (Burnham, 1986).

However, Friedrich (1990) argues that a family therapy view may imply blame for family members other than the offender. Sgroi (1982) adds that, when family therapy is utilised, it should be used with other treatment modalities and not begun until an individual therapeutic relationship has been established with the incestuous father.

There appears to be no standard, universally accepted approach to the treatment of incestuous fathers. The philosophical position regarding the etiology of incest seems to determine the type of treatment that is to be provided.

10. CONCLUSION

From the discussion of the academic literature and past research relating to incest, with particular focus on incestuous fathers, it seems obvious that this is a complex and intriguing subject that deserves further study.

Although this study mainly focuses on father-child incest, other types of incestuous relationships include; mother-son incest, mother-daughter incest,

brother-sister incest, incest with extended family members such as uncles, aunts and grandparents, and multiple incest.

Even though researchers seem to agree that there are no unique personality features distinguishing incestuous fathers from other individuals, these fathers seem to have some general characteristics in common. Furthermore, although other typologies of incestuous fathers may be equally valid, Meiselman's classification for incestuous fathers is important in understanding the variety of personality types, motivational dynamics and social settings in which father-child incestuous behaviour arises.

From the review of the literature, which is clearly linear, it appears that incestuous fathers are motivated by emotional as well as sexual needs. This idea is pertinent to this study on the emotional experiences of incestuous fathers.

The universality of father-child incest in different cultures has engendered diverse attempts at using an array of theoretical approaches and perspectives to understand its etiology. Possible models for the occurrence of father-child incest include a psychoanalytic perspective, a feminist perspective, the precondition model as well as a systems perspective. However, it seems that no simplistic explanation captures the etiology of father-child incest and that a complex pattern of variables needs to be considered. Even though the effects that father-child incest has on the incestuous father may depend in part on how

the father-child incestuous relationship ends, the effects of the incestuous behaviour on the father generally seems to be detrimental and devastating.

Regarding interventions with incestuous fathers, from a modernist perspective, the cognitive/behavioral therapy seems to be a highly effective approach. One of the more controversial topics surrounding the matter of the treatment of incest is the role of the family in incestuous abuse and the parallel question of the family in later treatment. However, the philosophical position taken on the issues of the etiology of incest seems to determine the type of treatment that is to be provided.

The researcher would like to note that this literature review is used neither to summarise the specific details of related research findings generated by quantitative methods nor to synthesise a theoretical framework but rather to specify important variables that can serve as background meanings for hermeneutic analysis.

It is evident that existing literature and research on incestuous fathers are largely based on the linear modernist approach, with psychopathology drawing strongly on the categorisation and treatment of conditions within the individual. It also seems that the incestuous fathers' experiences are unstated or insufficiently emphasised in the available literature on incest.

In advancing this, the researcher proposes a more inclusive and collaborative epistemology namely, postmodernism.

In the following chapter, postmodernism as an epistemological stance will be described. Fundamental concepts of postmodernism will be briefly discussed, followed by a look at the theoretical stance referred to as social constructionism.