

# **LOVE AFTER INCEST**

**MHSc**

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# LOVE AFTER INCEST

**How does father/daughter incest impact survivors' attachment and later developing romantic love relationships and how can the therapeutic relationship assist in helping survivors heal from maladaptive love patterns? A hermeneutic literature review.**

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## Attestation of authorship

I hereby declare that this submission is my own work and that to the best of my knowledge and belief it contains no material previously published or written by another person nor material, which to a substantial extent, has been accepted for the qualification of any other degree or diploma of a university or institution of higher learning, except when acknowledgement is made in the acknowledgements.

Signed:

Yasmine Oliver

Date:

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### Abstract

The purpose of this hermeneutic literature review is to assess, critique and bridge together literature on love, father/daughter incest, and the therapeutic relationship in order to consider how psychotherapists might best assist father/daughter incest survivor clients to reconceptualise learnt maladaptive prototypes of love through the therapeutic relationship. As love, incest and the therapeutic relationship are fundamentally attachment experiences, this leads naturally to exploring attachment relationships between people and looks at how incestuous experiences may affect those attachment patterns and ways of relating.

A substantial amount of research exists on the therapeutic relationship with survivors of sexual abuse as well as on the impact that sexual abuse has on attachment. The literature on both love and incest are also vast. However, there is a paucity of robust literature regarding the impact that father/daughter incest specifically has on these important areas of relating. Furthermore, none of these topics; the therapeutic relationship, attachment or love currently have any substantial links to one another. Thus, this report aims to review the role of love and the effects that father/daughter incest has on later developing love relationships. In order to better explore the abundance of research available, and to bring these discrete domains together, this report first develops working definitions from the many variations of love and incest.

After gathering, analysing and synthesising the literature from a hermeneutic perspective in this report, the conclusion is that clients' ways of loving will become apparent to the therapist via the transference relationship, through the exploration of historical attachment relationships, current love-style dynamics and attachment patterns. As internal working models are fluid and attachment can be secured through the therapeutic relationship as described in the literature, it is my prediction that the way that individuals love in their current relationships will also begin to shift and change as clients' begin to form more secure and positive modes of attachment through the therapeutic relationship.

### Chapter 1: Introduction

Research question: **How does father/daughter incest impact survivors' attachment and later developing romantic love relationships, and how can the therapeutic relationship assist in helping survivors heal from maladaptive love patterns? A hermeneutic literature review.**

This literature review will assess, critique and bridge together already existing literature on love, father/daughter incest, and the therapeutic relationship to assess how psychotherapists might assist father/daughter incest survivor clients to reconceptualise learnt maladaptive prototypes of love through the therapeutic relationship. It begins by reviewing the literature on love and on the impact that father/daughter incest has on survivors' abilities to enter into healthy interpersonal, love relationships. The findings are then discussed in relation to attachment theory and the therapeutic relationship.

Below I provide a brief snapshot of my rationale to choose this topic and the context in which the terms love and incest will be defined for this research project to help address my initial research question. In addition, I will provide a brief overview of the content of each of the chapters contained in this study.

### **Rationale for this topic**

During my time as a student psychotherapist I did my placement at a community organisation that worked with women and their families who had been affected by sexual violence and domestic violence. Of the many women who came through the service, I

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noticed a huge occurrence of childhood incest by these women's fathers or father figures. The women who had experienced this form of trauma commonly shared similar experiences of having internal lives that were shattered. Many of them spoke about feeling alone and terrified in the world, even if surrounded by other people. I noticed that my clients often employed defences to stop themselves from getting close to others, including me, and although they spoke of longings for love and connection in their lives, trust was often depicted as a fragile quality; something they feared would be subject at any time to attack from powerful others. Through the months and eventually years that I worked psychotherapeutically with these women, it appeared that exploitation and abuse were a common prototype of love. Thus, love and relationships were viewed as being full of pain, manipulation and abuse; often, despite being aware of this on a cognitive level, this was the only way my clients knew how to connect in love relationships on an emotional level. Across various degrees of abuse severity, love seemed to conjure up an array of feelings, associations and past experiences of being hurt and exploited; it was common for my clients to expect that from our relationship as well. Because of these expectations, my clients often displayed behaviours in their intimate relationships, and often through our transference relationship too, that were presumptuous and fearful and was as if I (or their partner), were abusing them, or about to, even if this was not the case. They appeared trapped in their own hypervigilance – the watch -on all intimate relationships - forever wondering “who will hurt me next?”

I noticed that as therapy progressed and I learned more about the unique qualities of each of my clients, I began to feel very maternal towards them and I often wondered how my actions and feelings towards them were perceived. I felt that through my actions as their

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therapist – i.e. holding boundaries, mirroring feelings, freeing the space for them to explore their inner worlds of torment and rage and deep sadness, getting angry alongside them at their abusers, normalizing their experiences, and being with them in moments of deep despair – I was showing them what it felt like to have someone on their side. I felt that through the transference I was offering them what Winnicott (1965) once described as a ‘good enough mother’. As these experiences were discussed and alive in the therapy, I was offered insight into their attachment behaviours and noticed them shift from time-to-time into more positive and secure forms. Beyond this, accounts of their relationships began to take a different tone as well. In their own time, as our work progressed, I felt that my clients were beginning to realize that their early experiences of love as abuse were not how love should, or could be, and that to love and be loved was not to hurt or be hurt. Their experiences of love and their changing ways of relating to loved ones in their worlds began to change as our relationship changed and grew in the therapeutic space.

As therapy deepened and our attachment bond secured through surviving the ups and downs, the turmoil and the disasters, the highs and the lows of each individual therapy, I began to wonder about how my clients were able to change their ways of being or thinking or talking about intimate love relationships. I became interested in the literature about love as a concept – the lived emotional and physical experience – and I wondered about it in direct relationship to clients who had experienced incest. How was it that their common perceptions of love were very different to what I and my colleagues, the literature, arts and the rest of the world seemed to view as healthy love? I wanted to know how, if at all, could

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a therapist help an incest survivor re-learn healthy ways of loving so that they could participate in intimate relationships to their fullest capacity as they so deserved to? And so began my journey.

### **Context: Defining love**

The first part of the process for this research was to define love. Yet as I embarked on this quest it quickly became apparent that this was very difficult. Below I will offer some insight into the difficulties of underpinning what defines love, and provide the reader with the context and scope of love for this review.

Love has been described as one of the most significant human experiences (England, 1997). It is a dominant theme in art and literature with paintings, poems, sculptures and songs enthusiastically devoted to it. All around the world and throughout time, philosophers, psychologists and romantics have sought to identify the foundations of love which underpin its numerous variations. However, defining a thing such as love is a colossal task. The word love is both complex and subjective and can have multiple meanings, even to one individual who derives its meaning from both societal and personal experience (Berscheid, 2006; Reik, 2002). According to both Berscheid (2006) and Reik (2002), theorists and researchers exploring the notion of love have spent a lot of time and effort attempting to define it, but as of yet no single conceptualization has been agreed upon. Berscheid (2006) quotes "...the word *love* is used in an astonishing array of situations to describe an enormous range of attitudes, emotions, feelings and behaviours toward objects and people. In this respect, *love* is not different from many other words, for all human language is characterised by

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polysemy” (p 172). Thus, it is difficult to write about love as a singular topic because it has more than one meaning.

In her writings, Berscheid discusses the work of Ernest Hemmingway, whose novels used love as a predominant theme. She claims, that the only true sentence ever written about love is Hemmingway’s “love is a word”. Thus, the word ‘love’ is used to represent something, and in the English language when this word is used, Berscheid claims that people generally understand what the person is trying to communicate. She states: “people generally know what *love* means in common discourse because they construe its meaning from knowledge of precisely who, in what situation, in what culture, is using the word to describe his or her attitudes, emotions, feelings, and behaviours about a person or thing” (Berscheid, 2006, p 172). Thus, it is the context in which love is used that establishes its meaning.

As this piece of work is about exploring love, incest and the therapeutic relationship - which essentially leads to exploring attachment relationships between people - love for this review will be defined as an enduring affectional bond to another person, as described by Bowlby (1979). Bowlby’s attachment concept will be elaborated on in chapter three. The specific context is within the close interpersonal, romantic relationships of survivors of father/daughter incest, focusing on their physical behaviours and emotions surrounding this concept.

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### Context: Defining incest

The term *incest* can encapsulate a variety of meanings. Van Buskirk and Cole (1983) discuss that little agreement actually exists on a single definition in psychological literature. According to England (1997), the traditional definition of incest had a somewhat narrow view of genital intercourse, which had many problems including the exclusion of incest that occurs between same sex individuals, and overlooked the potential damaging effects of other sexual acts that can also occur. Definitional problems may also exist according to Van Buskirk & Cole (1983) because of the continuum of behaviours and relationships potentially included under incest which can extend from incidental contact through to rape. In their writings Donaldson and Gardner (1985) define incest as a definite sexual approach by a family member that results in contact including, but not restricted to, intercourse. This view encapsulates a wider variety of actions that can occur during an incestuous experience including sexual touch that may or may not result in intercourse. For the purpose of this review, Donaldson & Gardner's (1985) definition of a broader view of incest will be used.

In addition, incest has traditionally been defined as sexual behaviour which occurs between individuals closely linked biologically, and thus may occur between: grandparents and their grandchildren; father and child, mother and child, siblings, cousins and also between uncles, aunts and their nieces and nephews. However, in contemporary society, with the surge in blended families, adoption and fostering becoming increasingly common, research on the effects of incest is beginning to accommodate for blended families including remarried and adoptive families (England, 1997). One purpose of this dissertation is to explore the effects of father/daughter incest, and will include literature on adopted daughters, daughters with

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step fathers, as well as daughters and their biological fathers. Herman (1981) discusses that it is not relevant whether or not father and daughter are biologically related, but the nature of the relationship, and the unequal power dynamics which subsequently occur. What matters, according to Herman, is “the relationship that exists by virtue of the adult’s parental power and the child’s dependency” (Herman, 1981, p70). Thus, as summarised by England (1997, p 4) “The nature of the relationship is a critical psychological factor which plays a central role in incest having a traumatic impact on the victim.”

### **Outline of the chapters in this study**

In Chapter two I discuss the methodology of this review where I will outline the epistemology, theoretical perspective, and methods. In addition, the context of this research is entering new territory as so far no rigorous or repeatable literature has embarked on applying the concept of love as a lens to explore father/daughter incest and the therapeutic relationship. Thus, in line with Aveyard’s (2010) outline of what constitutes a rigorous and repeatable literature review, I will also detail clear inclusion and exclusion criteria, approaches and search strategies in reviewing and critiquing the literature. Cultural applicability of this research will also be discussed.

Chapter three will consist of providing some context and scope for this piece of work. Thus, a historical overview of the different definitions of love throughout psychoanalysis will be explored and a working definition of love as Bowlby (1979) describes it for the context of the current review will be established. Throughout chapter three I will review love in terms of the key historical psychodynamic theories which underlie this body of literature. I will

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then review contemporary literature relating to styles of loving including empirical research on the effects of early attachment experiences on individual's ways of relating in interpersonal love relationships.

Chapter four will discuss the most common effects of incest and the role of the mother relationship, after which I will then review incest in terms of three key historical psychodynamic theories: Freudian, Object relations and Attachment thinkers. I then review contemporary literature relating to attachment patterns and incest, focusing predominantly on research on attachment patterns in incest survivors by Alexander, Anderson, Brand, Schaeffer, Grelling, and Kretz (1998). In addition Judith Herman's (1981) research will be discussed.

In Chapter five I will provide a discussion on the use of the therapeutic relationship for working with survivors of father/daughter incest in psychotherapy. This section will discuss how maladaptive love prototypes developed by incest experiences may be changed through the therapeutic relationship into more positive forms. Also discussed in this chapter will be potential blocks to treatment with this client group.

In Chapter six I will provide a discussion in the form of a summary of this review, and will offer clinical implications of the findings, strengths, limitations and recommendations for future research.

## Summary

In this chapter I have outlined my rationale for choosing this research topic, the working

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definitions for exploring the concept of 'love' for this review, and have defined the term 'incest' to set the scene for my research question: "How does father/daughter incest impact survivors' attachment and later developing romantic love relationships, and how can the therapeutic relationship assist in helping survivors heal from maladaptive love patterns?" I have also outlined the content of each chapter of this review. In the following chapter I discuss the methodology of the review.

# **Chapter 2: Methodology**

This chapter outlines the research approach to this study on the effects father/daughter incest has on attachment and love and how the therapeutic relationship can be used to help survivors overcome maladaptive love patterns in adulthood. It will detail the identification of the research question, epistemology, theoretical perspective, methodology and the rationale for choosing a hermeneutic literature review for the appropriate methodological approach. It will then outline the literature search process, inclusion and exclusion criteria, presentation and interpretation of findings and cultural applicability of this research.

## **Defining the research question**

As discussed in the introduction my initial interest for this topic arose from my experience as a student psychotherapist working in an organisation with women who had experienced significant sexual abuse by a father or father figure. My observations of their accounts of and experiences of future love and love relationships made me increasingly curious about the links to past experiences of incest and later developing experiences of love and love relationships. I also wondered about the use of the therapeutic relationship as a tool for healing maladaptive love prototypes.

A preliminary literature search revealed that there has been substantial research on the therapeutic relationship with survivors of sexual abuse as well as on the impact that sexual abuse has on attachment. The literature on love and on incest as separate topics were also vast, however none of the three topics; the therapeutic relationship, attachment or love

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had any substantial links or research dedicated to the impact that father/daughter incest has on these important areas of relating. This suggested an opportunity to draw these fields together and helped to formulate my research question: “How does father/daughter incest impact survivors’ attachment and later developing romantic love styles and how can the therapeutic relationship assist in helping survivors’ heal from maladaptive love patterns?”

### Epistemology

Epistemology essentially describes a way of looking at the world and making sense of it (Crotty, 1998). Inherent in this concept is the embodiment of a certain understanding of what is required in knowing; thus, as quoted by Crotty (1998, p3) “it is a way of understanding and explaining how we know what we know.” Epistemology underlies any meaning-making project as it seeks to deal with the nature of knowledge, its possibilities, scopes and biases’ and is thus a philosophical underpinning in deciding what kind of knowledge is possible and how to ensure its adequacy and legitimacy (Crotty, 1998). Crotty (1998) outlines three positions fundamental in epistemology: objectivism, constructionism and subjectivism, and explains that as researchers move through these positions, their neutrality decreases. On one end, objective epistemology is the view that things exist as “meaningful entities independent of consciousness and experience” (Crotty, 1998, p3). It is thus the epistemology that underpins a positivist stance and is generally applied to survey research and quantitative statistical analysis (Crotty, 1998). Truth in this paradigm thus exists independently of the observer. On the other end of the scale is subjectivism, which essentially proposes that reality does not exist outside of the observer’s experience/s and is

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used predominantly in structuralist, post-structuralist and postmodernist forms (Crotty, 1998). In this paradigm, meaning is imposed on the object by the subject and thus the object makes no contribution to the generation of meaning (Crotty, 1998). Finally, in between objectivism and subjectivism is constructionism, which is the view that all knowledge and meaningful reality is dependent upon human practices through the interactions of human beings and their world within a social context (Crotty, 1998). Thus, in this paradigm meaning is not discovered, rather it is constructed between researcher and participants, or the observer and the observed. In this concept, knowledge is viewed within the context of society and culture rather than separate, as these perspectives in fact guide how meaning is made for individuals (Law and Urry, 2004).

