AN INVESTIGATION INTO THE OBJECT RELATIONS, SELF-ESTEEM AND SEPARATION-INDIVIDUATION PROCESS OF BLACK FEMALES FROM FATHER PRESENT AND FATHER ABSENT BACKGROUNDS

by

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Abstract

An Investigation into the Object Relations, Self-Esteem and Separation-Individuation Process of Black Females from Father Present and Father Absent Backgrounds

by

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This study examined the effects that black fathers, either through their presence or absence, have on their daughters' psychological functioning in late adolescence and early adulthood. The psychological phenomena understudy were levels of object relations, self-esteem and separation-individuation, which were measured using the Bell Object Relations Inventory (BORI), the Separation Individuation Test of Adolescence (SITA) and the Rosenberg Self-Esteem Scale (RSES). It was hypothesized that women from father absent backgrounds would have poorer object relations, lower self-esteem and be less separated and individuated. Subjects consisted of 35 black females, assigned to either a father present group (N=25) or a father absent group (N=10) based on the amount of contact they had with their fathers in childhood. All subjects in the father present group had at least biweekly contact with their fathers. Subjects in the father absent group had only monthly or less frequent contact with their fathers. All subjects had low to minimum levels of family violence which was a study criterion. Biological, step and surrogate fathers were all included in this study. Both multivariate and univariate t-tests were performed as well as a statistical test of effect size (partial eta squared) on the three dependent measures. No hypothesis was found to be significant and no significant difference was determined between the two groups at the $p<.05$ level. However, the test

of effect size did find one meaningful difference between the two groups' means on the SITA dimension of rejection expectancy, suggesting that a father's absence from his daughter's life in childhood may cause her to have a higher expectation of being rejected by others later in life. This result, though, must be weighed against the fact that no other dimension of the SITA showed meaningful differences and the possibility that it was due to chance because of the small sample size. Discussion of the findings attributes the outcome of the study to the very small sample size. Given the importance of this topic, this study should be repeated using a much larger sample size.

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INTRODUCTION

Where is daddy? This question can be asked by a multitude of children due to the drastic changes that have occurred in the structure of the American family over the past thirty years. Traditionally the family composite consisted of the mother, father and child, with educators and researchers alike arguing that a child developed best in an environment consistent with this conventional construction of the family. In the most recent US 2000 Census, however, it was estimated that approximately 27% of all children under the age of 18 reside in one-parent families. This percentage almost doubles (53.3%) when applied to black children under the age of 18; and because of the disproportionately high number of single black families, given that blacks only make up approximately 12% of the US population, it can be argued that the restructuring of the family and its resulting sequelae are even more predominant in black America (New York Times Almanac 2002).

Despite this shift from the nuclear-based family, children are still more likely to be raised by their mothers/maternal figures, with forty-nine percent of black children under the age of 18 living in single parent homes headed by women compared to 17% of white children. These percentages are reflective of the decline in marriages and increase in divorce within the black community. Since 1970, the number of black married-couple families has decreased by more than 27% and the number of divorced blacks has increased by approximately 7%. Though the trend of this data may not be surprising as black families have long struggled with maintaining a cohesive family unit, starting with slavery when black families were at times forcibly separated, to the 1970's when females with no husbands present headed over 30% of black families, it is nonetheless disquieting

that these statistics have increased by at least 20%, resulting in thousands of fatherless black children (New York Times Almanac 2002).

In fact in 1999, Morehouse College, one of the preeminent historical black colleges in the United States, held a conference on African American fathers with the goal of the symposium being to examine the disappearing traditional role of black fathers, to discuss the economical, psychosocial and other constraints to black fatherhood, and to challenge the black community and society at large to work collectively to strengthen black fatherhood and black families (Morehouse Conference 1999). This concern about the possible future extinction of the traditional black family has garnered much attention in recent years, mainly due to increased literature acknowledging father's contribution to the family and to child development. Both residential and nonresidential fathers are now thought to be influential in their offspring's development. Nonresidential fathers' involvement in their child's life can be significant, as some men who do not live with their family do interact with their children in meaningful ways; whereas, other noncustodial fathers have no involvement but their absence may nonetheless impact the child. Receiving the most scrutiny by far though are those fathers who have minimum to no contact/involvement with their children.

There are many definitions used to explain the concept of fatherhood but one which encompasses the physical, emotional and psychological aspects of it is the one proposed by Leonard (1966, p. 326) who defines fathering as,

> the sum of nurturing, protection, affection, guidance and approval given by the father to his child: it is the ability to give love and to be loved (to be used as a love-object): to be admired, emulated, and obeyed (to be used as a model for identification and superego formation).

Embedded within this definition is the intrinsic value of having a relationship with father. In families with fathers present, children have been found to score higher on a variety of social indicators compared to children whose fathers were absent (McLeod, Kruttschnitt & Dornfeld 1994; Teachman et al. 1998). An examination of the importance of father love by Rohner & Veneziano (2001) stressed, based on past research, that there is a strong correlation between greater acceptance of children by caregivers and father's presence. Father's love (as evidenced by his affection) has also been found along with mother's general support to be especially important to the self-esteem of girls (Barber & Thomas 1986). Closeness with one's father and living in an intact home during childhood has further been linked to increased happiness and life satisfaction, and decreased psychological distress in young adults (Amato 1994).

Unfortunately a father's significance in a child's life and development has not always been recognized but with increased attention to father's role, a plethora of research devoted to comprehending the effects of father's absence on children and adults has emerged. Father's absence from an individual's life can be articulated verbally and can be experienced psychically through the psychological phenomenon known as father hunger, the emotional craving that one has for a meaningful relationship with father, who is either emotionally or physically absent. Both children and adults can experience father hunger, but it may manifest itself differently in adults and children, between genders, and one might even speculate between races as well. One behavioral translation of father hunger in females has been well studied by Margo Maine (1991). According to her, women's, specifically Caucasian females, conflicts about food and weight, which are often manifested through the disorders of anorexia nervosa and bulimia, can be

associated with the yearning for a close bond with father. Other studies (Leonard 1966, Hetherington 1972; Kulka & Weingarten 1979) contend that a history of childhood father absence in females affects later heterosexual relationships. Likewise, Young & Parish (1977) in a study investigating the psychological adjustment of college women with a history of childhood father absence found that women whose mothers had not remarried were more insecure and used more negative self- evaluations than women who were exposed to stepfathers.

Most of the literature to date suggests that the effects of fatherlessness are much more arresting and detrimental in boys than in girls. Researchers have long been interested in whether father absence affected children's sex-role development, theorizing that male children who were raised solely by their mothers would develop a more feminine identification (Biller 1970; Biller & Borstelmann 1967 & Leichty 1960). Masculinity and femininity are terms used to represent traits and behaviors (some of which are culturally influenced) that are ascribed to each sex. In general, males are perceived as independent, assertive and possessing good analytical skills, and females are thought to be dependent, passive and nonassertive, (Harris, Gold & Henderson 1991). Some studies (Alper 1974; Eberhardt & Schill 1984; Wong, Kettlewell & Sproule 1985) have found that fathers not only influence and promote masculine characteristics in their sons but also promote feminine characteristics in their daughters. Moreover, black fathers are thought to be even more encouraging of stereotypical gender-based behaviors in their sons and daughters than white fathers (Price-Bonham & Skeen 1982) but recent research suggests this may be influenced by class (Hill 2002).

While the research on father absence is voluminous, it is mostly limited to males, usually white males. Fewer studies have investigated the effects of fatherlessness on females and those that have, have often presented conflicting data, as has much of the general father absence research. Discrepant results may be attributed to the fact that some studies failed to control for socioeconomic status or the presence of secondary paternal figures, such as mother's male kin, older brothers or other older males living in the household (Bannon & Southern 1980). This is especially important when investigating father absence in black families, as there may be other family constellations. For example, Kellam et al. (1977) in a study on family structure and children's mental health found over 50 different family compositions in which black children lived.

Another complication for studies investigating father-absence is that while black fathers may be nonresidential, they may still have occasional to moderate contact with their children thus establishing some type of father-child bond. Research has indeed shown that it is not so much the quantity of time a father spends with his offspring but rather the quality of that time and their relationship (Amato & Gilbreth 1999; Lamb 1997). These outcomes speak to the need for broader research insofar as father absence/presence needs to be redefined, allowing for examination of fathers who are nonresidential but do have a quality relationship with their children, even if they only see them on average two to three times a month.

Unfortunately information on fathers' influence, either through his absence or presence, on black individuals functioning is sparse, becoming even sparser when the focus is on black females. What is known about blacks and their fathers is that they are more than twice as likely to come from homes where the father is absent and that these

types of families (fatherless black families) are one of the most impoverished groups in America (Taylor, Chatters, Tucker & Lewis 1990). As of 2000, the average black female head of household with no spouse median income was $18,244 compared to $26,529 for single parent white females. A large disparity is also present between black married-couple families and black female heads of households, $50,656 and 18,244 respectively (NY Times Almanac 2002). Lower income frequently translates into increased familial stress, which can significantly impact the emotional functioning of both child and parent. McLoyd et al. (1994) found that adolescents who perceived their families as experiencing severe economic hardship, in correlation with their mother's perception of financial strain, reported higher anxiety, more cognitive distress, and lower self-esteem. It has even been argued (Cherlin 1981, p. 81) that "the most detrimental aspect of the absence of fathers from one-parent families headed by women is not the lack of a male presence but the lack of a male income."

In 1965, Moynihan published a report contending that the frequent absence of black fathers from their families and children's lives results in successive generations of black males being unable to achieve financial stability. While Moynihan's report relied on the current statistics of his day and on earlier studies such as those conducted by Frazier (1939), a prominent black scholar, it also sought to point out some of the deleterious effects of father absence on black families but instead labeled black families as dysfunctional, and in doing so, it failed to consider the impact of societal racism, which can preclude blacks from obtaining fiscal stability and cause family disruption. Thus, this treatise starts with the presupposition that racism and socioeconomic status are correlated to fatherlessness in black America and also have a negative impact on family

functioning, in the presence or absence of fathers. It is therefore vital that socioeconomic status be taken into consideration in any research conducted on black families.

The idea that father absence has a detrimental impact on child development has been supported in some of the studies presented thus far. Yet, it is important to note that not all children, especially black children, who experienced fatherlessness and are raised in a single parent home have problems in their development or undergo negative outcomes. In fact, there is literature (Littlejohn-Blake & Darling 1993, Looney & Lewis 1993, Nettles & Pleck 1994) that presents the adaptive strengths of these types of families, including their resiliency. Nor is it this author's intention to associate single mothers with having dysfunctional families, although single parent families usually experience increased stress brought about by economic hardship. This author fully embraces the strength embedded in many single parent families; however, at question is what happens with these children as they become adults, as well as are black fathers in general important to their child's psychological development.

Existing research on fathers and daughters mostly focuses on the behavioral patterns of women with and without histories of paternal deprivation, in terms of frequency of marriages & divorces, age of first pregnancy, total number of children (in and out of wedlock), age of first sexual relationship, socioeconomic status and educational level attained. But given that black children are at greater risk of being raised in an environment devoid of a paternal figure, what impact does this have on their internal organization of self and others (object relations) and their self-esteem when they reach adulthood, as well as how does father's absence from black families influence the

dynamic experience of mother (i.e. what are the mother-daughter psychological boundaries), and how do these boundaries of separation and individuation developed in father's absence translate into broader relationship patterns? Conversely, how does having a relationship with father irrespective of his residential or nonresidential status impact these same issues? To answer these questions, one must comprehend father's role in child development, notably his impact on individuals' intrapsychic functioning; and one should have a basic understanding of object relations as well as knowledge of black families. Throughout this paper the terms blacks, black Americans and African Americans will be used interchangeably.

Purpose of the Dissertation

This dissertation will examine the object relations, including the process of separation-individuation, and the self-esteem of young black women in late adolescence with a history of childhood father absence, with the emphasis being on father absence itself as opposed to examining the specific types of father absence, (e.g. compared to those females from intact families or those females who maintained a relationship with a nonresidential father for the majority of their life). Historically, black women have been the least represented in the literature to date in terms of understanding how family composition impacts later adult functioning and intrapsychic organization. As females often act out less behaviorally than males and are seemingly on the surface less affected by father absence, as well as the fact that they remain with the parent of the same sex, there has been limited exploration into their internal dynamics. It would seem that a better understanding of their internal world is of importance, given that single black women are raising approximately half of all black children. It has been argued that the

effects of father absence are seen in females at later developmental stages when issues of intimacy arise (Hetherington 1972). This delayed reaction has been deemed the sleeper effect in the father absence literature on adolescent females. Work with black teens and young adults could be enriched through a more dynamic comprehension of the impact that fathers have on their self-esteem and object relations as they struggle with developing relationships, forming their identities, and making the transition into adulthood proper.

This author is aware that in reality individuals are influenced by both parents and hence do not grow up in a vacuum, as father is often located in mother's unconscious (or even consciousness) even when absent. The orientation of this dissertation, however, is not to study mothers per se but rather to examine the effects of father's absence on important developmental constructs given maternally dominated home environments and compare it to psychological development in a father-present environment. It is important to note that research of this kind is faced with the inherent challenge of trying to distill what developmental outcomes in children are due to father's absence versus a mutation brought about by mother's own issues in coping with father's departure and absence (Stolorow & Lachmann 1975). Another confounding variable inherent in this type of research is the timing of father absence and the quality of the family/marital relationship prior to his absence. Although timing of father absence will be controlled for to some degree by focusing only on black females who experienced paternal loss prior to the age of 7 (i.e. from ages 0 – 6 a crucial time in development of intrapsychic structures and intrapsychic organization), this does not control for the fact that some women may have been exposed to father's presence for 6 years while others for only 2, and still others may

have never been exposed to father as he was absent from birth. This variability in the timing of father's absence could possibly affect subsequent psychic structures as well as the fact that for some women father's presence in the family could have heralded healthier family functioning; yet for others, father's presence may have been emblematic of family discord and dysfunction (i.e. ongoing arguments, violence, abuse, etc.). Again these differing scenarios would affect the mother child dyad and the child's object relations differently as compared to those women with histories of father absence or father presence in which there had been no or low marital/family discord.

The first issue of how father's absence subsequently affected mother's emotional state and the ensuing impact on the female child will not be directly measured in this study, as it is clinically difficult to separate the two factors combined with the fact that mothers will not be interviewed. Daughters' cognitions of father's absence on mother however will be obtained. More significant though is the fact that a father's departure from the family affects every mother to some extent; therefore, only females whose mothers had an extreme reaction (i.e. complete inability to function as a parent emotionally and/or physically) would not be considered for this study, as mother's behavior would most likely overshadow other factors affecting development and personality. Additionally all subjects will be prescreened and administered the Family Violence Scale with high scorers being ineligible for study as being exposed to frequent violence impacts psychological development; which would make it difficult to discern between fathers' influences and the effects of family violence.

CHAPTER I: REVIEW OF THE LITERATURE

Object Relations & Psychoanalytic Theory

Object relations is a cumbersome psychological concept full of complexity (i.e. there are internal & external objects, bad & good objects, part & whole objects, inanimate & animate objects, etc.). Object relations evolved from Freud's use of the term object in his drive theory. It referred to a person who could be infused with instinctual energy and to imagoes[1] residing within the unconscious that could influence and direct one's interactions with others. Freud postulated that under certain circumstances these internal experiences could also take the place of external relationships (Ogden 1983). Since Freud's original usage of the term object, it has now come to denote various philosophies within psychoanalytic theory. Theorists such as Abraham, Klein, Fairbairn, and Sullivan among others, broadened, revised and transformed Freud's object, leading to the subsequent development of a theory (or theories) of object relations. Unlike Freud's libidinal energy theory, though, object relations is primarily concerned with "individuals' internal interactions with external and internal (real or imagined) other people, and the relationship between their internal and external object worlds (Greenberg & Mitchell 1983, p.13)." Object relations also explore how internal and external relationships shape personality, with our internal representations being configured from subjective experiences and fantasies of past relationships with objects, and in particular the relationships we establish in life as well as all aspects of adult perception and thought are considered to be influenced by early childhood relationships (Killian & Campbell 1984).

[1] An imago is a psychoanalytic term that refers to the many images, especially of people, within one's inner world that is based on subjective experiences, internal dynamics, and fantasy (Moore, B.E. & Fine, B.D. 1990).

Essentially it is through these early relationships that internal self-object templates are formed and contribute to self-organization, intrapsychic functioning, personality and drive relational behaviors. Conversely, in investigations of object relations, "empirical literature focuses primarily on adult experience [with] only retrospective extension of this to actual childhood experience (Fishler, Sperling & Carr 1990)."

Our earliest objects are usually our parents, with most theorists identifying the mother-child dyad as the precursor of all other relationships. It is in this relationship, through the mother's interactions with the child that the child first becomes aware of the other.[2] This phenomenon is part of a developmental process in which the child initially views the primary caretaker as an extension of himself but over time, with the development of the ego and other psychobiological factors[3], the child begins to differentiate between itself and the object. The gradual awareness of self and other is mediated through the contextual framework of the mother-child relationship, ultimately resulting in the child's psychological separateness and sense of self. Crucial to this process is the internalization of aspects of the other, on the part of the child, into a mental representation that eventually takes over the functions of the actual object (Gill 1991). This internalized object, or introject, can be called upon to comfort and aid the child in comprehending the world in the presence/absence of the caregiver (i.e. the child develops an ongoing relationship with the introject).

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[2] For purposes of this paper the other represents a whole person, as opposed to a part object, such as the breast, which some theorists argue is what the child first becomes aware of. All objects refer to people only and not inanimate objects.

[3] In child development, the infant's mental life is closely linked to maturational transformations in the central nervous system (Greenspan 1982).