It is therefore the constructivist approach that is appropriate for this research project which is concerned with interactions and experiences of attachment, love and incest between individuals as well as the interpersonal context of the therapeutic relationship in which healing can occur. In this approach, meaning and reality will be constructed between myself (as the observer) and the literature (as the subjects) as throughout the readings, qualitative experiences will be brought together both subjectively and objectively and I as the observing researcher will assume that there are many varying realities of attachment, love, incest and the therapeutic relationship (Crotty, 1998).

## **Theoretical Perspective and Methodology**

A theoretical perspective is the philosophical stance which lies behind any methodology (Crotty, 1998). According to Crotty (1998) the philosophical stance of any research informs

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the methodology and provides a context for the process and grounding of logic and criteria. Phenomenological Hermeneutics, also known as an interpretivist approach, was founded by Martin Heidegger and further developed by Hans-Georg Gadamer and refers to the tradition and practice of text interpretation. This approach provides a means of studying human experience that seeks to uncover meanings which are hidden or not apparent in individual narratives (Lindseth and Norberg, 2004). This 'creative engagement' with the language attempts to make clarity out of what is implied, in order to uncover a fresh and deeper understanding of lived human experience (Crotty, 1998). Thus, as quoted by Lindseth & Norberg (2004, p 147) "lived experience has to be fixed in texts, which then always needs interpretation." Thus, in this instance, phenomenology and hermeneutics cannot be worked with in isolation; they must work together in the form of phenomenological hermeneutics in order to gain a deeper more meaningful understanding of the everyday experiences of individuals in perhaps a different way to the participants (Lindseth & Norberg, 2004, Cocks, 1989). This perspective has relevance to the study of the effects that father/daughter incest has on attachment and love as women experience the abuse in many different ways, and the differing outcomes and effects of father/daughter incest are shaped by interactions with others and the world both during and after the incest experiences. As an interpretivist perspective, as opposed to a positivist one, "looks for culturally derived and historically situated interpretations of the social life-world" (Crotty, 1998, p67), researchers coming from this perspective are curious about the differing ways that humans experience reality and believe that numerous understandings are valid (Terre Blanche & Kelly, 1999). Within this paradigm, literature was reviewed to discover the various ways that the effects of father/daughter incest on love and attachment has been

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engaged with and understood in psychotherapy. Poulin (2007) discusses that this approach both assists the researcher to remain open to multiple perspectives about a subject, and reminds them that truth is both contextual and subjective. As a researcher in this paradigm, I will not just restate what I have read though the personal experiences of therapists and clients. I will critically engage with, and examine the multiple meanings and interpretations within the literature about individual experiences of father/daughter incest, attachment and love. Thus, through interpreting the literature, a greater understanding of the relationships between attachment, love styles, father-daughter incest and the therapeutic relationship can be achieved.

Although the choice of a hermeneutic paradigm for this review allows for a focus on individual personal experience as well as professional knowledge about the impact that father/daughter incest has on attachment and love as well as the role of the therapeutic relationship, according to Creswell (2007) there is always a risk that the researcher's interpretations of what they find are shaped by their own lived experiences. Thus, my own personal, social and cultural experiences of attachment and love styles and my expanding interest in attachment psychotherapy, as well as my professional experience of working as a therapist with survivors of father-daughter incest, are all influenced and guided by my lived experiences. However, understanding this will hopefully allow the reader to decide on the relevance of the findings of this research to their own context (Morrow, 2007). As discussed in my introduction, I have experience working with women who were severely abused by their fathers or father figures and thus the interpretations of attachment, incest, love and the therapeutic relationship in this context are all shaped by my encounters with these particular experiences and my own transference reactions and involvements with these

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women. This closeness to the topic is a strength in that it assists me to identify and make certain links in the research based on experience, which otherwise may not be apparent. However, with this strength also runs the risk of potential bias and assumptions about outcomes or conclusions. Thus I must be aware of this throughout my research process and particularly when engaging in my literature selection process. This is to ensure that I can incorporate as much research as possible and decrease the risk of making pre-decided conclusions about my topic. Finally, this perspective also acknowledges that subjective world views are fluid and viable to change as new experiences are attained (Gadamer, 1976). Thus, as a researcher in this field, I acknowledge that there will always be more than one possible way of interpreting the text and narrative of the literature that I read on the experiences and effects of father/daughter incest.

Finally, an interpretive approach is often corresponded with a qualitative paradigm as it explores and seeks to understand the meanings that people attach to being human and to the events that happen in their lives (Grant & Giddings, 2002). As it is difficult to quantify the emotional and intellectual humanness of psychotherapy and lived experiences such as love and incest, a qualitative approach has been chosen as being most suitable for this review.

### **Method: Literature Review**

The term 'method' refers to the actual application of the specific methodology that has been chosen and includes the techniques of research (Hart, 1998). In considering my hermeneutic methodological approach, I also held in mind that I would need to cover four

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bodies of literature including:

- 1) Love
- 2) Attachment
- 3) Father/daughter incest
- 4) The therapeutic relationship

As a literature review process includes building bridges between topics, a literature review method of research appeared the most appropriate fit for this dissertation and my process for the method undertaken in this review will be described in this section.

### **Hermeneutic literature Review Process: Determining the types of studies to be located to answer the question**

Smythe & Spence (2012) discuss that the aim of a hermeneutic literature review is to uncover information which both interests the researcher and generates new thinking. It is thus recommended that texts are gathered from wide and diverse sources including different disciplines and time periods. Additionally, Boell and Cecez-Kecm (2010, p 133) state that “in accordance with the hermeneutic circle, understanding of the meaning and importance of individual texts depends on the understanding of the whole body of relevant literature which in turn is built up through the understanding of individual texts.” This research topic pertains to not only the psychodynamic literature about love, incest, attachment and psychotherapy, but it also deals with texts outside of psychoanalysis including contemporary literature about love styles. In my literature search I followed a traditional literature review search process of the AUT databases to identify relevant books, authors and articles to gather pertinent individual texts to begin to understand and make

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sense of these four themes as a whole body of literature. An initial search revealed that the literature did not form an individual body, but that in fact it covered a wide variety of topic areas which had not yet been linked together to form a specific topic area.

### Literature search process

As discussed above, an initial review of the literature revealed relatively little information linking the impacts of father/daughter incest on attachment and love, and the way in which the therapeutic relationship can help to heal unhealthy love prototypes. The AUT electronic databases Psychoanalytic Electronic Publishing (PEP), Psychinfo and ProQuest were searched for relevant literature relating to love, attachment, father/daughter incest and psychotherapeutic relationship. PEP was highly relevant as it is a database specific for psychoanalytic literature; however, I found it difficult to use and it was very restrictive in terms of its search functionality. Psychinfo was chosen because of its broad inclusion of psychological, social, behavioural and health science literature, as well as providing a wide range of psychodynamic literature (American Psychiatric Association, 2012) and thus fitting well within a hermeneutic literature review style. Finally, ProQuest was also chosen as this database provides literature material which may otherwise be difficult to find, including reviews and analyses of topic material (ProQuest, 2012).

The keywords included for my search were: father-daughter incest; incest\*; attachment\*; attachment styles; love; love style\*; object relations; intimate relationships and therapeutic relation\*. In addition, father-daughter incest and incest\* were combined with the other keywords to help improve my search. A preliminary experimental search of all the separate keywords indicated that each topic had a vast amount of literature dedicated to the topic

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areas as indicated in Table 1, and thus indicated the need for a systematic search which combined the keywords together.

Table 1: *Preliminary experimental PsychInfo search of each topic*

Search terms	Results
Father-daughter incest	288
Incest*	4989
Attachmen*	35020
Attachment	2130
Love	22607
Love style*	193
Object relations	9465
Intimate relationships	3590
Therapeutic relationship*	7415

Below is a table of the databases in which my keywords were used. To achieve better accuracy while searching, I used truncations and the Boolean operators AND and OR available in the databases, to combine the search terms in diverse ways. After reading the abstracts of the relevant articles which appeared, I was able to pick the most relevant articles for use in my literature review. I then read the titles and abstracts of the resulting

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articles to choose the most relevant articles. As titles and abstracts alone may not convey an articles true content adequately, I additionally obtained full copies of articles which I felt could have been potentially relevant (Boell and Dubravka Cecez-Kecm, 2010; Hartley & Betts, 2009). Where I was not able to obtain the relevant literature I desired within the AUT library, I requested them through the library interloan system and these were then sent to me in document form or if they were books, sent to the AUT library for pick up.

*Table 2: Searches for combined keywords in PsychInfo*

<b>Key word</b>	<b>Results</b>	<b>Relevant articles</b>
Father-daughter incest <b>OR</b> Inces* <b>AND</b> Attachmen* <b>OR</b> Attachment Style*	114	6
Father-daughter incest <b>OR</b> Incest <b>AND</b> Love <b>OR</b> Lovestyle*	392	9
Father-daughter incest <b>OR</b> Inces* <b>AND</b> Object relations	82	9
Father-daughter incest <b>OR</b> Inces* <b>AND</b> Intimate relationships	34	3
Father-daughter incest <b>OR</b> Inces* <b>AND</b> Therapeutic relation*	35	2

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*Relevant articles obtained and used through PsychInfo: 29*

Table 2: PEP searches (limits: English, Articles, All Journals)

Search terms	Results	Relevant articles
Father-daughter incest <b>OR</b> Inces* <b>AND</b> attachment* <b>OR</b> attachment style*	107	9
Father-daughter incest <b>OR</b> Inces* <b>AND</b> Love <b>OR</b> Lovestyle*	184	4
Father-daughter incest <b>OR</b> Inces* <b>AND</b> Object relations	129	6
Father-daughter incest <b>OR</b> Inces* <b>AND</b> Intimate relationships	76	3
Father-daughter incest <b>OR</b> Inces* <b>AND</b> Therapeutic relation*	98	2

*Relevant articles obtained through PEP = 24*

*Relevant articles ProQuest*

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Search terms	Results	Relevant articles
Father-daughter incest <b>OR</b> Inces* <b>AND</b> attachment* <b>OR</b> attachment style*	4863	Refined search
Father-daughter incest <b>AND</b> attachment* <b>OR</b> attachment style* (Full text, scholarly journals, English)	107	4
Father-daughter incest <b>AND</b> Love <b>OR</b> Lovestyle*	259	Duplicates
Father-daughter incest <b>AND</b> Object relations	185	4
Father-daughter incest <b>AND</b> Intimate relationships	140	Duplicates
Father-daughter incest <b>AND</b> Therapeutic relationship	106	Duplicates

*Relevant articles obtained through ProQuest: 8*

Overall I was left with 61 relevant articles to include in my preliminary readings for this review. Although this number appeared small at first, I was reminded that when reviewing literature within the hermeneutic circle, a small set of greatly relevant documents to begin with is preferable over vast sets of literature that cannot be judged appropriately (Boell &

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Cecez-Kecm, 2010).

A non-systematic search was also conducted, which included finding other relevant literature through the reference lists of the articles I read and chapters obtained, as well as a hand search of the AUT library book shelves. It also included theses and dissertations.

In line with a hermeneutic methodological stance, the articles which were chosen for my review were not only determined by subject relevance but also through my own reactions to the material (Smythe & Spence, 2012). As discussed above my bias and experience in working in the field have the potential to influence which research articles are included, and although this is outlined as being significant within a hermeneutic approach (Smythe & Spence, 2012) I was careful to keep this in mind so as not to let my bias influence my choices too readily. I was drawn to historic theorists from within the psychoanalytic schools of thought, particularly Freudian, object relations and attachment thinkers, as this material set the scene for my research and provided some historical background to the differing ideas and notions of love and to the differing effects of father/daughter incest. I chose these three areas as they were the most commonly written about and thus accessible, and they related to the writings on both love and father/daughter incest most fluently. Additionally, this research enabled me to define 'love' for this particular review. I was also drawn to contemporary social psychology research which explored the notion of love styles, and to current empirical research which reviewed and linked attachment styles to both love and incest. Perhaps this reflects my interest in psychological sciences and my view of empirical research as also being important within this field. I excluded research which addressed any sibling incest, or incest occurring between other family members; however

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due to the paucity of research linking father/daughter incest with attachment and love, where these links were made I included literature which discussed 'incest' in relation to attachment and love without it being specifically father/daughter defined. Literature written in languages other than English were excluded from this study.

### **Presentation and interpretation of findings**

Within the hermeneutic cycle, understanding is fundamental, and the process involves moving back and forth between the parts and the whole of the literature to identify and generate ideas, integrate thinking, and to challenge and revise presumptions (Diesing, 1991). Kock (1995) discusses that within the hermeneutic phenomenological approach, it is acknowledged that pre-understanding about a topic cannot be eliminated and that problems arise when this is attempted. Thus, the way in which I engage with the literature within this hermeneutic perspective is to ensure that I pay close attention to the way in which the material fits with my experiences, existing knowledge of the topic, and my expectations of the findings. This is to ensure that I am able to produce a new understanding of the ways in which father/daughter incest affects both attachment and love, and provoke thinking about the way in which the therapeutic relationship might assist in healing maladaptive prototypes of love. As this topic is aimed at informing psychotherapeutic practice, I have analysed and interpreted the findings from a psychodynamic view. Part of the process of interpreting the findings included bridging the literature together, thus the material discussed in Chapter three, which analyses attachment styles and love styles, was brought together with the material analysed in

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Chapter four, which evaluates attachment styles in incest survivors. These two chapters were then brought together with the material on the therapeutic relationship in chapter five. The information gathered from these three chapters, as well as insight from my own experiences was then discussed in the implications for treatment section in chapter six. This process enabled me to generate some new material based on both literature and my own experiences to provoke new thinking in relation to the way in which father/daughter incest affects attachment and love and how the therapeutic relationship might help clients to develop new ways of loving.