Many assume that internalization of the father occurs at a much later time in development than that of the mother. Theorists such as Bowlby, Winnicott & Klein all relegated the father to mainly the supportive role of protecting the mother-child bond by helping the mother not feel overwhelmed and thereby be better able to care for the child. According to Bowlby (1982, 1988), father, through his support of mother, helps facilitate the development of a secure mother-child attachment. Winnicott (1960) has referred to this as father providing a holding environment for mother and child, and it is the quality of the infant's connectedness with mother, fueled by their interactions, that determines the type of attachment the infant will develop. The infant's relationship with this primary object (mother) becomes internalized and if it is a healthy bond/secure attachment, it will provide the infant with emotional support and with a sense of closeness that endures throughout life (Bowlby 1982 & 1988). The literature on human relatedness suggests that the ability to make healthy attachments to objects later in life is associated with having had a secure attachment in early childhood with mother (Ainsworth et al. 1971; Bowlby 1982, 1988), but with increased research in this area has come the recognition that fathers in their own rights can be secure attachment figures (Bowlby 1988; Main & Goldwyn 1994). Additionally, father can be a secondary attachment figure within a hierarchy of attachment figures that "can, in preferential order, insulate the infant against the experience of aloneness, strangers and danger (Muir 1989, p. 49)" contributing to the child later forming secure attachments in adulthood.

The bond one develops with father is contingent upon many things: the father introject, mother's perception of father, fantasies of father, family relations, and one's own defenses. In aggregate these internal configurations serve as the child's (as well as

the adult's) paternal imago and as children develop and transition into adolescence and later into adulthood, their paternal imagoes often dictate their behaviors when they encounter objects that in some important way signify father (Lansky1989, p.28). However, because of the array of representations contained within one's paternal imago, it is difficult to ascertain unadulterated recollections of father; yet, a paternal imago is a "powerful indicator of self-representations and internalizations (p.44)." From this one could further assume that these representations and internalizations provide understanding of one's object relations, or stated differently, they provide insight into the relationships that one has with others. The internalized relationship one has with father has also been elucidated in select psychoanalytic literature as being an "integral part" of one's emotional life and "a necessary ingredient in the complex forces which work towards the formation of . . . character and personality (Machtlinger 1981 p. 119)."

Developmental Overview

Throughout childhood, children are faced with different age specific tasks that must be mastered in order for normal development to ensue. It is these early childhood developmental endeavors according to psychoanalytic theory that are the building blocks for later psychological functioning. Of particular importance are the stages of separation-individuation and the oedipal crisis, with each contributing to the expansion of object relations and ego functioning. These two interrelated developmental phases occur early in a person's life and are thought to be vital to the development of intrapsychic structures and organization that facilitate awareness of self and adaptation to the outside world, both of which are necessary for optimal object relations to occur later in life. Separation and individuation are actually two mental constructs but because of their psychological

overlap, they are viewed as one intertwined intrapsychic process (separation-individuation) that transpires in four subphases and occurs in a child's life between the fourth or fifth month, to the thirtieth or thirty-sixth month in age. It is in this phase that the child establishes a sense of separateness from symbiotic fusion (with mother) and assumes individual characteristics (Mahler, Pine & Bergman 1975). Or more simply stated, a successful navigation of the separation-individuation phase would result in one being able to experience themselves as a separate individual entity with his/her own uniqueness in relation to others, which represents the highest level of object relations. This challenge of establishing and maintaining a separate identity, though, reverberates throughout one's life, becoming more prominent at certain times than others, and in accomplishing this milestone children are more psychologically prepared to enter into the next phase of development, the oedipal crisis (Abelin 1971; Mahler, Pine & Bergman 1975; Neubauer 1989).

The Oedipus complex/crisis, on the other hand, is an intrapsychic dilemma that Freud (1905, 1924) theorized occurs roughly between the ages of 4 to 6 and entails a child developing romantic feelings for, including wanting to own and posses, the parent of the opposite sex. Concomitantly, the child forms a rivalry with the same sexed-parent who is experienced as a competitor for the affections of the opposite sexed-parent. According to Freud, this crisis resolves itself in normal development when the child gives up his/her romantic notions, subsequently repressing them, and identifies with the parent of the same sex. While the above is a general description of the Oedipus complex, autonomous functioning and the ability to invest libidinal energy later in life in appropriate available objects are thought to be the outcomes of a successfully resolved

oedipal phase (Greenberg & Mitchell 1983). Although Freud downplayed the interpersonal aspects of his psychosexual theory of development and did not conceptualize it as a theory of object relations, object relatedness is nevertheless a crucial element in the Oedipus complex, given that it involves a relationship between three objects (Greenberg & Mitchell 1983). In this phase children learn to negotiate a triadic relationship, self-object boundaries, loss of an oedipal object and he/she also has to internalize aspects of each of the external objects (the parents) to further consolidate psychic functioning.

What happens, though, if father is not present during the child's early years? Depending on the timing of father absence in an individual's life, divergent developmental sequences can arise. Father's absence at a crucial juncture in development could lead to several outcomes: the child taking longer to overcome the developmental milestone; the child not adequately completing the developmental milestone; the child overcoming the developmental task with great difficulty; or the child may be able to compensate for the loss of father through other factors, such as having a very close relationship with another male figure (grandfather, older brother etc.). Most of these differing outcomes could lead to disturbances in later developmental phases, with the possible exception of the last pathway. Comprehension of the impact of these varying developmental sequences on the future object relations of black fatherless children, and hence black adults, requires a more in-depth explication of the separation-individuation process, the oedipal crisis and father's role in each respective phase. Yet, given the complexity of development, parental loss may "affect certain structures and developmental lines and leave others relatively intact" as well as the fact that this type of

phenomenon may not be pathogenic itself but "may become a nucleus around which conflict and latent pathogenic elements are organized (Krueger 1983, pp. 581, 582)."

Separation-Individuation

Mahler (1952, 1960) and Mahler, Pine & Bergman (1975) in their work with infants and children noted that the symbiotic mother-child dyad undergoes incremental transformations ultimately resulting in the child becoming more autonomous and forming his/her own identity separate from mother, who up until this point, in more traditional cultures, has been the primary object to whom the infant has relied on for complete physical and emotional sustenance including affect regulation. Mahler divided the process of separation-individuation into four sequential and overlapping subphases, respectively entitled *differentiation*, *practicing*, *rapprochement* and *the child on the way to object constancy.*

The infant "breaking away, in a bodily sense, from . . . passive lap-babyhood – the stage of dual unity with the mother" characterizes the first subphase (Mahler 1972a, p. 489). During this period the infant has acquired the necessary motor functions to begin to tentatively conduct a visual and tactile exploration of the environment, separate from mother but still in very close proximity to her. The second subphase of practicing is split into an early practicing period, which overlaps with the former differentiation subphase, and the practicing subphase proper. In early practicing the child frequently returns from exploring the environment to mother for emotional refueling. As children progress through this subphase, they become bolder in their explorations, expand their reality and need significantly less contact with mother to maintain their emotional equilibrium, a development brought about by the transformation in their cognitive and physical

functioning, such as being able to walk upright and moving from sensorimotor intelligence to representational intelligence (Mahler 1972a).

With the development of representational thought and concomitant emotional growth, Mahler (1972a) states that the infant now a toddler transitions into the rapprochement subphase. During this period toddlers are increasingly phenomenologically aware of being a separate entity from mother and while relishing this, they also desire to have mother constantly participate with them in their endeavors. This struggle of maintaining independence in conjunction with a desire to cling to mother and the growing comprehension of mother as being a separate person with her own individual interests has been labeled the rapprochement crisis and is the highlight of this subphase.

Finally in the last subphase, the child's cognitive and physical abilities have expanded exponentially. The child has mastered the beginnings of language and is expected to use it to interact with mother and others, as opposed to the symbolic symbiotic communication once used. Equally important is the fact that the child in this subphase realizes that objects exist even when out of sight. In turn, this cognitive development helps to facilitate the child's ability to internalize objects. At the end of this subphase, children should be separated and individuated from mother, although it is thought by some that this entire process is more difficult for girls (Mahler 1963, 1972a, Mahler et al. 1975; Galenson & Roiphe 1976). According to this theory, girls are more entangled in their relationship with mother and have greater difficulty disidentifying with her and cathecting their energies into the outside world. Father then is especially important to daughters during this developmental process, though recognition of father's

importance in the separation-individuation phase has only occurred in the past several decades.

Both Mahler and Gosliner (1955) stress father's importance in the separation-individuation process, viewing father as "a powerful and perhaps necessary support against the threat of re-engulfment of the ego into the whirlpool of the primary undifferentiated symbiotic stage (pp. 209-210)." It is the father "the other" who appears enticing and fosters reality and stability in the child as he/she ventures away from "home-base" and safety, which is mother (Abelin 1971). Additionally while the child is in pain over separating from mother during the rapprochement subphase, he/she also longs to return to the security of mother, who represents both protection and helplessness. Loewald (1951) believes that it is father who helps children to overcome this ambivalence by helping them to develop greater ego organization, differentiation and integration thereby freeing themselves from mother and the "dread of sinking back into the original unstructured state of identity (p. 16)." Father via his presence and interactions with the child creates an outlet from the regressive pull back to mother and by virtue of this process; he helps the child develop the capacity to experience a broader spectrum of object relatedness (Abelin 1975, 1971; Greenspan 1982; Ott 1997).

Moreover, through their gradual identification with father, children develop a mental representation of another object, one outside of mother, which further advances their capacity to differentiate between objects and self. From his position as a distinct object, father is also able to help the child mourn the symbolic loss of mother, a necessary requirement for successfully relinquishing the symbiotic partner and internalizing her as "a solid, differentiated, object representation (Greenspan 1982, p.136)." Indeed, Abelin

(1975, 1971 & cited in Ott 1991) posits that father is a separate and second object for the child who along with mother forms an early triangulation with the child and within this triangulation are several arrangements: three two-person dyads (mother/father, mother/child and father/child), a triad and three separate people. These different configurations and relationships all aid the child in gradually becoming aware of his/her identity, value and self-image.

According to Tyson (1986) because of father's unique maleness, he provides a "sharp contrast to mother" and this difference (which is more than anatomical) aids the child in the journey of becoming a more autonomous individual. This sharp contrast also helps to "dissolve any lingering symbiosis (p. 18)" and it is instrumental in gender differences becoming symbolically rooted in the child's psyche, with one theorist in particular, Benjamin (1991), stating that this phenomenon is the genesis of sexual and self development. In addition Abelin (1975) in an observational study of toddlers' interactions with parents found that girls tended to attach themselves earlier to their fathers than boys do, implying that this selective (identification on girls' part is a "means of disidentifying with mother for the primary self (body) identity Ross 1982, p. 30)." In fact, Abelin (1971) argues that the child may not be able to master separation-individuation without the presence of father or an alternative non-maternal object. While Abelin makes this statement in reference to father's significance in the separation-individuation phase, this sentiment can also apply to later developmental periods, such as during adolescence when issues of separation-individuation once again emerge and there is a regressive pull back towards symbiosis (Blos 1979).

When a father is absent from the home and a child's life, the child not only relies on any memories or fantasies of him but also incorporates into his/her mental picture of father, mother's verbal and nonverbal communication about him. It is mother who first introduces the infant to father even when he is absent (Atkins 1982; Davids 2002). Bach (1945) in a well-known study conducted during World War II on father separated children found that both girls and boys whose mothers held unfavorable views of the father also tended to have negative perceptions of him. In essence, the study illustrates that in father absent homes, a father is not there to provide "distant, nonmother space" which increases the chance of the child becoming overly emotionally invested in and identified with the mother. In these types of homes, children may also take on supplementary roles, some of which may not be developmentally appropriate, to assist mother emotionally or to assist with keeping the household functioning smoothly (e.g. the child becomes parentified). It is the very nature of this mutuality in mother-daughter dependence that fosters an enmeshed relationship between the two, making it harder for the child to separate, especially as the daughter may be tugged in three different directions: wanting to establish her own independence and interests; wanting to aid her mother emotionally & physically; and also wanting to remain loyal to the memory of her father (Secunda 1992, p. 208).

Oedipus Complex

The preoedipal triangle that Abelin postulated that occurs in response to father's presence actually helps prepare the child for the vicissitudes of the oedipal phase (Abelin 1971; Neubauer 1989). For Freud and many classical psychoanalysts, it is during this phase that father's involvement is the most crucial, as father is either the spark that is

needed to begin or end the Oedipus complex. For girls, it is their father who is the desired object and mother, who was the original love object, is now the competitor, the feared and hated object. This juxtaposition is brought about according to Freud (1931) because the little girl upon discovering that she does not have a penis feels inferior and blames her mother for her dilemma. The girl in response to the situation turns to her father and in doing so transmutes her wish for a penis into a wish for a baby from him. Father however represents the external force of reality as experienced by the child and because of this, his actual presence and involvement binds the child to reality and aids the child in negotiating the oedipal phase by helping him/her to accept the demands of reality and give up infantile wishes, specifically his/her incestuous and murderous fantasies (Loewald 1951). Successful resolution of the oedipal complex not only requires children to relinquish their erotic love for the opposite-sexed parent but it also involves their identifying with the same sexed-parent. Girls in their identification with mother would assume her characteristics and behaviors, (i.e. emulate her) thus setting the stage for the girl developing a feminine identity, although Freud (1931) believed that the oedipal conflict in girls is a much lengthier and indeterminable process. Other perspectives on father's role in feminine development will be discussed in more detail in the next section.

Freud's theory of psychosexual evolution, which was thought to presage normal development, was established in an era when most children resided with both parents. Although Freud theorized on the oedipal development of one parent children, it has only been since his time that psychoanalytic literature has focused more in-depth on these types of children, given the surge in divorces and out-of-wedlock births over the years. Regardless of having only one parent though, boys and girls still enter into the oedipal

crisis, often creating a fantasy parent who may be idealized or endowed with omnipotent powers that serve to punish, gratify or protect them (Burgner 1985; Neubauer 1960). In fact Anna Freud and Burlingham (cited in Neubauer 1960) in their study of fatherless children in wartime Hampstead observed that these children all seemed compelled to create a fantasy of their absent fathers to which they could form attachments to. This is a means of keeping the absent father close but this internalized fantasy father can also influence many aspects of an individual's behavior (Flemings 1972). Nevertheless, with the absence of a parent, there is also "an absence of oedipal reality (Neubauer 1960, p. 288)."

But what exactly does this mean for a paternally deprived child? With his presence, father provides an alternative love object for the child when the other object, mother, is hated (Winnicott 1944). He also fosters the development of "integrative affective and behavioral polarities (Greenspan 1982, p 128.)" But a paternally deprived female grapples with experiencing mother as rival for the fantasized father and with maintaining a continued attachment to mother who is the only real constant object in her life. This struggle inherently causes psychic conflict and may manifest itself in a number of ways, including the child splitting off her aggression for mother and turning it back on herself (Neubauer 1989).

Neubauer, while acknowledging the vicissitudes of aggression in a one parent oedipal child, placed more emphasis on the ambivalence that ensues in the child's relationship with the remaining parent, as he believes that the child's fear of losing this parent too causes aggression at the parent to be repressed. Burgner (1985) concurs with this viewpoint stating that the ambivalence suffered by these children endures throughout

their adolescence and adulthood, highlighted by "certain hopelessness in their adult capacities as partners and parents (p. 319)." A description of this phenomenon is depicted in Fenichel's (cited in Neubauer 1960, p.292) work with an adult female patient, with an early childhood history of father absence. He illustrates how this patient's repressed aggression, and hence ambivalence, towards an unsatisfactory mother is the impetus for her turning to "an identification with the idealized fantasy father" resulting in her being perpetually "disappointed" with people, as no one can measure up to her fantasy.

Kestenbaum (1976) and Leonard (1966) on the other hand assert that fatherless children's aggression can manifest itself in different ways. It may be projected onto the fantasized father, thus preserving the maternal attachment or it may be discharged onto the mother. The girl's anger at mother may embody her conscious or unconscious blame of mother for father's absence but like her fantasies about her missing father it is an attempt to buttress her integrity and cope with the painful narcissistic injury brought about by her father's vacancy from her life, as she may believe (especially if loss occurs during the oedipal phase) that father departed because she is defective or unworthy (Krueger 1983; Lohr et al 1982; Neubauer 1989). She may further in a compensatory effort develop fantasies involving the eventual return of father, with her fantasies of him including whatever bits of data she has gleaned about the cause of his absence, which have in turn become incorporated into her mental representation of him, subject to distortion (Burgner 1985; Krueger 1983; & Leonard 1966).

Identification with a fantasy father has also been thought by some (Eisendorfer 1943; Kestenbaum 1976; Leonard 1966) to contribute to a negative oedipal resolution,

for girls this is defined as their investing libidinal energy in their mother, as opposed to their father, yet taking on father's masculine characteristics through their identification with him. According to Fenichel (cited in Neubauer 1960, p.292) this can manifest itself in later problematic adult relationships where difficulties with men mask "the primary unfulfilled wishes for mother." Freud (cited in Neubauer 1960) theorized that when one parent is absent it creates an environment conducive to the remaining parent becoming overcathected in and seductive of the child. Yet, even if the female child does undergo normal oedipal strivings, without the reality of father, she will find it difficult to desexualize her fantasies of him. A fantasy parent is not modified by reality unlike what happens with the actual father if he were present and involved, as the child would have a daily opportunity to contrast the fantasy object to the real person (Krueger 1983, p. 284; Leonard 1966, p. 329). Tessman (1982, p. 225) elaborates on this modification of a female's erotic love for father stating that it is his acknowledgement of "her childish wish to bestow her love freely and seriously on him..." that allows her to "transform it into some kind of affectionate collaboration . . . imbuing her later strivings with hope based on experience." It is this relationship with father that helps to instill in daughters a sense of confidence and the ability to experience themselves as a lovable autonomous female.