As I will be embarking on a qualitative literature review, I will be using the available data. This data has been primarily sourced from western perspectives as cultural influences and differences between individuals in different cultures and contexts (in terms of the effects of incest and love) are somewhat limited. It should therefore be kept in mind by the reader that cultural differences might influence the way in which incest, love and psychotherapy are interpreted and therefore experienced by different cultures. This would be an important area for future research and is out of the scope for this particular study.

### Summary

In this chapter I have discussed the research approach to this study on the effects that father/daughter incest has on attachment and love styles and how the therapeutic relationship can be used to help survivors overcome maladaptive love patterns in adulthood. It has detailed the identification of the research question, epistemology, theoretical perspective, methodology and the rationale for choosing a hermeneutic

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literature review for the appropriate methodological approach. It has additionally outlined the literature search process, inclusion and exclusion criteria and has discussed how the findings have been presented and interpreted. It has also mentioned the cultural applicability of the research. The following chapter will discuss love throughout the time of psychotherapy and will review contemporary love styles and attachment research.

## **Chapter 3: Love**

*“You who do know*

*All the hearts turns*

*Say, is it love now*

*That in me burns”*

*(Cited in Reik, 2002, p 4).*

### **Overview of love**

#### **Towards a definition**

To provide some context and scope for this piece of work, a historical overview of the different definitions of love throughout psychoanalysis will be explored below and a working definition of love for the context of the current review will be established. In this chapter I review love in terms of the key historical psychodynamic theories which underlie this body of literature. I then review contemporary literature relating to styles of loving and of the effects of early attachment experiences on individuals’ capacities to enter into healthy interpersonal love relationships.

#### **Conceptual context of the literature**

The key psychoanalytic theories informing the literature on love reviewed in this chapter were originally developed by Freudian, Object Relations and Attachment thinkers. Below I

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provide a succinct summary of the core concepts of love of these schools of thought in order to set the scene for my review of a body of literature in which Bowlby's notion of love will later be explored in relation to survivors of father/daughter incest.

## Historical overview of love in psychoanalysis

### Sigmund Freud – The Oedipal Complex

At the end of the 19<sup>th</sup> Century, Sigmund Freud was one of the pioneers who worked on assembling scientific accounts of love (Mitchell & Black 1995; Mitchell, 1997; Lewis, Amini & Lannon, 2000). From the beginning of his work, Freud set out to explain the foundations of love and he created metaphors and theories to explain his thinking.

One of Freud's theories, which has since become a founding theory in psychoanalysis, is the Oedipus complex. This is a social mechanism through which children develop a healthy identity in order to socialise and love in later adult life. Freud's theory denotes that at around the ages of 3-5 years' children have a potent erotic drive that pushes them to desire – sexually and in every other way – the parent of the opposite sex. The child sees the same sex parent as a competitor and confusingly, both loves them and hates them, paradoxically wanting to 'do away with them' (Karen, 1998). According to Freud (1961) for a child to resolve this conflict and progress into an adult with a healthy identity, free of pathology, they must identify with the same sex parent. Identifying with the same sex parent gives rise to the *super ego* by internalising the parental figure which may then act as an inner moral authority. Essentially, during this phase the former *id* drive is suppressed and the super ego allows the child to mature and act upon ideal social standards (Freud, 1961). The success or

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resolution of this conflictual stage determines the attainment and/or failure of later developing important adult love relationships. Unresolved Oedipal anxieties can disturb and distort individuals' intimate relationships throughout life and in complex and disturbing ways (Freud 1961; Karen, 1998).

Freud (1961) argued that successful resolution of these conflicts will equal successful mating, and it will be determined by the opposite sex parent who enforces boundaries on the child's primitive urges, ultimately modelling 'healthy' love relationships. According to Freud (1961), for an individual to successfully develop free of neurosis, they must have the ability to establish healthy and consistent relationships with what he termed a 'whole object'. Thus, from within his drive/structure model, the development of a whole object is determined by the integration of childhood sexual impulses (the Oedipal complex), which are generated as part objects, into a single current of genital sexuality which would then cathect a whole object (Greenberg & Mitchell, 1983). Freud (1921) originally argued that love is nothing more than object-cathexis related directly to the individual's sexual instincts and sexual satisfaction. Enduring love can then develop out of the initial sexual interest by way of a lasting cathexis upon the sexual object, in order to love them in the passionless intervals as well. Freud argued that enduring love is born out of the establishment of *sublimation*, which allows for friendly and affectionate relations to develop with family members who were not part of the original sexual drives (Freud, 1921; Greenberg & Mitchell, 1983).

In his book *Love and Lust*, Reik (2002) discusses Freud's work in depth, particularly in relation to his notion of love, and explains that Freud aligned love with sex and when he

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spoke of 'love object' or 'love choice' he fundamentally meant sexual object and sexual partner. Reik (2002) proposes that it was due to the fact the Freud came from a medical model that he used the expression of the libido in its original sense as pertaining to the energy of the sex urge and explains that Freud assumed that this notion included affection and attraction. Reik (2002) discusses that in Freud's writings he does not differentiate between libido love (the quantitative expression for the energy of all that we sum up as love), or that of parents, children and friends because Freud saw all of these tendencies as the expression of the same instincts, which are aimed towards sexual union between the sexes (Reik, 2002). Freud argued that what we generally call 'love' is in fact a mixture of direct and indirect sexual tendencies. Reik (2002) stated that "aim inhibited love, Freud never tires of emphasising, was originally utterly sensual love and is the same still in the unconscious life of men. Even when those love tendencies are in contrast to the purely sexual ones, it remains clear that their descent can be traced back to sex" (Reik, 2002, p13). Thus, within Freud's system, all of an individual's complex emotions, including love, are derived from the basic building blocks of bodily tension and are ultimately vehicles for tension reduction (Greenberg & Mitchel, 1983).

Freud's belief that the central conflicts in life were between libido and aggression subsequently put love into a category of sexuality. His theory supposed that individuals loved according to their libidinal fixation points and he termed mature love 'genitality' (Mitchell, 1997). Critics of Freud argue that his drive theory put love into a category of sexuality, and suggested that his notion that individuals are attracted to their 'sexual objects' out of neurotic feelings of guilt left a gap in early literature and theory to address relationships as integral to the attainment of love (Mitchell, 1997).

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### Object relations theories

The Object Relations movement, which was established during Freud's era, was followed by prominent theorists including: Melanie Klein, Harry Guntrip Sandor Ferenczi, Otto Rank, Ian Suttie, Michael Balint, Ronald Fairbairn, Donald Winnicott and John Bowlby. Although many of these theorists were originally followers of Freud and his drive theory, many felt something was 'missing' from Freud's work and desired to move beyond sexual instincts and neurotic symptoms such as irrational guilt, to problems of individual characters (Karen, 1998). These theorists felt that the fundamental missing components from Freud's drive theory were individuals' motivation and innate need to be meaningfully connected to others (Karen, 1998). It was during this era that 'relationships' became a pivotal turning point in exploring the foundations of love.

The Object Relations school of thought differs widely in terms of theorists and thinkers who hold opposing views as to how relationships are manifested and internalised (Greenberg & Mitchell, 1983). However, these differences aside, object relational thinkers share a common understanding: that an individual's relational experience with people is shaped by a pattern or template which is carried around within them (Greenberg & Mitchell, 1983). This template is itself shaped by past and significant interpersonal relationships. Thus, exchanges with people are internalised to create mental representations of others and they come to shape subsequent attitudes, reactions and perceptions. Although the impact of the internal images and characteristics of others differ widely from person to person, object relation theorists believe that their presence and activity is evident in everyone (Greenberg & Mitchell, 1983). Additionally, through the differing theoretical systems within object

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relations the existence of mental representations are termed variously and their functions are widely debated. This being said, several functions of mental representations are shared and may be understood as the following: they serve as a loose anticipatory image of what is to be expected from people in the real world; they are closely entwined with the individual's experience of who they are; they can act as persecutors fulfilling the function of an inner critic; and they may be a source of internal security and resource, invoked in times of stress and isolation (Greenberg & Mitchell, 1983). From this perspective then, how an individual learns to love is inexorably linked to their past experiences, both good and bad.

There are many early psychoanalytic writings on love, all of which discuss the attainment of it in their own conceptual ways. Literature on love varies widely among Freudian and Object Relations schools of thought, with studies that have described love as being as essential to a child as food and water (see: Ferenczi, 1932), to others which have discussed love, hate and aggression as concepts of development (see: Klein, 1975), some have discussed that the internalization of love is what constitutes the 'I' (see: Lear, 1990). Other literature discusses love as being a process of mutual recognition in which individuality is confirmed (see: Hegal, 1979), while others discuss love and its role in the achievement of the self (see: Gaylin, 1988; Mitchell 1997). Some writers debate the role of the 'good enough mother' (see: Winnicott, 1965), while others argue that narcissism, masochism and aggression have a role in the attainment of love (see: Kernberg, 1995). Finally, one writer, who will now be elaborated on, posits that an individual's ability to form meaningful love relations with others is dependent on learned and experienced attachment bonds (see: Bowlby, 1988).

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### Attachment theory - John Bowlby's definition of love

Originally an object relations theorist, John Bowlby developed the concept of attachment theory in the 1930s, which fundamentally refers to the 'state and quality' of individual's attachment to significant people in their lives (Holmes, 1993). Bowlby drew on concepts from ethology, cybernetics, developmental psychology and psychoanalysis to form the basic tenets of his theory. Bowlby has been described as one of the most important psychiatrists of the twentieth century and his attachment theory has been one of the major theoretical developments in psychoanalysis to date (Holmes, 1993). Attachment theory has since been used to explore the conceptualisation, attainment and definition of love.

Bowlby believed that the quality of the child's early *emotional* environment was the most important factor in ensuring they develop into adulthood free of neurosis (Karen, 1998). Attachment theory describes behaviour in individuals as proximity seeking or maintaining closeness to a trusted person in times of stress (Bowlby 1988). Bowlby, working alongside the theorist Mary Ainsworth proposed the concept of attachment styles, which could be either secure or insecure. Ainsworth identified two major classifications of insecure attachment: *Anxious/ambivalent* and *avoidant* (Karen, 1998). Each attachment style displays its own sets of behaviours relevant to the particular style of relating interpersonally with others (Karen, 1998). Bowlby devised the concept of 'internal working models' to describe the way in which attachment experiences are represented in the mind of the developing child as "a set of models of the self and others, based on repeated patterns of interactive experiences" (Holmes, 1993). These patterns form relatively fixed representational models that children then use to predict and relate to people and

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experiences in their world (Holmes, 1993). Secure attachment may be understood as a source of emotional health, in which children develop within themselves the confidence that someone will be there for them in times of need, and a securely attached child's internal working model will create assumptions that the child is worthy of love and attention, which will come to bear on all other relationships (Holmes, 1993). Secure attachment develops from caregiving which is warm, sensible, responsive and dependable, and thus allows the child to create the capacity to form satisfying relationships with others throughout childhood and in later adult life (Karen, 1998). Insecure attachment impairs the child's capacity to create long lasting, satisfying relationships with others, and is usually characterised by lowered self-esteem, an inability to seek help in effective ways, and difficulties with emotional regulation (Holmes, 1998). Insecure attachment leads to a disruption of the child's internal working model where the child may see the world as dangerous, where other people must be treated with caution, and these individuals may see themselves as ineffective and unworthy of love (Bowlby, 1979; Holmes, 1993). Interestingly, internal working models have the capacity to change and are therefore malleable and can be modified in later adult life (Karen, 1998).

Of particular relevance to this body of research is Bowlby's reference to relationships as attachment experiences (Karen, 1998). Bowlby (1979) argued that falling in love is a phenomenon linked to the forming of a bond that is intricately connected to individuals' past experiences with their primary attachment figures. Holmes (1998) further discusses that when Bowlby mentioned love in his writings, he did so in the context of the formation of an attachment bond, whether between two adults or between parent and child. Further studies which have used Bowlby's attachment theory to predict styles of loving in adulthood

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extend this concept and discuss that when the word 'love' is used in its dispositional sense, it refers to what Bowlby and his followers call *attachment* – i.e. an enduring 'affectional bond' with another person (Hazan & Shaver, 1987).

Exploring the links between Freudian, object relations and attachment views of love is outside the scope of this research, and although important links could possibly be made through both Freudian and object relations notions of love and incest, by necessity I will focus on Bowlby's attachment theory. As incest is fundamentally a severing of attachment bonds between the child and their primary caregiver (which will be explored in the following section), Bowlby's notion of love as an enduring affectional bond to another person, learned through early fundamental caregiver relationships, is the link I will use to explore and focus on for this piece of work. Whereas Freud's version of love is derived only from innate subconscious sexual drives which are subsequently sublimated into socially acceptable representations, Bowlby's attachment theory sees love as evolving from proximal closeness and emotional bonding with or without the explicit requirement of an individual's sexual instincts.

In order to focus more deeply and find more useful links, it is necessary to limit my study to one theory of love. Due to the implications and versatility of love explained in terms of Bowlby's attachment theory, this will be used as the working definition of love for the current literature review.

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### Contemporary Love research

Although the psychoanalytic concepts of love discussed above have been continually explored since their conception in the early 1900s, more recent research has expanded the field, suggesting an astonishingly diverse range of love experiences. Theorists have devoted their time to not only understanding the attainment of love, but of the various 'love styles' that individuals engage in (for example, see: Fehr, 1988; Hazan & Shaver, 1987; Hendrick & Hendrick, 1986; Lee, 1973; Shaver & Hazan, 1988; Sternberg, 1986). These theories have emerged from within the social psychology realm, with a proliferation of theories, models and research investigating the vast experiences of love and its correlates (Fehr & Sprecher, 2009). When defining the concept of 'love', these studies have predominantly focused on the study of romantic love between intimate partners as opposed to platonic or friendship love, or love for one's children.

### Romantic Love

Romantic love research ranges from studies aimed at distinguishing between liking and loving (see: Rubin, 1973) and theories of emotion to the passionate aspect of romantic love (see: Berscheid & Walster 1974; Dutton & Aron 1974; Schachter 1964), to the development of love styles (see: Lee 1973) and the development of reliable scales to measure identified love styles. (see: Hendrick & Hendrick, 1986). Others have developed a theory of love which categorises love styles in terms of passion, intimacy and commitment (Sternberg, 1986) and some research has proposed an approach to love based on Bowlby's (1969) attachment theory (see: Shaver & Hazan, 1988). Others have devised uni-dimensional conceptions of love or of particular love styles (see: Hatfield, Traupmann, Sprecher, Utine & Hay, 1985;

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Tennov, 1979), while others have explored the process of falling in love and theorised the idea of love as self-expansion (see: Mathes & Moore, 1985).