Late Adolescence & Early Adulthood

As discussed thus far, fathers through their presence and/or absence play an instrumental role in individuals' psychic lives during their early childhood, specifically during the developmental periods of separation-individuation and the oedipal complex. Fathers' influence is thought to echo throughout the life cycle and in particular his absence is believed to contribute to disturbances in later maturational stages, as well as

affect individuals' internal representations of self and others. This tenet highlights the foundation of this author's dissertation which is that women whose fathers were not present during their childhood will have measurable differences in their psychological functioning compared to women whose fathers were present in their childhood. Mahler (1972b, 1975) too similarly believed that early childhood developmental deficiencies impact later intrapsychic functioning, as she theorized that the difficulty incurred in negotiating the rapprochement subphase will contribute to a child having problems in later developmental periods, namely during the oedipal phase and adolescence. While Mahler (1972b) spoke in detail about disturbances in the rapprochement subphase being part of a borderline constellation, she also intimated that some disturbances in separation-individuation lead to more neurotic outcomes. Krueger (1983) too stresses that individuals with early parent loss are usually neither narcissistic nor borderline despite some initial presentations.

According to Krueger, if parent loss individuals do have character pathology, it is most often associated with maternal loss. It is these more neurotic outcomes that this author believes will be evident, during late adolescence and early adulthood, in the object relations of black women with a history of early paternal loss. This is an extremely important sentiment because as Brewer (1997) points out in his discussion of the separation-individuation process for poor black families "it will be argued" that these families are organized at a borderline level. As an example Brewer cites a study conducted by Minuchin et. al (1967) which observed several disorganized poor black families with enmeshed boundaries between mother and child. However, Brewer contends that despite this research and others of its kind, one cannot link the borderline

syndrome to African American families as there is only a miniscule amount of research directly examining either the separation individuation process and/or borderline functioning in blacks or for that matter examining the influence of culture and psychosocial factors on these psychological constructs.

Late adolescence is roughly defined as occurring between the ages of 17 and 23, although some argue that this time period can apply to both adolescence and early adulthood (Staples & Smarr 1989). This age span is also representative of the time frame in which most individuals attend college for the first time. This dynamic can further perpetuate individuals' dependency on their parents as most college students rely on their parents for financial assistance. Young black adults who do not attend college also tend to remain fairly dependent on their parents as they often reside at their childhood home. It is during this period of adolescence that Blos (1979) maintains a second experience of separation-individuation occurs along with a reemergence of unresolved oedipal issues. Typically, according to psychodynamic and social theories, in late adolescence individuals' lives are fraught with sexual strivings and battles for independence, as the respective developmental tasks are to form more intimate relationships and engage in more autonomous functioning. Undergoing these transitions under the best of circumstances is often tumultuous for both the child and their family but these struggles one imagines are compounded for individuals already experiencing unresolved oedipal issues and ongoing intrapsychic dependency and identity difficulties, due to not successfully traversing the separation-individuation phase earlier in life, which this author suggests is linked to their early paternal deprivation. While these dynamics are played out on a psychic level, a confluence of social and cultural factors also impacts the

adolescent and together these internal and external factors serve to broaden and consolidate ego functioning and restructure psychic dynamics (Adatto 1989; Erikson 1968).

Blos (1979) and Ritvo (1972) in their writings on adolescence underscore the fact that it is a developmental period typified by regression to original object relations and earlier neuroses accompanied by decreased self-esteem. Adolescents intrapsychically revisit childhood conflicts, anxieties and guilt with the maturational aim being to reconcile these issues in order to free up psychic energy to invest in adult object relations, to undergo psychic reorganization and to obtain healthier ego functioning which for females includes both a biological and social component (Blos 1979; Staples & Smarr 1989). Blos further maintains that the adolescent girl ". . . endeavors to deal with relationships . . . and . . . is far more preoccupied with the vicissitudes of object relations than the boy is . . . (p. 194)." Because of this, he states that the girl adolescent seeks to establish a close emotional bond with mother reminiscent of the nurturing protective relationship she had with her in early childhood, often making mother her trusted associate but if the regressive pull to the pregenital mother is too intense, father can "lend a hand to pull one out of relatively undifferentiated (at a representational level) waters . . . (Greenspan 1982, p. 137)." Research has in fact shown that mother-daughter interactions are more disputatious than other parent-adolescent dyads (Laursen et al. 1998). But regardless of possible gender differences, Blos (1979) maintains that a healthy outcome of adolescent separation-individuation is correlated with healthy adult personality and social functioning. Support for this theory has come from several studies (Holmbeck & Wandrei 1993; McClanahan & Holmbeck 1992) examining adjustment (e.g. self-esteem,

levels of anxiety and depression, success of peer relationships, and quality of family relationships) in college students.

This traditional view of healthy psychological development emphasizes psychological separation and individuation from parents and the formation of healthy object relations and self-esteem. Challenges to this perspective have come from those (e.g. Brewer 1997; Gnaulati & Heine 2001; Josselson 1988; Kalsner & Pistole 2003) questioning how the impact of culture and ethnicity affect these processes. Josselson (1988, 1992) suggests that complete separation from family is not the true aim of late adolescence but more exactly that the adolescent must learn to renegotiate their relationship with their family while maintaining a connection to them or stated differently "it is the interplay between needs for self-determination and interpersonal relatedness . . . [that takes] place in the context of renegotiated connections with parents (Gnaulati & Heine 2001, p. 59).

It has been argued (Gnaulati & Heine 2001; Kalsner & Pistole 2003) that minority groups, especially African Americans, tend to have more enmeshed family boundaries and are less separated from their parents but despite this viewpoint, no one disputes the fact that they do develop object relations and undergo the process of separation-individuation. What is debated on is whether this process transpires according to a different time-line or whether the process itself is slightly different in blacks, with different not being analogous to pathological. It could be that separation-individuation in blacks more closely resembles the model spoken of by Josselson (1988) and that is observed in the study by Jones et al. (2003,) in which a "sense of secure connectedness . . . allowed for progressive development to proceed along the line of identity formation and

individuation (p. 90)." Some degree of interdependence (greater more likely than that seen in White Americans) then would be normative for this population, but this author is postulating that it is the presence and involvement of fathers in black families, who for many of the reasons already outlined, precludes normative connectedness from becoming a more extreme unhealthy form of enmeshment and/or it is father's absence from their child's life that contributes to the child's developing lower levels of object relations.

In summary, the interdependence of the developmental phases of separation-individuation and the oedipal complex, both of which influence the development of object relations and one's internal representations of self and others, and are themselves determined by the relational bonds and the intrapsychic functioning of early childhood, led this author to the supposition that father's absence from the family milieu would have a measurable effect on the level and quality of the late adolescent's or young adult's object relations. It is this conceptualization of object relations coupled with the specific conflicts of adolescence which contributes to the speculation that young adults who have experienced early childhood paternal deprivation suffer disturbances in boundaries between self and others insomuch as their boundaries may be too rigid or too permeable. One would imagine that these individuals' internalized objects may be consuming (a la mother, as adequate levels of separation-individuation were not achieved) or depriving and imbued with idealized qualities (a la father, based on the individual's psychic representation of their absent father). Their rigidity then would be a defense against the unconscious fear of abandonment and/or engulfment, and their "unconscious anxiety driven wish for closeness (Burgner 1985, p. 312)" would be reflected in their porous boundaries. Hence any measure of their object relations would most likely reveal a

vacillation between two poles: a desire for intimacy with others or a desire for distance in relationships (internal/external). And although these individuals may have been able to compensate to some degree for deficits caused by early father loss through experiences with other objects later in life, any arrest in their development would show up in their object relations and self-representations (Krueger 1983, p. 582). Specifically, the distortions experienced by these individuals would most likely manifest themselves in their adolescent and adult relationships (Burgner 1985) as evinced by a tendency to withhold "emotional involvement in a relationship, unconsciously fearing a devastating outcome as originally (Krueger 1983, p.589)" experienced. Whereas women with fathers present in childhood would be expected to have more stable and healthier object relations.

Numerous measures have been designed to assess internal representations of self, others, and self in relation to others, as well as overall level of human relatedness and the capacity for relatedness, which have been viewed throughout this paper from an object relations perspective, based on the assumption that it is our internalization of early childhood relationships with early childhood objects that forms the basis of adult personality. Unfortunately there are no current measures available for identifying healthy levels of "enmeshment" for black families. Instead standard tests which have been developed based on white and mixed populations are used to investigate developmental intrapsychic phenomena in blacks. Traditionally projective instruments, such as the Rorschach Inkblot Test, have been widely used to examine these dynamics. The last two decades though have ushered in a number of objective measures aimed at investigating internal phenomena. Some of the more recently developed objective tests in this area

include the Bell Object Relations Inventory, and the Separation-Individuation Test of Adolescence all of which will be used in this study.

Fathers and Daughters

Although changes have occurred in the structure of the family and in parenting responsibilities, research shows that overall fathers still spend considerably less time than mothers do with their infants (Ahmeduzzaman & Roopnarine, 1992; Lamb et al. 1987; McBride & Mills 1993; Pleck 1997) and that fathers seem to prefer their male children (Parke & O'Leary 1976; Park & Swain 1980). Despite this preference, initially fathers react somewhat similarly to boy and girl infants. Fathers upon first viewing their infants often appear to be engrossed with them, seemingly captivated by the infant and experiencing increased feelings of self-worth while interacting with the infant (Greenberg & Morris 1982, 1974). Fathers also tend to engage in more physically stimulating and unpredictable play with infants (Clarke-Stewart, 1978; Crawley & Sherrod, 1984; Lamb 1976b, 1977) with this pattern of interaction being observed across races (Hosssain & Roopnarine 1994).

In an observational study of the preoedipal infant-father relationship, Dorothy Burlingham (1973, p. 38) noted that "fathers tend to stimulate and excite their children. They not only lift them, but swing and toss them in the air, catching them again or even pretending to let them fall which provokes frightened, but at the same time pleasurable excited laughter." Based on this type of interaction along with other factors, fathers have been deemed the "exciting other" in psychoanalytic theory, a "twilight figure" whose presence fills the child with exhilaration (Greenacre 1966). Secunda (1992, p. 10) maintains that through this induced excitement by father, a girl child begins to identify

with the "sex appeal of men" forever linking them to increased arousal. Others postulate that because of father's more stimulating interactions with their infants/toddlers, he may activate mental phenomena in children differently than mother. For example, Gleason (1975) and Rondal (1980) connect fathers to linguistic development, implying that father's use of language with their infants uniquely enhances their linguistic development. Other studies (Blanchard & Biller 1971; Solomon 1969) also link increased cognitive competence (in preschool children) to paternal involvement and engagement. Still others propose that it is father's engagement in play and his interactions with the child in conjunction with mother's stimulation of the child that fosters intellectual competence in children and the development of a broader array of social skills (Clark-Stewart 1978; Yogman 1982).

There have been differing views however on whether paternal involvement influences girls' cognitive development, black children's cognitive abilities or those of children in general (Busse 1969; Clarke-Stewart 1980; Hunter et al. 1987; Landy et al.; Lessing et al. 1970; Pedersen, Rubenstein & Yarrow 1979; Shin 1978; Teachman 1998). A more recent 2002 study by Shannon et al. lends support to the perspective that fathers do have a positive impact on their children's cognitive development. In this study low income fathers interactions with their child was videotaped and assessed. Results indicated a relationship between "responsive-didactic" behaviors in fathers and children's performance on the Bayley Scales of Infant Development, 2nd Edition (BSID-II) -i.e., as "fathers scores on responsive-didactic factor predicted whether children scored in the normal or delayed range on the mental scale of the BSID-II (p. 95)."

One explanation for the failure of some studies to show any association between black children's cognitive functioning and father's presence or absence is put forth by Radin (1981) who stated that "the lower-class black child is already so overwhelmed by adversity that the additional handicap of fatherlessness does not have a critical impact (Radin 1981)." Despite this theory, fathers do influence mothers and vice versa, thereby subsequently influencing each others respective behaviors with their children and the children themselves (Hunter et al. 1987). In fact, Pedersen (1981) found that marital tension negatively affected mother-infant interactions and that the quality of infant motor activity was influenced by the support of the husband for his wife. Drawing on this same premise, Cowan et al. (1993) identified the quality of the marital relationship as being correlated to the type of relationship the father will have with his daughter (i.e. men who are dissatisfied with their wives tend to treat their daughter negatively).

Observed differential treatment of infant sons and daughters by fathers has indicated that fathers tend to display gentler interactions with their daughters, holding them in closer proximity and treating them as if they were fragile (Rubin, Provenzano & Luria 1974). In this study fathers further described female infants as "softer, finer featured and more delicate" as compared to male infants who were described as "firmer, more alert, stronger and hardier." While this study describes varying cognitions on the part of fathers about sons and daughters, it further exemplifies the degree to which fathers can socialize their children into respective gender roles.

Father's Role in Feminine Development

Notwithstanding mother's contribution to feminine identity, theories abound regarding father's impact on feminine development, although some researchers advocate

that father's influence on sex-role development is inconclusive (Lytton & Romney 1991). Yet these same researchers do acknowledge that despite the lack of significant results supporting the parental socialization theory, they did find evidence of many trends pointing in the direction of the theory. In an attempt to understand these contradictions, researchers have argued that the trends are informative themselves and that children undergo numerous transitions throughout childhood with the implications being that it may be that the parents' interactions change at specific periods or that it is the timing of a parent's interaction that is important (Lewis 1997). Indeed Lewis further expounds upon this issue by discussing the research of Beverly Fagot (cited in Lewis 1997) who emphasized a critical phase between infancy and early childhood in a child's life in which their sex-role development is susceptible to parental influence. The relationship between early childhood and sex-role identity is also prominently featured in many psychoanalytic theories as well as in other theories of sex-role development.

One theory already mentioned is that of Freud's who linked girls' sex-role orientation to the resolution of the oedipal complex and the girls' subsequent maternal identification. Helena Deutsch another psychoanalytic theorist and the author of the tome *The Psychology of Women* elaborated on Freud's theory espousing that it is the young girl's desire to win father's love that leads her "to monitor and imitate the behavior of her mother, since the latter had obviously developed successful strategies for winning father's affection (cited in Lamb et al. 1979, pp. 92-93)." Moreover, Deutsch emphasized that the female child is also attentive in her exchanges with father for cues regarding the ways in which he expects her to behave and because of father's encouragement (via his displays of affection) of the girl acting "passive, helpless or

femininely seductive" and his discouragement of "any masculine and/or aggressive strivings" the female child adopts an erotic-passive mode when interacting with males (cited in Biller 1981, p. 338). For Deutsch father clearly plays a vital role in girls developing a feminine identity.

Deutsch's perspective on feminine development is in fact the precursor to what was later known as reciprocal role learning in which roles are determined by the relationship between individuals, especially those in which the association causes an inseparable intertwining of the roles (Reber 1985). Parson (1955) and Johnson (1963) are the most frequently associated with the theory of reciprocal role learning. Parson in his study of family structure and children asserted that culturally sanctioned conceptions of masculinity and femininity are learned by children from father via his differential interactions and reinforcements with them. Johnson later expanded upon Parson's view of identification stressing that "it is identification with the father, which is crucial for producing appropriate sex role orientations in both males and females . . . The father adds the specifically feminine elements to the female's initial expressiveness by rewarding her, by his appreciative attitude, not simply for being good but for being attractive (pp. 319, 320)." This theory maintains that father interacts differently with male versus female children, encouraging instrumental behavior in sons and expressive behavior in daughters in contrast to mother's primarily expressive relationship with children of both sexes. Still others attribute distinctions in sex-role development to both parents' reinforcement of appropriate gender behavior in boys and girls.

Although the descriptions of masculinity and femininity have changed somewhat over the ensuing years, Biller (1970) associates positive feminine attributes to skill in

interpersonal communication, warmth, expressiveness and to concern about others and their needs, whereas the negative or more traditional definition of feminine behavior stresses passivity, dependency, emotionality and fantasy. It is this traditional definition of femininity that is the antithesis of the traits associated with masculinity: independence, aggression and an inclination for thought and action. Given these traditional views of femininity and masculinity superimposed upon the societal treatment of blacks, do black women fit into these more stereotypical categories of gender? Black women have worked outside the home and maintained other nontraditional female roles long before it was considered acceptable in society at large. An example of this discrepancy between acceptable gender roles for white women as compared to black women was aptly portrayed in a speech given by Sojourner Truth at the Women's Rights Convention in Akron, Ohion, in 1851:

> That man over there say that a woman needs to be helped into carriages, and lifted over ditches, and to have the best place everywhere. Nobody ever helped me into carriages or over mud puddles, or gives me a best place – and, ain't I a woman? Look at me. Look at my arm! I have plowed and planted and gathered into barns, and no man could head me. And sold off into slavery. And when I cried out with a mother's grief, none but Jesus heard – and ain't I a woman (Gilbert 1968)?

Because of their race, black women have always operated by another standard in society; yet within the confines of their own homes, they do adhere to an extent to behaviors deemed to be more traditionally feminine, such as being responsible for caring for the home, the children and their spouses. This is irrespective of whether the black woman is the sole breadwinner or if both, she and her husband/significant other, are employed (Billingsley 1992; Hill 2002). Black parents in turn socialize their children into these respective sex roles. Some studies examining child rearing in black families

have found black fathers to be authoritarian. In one investigation of the interactions between black fathers and their daughters, Baumrind (1973) observed that black fathers de-emphasized individuality and nonconformity in their daughters. However, Baumrind also found that in comparison to their white counterparts, the black girls of these authoritarian fathers were significantly more independent.