### Adult Love Styles

One of the most written about and widely researched theories on love styles is Lee's (1973) typology of love, that suggests that love is not a single entity, but rather something that should be understood in terms of peoples individual *styles* of loving. Lee's research is known across different disciplines, including psychotherapy, and has been studied particularly in relation to attachment theory.

Lee (1973) was concerned with *styles of relationships*, and he sought to distinguish the personal and social expression of the various conceptions of love that refer to intimate, adult relationships. Although he acknowledged that other forms of love (e.g. love of God, children and/or country) are not unrelated to conceptualisations of intimate adult affiliation, Lee was more concerned with examining love relationships between intimate partners (Lee, 1973). Lee developed a broad taxonomy of love based on extensive historical analysis of romantic literature, and a comprehensive, complex and empirically sound interview procedure called the Love Story Card Sort (Lee, 1973; Hendick & Hendrick, 1986). Lee then used a constructive typology method to cluster the most distinctive characteristics of love, acknowledging that the ideal types of love styles may be thought of as functioning at several levels of meaning. To summarise his method he quoted:

“One may speak of an “erotic lover” or “erotic love ideas” or “erotic love behaviour”. That is, one may appear to speak of identity, ideology or role performance. The first, “erotic lover”, is actually an ellipsis for “a person who”, in the particular intimate relationship under

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observation, manifests attitudes and behaviour typical of an empirically distinguishable style of loving which, for purposes of comparison with other contrasting styles, has its distinctive cluster of characteristics lumped together under the label *eros*" (Lee, 1977, p174). Thus love in this context is about behaviour/s exhibited within a romantic union.

Lee devised six love styles, using colour as an analogy to describe their basic taxonomical structure (Lee, 1973). The three 'primary' love styles are: Eros (romantic love), Ludus (game playing love) and Storge (friendship love) (Feeney & Noller, 1990; Hendrick & Hendrick 1986; Lee, 1973; 1977). Judicious mixture of the first three yield the second three 'secondary styles' which are Mania (possessive, dependent love: a mixture of Eros and Ludus), Agape (selfless, all-giving love: a mixture of Storge and Eros) and Pragma (logical love: a mixture of Ludus and Storge) (Feeney & Noller, 1990; Lee, 1973, 1977). Although other mixtures of the lovestyles are possible, Lee and other researchers have significantly focused on these six types of love (Hendrick & Hendrick, 1986). For a fuller description of these love styles see Appendix A.

### Attachment and Love Styles

Investigations into whether attachment styles may be used as a predictor of an individual's love style have been carried out most fully by Hazan & Shaver (1987; Shaver & Hazan, 1988; Shaver, Hazan & Bradshaw, 1988). Their theory proposes that an individual's early social experiences produce long lasting differences in relationship styles, and that the three attachment styles described in early attachment literature (secure, avoidant, anxious/ambivalent), are manifested in adult romantic love. To distinguish their meaning of attachment they used the empirical work of Mary Ainsworth who identified three major

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attachment classifications based on observed interactions between infants and their parents as described above. For the purpose of their research they noted the following descriptions: *secure attachment* refers to infants whose primary caregivers were generally available and responsive to their needs. These infants appear to be generally happier, more relaxed and adventuresome, and easier to comfort when distressed. *Anxious/ambivalent attachment* refers to infants whose primary caregivers were also anxious and seemingly out of step with the infant's needs, being sometimes available and responsive but at other times unavailable or intrusive. *Avoidant attachment* refers to infants whose primary caregivers were generally unresponsive if not outright rejecting (Shaver & Hazan, 1988). Hazan & Shaver's (1987) work presented theoretical and empirical evidence for the relevance of attachment style to romantic love and their theoretical work showed that there are strong similarities between infant and adult attachment. Thus, their research concluded that adult individuals endorsing the three types of attachment styles all differed accordingly in their attachment histories based on accounts of their early family relationships. Differences also were seen in the endorsement of mental models and romantic love experiences (see: Hazan & Shaver, 1987, Shaver & Hazan, 1988; Feeney & Noller, 1990). A description of their adult attachment findings are as follows: *Secure* adult subjects in their studies described their relationship with their parents as generally supportive and appeared confident and open, characterising other people as well intentioned and good hearted. Secure adults' love relationships were described in terms of friendship, trust and happiness (Shaver & Hazan, 1988). *Anxious/ambivalent* adult subjects described their parents as unpredictable, unfair and intrusive. These subjects lacked self-confidence, were prone to fall in love easily and quickly and characterised other people as

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unwilling to commit themselves to long-term relationships. Finally, they described their love relationships in terms of jealousy, desire for reciprocation, emotional highs and lows, and intense sexual desire (Shaver & Hazan, 1988). *Avoidant* adult subjects described their parents as demanding, disrespectful, critical and uncaring; they characterised themselves as independent and disliked by others, and said that romantic love rarely lasts and is hard to find. Finally, they described their most important love relationships in terms of fear of closeness, jealousy and lack of acceptance (Shaver & Hazan, 1988). In addition to these outcomes, Shaver & Hazan's research uncovered that secure subjects' relationships lasted twice as long as the insecure types, and that the divorce rate was higher for anxious/ambivalent and avoidant adults (Shaver & Hazan, 1988).

Shaver & Hazan (1998) attributed their theory of attachment style and romantic love to various existing theories of love, including: Tennov's (1979) study on limerence (i.e. infatuated love); and Sperlings (1985) desperate love (see: Shaver & Hazan, 1988). In addition, they linked their theory to Lee's (1973) typology of love styles. In their study on attachment and love styles Shaver & Hazan (1988) argued that the typology can in fact be reduced to an essential form analogous to Ainsworth's attachment styles: secure, anxious/ambivalent, avoidant. They concluded that: *secure attachment* should correspond to eros and to a less extreme version of agape, *avoidant attachment* to ludus, and *anxious/ambivalent attachment* to mania. According to Shaver & Hazan (1988) Pragma and Storge fail to qualify as forms of romantic love and therefore were discarded as related to love styles (Feeny & Noller, 1990, p281).

Lee's research has been significant in exploring behaviour in love relationships, and my

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original research design was going to focus on the attachment research described above and its link to Lee's love styles. However, when I reviewed this more significantly with the literature on incest, it felt as though it was too structured and prescribed. As I read more about the effects of incest which will be described in the next section, it became clear that in order to shift maladaptive love patterns, therapists and clients need to go back to the 'scene of the crime'. Although Lee does discuss that change in love styles is possible, his theory felt too prescribed for the purpose of this research. As love is an incredibly subjective attachment experience and can take any number of forms in individuals, categorising love felt problematic as I felt that the individuality of each client could become lost and cultural experiences and interpretations unaccounted for. As this is a hermeneutic literature review and thus acknowledges that all individuals make their own meanings out of different experiences I would argue that Lee's theory is too rigid for this piece of work and I strongly hesitate to use his perspective to quantify the love behaviour of individuals who have experienced father/daughter incest. However, it was an interesting path to go down as part of this journey and relevant to see that attachment research has been attributed to it, thus offering some information about how behaviours in love relationships could be different according to attachment type and style. Certainly with my own experience of working with incest clients, although their attachment behaviours were unique and diverse, their love relationships appeared volatile and in some ways represented behaviour visible across individuals affected by this particular form of psychic damage. This will be explored in more detail in the following section. Lee's theory has however helped to move me towards more of a developmental perspective of trauma which feels as though it fits more fluently with my topic and research question. Further on I

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will provide an appendix to illustrate how Hazan and Shaver's attachment research aligning with Lee's typology of love could correspond with attachment patterns in incest survivors and provide an area for future research.

### Summary

This chapter has explored the early psychoanalytic notions of love and thorough exploration of the literature has defined love for this review in terms of Bowlby's concept of attachment. Contemporary literature has expanded on Bowlby's concept to assess individuals' learned attachment styles as predictors of later adult romantic relationships and although these are significant research findings they deviate from the focus of this piece of work. As such, Bowlby's (1979) concept of love as an affectional bond has been defined as significant for exploring individuals' diverse experiences of love in childhood and later adult relationships. This chapter has formed a conceptual foundation of love for the following chapters that will review the impact of father/daughter incest on attachment and later love experiences.

## Chapter 4 - Incest

**“My father had forever deserted me, leaving me only memories which set an external barrier between me and my fellow creatures.... His unlawful and detestable passion had poured its poison into my ears, and changed all my blood, so that it was no longer the kindly stream that supports life but a cold fountain of bitterness corrupted in its very source. It must be the excess of madness that could make me imagine that I could ever be aught but one alone; struck off from humanity; bearing no affinity to man or woman; a wretch on whom Nature had set her ban.”**

**- Mary Wollstonecraft Shelley, Mathilda, 1819**

To provide some context and scope for this review, a brief overview of the prevalence and effects of incest will be outlined below. The most common effects of incest and mother relationships will then be described; after which I will then review incest in terms of three key historical psychodynamic theories. I then review contemporary literature relating to attachment patterns and incest focusing predominantly on research on attachment patterns in incest survivors conducted by Alexander et al (1998) to later infer how this may link to future experiences of love.

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### Overview of Incest

#### The prevalence of incest

Childhood sexual abuse is common in all socioeconomic classes, racial groups and geographical regions. However only in the last few decades have the implications and effects of incest begun to receive adequate attention (see: Alpert, Brown, & Courtois, 1998; Beitchman, Zucker, Hood, DaCosta, & Akman, 1991; Briere & Elliott, 1994; Browne & Finkelhor, 1986; Cole & Putnam, 1992; Grand & Alpert, 1993; Kendal -Tackett, Williams, & Finkelhor, 1993;). Although incest has only recently been recognised as a major mental health concern, it is in fact a very old problem (England, 1997; Grand & Alpert 1993; Herman, 1981). With the emergence of the women's movement in the 1970s the reality of incest, once denied throughout medical, social, and legal dominions, became validated as a legitimate problem within communities. This resulted in an expanse in the literature investigating the prevalence of father/daughter incest, and subsequently its very real effects, which deviated from what once was believed to be linked to fantasy (which will be described below) (Dewald 1989; England, 1994, Groth-Marnet, 2003). Judith Herman 's research claims that 10 percent of girls in America will experience childhood sexual abuse with a relative and that 1 percent of those girls will experience it from their father or father figure (Herman, 1981). According to Van Buskirk & Cole (1983) there are no national statistics that document the incidence of sexual abuse of children but several estimates based on small scale surveys found that approximately 200,000 to 300,000 cases (of which 600 cases were incest) are reported each year in America. They argue that these figures are underestimated and that they may inaccurately reflect the number of incest cases that are

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actually experienced. Without a true indication of incest statistics occurring in society, Van Buskirk & Cole (1983) argue that it is not only methodologically difficult to interpret incidence rates within certain populations, but it is also difficult to gain a true understanding of the social ramifications of incest. Interestingly, some research has shown that there are high rates of incest reported in prostitute samples, women being treated for sexual dysfunction, drug user populations and psychiatric patients (Baisden, 1971; Benward & Denson-Gerber 1975; James & Meyerding, 1977; Van Buskirk 1983).

It is interesting to note that the effects of incest are only recently being explored. Gartner (1999) makes claims that the secrecy of the incest experience is not only kept to the confines of the homes where it occurs, but is also played out in society's historical tendency to ignore, or downplay the occurrences of incest over time. He argues that because of this societal minimisation, there may be a common tendency for incest to be unconsciously overlooked in therapy, and for the effects to become the common focus (Gartner, 1999). In addition, literature suggests that studies find different psychological effects of incest based on the particular methodology, sample and questions used in the research design (Kroth, 1979; Van Buskirk & Cole, 1983). Interestingly, some literature also argues that the effects of incest may not necessarily be linked directly to the sexual activity itself and that other factors such as poor parenting, disorganization in the family, emotional deprivation and physical abuse, as well as other reactions to the child's social environment to the incest, may have more profound or lasting effects than the incest itself (Van Buskirk & Cole, 1983). Some research focuses on the effects of force, type of sexual activity, duration of incest, degree of closeness to the perpetrator, age differences between perpetrator and child, and

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the age of the child when the incest began (Finkelhor, 1979; Levine, 1990). As such it appears that the earlier the incest begins, the more traumatic the experience and the more profound the effects. In addition, according to Van Buskirk & Cole (1983) there is some controversy in the literature concerning whether or not incest is even necessarily traumatic, and some emphasis is placed on the fantasies that the child builds around the abuse as being more harmful.

### Symptoms of Incest Trauma

#### *Common effects of Incest*

Before beginning this chapter it's important to look at the common effects of incest which may be presented in therapy with survivors of father/daughter incest. Literature reviewing the effects of father/daughter incest concludes that they are serious, long lasting and complex (Grand & Alpert, 1993; Herman 1981). Some of the common symptoms and side effects of father/daughter incest which are often present throughout treatment are: depression, post-traumatic stress symptoms, difficulties in interpersonal relationships, dissociation, anxiety, self-destructive behaviour, feelings of isolation and stigma, low self-esteem, intense feelings of guilt, difficulty trusting others, somatic disturbances, eating disorders, a tendency toward re-victimization, substance abuse, social isolation and sexual maladjustment, environmental neurosis and developmental fixations and arrest, ego splitting, repression, psychic loss, disruption of internalised objects, repetition compulsion, grandiosity due to Oedipal fantasies becoming a reality, interruption of normal Oedipal progression, a halt in the process of individuation, narcissistic disturbance, passivity and masochism (Cohler, 1987; Eisnitz, 1984; Grand & Alpert, 1993; Herman, 1981; Van Buskirk & Cole, 1984).

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Ferenczi (1933) discussed the physical and moral helplessness of the abused child, and the subsequent paralyses caused by enormous anxiety. He argued that abused children's personalities are not sufficiently consolidated enough to protest, and so, filled with anxiety, children subordinate themselves to the will of, and subsequently identify with, the aggressor. This identification is perhaps a way of gaining illusory control of their fathers which offers temporary relief to bear the abuse. The unfortunate part of this defence however, is that more often than not this internalisation of destructive intent develops into persecutory self-objects and self-blame (Bateman & Fonagy, 2006). In addition, the *guilt feelings* of the adult are introjected into the mind of the child, thus creating huge anxiety as harmless play paradoxically appears dangerous and punishable (Ferenczi, 1933). These feelings cause much confusion and evidentially a 'split' in the testimony of children's experiences and can lead to underdeveloped or 'perverted' sexual experiences in the future, loss of self and pathological guilt (Ferenczi, 1933).

### *The mother relationship*

The mother relationship is also significant when discussing the effects of father/daughter incest as in most cases there are also serious disturbances in the mother-daughter relationship (Eisnitz, 1984, Herman, 1981). Accounts from survivors in the literature commonly include physical or psychological illness on the part of the mother, as well as her being absent or overwhelmed and consumed by her own conflicts (which could have possibly stemmed from her own experiences of incest/sexual abuse in her own family history hence her choice of spouse) (Eisnitz, 1984). Eisnitz (1984) writes that in a lot of father/daughter incest cases, the daughter is rejected by her mother. Thus, in healthy parent/daughter dyads, mothers would most likely be perceptive enough to suspect the

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fathers' aberrations and would either prevent it or remove children from under his care (Cloitre, Cohen, & Koenen, 2006; Eisnitz, 1984). Eisnitz (1984) writes that father/daughter incest actually has more than two participants and that pathology not only arises from the incest which occurs but also in the very nature of the mother tolerating or remaining 'consciously unaware' of the abuse. Thus, he describes incest as a family illness, and argues that pathogenic consequences are a result of *both* relationships with the father *and* the mother (Eisnitz, 1984).

In many cases, mothers are described frequently as being consumed by their own inner torment. Interestingly, client's family histories often indicate transgenerational incest/sexual abuse and through clients' accounts of their mothers, these past experiences appear to impact the way in which incest disclosures were tolerated by mothers. Often, abused mothers display little ego strength to bear the abuse and in many cases ignoring the abuse of her daughter is all the mothers can do to survive being in a world where the harrowing events are passed down to her child/ren.

## Historical overview of incest in Psychotherapy

In line with the previous chapter on love, the three key historical psychoanalytic theories informing the literature on incest reviewed in this chapter are Freudian, Object Relations and Attachment theories. Below I provide a succinct summary of these schools of thoughts' core ideas of the effects of incest in order to set the scene for the following chapters which will bridge the love and incest literature together.

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### Sigmund Freud: The seduction theory

Towards the end of the 18<sup>th</sup> century, Freud posited what he called his 'seduction theory' which assumed that traumatic infantile sexual abuse was repressed and would later re-emerge during adulthood in the guise of symptoms or fantasies. Freud's discovery that many of his female clients had experienced some form of childhood sexual abuse or incest and were subsequently experiencing neurotic symptoms was rejected by many theorists at that time. Analysts now concede that the controversy came as Freud (and others) in 1900s Vienna were not ready to accept the implications that this brought to the Bourgeoisie fathers of the day. No longer was incest confined to the poor and the mentally defective; these findings would mean that patriarchal families and other wealthy figures were also sexually abusing their children (Diamond, 1989; Herman, 1981). Much of the literature claims that because his findings were unable to be accepted during this time, Freud retracted his original theory and claimed instead that reports of sexual abuse were not memories, but in fact the products of unconscious fantasies which were capable of creating neurotic symptoms (Diamond, 1989; Groth-Marnat, 2003). During this time, it is proposed that Freud stopped investigating the prevalence and significance of the actual occurrences of incest and focused instead on the incestuous fantasies of his patients and more emphasis was placed on his seduction theory in psychoanalysis for almost half of the 19<sup>th</sup> century (Diamond, 1989). This led to a (somewhat false) belief among the psychological realm that Freud outright rejected incest, however literature indicates that he still in fact treated incest disclosures accordingly in treatment. Leonard Shendold, in Freud's defence argues "Freud first felt that psychic illness was the result of children being seduced by parents. He accepted the stories he was told by his patients of sexual assault in childhood as historical

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truth and only later realized that many of his patients' stories about seductions, rapes, and beatings were fantasies. But he remained aware of the reality of sexual abuse and cruelty suffered by some of them as children. Unconscious fantasies of bad parents and of being seduced and misused are universally present. Conscious memories are unreliable. Even for those who see the abused child shortly after the alleged trauma, establishing just what happened and "who did it" can be difficult and sometimes impossible" (Shengold, 2013, p 39). Thus indicating that contrary to popular belief, Freud still acknowledged the very realness of the incest trauma at the same time as he explored the role of fantasy and conflict. Subsequently, it was during this time that the exploration of childhood sexuality and fantasies led to the development of the Oedipus complex. In the following section I will detail some of the major implications that father/daughter incest can have on the child's developing oedipal complex.

### *Father/Daughter Incest: A disruption of the Oedipal Complex*

In his review on father/daughter incest, Eisnitz (1984) writes about the common Oedipal upsets that occur. In line with Herman's (1981) writings on father/daughter incest, he discusses that while it may vary most father/daughter incest cases occur in the post-Oedipal pre-pubertal years, roughly around the ages of six to thirteen. Eisnitz (1984) discusses that as children abused at such a young age have not yet had the opportunity to form important Oedipal identifications, ego damage is one of the biggest effects of father/daughter incest. When parents are incestuously abusive, they are unable to supplement the child's lack of development and the child may not be able to complete this phase, and may be left with relatively frail and incomplete ego structures. In addition to this outcome, Levine (1990)

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writes thoroughly of dissociative tendencies which he describes as 'split-ego organization' in which the incest results in a 'good-bad' dichotomy as the abusing and non-abusing parents are seen as both caring and violating. Levine (1990) writes that this ambiguity results in ego-splitting in which the healthy parts of the survivors' personality alternate with the regressed and more primitive parts.

Eisnitz (1984) writes that a child's relationship with her parents is a mixture of protection, need and love, which must be provided by the parent by way of being available as natural targets for the full range of the child's instinctually derived wishes: both sexual and aggressive. The job of the parent therefore is to respond appropriately so that the child may feel acknowledged and can extend her own self-determination, rather than interacting or responding in a way such that the child becomes subject to overstimulation (Eisnitz 1984). The most important aspect of the Oedipal relationship is that a child's parents have the capacity to allow the child to develop ego apparatus to "enable her instinctually derived expression to become aim inhibited" (Eisnitz, 1984, p 500). When father/daughter incest occurs Eisnitz (1984) argues that the parents do not have this capacity themselves, and therefore the child cannot establish an identification that can help her to develop the structural capacity she needs to deal with her own drives. Thus, children subjected to father/daughter incest are not provided with the ability to deal with sexually competitive interactions outside of the family system, which is a marker of adult life (Eisnitz, 1984).

Instead, according to Eisnitz (1984) intense wishes to possess and love both mother and father become expressed in 'triangular involvement'. The notion of the triangular nature of the incest situation has been written about by Steele & Alexander (1981), Eisnitz (1984),

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Cohler (1987) and Ehrenberg (1987) who claim that family constellations may include: a mother who may be depressed, cold ineffectual or un-empathic to the child's needs; reversed roles of the mother and daughter; and enmeshment between father and daughter. As the girl becomes entangled in the mother-father-child triangle, several negative outcomes occur: denial, repetition compulsion, identification with the aggressor, difficulty defining a sense of her own femininity, fear of her attachment to her mother, inhibited structural development, fixation and arrest of development, and continuing defects in self-object boundaries (Eisnitz, 1984). In addition, instead of working through Oedipal conflicts and identifying with both parents, survivors of father/daughter incest do not develop a firm sexual identity or a stable self-representation and often search for outside narcissistic objects to establish to try and enhance self-representations which are then difficult to maintain (Eisnitz, 1984).

Eisnitz (1984) quotes "An incestuous father traumatizes the girl by his overstimulation and requires her to maintain a high level of instinctually derived excitement, thereby preventing renunciation and control of wishes. Most importantly, in her father's (and also by implication, in her mother's) disregard of her developmental needs, and in the manipulation of her body and person to the service of his own needs (a gross distortion of nature's "plan"), he forces her to submit passively as the victim of his sadistic needs" (p 501).

Shengold (1989) writes beautifully (yet harrowingly) about the experience of trauma such as father/daughter incest. He describes severe trauma such as incest as "a deliberate attempt to eradicate or compromise the separate identity of another person" (p 2), and he defines this type of trauma as "Soul Murder". He states "A consummated soul murder is a crime most often committed by psychotic or psychopathic parents who treat the child as an

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extension of themselves or as an object with which to satisfy their desires” (Shengold, 1989, p 2).

According to Eisnitz (1984) the extent of pathology in survivors depends on the degree of ‘self-representation stability’ that the girl had been able to establish before the incest took place. Accordingly, those with smaller deficits in self-object boundaries could be restored, whereas in more damaged cases instability in the self-representation could be greater and more pronounced and pathology more severe (Eisnitz, 1984).

### **An object relations perspective**

While classical approaches discuss drives and how trauma such as incest affects ego development, object relations theorists focus more on the importance of attachments in childhood development and the traumatic impact of lack of validation. Dalzell (1998) explains that there has been a shift from drive defence models to object relational approaches which have subsequently increased emphasis on early trauma and its relational influences.

Dalzell (1998) cites the work of Fairbairn who theorized that abused children perceive their connection to their parents with humiliation and shame and sees the abusive parent as a “bad object”. However she explains that the child also needs to attach to the parent and that these needs conflict with each other resulting in the child internalizing the bad object to try and control her conflicting emotions (Dalzell, 1998).

In their article Grand & Alpert (1993) discuss the long term effects of incest in terms of object relations and from a psychoanalytic developmental perspective. They argue that

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incest violates two critical areas of object relating. The first is the child's experience of being connected to others or 'attached' to objects; the second is a notion similar to Winnicott's (1958) writings about "going on being". They propose that through incest, the child's secure sense of existence is disturbed in such a fundamental way that it threatens to leave the child with no sense of self (Grand & Alpert, 1993). These authors liken this to what Winnicott (1958) describes as "unthinkable anxiety" caused by an unspeakable, terrifying disintegration of the self, triggered by the terror of the incest experience (Grand & Alpert, 1993). This may refer to the inability of the child to develop an integrated and secure sense of one's self, enough so that the child develops a sense of basic security to function as an adult in the outside world, away from their direct caregivers. Thus, when childhood incest occurs, they argue that at the point of arrest, the child deteriorates into a sense of basic dread or annihilation terror leading to the disintegration of both the child's physical existence and their sense of continuity with the human world (Grand & Alpert, 1993).

Several authors have reviewed the impact of father/daughter incest on object relations. One study conducted examined the lasting effects of biological and non-biological father/daughter incest on adult survivors' object relationships and intimacy functioning, and found that paternal incest, regardless of whether they are biologically related or not brutally disrupts children's attachments to their fathers and is internalized as a template for future interpersonal relations (Grand and Alpert, 1993). This research showed that both biological and step father incest survivors exhibit similar disruptions and symptoms including; alienation, insecure attachment, egocentricity, social incompetence, fear of and difficulty with intimacy, and a tendency to perceive relationships as risky (Grand & Alpert, 1993). According to Grand & Alpert (1993), symptoms and behaviours that are common in

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incest survivors primarily include difficulties in intimacy and an intense attachment to the abusive parents. All of these are acknowledged to be survival techniques created as a defence that tricks the child into thinking they have a sense of existence and integrity, without which their world would be too much to cope with – much like Winnicott's (1958) notion of objectlessness, which is imperative for psychic survival.

### **An attachment perspective**

Attachment researchers have hypothesized that attachment is a continuous evolving state of measure, evident throughout a child's various stages of development, and has a profound impact on the construction of the child's internal working model (Anderson & Alexander, 1996). The internal working model created in childhood ultimately serves to provide a pattern or template for understanding the self in relation to other people as well as a strategy for affect regulation (Alexander et. al. 1998; Anderson & Alexander, 1996; Bowlby, 1969; 1982;). Zannah & Zannah (1989) state that the internal working model governs how incoming interpersonal information is attended to and perceived, determines which effects are experienced, selects the memories that are evoked, and mediates behaviour with others in interpersonal relationships. This concept may provide a potential link between childhood incest and later developing love relationships in adulthood based on attachment type and style developed in childhood.

Attachment theory proposes that there is a biologically based bond between children and their caregivers and that this bond is fundamental as it assures the protection and the survival of the child (Alexander et al., 1998; Bowlby, 1969; 1982). Alexander et al (1998) discuss that the construct of adult attachment has been validated through its association

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with interpersonal functioning in intimate relationships. They argue that attachment theory is pertinent to the study of incest and that it can explain an individual's' approach and/or avoidance of not only the parent (in childhood) but also adult intimate relationships in general (Alexander & Anderson, 1994). Attachment patterns and their subsequent approaches to relationships can also help in determining individuals' behaviours and experiences within attachment/ love relationships. These will be explored in the following section.

## Contemporary research

### Incest and Attachment

Sachs (2013) writes about the problems of childhood incest, which in fact do not end in childhood; instead she claims that problems of incest extend from childhood through to adulthood. From the context of an attachment perspective she suggests that the most manipulated aspect in incestuously abused children is their attachment patterns because the attachment system becomes activated when one is in a state of survival fear (Sachs, 2013). As in a majority of incest cases, violence, cruelty and terror are also a part of the experience with parental abusers, and according to Bowlby (1958) by natural instinct, terrified children reach for their attachment figures, using behaviour that will summon and engage them. As such, in an incestuous environment, the attachment figure will commonly respond to sexual or violent signals and thus infants and children in these families are likely to develop sexualised or violent attachment behaviours when frightened, which are not

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only described as subtypes of disorganized attachment (Liotti, 1999) but are also likely to be repeated in later intimate interpersonal relationships (Sachs, 2013). Herman (1981) and Cohler (1987) both note in their writing that later adult relationships more often than not function as a stage on which the incest is repetitively re-enacted as women survivors create relationship prototypes based on past abusive experiences. Thus, it is not uncommon that survivors re-enact past abuse experiences and use these experiences as a basis for loving which often leads women to re-experience the initial trauma (Herman, 1981, Cohler, 1987). As Cohler (1987) put it, each relationship, played out later in life is connected, *pari passu*, to the incestuous event/s.

### Attachment Styles and Incest

Investigations into individual's attachment styles and the effects of childhood incest have been carried out by Alexander et al. (1998). Their study aimed to examine how adult attachment patterns are related to distress and personality disorders in incest survivors. Alexander et al (1998) tested female incest survivors with a structured interview and completed measures of current functioning and personality (Alexander et al., 1998). Their study interestingly found that attachment was significantly related to personality structure, depression, distress and – most importantly for this review – that the majority of women survivors of incest shared similar attachment patterns (Alexander et al., 1998).

To investigate adult attachment patterns, the authors used Mary Ainsworth's categories of attachment seen in children: *secure*, *avoidant* and *resistant*. In addition, they also used Main and Solomon's (1986) additional term introduced to allow for toddlers who did not fit

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into these categories (interestingly, toddlers who had experienced abuse), *disorganized/disoriented* attachment. Toddlers who fit into this sub category subsequently showed patterns of contradictory behaviour; for example, strong proximity seeking behaviour followed by strong avoidant behaviour. These children exhibited dazed expressions and apprehension on the parents return and their attachment type was “associated with frightened or frightening behaviour on the part of the parent in which the parent was simultaneously the source of and the solution to the child’s anxiety” (Alexander et al., 1998, p 47).