Both black fathers and fathers of low socioeconomic income status tend to exhibit more traditional sex-role attitudes (McBroom 1981; Price-Bonham & Skeen 1982) although some research has shown that as black fathers' socioeconomic status improve, they tend to hold less typical views of gender (Hill 2002). As indicated, sex-role development (or rather the comprehension of it) is a more intricate process in black children but despite this, there appears to be a flexibility of gender roles in black families. Many researchers argue that this type of gender socialization in black families is normative and can be traced to blacks' African heritage (Burgess 1994; McAdoo 1983; Taylor 1986). Collins (1987) further maintains that it is also necessitated by economic deprivation and racism, with black women in contrast to black males being allowed greater access to employment. This in turn has fostered the perception of womanhood among blacks as being related to independence, self-reliance, work and achievement (Giddings 1984, p. 356) with black daughters being indoctrinated at an early age in these beliefs (Collins, 1987; Ladner 1971). Despite being socialized to be assertive and even aggressive (Boykin & Tomas 1985; Cauce et al. 1996; Lewis 1975), black women are also socialized to be "familistic and nurturant (Scott 1993, p. 73)" which would support the earlier argument that black females do engage in some stereotypical feminine behaviors within the home.

Father as Love Object & Determiner of Later Adult relationships

Father is often considered a woman's first heterosexual love. This relationship with father starts in childhood and it influences a female's ability to form mature relationships with others later in life, especially with men. Some theorists, such as Tess Forrest (1966), suggest that a girl should develop a relationship with her father in infancy:

> She must learn paternal trust during infancy when she learns maternal trust. Especially from her father does the infant girl need confirmation of her desirability as a female and affirmation of her value as a different and separate person. His gentle tenderness communicates to her his pleasure in her femininity. Father, by comparison with mother, has a sharper eye, a firmer grip, a rougher cheek, a deeper voice. He is nonetheless equally tender, loving warm, and safe, and the infant girl can feel herself lovingly cradled by a man's arms and comforted by a man's voice. Contact with the father opens the door of the mother-infant dyad to the possibility and pleasure of triadic union and secondary dependence (pp. 29-30).

As the girl's relationship with her father continues to develop, she is often perceived of as being "daddy's little girl." This simple phrase is imbued with much meaning, conjuring up the image of a special father-daughter union, filled with flirtation between the two and presaging the quality of later romantic relationships in the girl's life in which men are consciously/unconsciously compared to daddy. Secunda (1992) based on her interviews with 150 women ranging in ages 18 to 70 from various socioeconomic backgrounds, delineated five general behavioral categories for fathers and five behavioral patterns of reactions to fathers for daughters. She described females as being the favored, good, competitive, fearful or maverick daughter, with some overlap in behavioral styles. Fathers were depicted as either being doting, distant, demanding, seductive or absent.

Secunda believed that these five different types of fathers are the "templates for their daughters' future romantic attachments (p. xxiii)" as distinguished from those "lucky women" she interviewed whose healthy self-esteem about themselves on the whole corresponded to their experience in childhood of "their father's strength and affirmation and tenderness . . . (p. xxiv)."

Briefly defined, the distant father is a passive or quiet presence within the family; the doting father desires to be worshipped by the daughter; the demanding father dominates through rules, rigidity or violence; the seductive father engages with the daughter in an erotic or suggestive manner and the absent father is one who has died, abandoned the family or seldom sees his daughter (Secunda 1992, p. 103). Secunda discusses how these respective types of fathers' interactions with their daughter profoundly impact the daughter's interpersonal relations with men. Secunda characterizes the favored daughter style as one in which the daughter as an adult female seeks men who are exactly like her "glorified father" or are the antithesis of him. The good daughter, on the other hand, places value on getting and keeping a man, with her self-worth being contingent upon this ability. The competitive daughter is described as operating on three related levels: being in competition with men, relating to men through hostility, or focusing solely on her career as a way to avoid intimacy with men. The fearful daughter like the competitive daughter may abstain from relationships, but it is based on fear or she may get into relationships in which her partner dominates her. Lastly, the maverick daughter can be described as either being at ease with her "unusual self" or being rebellious throughout her adulthood because of restrictions placed on her as a child. According to Secunda, women may move throughout these differing behavioral

styles (i.e. early in life they may exhibit one type of style as opposed to later in life or they may take on different styles with different partners). At the heart of Secunda's theory is the idea that all of these categories contain behaviors that are both "endearing and endangering" and that for women the goal is to "figure out which is which, to discover which corroborate our good experience of our fathers and which the bad, which reflect our true selves and which the false (p. 241)." She believes that only by understanding their relationship with the first man in their lives including the lessons of love they learned from him can women "separate" from father and find their "own romantic and sexual identity (ibid)."

Analogous to Secunda's theory is Appleton's (1981) view of the father-daughter relationship. Like Secunda, Appleton uses categories to describe the relationship. But unlike her, he instead proposes a father-daughter model (Oasis, Conflict and Separation) that focuses on the first 30 years of a woman's life, as he feels that women continue to have relationships with their fathers that changes and grows in accordance with developmental changes in both the daughter and the father, although each stage may result in outcomes that impact the daughter in subsequent stages and throughout her life. For example, Appleton contends that if during the Oasis stage, which corresponds roughly to the daughter's childhood, father is absent then the daughter has "no experience with flirting with, gaining attention from, being worshipped by, or delighting the man who means the most to her at the most impressionable time of her life (p. 12)." Although he states that the presence of uncles, older brothers etc. can mitigate some of the effects of father's absence in a female's life, he nonetheless maintains that the daughter will

develop "various kinds of scars (p. 13)" with insecurity being the most significant which will affect her adult heterosexual relationships.

Jonetta Rose Barras, author of the only book written specifically about the impact of fatherlessness and black women, and also a repeated victim of father-absence, having had several fathers throughout childhood, coined the phrase Fatherless Women Syndrome to apply to a set of psychological and behavioral dynamics common to many black women with histories of childhood father absence. Based on her research and personal experience, she depicts this syndrome as being "rooted in the feeling of being fundamentally unworthy and unlovable (p. 6)." These feelings in turn lead to other emotions, most notably chronic rage, anger and depression, though at the heart of this wound is the fear of abandonment and/or rejection which the fatherless woman tries to soothe by using a variety of balms. Unfortunately in trying to compensate for these feelings the fatherless woman may start to engage in destructive behavior, such as promiscuity and mild to severe forms of addictions.

Barras connects the high number of black female teen pregnancies to father absence with the analogy being made in her book that "teen pregnancy is to girls what jail is to boys . . . (p. 82)." While black teens' pregnancies can be due to other reasons such as providing an escape from their family or poverty, a means of maintaining an important relationship, or an attempt to bring joy to a life filled with bleakness (Dash 1989), it may also be an attempt to fill a void created by their father's absence. In her interviews with fatherless black women, Barras noted that many of these women consciously and unconsciously developed the belief that a baby would be their "mythic rescuer." Their

desire to have a baby appeared to be linked to their need to feel loved and their wish to have something of their own that would always need/love them.

Secunda argues that it is a loving, predictable, available father who provides daughters with a sense of security of heterosexual love, as daughters can experience and rehearse loving a man through father. Father's "maturity and limit setting and sexual oppositeness" enables daughters to "function with confidence in the wider world of adult love and work (p. 29)." Ross (1990) describes this same phenomenon as being propelled by the girl's relationship with "The Eye of the Beholder" meaning that it is the gaze and look of father denoting his admiration which reaffirms daughters' femininity and helps to delineate "their very existence (p. 63)."

Father Absence

Fathers can be absent from the family involuntarily due to death or imprisonment or he can voluntarily absent himself from the family via desertion, divorce and separation. Numerous scholars and researchers have examined and debated the effects of children being reared in two-parent homes versus those raised by a single parent. Increased delinquency and antisocial behavior were originally associated with father absence (Glueck & Glueck 1950; Siegman 1966) as father was thought to establish morality, execute punishment and help the child to modulate his aggression. More recently, the rise in youth violence in America has been attributed to the breakdown of the traditional nuclear family. In 1998, a National Health Interview Survey on Child Health found that children living apart from their fathers were far more likely than other children to have behavioral problems, have difficulty getting along with their peers and get into more trouble with the police. Likewise, David Blankenhorn in his 1995 tome,

Fatherless America, purported that fatherlessness is the leading contributor to increased youth violence. He further argued that fatherlessness has become the "elephant in the room" that society does not want to discuss and that this increased societal acceptance of fatherlessness is one of the greatest injuries being done to children.