Although Alexander and colleagues (1998) acknowledge that attachment patterns can change across time with the experience of different social interactions, they argue that fundamentally they are fairly stable and consistent, due to internal working models remaining fairly unconscious throughout life. Therefore, to measure an adult’s childhood attachment pattern, Alexander et al. (1998) explain that this can be evident through the way in which an adult describes his or her childhood attachment relationships. They discuss that *secure* adults (who develop from secure children) are coherent in their memories of the past and have current close and satisfying intimate relationships. *Dismissing* adults (avoidant children) idealize or fail to recall their childhoods, are uncomfortable with intimacy and overtly suppress negative affect while showing signs of psychological arousal. *Preoccupied* adults (resistant children) focus excessively on memories of the past and are confused, anxious, clinging, dependent and jealous in their intimate relationships. *Fearful/avoidant* adults (disorganised children) become incoherent describing their pasts, tend to be socially inhibited and unassertive and evidence both dismissing and preoccupied traits. They state that “...it appears that the adults’ current state of mind regarding past

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attachment relationships is predictive of both current attachment relationships and the ability to regulate affect, both of which are especially germane to an incest population”(p ??) . For the purpose of their research they used the Family Attachment Interview which allows the independent assessment of attachment based on the respondent’s process of answering attachment experience questions (Alexander et al., 1998). Again using Ainsworth and Solomons’ measure of attachment, Alexander et al. (1998) provided four adult attachment categories: *Secure adults* (secure children) see themselves as trustworthy and others as trustworthy and responsive; these subjects feel comfortable with intimacy and autonomy (Alexander et al., 1998). *Dismissing adults* (avoidant children) see themselves as worthy, but others as untrustworthy which thus leads to a tendency to maintain their sense of invulnerability by avoiding disappointment by others. *Preoccupied adults* (resistant children) see themselves as unworthy and others valued. This leads to a tendency to strive for acceptance and value by others. *Fearful/avoidant adults* (disorganised children) see themselves as unworthy of others and as unresponsive and untrustworthy which leads to a tendency to avoid anticipated rejection by others.

Although this study was not restricted only to survivors of father/daughter incest and also included other types of incest, it is interesting to note the results which showed that only 9% of incest survivors showed secure attachment, 60% were fearful/avoidant, 21% preoccupied and 11% dismissing. This indicates that incest is associated with a higher likelihood of insecure attachment in general, with fearful/avoidant attachment being the most prevalent with this client group (Alexander et al., 1998). This research was carried out with a population of women survivors of incest and was not limited to father/daughter survivors, which leaves a potential gap for future research to take place.

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### **Categorising Love styles and attachment of incest survivors**

It is interesting to note that there is a potential correlation between Love styles and attachment, and incest and attachment. Drawing on separate research from Alan Lee and Alexander et al, we are able to see a correlation from which further research could establish a valuable tool for therapists of these clients. Knowing more about survivors of father/daughter incest and their potential ways of engaging in particular love styles would be undoubtedly beneficial for both clients and their therapists. However, the crude data available and the undeveloped correlation which draws together the two fields of research is currently too overly prescriptive in the way that clients are pigeonholed. While interesting, this categorization of love styles and attachment of incest survivors is outside of the scope of this research. However, a table detailing this relationship has been provided in Appendix B.

### **Further research**

#### **Sandor Ferenczi: Mutual analysis**

During the era that Freud was developing new thinking and society was heavily rejecting claims of prominent sexual abuse, Freud's student Sandor Ferenczi fought to keep the very real occurrences of incest alive and known within his own psychoanalytic practice. Although some literature argues that he was driven by his own abusive and incestuous childhood, Ferenczi's dedication to mutual analysis (although rejected by Freud) was a significant

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contribution to psychoanalysis and to the treatment of clients who had experienced trauma, and to this day offers a fundamental – and somewhat controversial – view for working with cases of father/daughter incest (Groth-Marnet, 2003). This research is outside the scope for this current review so for now I will provide some references to read more on Ferenczi (see: Ferenczi 1933; 1955; Dupont, 1985).

### **Judith Herman's research: Father/daughter incest and intimacy**

Judith Herman (1981) discusses some of the major impacts of incest that affect the intimate relationships of women who experienced profoundly disturbing father/daughter incest in childhood. Her research is interesting because it offers a focus on particular ways that incest clients specifically might approach love relationships. In her research using women's accounts of their love relationships with intimate partners, she found the following themes: difficulty forming trusting relationships; belief in having attained powers that could be used to seduce men as a defence against feelings of helplessness; expectations of abuse and disappointment in all intimate relationships, including exploitation by some partners, and abandonment; the use of sex to give women the long sought-after feeling of nurturance they had not received in childhood, often resulting in feeling that they are good for nothing more than sex; brief, unsatisfying sexual relationships; sexual promiscuity often leading to periods of compulsive sexual activity and abstinence; stormy and tormented love relationships, often with a predilection for men who are aloof, unreliable and exploitative; common experiences of rape in relationships and other abusive behaviour such as control and theft of possessions and money; feelings of discontent in marriage; feelings of not being

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valued or respected by husbands/partners; feelings of obligations to be grateful to husbands for marrying them; complaints that they seem unable to choose husbands or lovers whom they themselves respect; physical abuse, with an added component of feeling as though they deserved it; toleration of extreme abuse from intimate partners; common belief that 'men only want one thing'; overvalue and idealization of men often as a search to recapture the 'specialness' that they had felt in the relationships with their fathers; submission to lovers as an attempt to fulfil unsatisfied childhood longings for protection and care; impairments in sexual enjoyment, including minimal to no enjoyment (Herman, 1981).

### Summary

This chapter has reviewed the effects of father/daughter incest in terms of common effects presented in treatment, as well as the three key historical psychoanalytic theories informing the literature on incest: Freudian, Object Relations and Attachment theories. It has provided a succinct summary of the core ideas of these schools of thought regarding the effects of incest, and examined research on attachment and incest in order to set the scene for the following chapter which will bridge the love and incest literature together by discussing how the therapeutic relationship could assist in helping survivors develop healthy prototypes of love. Also explored were the most common effects of father/daughter incest, the mother relationship, and Judith Herman's father/daughter incest research.

## **Chapter 5: The therapeutic relationship**

**“...the victims of incest grow up to become archetypically feminine women: sexy without enjoying sex, repeatedly victimized yet repeatedly seeking to lose themselves in the love of an overpowering man, contemptuous of themselves and of other women, hard-working, giving, and self-sacrificing. Consumed with inner rage, they nevertheless rarely caused trouble to anyone but themselves. In their own flesh, they bore repeated punishment for the crimes committed against them in childhood” (Herman, 1981, p 96)**

In this chapter I will review the literature written about the therapeutic relationship and discuss how this relationship could influence father/daughter incest survivor clients' abilities to love in adaptive ways. I will review literature that has explored this in depth and attempt to relate it to the previous chapters on love and incest. It will also explore potential blocks to successful treatment and discuss the findings in relation to the previous chapters, thereby bridging the three topics: love, incest and the therapeutic relationship.

### **The therapeutic relationship: How it could influence the client's ability to love**

Literature has discussed the importance of healthy parental care, love, affection, closeness and modelling from caregivers, to ensure that children create healthy object relations and attachment (see: Karen, 1998; Bowlby, 1979). It is through healthy relationships with early caregivers that children learn to develop a sense of their core, true selves, and develop

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feelings and ways of relating that ensure they learn how to love and be loved in healthy ways in later adult life. Without appropriate object relationships and attachment to their primary caregivers, individual capacities for relating and loving are thwarted and relationships are rendered difficult as we tend to internalise our first and most influential object relationships (Main, Kaplan and Cassidy, 1985). Indeed, Main et al (1985) discuss that the very first and oldest prototypes formed within the context of attachment relationships play a fundamental role in shaping our thoughts, feelings and behaviours in the interpersonal domain. In his writings, Winnicott (1969) argued that caregivers do not need to be perfect to help a child develop healthy object relations and attachments; they have to be 'good enough'.

When boundaries between parents and children are crossed in the form of incest, a distortion arises in the resource relationship of the parent. The daughter's bond with the father becomes contradicted as her source of safety also becomes, paradoxically, the source of danger, thus compromising her feelings of safety, control, positive regard, competence and connection to the larger world (Cloitre et al., 2006). In the context of relationships, when incest occurs, both the sense of self and the capacity for relating are upset as children learn that to be interpersonally engaged means to be abused. Father/daughter incest has been said to be potentially the most dangerous form of incest and it is discussed in the literature that not only does the incest impose severe anxiety and distress on daughters; it also impacts their abilities to love and find meaningful connections in later adult life (Giaretto, 1976). Thus, women often develop prototypes for interpersonal relatedness of 'to be loved or to love is to be abused' or 'abuse is a way to connect' and often extrapolate these messages into later intimate relationships, even if they feel like they

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have overcome the incest experience/s (Cloitre, et al., 2006; Hendrix & Hunt, 1997; Karen, 1998; Main, et al., 1985;). Research over time has cited the many debilitating effects that incest has on women and their capacity to enter into strong, loving and meaningful relationships with others, whether these relationships are romantic, sexual, or platonic (Herman, 1981).

Davies and Frawley (1994) write extensively about treating adult survivors of childhood sexual abuse, including survivors of father/daughter incest. Their research claims that within a relational model, the therapeutic relationship co-creates a transitional space by which the therapist and the client “re-enact, create context and meaning, and ultimately recreate in newly configured forms the central, organizing relational matrices of the patient’s early life” (Davies & Frawley, 1994, p 3). Thus, they explain that through this form of treatment, the therapist is expected to be pulled through transference pressures from the client and into her own countertransference reactions to the material and into constant and ever shifting re-enactments (Davies & Frawley, 1994). However, they argue that these re-enactments are necessary, even crucial, for healing to take place. Thus, re-enactments are in fact unconscious recreations of dissociatively unavailable aspects of the client’s self and object representation/s which are difficult to verbally describe, but can be reconstructed through actions in the therapy between therapist and client via projective identification (Davies & Frawley, 1994). These re-enactments are often reconstructions of early trauma, and show how they occur in present-day interpersonal relationships through their actions in the therapeutic relationship. Thus, by bringing to the therapeutic relationship fears and anxieties associated with other important attachment and interpersonal relationships (including romantic love relationships), the client acts out their

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internal working models through the transference relationship by acting towards the therapist as they do in other relationships (Alexander & Anderson, 1994).

Literature explains that treatment is therefore dependant on the therapist's ability to freely engage in the transference and countertransference re-enactments and then to disengage adequately enough to observe, contain and process with the client what has just occurred or is occurring between them (Davies & Frawley, 1994). Alexander & Anderson (1994) discuss that within the therapeutic relationship, the therapist may help the client to increase permeability and complexity of their internal working models by revising them (both cognitively and affectively) on the basis of new information through new experiences in the therapy. Thus, both positive and negative therapeutic encounters (providing they are explored and dealt with appropriately for each specific client) aim to strengthen and move the client towards a secure state of mind. If the therapeutic relationship forms a consistent holding environment where client's may learn to trust that the 'good enough space' (as likened to the good enough mother) feel safe enough to 'go on being' while they relive, tame and begin to integrate split-off and other fragmented representations which have resulted from her traumatic experiences, healing may begin to take place (Davies & Frawley, 1994; Winnicott, 1960). As such, it is within the therapeutic relationship 'arena' that the abuse, neglect and idealized salvation may be 're-experienced', and where the therapist and client can work through identifications and powerful, chaotic transference and countertransference paradigms, to promote understanding and, most essentially, healing (Davies & Frawley, 1994).

It is therefore proposed through the literature that instead of relying on specific and often

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abstinent analytic techniques, the emphasis for this client group is on a 'relationship-based approach to change' (Alexander & Anderson, 1994; Davies & Frawley, 1994). Accordingly, the 'holding environment' discussed above, is not dissimilar to Bowlby's (1988) concept of the 'secure base', both of which can act as a space in which clients are invited to explore their inner worlds of past, current, and transference relationships as well as their separation and loss experiences. As the literature reveals that with this client group one major goal of therapy is secure attachment, therapists working with clients' internal working models of themselves and inevitably of their love relationships, can help them to gain access to both positive and negative feelings around these, and thus help them to find more complex and coherent understanding of their relationships and relational patterns (Alexander & Anderson, 1994). As a result, clients can begin to develop more successful strategies of regulating painful affects in their relationships, and learn and grow to achieve secure and rewarding attachment and love relationships (Alexander & Anderson, 1994).

Davies and Frawley (1994) discuss eight transference-countertransference positions which client and therapist enact that frequently recur in treatment with this client group. These include: the uninvolved non-abusing parent and the neglected child; the sadistic abuser and the helpless, impotently enraged victim; the idealized, omnipotent rescuer and the entitled child; and the seducer and the seduced (Davies & Frawley, 1994). Although these do not account for every aspect of every therapy with every client, they state that in their experience these eight positions are enacted regularly throughout treatment and are invaluable to the analytic work (Davies & Frawley, 1994). As these positions are generally encompassed by self and object representations and are most often split off from the conscious awareness by the client, the manifestation of these positions is often most

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commonly identified through the therapist's' vigilant exploration of their own countertransference responses (Davies & Frawley, 1994). They state that "it is in the countertransference reactions that the clinician experiences powerful projective identifications with aspects of that patient's self and object worlds" (Davies & Frawley, 1994, p167).

### **Potential blocks to successful treatment with survivors of father/daughter incest**

Literature on father/daughter incest shows that clients who have been incestuously abused by a parent may present some perplexing dynamics upon entering therapy (De Young & Lowry, 1992; Herman, 1981). Clients may be unwilling to discuss details of their abuse histories, they may show strong emotional ties to their abusers, and they may engage in behaviours that seem to increase the risk for further and continued sexual victimization. 'Traumatic bonding' is described by De Young & Lowry (1992) as the evolution of emotional dependency between two people of unequal power. The nature of this bond is distinguished by clients' feelings of intense attachment, cognitive distortions and behavioural strategies that paradoxically strengthen abusive bonds and may be exhibited in the therapy due to survivors' expectations that the therapist will cross boundaries as their fathers once did (De Young & Lowry, 1992). Due to incest survivors' often dysfunctional prototypes of interpersonal relationships and love, their original experiences of maladaptive interpersonal relating will ultimately influence the therapeutic relationship, and subsequently the development of new love prototypes.

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Literature discusses the many ways that incest may manifest in treatment with survivors of father-daughter incest. In particular, Davies & Frawley (1994) stipulate that survivors often employ a range of defences including: splitting, projection and introjection, denial, acting out, omnipotence, projective identification, and dissociation, which can impact the development and analysis of the transference and countertransference in treatment (Davies & Frawley, 1994). It has been discussed that being aware of these potential enactments of these defences arising in therapy can not only enhance empathy and understanding from the therapist, but can also protect the therapist from potentially withdrawing and unconsciously rejecting the client in treatment. If the therapist is a survivor herself, it will be important for her to recognise her own responses to client material and transferences and to explore these in supervision. If the therapist is a male, other barriers may occur which will be important to explore in treatment with clients and in supervision.

### **Findings: Significance of the research**

As described throughout this review, the very first and oldest prototypes formed within the context of attachment relationships play a fundamental role in shaping an individual's thoughts, feelings and behaviours in the interpersonal domain (Main, et al. 1985). Discussed throughout this review are the implications for survivors growing up in a sexually abusive environment, and thus learning that to be interpersonally engaged means to be abused, and so developing prototypes for interpersonal relatedness of 'to be loved or to love is to be abused' or 'abuse is a way to connect' (Cloitre, et al.. 2006; Hendrix & Hunt, 1997; Karen,

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1998; Main, et al.. 1985). Incest thus creates negative patterns of relating interpersonally in children which can guide the adult survivor to repeat patterns which are maladaptive and develop dysfunctional and disruptive adult love relationships. These dysfunctional ways of relating may take many forms as outlined in chapter four.

In terms of bridging the current research on love, incest and the therapeutic relationship, and of my own experiences as a training therapist working with survivors of father/daughter incest, I infer that clients' ways of loving can become apparent to the therapist through the exploration of various attachment relationships. These may be apparent throughout client histories and current love style dynamics, as well as attachment patterns that are played out in the transference relationship. As the literature reveals that internal working models are fluid and attachment can be secured through the therapeutic relationship, I predict that the *way* that individuals love in their current relationships might also begin to shift and change, as clients begin to form more secure and positive modes of attachment through the therapeutic relationship. This research can help to guide therapists working in this area with these challenges as they arise in therapy.

## **Chapter 6: Summary, Discussion and Clinical Implications, Limitations and Recommendations**

In this chapter, I offer a summary of the review and the findings revealed from undertaking this process. I consider the clinical implications, strengths and limitations of the review.

### **Summary of the Review and Overall Findings**

#### **Love**

The literature shows that love is an extremely subjective experience and is thus difficult to define (Berscheid, 2006 & Reik, 2002). Through the process of this review, love has been explored throughout the time of psychotherapy and examined under three major schools of psychoanalytic thought – Freudian, Object Relations and Attachment theories – in an attempt to define its significance for this review. As the literature shows, attachment is a fundamental perspective apparent in both love experiences and incest and it is for this reason that Bowlby's (1979) definition of love as an enduring affectional bond to another person was emphasised as the working definition of love for this review. Although other significant interpretations of love could be made through Freudian and Object Relations theories, the limited scope of the literature review allowed for only one working definition.

Contemporary research into love experiences that move beyond the working definition of

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love and into examining individuals' unique styles of loving was also explored and literature regarding Lee's (1973) typology of love was discussed fundamentally because of its link to attachment theory. Lee's research suggested that love is not a single entity but should be understood in terms of the way individuals engage in love relationships, or rather their *styles* of loving. The literature showed that attachment styles may be used to predict an individual's style of loving and through empirical investigations conducted by Shaver & Hazan (1988), attachment theory was applied to Lee's (1973) typology of love theory. Shaver & Hazan's research indicated that four of the six love styles discussed in Lee's theory were able to be reduced to an essential form analogous to attachment styles. This review of the literature on love set the scene for the following chapter which explored the impact of father/daughter incest in the hope to bridge some gaps in the research pertaining to father/daughter incest and later experiences of love.

### Incest

This chapter explored the effects that father/daughter incest has on daughter's lives, their overall functioning and the impact it has on their later adult attachment relationships. The literature was explored in terms of the common effects, and then the effects were explored in terms of oedipal disruptions, object relations disruptions and attachment disruptions. Again, as the scope for this review was limited as to what could be explored and applied, disruption of attachment was highlighted as this was the most significant research that also aligned most clearly with the research on love. In addition, empirical attachment research was examined in direct relationship to incest cases and this helped to set the scene for the following chapter which aimed to bridge both the love research and the father/daughter

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incest research together by examining how love prototypes might be strengthened by the therapeutic relationship.

The literature on father/daughter incest showed that there are many debilitating effects of this experience which can be manifest in psychotherapy with this client group. Literature also explained that the effects are frequently related to the overall functioning, or lack of functioning, and other issues such as physical and emotional abuse and neglect which are also apparent in the incestuous environment, and that these may in fact be more devastating to the individual than the incest experience itself (Van Buskirk & Cole, 1983).

The literature examining the common effects of incest showed that there are myriad effects that father/daughter incest has on daughters' lives including the following disruptions: depression, post-traumatic stress symptoms, difficulties in interpersonal relationships, dissociation, anxiety, self-destructive behaviour, feelings of isolation and stigma, low self-esteem, intense feelings of guilt, difficulty in trusting others, somatic disturbances, eating disorders, a tendency toward re-victimisation, substance abuse, social isolation and sexual maladjustment, environmental neurosis and developmental fixations and arrest, ego splitting, repression, psychic loss, disruption of internalised objects, repetition compulsion, grandiosity due to oedipal fantasies becoming a reality, interruption of normal oedipal progression, a halt in the process of individuation, narcissistic disturbance, passivity, and masochism (Cohler, 1987; Eisnitz, 1984; Grand & Alpert, 1993; Herman, 1981; Van Buskirk & Cole, 1984).

Literature also showed significant disruptions of the Oedipus complex of individuals who experienced father/daughter incest, as well as disruptions of Object Relations and

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Attachment functioning. As attachment has been the major focus of this review, literature investigating attachment styles in incest survivors was explored. Only one research study on attachment and incest could be found in the literature. This empirical research conducted by Alexander et al (1998) discussed that the majority of incest survivors (60%) had a fearful/avoidant attachment pattern. Literature showed that these survivors became incoherent describing their pasts, tended to be socially inhibited and unassertive, and evidenced both dismissing and preoccupied attachment traits (Alexander et al, 1998). This research also contended that of the survivors' who were examined in the study, 9% were shown to have secure attachment, 11% dismissing attachment and 21% preoccupied attachment.

### **The therapeutic relationship**

This chapter reviewed the literature written about the therapeutic relationship and discussed how this relationship could influence father/daughter incest survivor clients' abilities to love in adaptive ways. Davies & Frawley's (1994) research claims that within a relational model, the therapeutic relationship co-creates a transitional space which allows the therapist and the client to re-enact past relational experiences through the transference and create new meanings associated with intimate relationships. They argue that re-enactments are necessary for healing to take place as these are often reconstructions of early trauma that show the therapist how they occur in present-day interpersonal relationships. It is argued that successful treatment is dependent on the therapist's ability to engage in the transference and countertransference re-enactments and to observe, contain and process what is occurring between them (Davies & Frawley, 1994). It was

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discussed that it is within the therapeutic relationship 'arena' that the abuse, neglect and idealized salvation may be 're-experienced', and the therapist and client can work through these to promote understanding and healing (Davies & Frawley, 1994).

It was also proposed that instead of relying on abstinent analytic techniques, the emphasis for this client group is on a 'relationship-based approach to change' (Alexander & Anderson, 1994). The holding environment was discussed as being akin to the 'secure base' which can act as a space where clients are invited to explore their inner worlds through which clients' can begin to gain access to positive and negative feelings and develop a more coherent understanding of their relationship patterns (Alexander & Anderson, 1994). As a result, clients can begin to develop more successful strategies of regulating painful affects in their relationships, and learn and grow to achieve secure and rewarding attachment and love relationships (Alexander & Anderson, 1994). Davies & Frawley's (1994) eight transference and countertransference positions were discussed, as well as the potential blocks to working with this client group.

## Discussion and Clinical Implications

Judith Herman interviewed woman who had experienced incest with their fathers or step fathers and found in their accounts that although they had done their best to put the incest experiences behind them, the experiences of incest in fact shaped their later relations with others as well as the image of themselves. Sadly all of the women interviewed felt marked by their experiences. Predominantly they felt abnormal or different from other people and had a profound sense of being an outsider. In addition, feelings of shame had persisted into

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their adult lives and a majority claimed that the incest secret had helped to create and form their identities (Herman, 1981). Depending on the severity of the incest, clients may present with any of the types of attachment discussed in chapter three. According to Herman (1981) the more severe and prolonged the incest, the more profound the effects, which may assume a more insecure type of attachment. Accordingly, the findings of this review reveal that attachment patterns can become apparent to the therapist through clients' discussions of intimate relationships as well as through actions in the therapeutic relationship and countertransference. Knowing that change in attachment and internal working models is possible can help therapists and clients to explore how early object relationships have assisted in shaping clients' prototypes of love. Thus widening clients' internal lenses and creating space for them to explore their inner worlds. For instance, it can be common in therapy with survivors of father/daughter incest for their attachment and object relations to be fundamentally characterised by absent, neglectful and sadistically abusive caregivers. Accordingly, disorganised, fearful and other negative attachment patterns are created. These attachments often cause clients to display an insatiable hunger for protection and care, yet they are haunted by the fear of abandonment and exploitation. Throughout therapy, countertransference experiences may take many different forms as therapists become pulled into re-enactments of clients' attachment and love relationships (Davies & Frawley, 1994). These often elicit intense feelings such as guilt, anger and fear or the need to be the 'perfect' therapist/parent or concern that therapy is in some way may be harming the client. In some cases, clients may unexpectedly threaten to or successfully terminate therapy as they experience their therapist through the re-enactments as exploitative and abusive; another predator who would take advantage of them. At other times the very

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presence and non-abusive reality of the therapist can threaten the defences clients hold around their denial of their abuse and they flee. Sometimes, it can be difficult for them to experience their therapists' maternal warmth and unconditional love as they stand up for their clients when they speak about their abusers. This can shake their experiences of reality and can be difficult to contain from within. These experiences may leave the therapist projected with not only their own feelings but also their clients. Untangling these and talking about them in the therapy with their clients can be invaluable to the work. In most cases, intense fears of annihilation that are alive in the therapy are the same fears that are also present in client's relational dynamics outside of therapy. Paradoxically clients' often have difficulty existing with and without other people in their lives, carrying fears of 'if you leave me I won't exist but if you stay you might destroy me'. These fears create chaos in their intimate relationships and therapists may experience first-hand the puzzling and painful effects associated with incest-related attachment and love trauma. Experiencing this may open up opportunities for therapists to gently bring these paradoxes into the treatment-setting and to discuss these feelings within the therapeutic relationship. Subsequently being transparent of the dynamics occurring in the therapeutic relationship may allow clients to begin to mentalize enough (Bateman & Fonagy, 2000) to begin to shift their internal working models and challenge their internal object relations that tell them to run from the therapeutic relationship as well.

The therapeutic relationship takes time and effort and may ignite myriad feelings and countertransference responses (often negative) which can be challenging to therapists and

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clients alike. Perhaps the first and most important task when working with this type of trauma is to offer client's patience. Two significant theoretical insights stand out for me to highlight the importance of this first step: the first from Bowlby in his paper "Juvenile Thieves": "Whatever we do", we might imagine them saying, "do not let us care too much for anyone. At all costs let us avoid any risk of allowing our hearts to be broken again." This, I think, is the explanation of much of their hard-boredness and apparent indifference, traits which puzzle and irritate almost everyone who has to deal with them. It is a policy of self-protection against the slings and arrows of their own turbulent feelings." And Shengold (1989 p10) in his book "Soul Murder": "They have been abused and neglected and have learned a lesson: If you cannot trust mother and father, whom can you trust?" Both of these insights reveal just how dangerous it can be for survivors of father/daughter incest to openly love. As such, a deal is struck with themselves to not put one's self into danger again. However, this deal comes at a high cost and the price of this self-protection may be seen in defences which have become hidden in their unconscious, defences which are then resurrected within the therapy relationship.

This research highlights the importance for therapists to understand in more depth survivor clients' internal worlds, particularly when it comes to intimate love experiences. Doing so may offer therapists a common language to use with their colleagues and their clients. Thus assisting therapists to gain a deeper understanding of the differing, complex ways that this client group might respond to the therapeutic relationship (seen as this is an attachment relationship which can also elicit intense feelings akin to intimate relationships). For instance, women who have suffered abuse on the more severe end of the spectrum, tend to have had their internal selves as children not adequately understood or mirrored by caring,

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non-threatening adults. Thus they were unable to adequately learn how to represent their internal states. As a result these clients are often forced to use incongruent reflections to assist in organising their internal states which subsequently leads to disorganisation, incoherence and 'fragmentation of the self' (Bateman & Fonagy, 2006). Due to this splitting and projection defences often appear throughout the work and clients' most commonly operate in the paranoid-schizoid mode, thus making mentalizing difficult for them (and also the therapist when clouded by their own countertransference) (Bateman & Fonagy, 2006; Hinshelwood, 2003). For much of the work, therapists may be representative of another abuser (as akin to Davies and Frawley's sadistic abuser) and forming a trusting alliance where they clients can mentalize enough to see that the therapist is not out to get them may be a major part of the therapy and may have significant benefits to clients' healing. Another defence that may present as challenging (and common) in the therapeutic relationship with this client group – is dissociation (also discussed in chapter three). Many survivor clients' have developed an adaptive ability as children to dissociate when the abuse was taking place. However, this can mean that even though they are now no longer undergoing the abuse, they often dissociate under circumstances where fear is experienced, but where their lives are not realistically in danger. This most often appears when warded off memories of their trauma are triggered. This dissociative defence style can make it difficult for clients to make conscious and accurate assessments of danger and their need to relieve 'dangerous' situations to expel the life threatening feelings can lead to re-enactments of past abuse (see Davies & Frawley's eight transference and countertransference constellations) and re-traumatization. It can be a fine dance in the therapy to balance the need for re-enactments as a way of helping to shift internal working

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models to create more positive attachments, with the very real feelings and lived experience of the harrowing trauma experienced and so often played out in the everyday lives of father/daughter incest survivor clients.

Understanding that attachment and incest can impact the way that love is currently expressed in intimate relationships can provide more in depth understanding and insight (and hopefully acceptance) of why clients are the way they are in love relationships. This knowledge can be used to explore how clients may *ideally* like to be in their intimate relationships and compassion towards themselves generated. Understanding can give both therapist and client hope that more adaptive forms of loving can be enhanced through psychotherapeutic practice.

Most importantly, I believe that this research is pertinent among the psychotherapeutic community as it can help to highlight the importance of shifting from working from an abstinent analytical stance in treatment, to a relational, attachment-focused stance with this particular client group. Therapists with this knowledge can help to give hope to clients who feel that they may not be capable to love in other ways and through their actions can offer clients' something they have never experienced before.

## **Strengths and Limitations of the study**

Boell and Cecez-Kecmanovic (2010) explain that through embarking on a hermeneutic process, it is assumed that there is no final understanding of the relevant literature; instead,

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a constant re-interpretation ideally leading to a deeper and more comprehensive understanding of relevant publications is obtained. They argue that hermeneutic reviews are better understood as a continuing, open-ended process through which increased understanding of the research area and better understanding of the research problem inform each other. A strength of this review is that it is the beginning of a research design which has currently not been examined in the literature and has led to a deeper and more comprehensive understanding of both the links and gaps between love, incest and the therapeutic relationship. However, it could also be argued that a weakness is because this study was done in the form of a hermeneutic literature review, no final understanding of the relevant literature has been obtained and only one interpretation of love (as an enduring affectional bond to another person) has been examined.

The attachment literature used in this review was not carried out exclusively with survivors of father/daughter incest, which is a major limitation of this research. As links between father/daughter incest and love were being attempted, and the literature could only provide one research design which also included other forms of incest, the applicability of the results is restricted and more specific research needs to be undertaken in the future. In addition, as a hermeneutic literature review is the theory and methodology of text interpretation, this review did not engage in an empirical study of actual incest survivors to analyse their experiences and meaning of love for them, which could potentially be another limitation.

Finally, much of the literature reviewed was exclusively done so from a western perspective which leaves a large gap in reviewing love and father/daughter incest from another cultural

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perspective. As this is the case, the application of this research is limited to western clients and indicates an important gap to be considered for future research to take place.

### **Areas for future research**

This review highlights the need for future research on the actual experiences of love for survivors of father/daughter incest. Such research could take various forms. I envisage a thematic analysis to interview survivors of father-daughter incest and their experiences of love to address the research question and to provide actual written accounts of their own experiences and analysis of love, instead of interpreting these through text. This would be particularly useful in the context of accounting for more applicability across cultures, generations and client groups. In addition, I found that a lot of the research on the impact of father/daughter incest and later love relationships focused on heterosexual relationships. Research regarding survivors in same sex relationships and their views on love would be an interesting and important angle.

Additionally, examining the role of the therapist's love (of which there is a large body of research and outside the scope of this review) and its effect on this particular client group entering therapy, could be useful to provide another perspective into how the therapeutic relationship could assist in helping survivors develop healthy love prototypes. Again, interviewing both clients and therapists would be useful to explore experiences and synthesis of love and what it means in the context of therapy. I imagine that this would be useful for therapists working with this client group to gain an understanding of the experiences of love which occur within the therapy.

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### **Final Conclusion**

This piece of work has reviewed the role of love as defined by Bowlby (1979), as an enduring affectional bond to another person, and the effects father/daughter incest has on later developing love relationships. It has done so in the context of psychotherapy by exploring the literature on the therapeutic relationship and focusing on how this relationship can help clients to heal maladaptive love prototypes caused by childhood incest. Attachment theory has been a particular focus as fundamentally love, incest and the therapeutic relationship are attachment experiences. It is my view through gathering, analysing and synthesising the literature from a hermeneutic perspective, clients' ways of loving will become apparent to the therapist through the exploration of various attachment relationships throughout client histories, current love-style dynamics and attachment patterns. These will over time become apparent through the transference relationship. As internal working models are fluid, and attachment can be secured through the therapeutic relationship as described in the literature, I predict that the way that individuals love in their current relationships will also begin to shift and change as clients' begin to form more secure and positive modes of attachment through the therapeutic relationship.

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## Appendices

### Appendix A

#### Alan Lee's (1973) Typology of love

*Eros*: may be characterised by an intensely emotional experience similar to passionate love. The erotic lover tends to have a clear image of the ideal physical characteristics of his or her lover. Eros is eager for rapid disclosure of the self and the beloved, including sexual intimacy, and is prone to falling instantly and completely in love with strangers (Lee, 1973; Levy & Davis, 1988). Eros is self-confident rather than anxious in love relationships, and enjoys touch. Predominantly, eros lovers' report their childhood as happy and warm with positive parent-child relationships, and are generally satisfied with their current lives (Lee, 1973, 1977; Levy & Davis, 1988).

*Ludus*: may be characterised as a playful or game like love. People who fit into this category of love describe a style which is 'permissive and pluralistic' (Lee, 1973). The degree of involvement in this style of love relationship is carefully controlled and jealousy is avoided. Individuals with this love style generally enter into multiple, short lived relationships (Lee, 1973). Ludus lovers tend to avoid future commitment and individuals avoid over commitment by limiting

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time spent with their lover/s (Levy & Davis, 1988). Ludus rarely feels jealous and expects their lovers not to either, and they consider sex as 'fun' rather than about deepening emotional connection (Levy & Davis, 1988). Ludus will often end relationships if they fail to fulfil his or her needs and will commonly have multiple partners to prevent any one lover becoming overly involved (Levy & Davis, 1988). Ludus lovers report their childhood as 'average', find present life satisfactory, and rarely get excited about life in general (Lee, 1977; Levy & Davis, 1988)

*Storge*: is a love style characterised by companionship and slowly developing affection. Friendship is an important aspect in these individuals' lives and potential lovers are approached in this vein, as the storge lover expects love to develop slowly out of friendship, eventually unfolding into sex and long-term commitment (Lee, 1977; Levy & Davis, 1988). Physical aspects of the storge's love partner come secondary to companionship, and central to the relationship is a sharing of common interests and activities (Levy & Davis, 1988). Storge lovers generally feel secure in their relationships and are unimpeded by anxiety about separation, however they avoid extreme emotions and conscious deliberation of the others feelings (Lee, 1973; Levy & Davis, 1988). Storge lovers report secure family relationships and are generally happy with life.

*Mania*: is characterised as an obsessive, jealous and emotionally intense love style (Lee, 1977). Typically, the manic lover shows the same intensity and preoccupation with their lover as the erotic lover, yet the same Ludic lovers

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desire to restrain their feelings and manipulate the relationship and this contradiction results in ambivalence and tension, for example “I hate and I love” (Lee, 1977). Mania usually reports an unhappy childhood, is usually lonely and lacks friends and/or enjoyable work (Lee, 1977; Levy & Davis, 1988). Manic lovers are uncertain about which physical type they are attracted to, and are generally anxious about falling in love. Manic lovers first reaction is usually dislike for the people they end up falling for, and when engaged in relationship, each sign of warmth or approval no matter how small, brings instant relief, but no lasting satisfaction (Lee 1977). Any slight lack of response or enthusiasm from the Manic lovers lover elicits anxiety and resentment as the manic lover is dependant, possessive and jealous. Lee (1973) describes the manic lover as having an insatiable appetite for attention and affection and he quotes “the manic lover is obsessively preoccupied with the beloved, imagines all manner of rivals and disasters, and ignores any warning signs or difficulty in the relationship until it is too late. Yet he “knows all along”.” (Lee, 1977, p1979).

*Pragma*: is a love style which combines the control and manipulation of Ludus with the companionship of Storge (Lee, 1977). This ‘pragmatic lover’, according to Lee “not having grown up with, or discovered in his everyday activities, a beloved with similar interests and background with whom a friendship can bloom into love, he sets out more or less consciously to find someone who, had fate decreed otherwise, would have been a friend, and now might be.” (Lee, 1977, p1979). Thus, individuals who fall into the pragma love style

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construct what has been termed a 'shopping list' of desired qualities in the ideal lover, and then sets off to find the 'perfect match' (Levy & Davis, 1988). There is a focus on social and personal qualities above sexuality, and Lee's research found no common pattern of experience in prior love relationships for individuals with this love style (Levy & Davis, 1988). Present relationships show the same Ludus characteristic of detachment, manipulation and weighing of alternatives, self-control and conscious substitutability of lovers, although the pragma lover does want to settle down and is willing to work on maintaining their relationship (Lee, 1977; Levy & Davis, 1988).

*Agape*: may be seen as selfless or altruistic love to the extreme, with little to no expectation of reciprocity. Characteristics include: enduring patience and gentle affection, sexual restraint, lack of jealous possessiveness (Levy & Davis, 1988). Lee (1977) indeed quotes that "this love style exists more as an ideal than an achievement in affiliative relationships" (p.180). He also claimed that people are probably not ever perfectly agapic, but may experience this love style momentarily or have a tendency towards this love style (Lee, 1977). This love style is 'universalistic' in the sense that the typical agapic lover believes that everyone is worthy of love and that loving others is a duty of the mature person. It has been likened to that of the love that Christians often tend towards, ie portrayals of selflessness (Levy and Davis, 1988). With respect to love relationships, the agapic lover will unselfishly devote him or herself to their partner. Lee believed that although many lovers respect and strive to attain this ideal of love, the give-and-take that characterises most love

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relationships excludes the occurrence of love as completely agapic (Levy & Davis, 1988)

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## Appendix B

### Relationship between history of incest, attachment styles and love styles.

**Table 1**

*Relationship between history of incest, attachment styles and love styles.*

Percentage of attachment type in incest survivors - Alexander et al. (1998)	Typical Characteristics	Attachment Style (Alexander et al)	Attachment Style (Shaver & Hazan, 1988)	Typical Characteristics	Love Style (Lee, 1973)
<b>9% of incest survivors –</b> interestingly the study concluded that of this 9% the highest proportion	Coherent in memories of the past and have current close and satisfying relationships see themselves as trustworthy and others as trustworthy and responsive, these subjects feel	Secure adults (secure children)	Secure attachment	Passionate love, rapid disclosure of self and lover, sexual intimacy desired, falls in love instantly with strangers, self-confident in love, enjoys touch, happy warm childhood with	EROS (Romantic Love)

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<p>were survivors of father-daughter incest.</p>	<p>comfortable with intimacy and autonomy</p>			<p>positive parent relationships, satisfied with current life.</p>	
<p><b>11% of incest survivors</b></p>	<p>Idealise or fail to recall their childhoods, are uncomfortable with intimacy and overtly suppress negative affect while showing signs of psychological arousal see themselves as worthy, but others as untrustworthy which thus leads to a tendency to maintain their sense of invulnerability by avoiding disappointment by others. <i>This can be seen in the Ludus tendency to carefully control and have short lived relationships. Perhaps incest had less severe affects, but more than eros</i></p>	<p>Dismissing (avoidant) adults (avoidant children)</p>	<p>Avoidant attachment</p>	<p>Playful or game like love, permissive or pluralistic, involvement in relationship is carefully controlled, jealousy avoided, multiple, short lived relationships as opposed to long term, avoidance of over commitment, sex as 'fun', multiple partners, end relationships when need fulfilment has ended, average childhoods, present life is satisfactory.</p>	<p>LUDUS (game playing love)</p>

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	<i>lovers/securely attached incest survivors.</i>				
<b>21% of incest survivors</b>	Focus excessively n memories of the past and are confused, anxious, clinging, dependant and jealous in intimate relationships. see themselves as unworthy and others valued. This leads to a tendency to strive for acceptance and value by others.	Preoccupied (anxious) adults (resistant children)	Anxious/ambivalent attachment	Obsessive, jealous, emotionally intense love, intense preoccupation with lover, desire to restrain feelings and manipulate relationship, uncertain of which physical type attracted to, anxious about falling in love, first response is dislike for lovers they end up with, warmth and approval bring relief but not satisfaction, anxiety, dependency, possessiveness and jealousy present in love relationships, unhappy childhoods, usually	MANIA (Possessive, dependant love- mixture or eros and ludus)

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				lonely and lack friends/enjoyable work.	
<b>60% of incest survivors</b>	Become incoherent describing their pasts, tend to be socially inhibited and unassertive – evidence both dismissing and preoccupied traits.  See themselves as unworthy of others and as unresponsive and untrustworthy which leads to a tendency to avoid anticipated rejection by others	Fearful/avoidant adults (disorganised children)	Not evidenced in any research to date	Shows a mixture of Mania and Ludus but also has more fearful traits which could be linked to more fearful attachment experiences in childhood not examined or accounted for by Lee (1979).	A mixture of Mania/Ludus  However, part of which is unaccounted for through Lees Lovestyle theory

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### ***Table 1***

Table 1 shows some of the possible ways in which survivors of father-daughter incest clients may tend to approach and engage with intimate partners in love relationships. It combines the results of two separate studies, in order to make new connections between the findings. In the study performed by Alexander et al. (1998), as discussed in the previous chapter, they identified which of Bowlby's attachment styles were likely to occur in survivors of father-daughter incest.

In a separate study, Shaver & Hazan (1988) used Bowlby's attachment styles, but this time identified links between the recognised attachment style and the most prevalent love style as described by Lee (1973). By using the predicted attachment styles of incest survivors in Alexander et al.'s (1998) research and comparing it to the findings from Shaver & Hazan (1988), it is possible to identify the potential ways in which an incest survivor might exhibit a particular love style.

In their research, Alexander et al (1998) found that 9% of incest survivors presented with secure attachment, and thus could be linked with either (or both) eros or agarpic love styles and secure attachment as shown by Shaver & Hazan (1988). 11% presented as dismissing or avoidant attachment styles and therefore fall into the ludic love category. 21% presented as anxious/ambivalent/preoccupied, therefore falling into the manic love style. However, the majority 60% of incest survivors appear to show some qualities of two of the styles Mania and Ludus (which is actually a subset developed by Lee, 1973), but they also show an

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interesting *fearful* component in their attachment patterns which have not been accounted for in this original love style design. From this initial finding, it is important to question whether Lee's research is fitting for all of the population or whether some survivors of father-daughter incest may actually fall into another subset all together, that of a higher fearful type of lovestyle.

The findings of this review show some of the possible ways in which survivors of father-daughter incest clients may tend to approach and engage in love relationships with intimate partners although there appears to be a gap in the findings for the 60% of survivors who fall into the category of fearful avoidant. Accordingly, the research also shows that although attachment and lovestyles can be linked the majority of survivors of father-daughter incest are not represented in these research findings.

Interestingly there is a high indication of fearful/avoidant attachment which does not appear in Lee's (1973) original lovestyle design. Thus, the findings indicate that although survivors of father-daughter incest may appear to fit into the mania/ludic subset developed by Lee (1973) according to their avoidant characteristics, they additionally have a fearful component of their attachment which is not consistent with any of Lee's 6 original categories or 6 sub categories. This may indicate some new approaches to love relationships not yet explored in Lee's literature. Awareness of this research may offer therapists a new perspective of how incest survivors can present in intimate love relationships, highlight possible shifts as clients' attachments change, and could provide useful information for therapists to hold in mind when working with this client group.