McLanahan et al, 1991, in a review of the literature on father absent families summarized that children from single mother families not only have poorer academic achievement but also higher school absenteeism, higher school dropout rates, earlier ages at first marriage, higher rates of drug and alcohol use, higher divorce rates, give birth to children at younger ages in and out of marriage, have lower earnings in young adulthood, and have higher rates of poverty. When some of these data are analyzed for black children, the statistics are even greater. For example, there are disproportionately higher percentages of pregnancies in black teens as compared to white adolescents. In 1984 it was estimated that 41% of black females and 19% of white females become pregnant by the age of 18 (Furstenberg, Brooks-Gunn & Chase-Lansdale, 1989). Further black daughters from female-headed households, more so than daughters from two parent families, were found to be at greater risk of being a single parent by the age of 16, even when income was controlled for (McLanahan 1988). However, some scholars are questioning the definition of father absence in black families noting that a nonresidential status does not necessarily equate with a black father being completely absent from his offspring's life. Rather these researchers suggest that fathers who have moderate contact with their children, which may be less than white fathers, be counted as present and that their influences and relationship with their offspring be examined (Hamer 1997).

Psychoanalytic literature is replete with clinical cases depicting patients experiencing father hunger. Fleming 1972, Gill 1991, Strean 1997, and Shechter 1997 all discuss how their adult patients', with histories of early father absence, unresolved issues about their absent fathers readily surfaced in the treatment. They further illustrate how this early object loss gets discharged onto the therapist. From this one could extrapolate that affect and cognitions about father are also easily transferred onto other objects in our everyday life. This phenomenon is referred to as father transference and is seen by Greenson (cited in Shechter 1997, p.22) as "an object relational construct that can be invested with either positive or negative valence." In its broadest sense, father transference describes a mental state in which one displaces feelings and thoughts, such as love, hate, neediness etc., about their father onto others. However, loss of a parent not only gives rise to object hunger and genetic transferences based on the unconscious discharge of emotions about the missing parent, it may also be experienced as a trauma that disrupts other psychic structures and functioning.

Fleming (1972) in her study of analytic patients with early object deprivation noted that their entrance into treatment was predicated on their all being unable to psychologically cope with a problem in their lives that required a subsequent change in their lifestyle. In other words they had difficulty navigating the emotional experience of separation, as change represents departure from familiar territory. Fleming argued that these patients were experiencing psychic tension caused by their inability "to manage the developmental tasks of separation-individuation, of movement toward adulthood (p. 25)."

Father's absence from death, desertion or divorce has been found to have similar but also differing effects on individuals, with most researchers agreeing that father

absence, regardless of type of absence, has more of a negative impact on very young children, as young children do not have the emotional and cognitive apparatus to process such stressful and life altering events and that such experiences can interfere with or alter their developmental/emotional growth. Once a father leaves the home, daughters may blame themselves for his absence especially if they are at an age in which they engage in primitive thinking. Piaget (1936) emphasized that children's cognitive development takes place over a span of time from infancy to adolescence/adulthood and that very young children engage in egocentric thinking or stated differently they engage in narcissistic reasoning which would lead them to the conclusion that daddy must have left because they did something wrong (Secunda 1992, pp. 196-197).

Hetherington's 1972 study of adolescent girls from intact families, divorced families and families in which the father had died indicated that the daughters of divorce had more strife with their fathers, harbored more negative attitudes about him and regarded him as less competent than did daughters of widows. Hetherington attributed this difference in cognitions about the absent father on the part of the daughters of divorce to their mother's anger towards ex-husband. She also found that the daughters of divorce "sought more attention from male adults and initiated more proximity seeking and physical contact with male peers" than daughters from any other group. Similarly, most of the women from divorced families that Secunda (1992) interviewed in her study admitted to being sexually precocious but they additionally expressed that despite their forwardness with men, they were unable to get what they most desired, "getting and keeping their father's nonsexual attention (p. 198)." For the women whose fathers had deserted them, Secunda noted that they seemed to experience the loss as "an open wound,

a lingering death . . . and were unable to mourn because always there was the hope that their fathers might turn up (p. 204)."

Hetherington's study (1972) further revealed some negative outcomes for adolescent females whose father had died. These adolescents were significantly less talkative, displayed poorer eye contact and oriented their bodies the farthest when engaged in conversation with a male interviewer. Yet, out of all three groups of daughters, the daughters of widows had better relationships with their mothers, which Hetherington speculated may be due to the fact that widowhood is easier socially and financially than being divorced, as widows often collect social security benefits for children, receive more social support and may feel less resentful about being placed in the role of single parent. Nonetheless, in this type of union, as in other single parent families, mothers and daughters are at risk of becoming too close (as indicated elsewhere in this study) as mothers may rely more on daughters for their companionship, responsibility, etc. Further complicating this issue is that depending on the female's age at the time of loss and mother's own mental faculties, she may not be able to mourn the death of her father, with this "repressed mourning" being psychically experienced throughout life unless adequately processed. The daughter would likely retain an idealized image of father and experience intense "ambivalence and guilt" if she becomes attached to another man (Wakerman 1984, p. 29)."

Irrespective of the differing outcomes associated with type of father absence, Hetherington and Secunda declare that father's absence for any reason over a significant period of time results in females being apprehensive and insecure with men. Secunda (1992) even goes so far as to outline several legacies of father absence: fear of intimacy,

emotional detachment, fear of independence and dependence, anxiety about sex and rootlessness. Some of these consequences are interrelated and are opposite sides of the same coin, such as fear of dependence and independence, and emotional detachment. Based on their anxiety and pain over father's absence, Secunda states that fatherless women seek to protect themselves (consciously/unconsciously) by not becoming emotionally or financially dependent on a male (or in some cases, anyone). Yet others strive to stave off their feelings of loneliness and the psychic experience of abandonment by continuously involving themselves in relationships to the extent that they are never alone. Sex for these females also tends to be convoluted as it brings up issues of being vulnerable with men and their issues of being abandoned by men. Lastly, for Secunda, rootlessness is perceived as the most "crushing legacy of father absence among daughters (p. 214)." She describes it as the dynamic experience of floating emotionally unanchored through life, as if one does not belong anywhere (ibid).

Black Families

One of the major criticisms levied at researchers investigating black families is their failure to examine black families within a contextual framework. Racism, slavery, kinship network, spirituality, collective unity, poverty etc. are all phenomena that affect and shape black families. In understanding the impact that father's absence has on black females and father absence in general in the black community, it is necessary to have some awareness of the culture of black families. Equally important is the knowledge that while the phrase black culture is used by this author black individuals and hence black families are not homogeneous. There is diversity within the black community but because of the social and political climate of the United States, the majority of blacks in

America have collectively undergone similar experiences historically, and as a group they continue to be influenced by these dynamics.

African American families generally have been purported in the literature as having closer familial ties than white families in that their family interactions are more entwined than whites, implying on some level that blacks are less individuated and separated and have less of a self organization. The literature is contradictory on the impact of this dynamic but most mainstream psychology literature views the tangling of family boundaries as having a negative influence on self-organization and family & individual functioning. Literature emphasizing the importance of culture/race/ethnicity however tends to view this dynamic in more positive terms and calls for more investigation of the impact of these factors, as it underscores the fact that much of the research conducted on African Americans has been examined through an ethnocentric framework - i.e. they are compared to the norms of this society, with the norms themselves being based on middle class whites (Dodson, J.E. 1996). Specifically the cultural variant/relative perspective is built on the foundation that while many functions of a family may be universal, "various constraints may produce culturally distinct structures and dynamics. Thus the importance of cultural relativity is stressed (Johnson, L.B. 1996, p. 97)."

Scholars of this cultural relativity orientation have undertaken the task of comprehending how racism, slavery and an African cultural heritage have influenced black Americans individual and family functioning/development. Franklin (1996) has espoused that "the family is one of the strongest and most important traditions in the black community (p. 5)." He traces this esteem for the family to African culture and

notes that even after their enslavement, black slaves continued to place a high value on family despite the atrocities inflicted on them and the fact that their families were frequently forcibly separated. Family though for black slaves was not the traditional model of the nuclear family but rather consisted of both biological and unrelated individuals. While this configuration of the family was to some extent a byproduct of slavery, it also has its roots in African culture. Further this construction of the family has endured in the descendants of enslaved Africans and can be observed in the family life of people of African descent throughout the Americas (Hayes & Mendel 1973; Nobles 1974; Nobles et al. 1976; Sudarkasa 1996). Sudarkasa also states that "throughout the Americas, surviving features of African family structure tend to be strongest among the lower-income segments of the Black population (p. 14). According to her, increases in income and education in blacks tends to lead to their becoming more assimilated into the more dominant European derived society, which in turn affects their family functioning.

Due to the high percentage of fatherlessness in black families, especially in low income black families, there is a paucity of information on fathers who are involved with their families regardless of whether they reside with them or live elsewhere, with limited attention being given to these types of families as well. Of the literature that does focus on black married families, African American families have been found to have more egalitarian relations than other types of families and to be more flexible in their roles. Black men and women whether married or living together approach household tasks and childcare somewhat collaboratively, with black men being thought to contribute approximately 7 hours a week to household care as compared to 5 hours for white husbands (Billingsley 1992). Although this comparison indicates that black men may be

more likely to step out of the traditional masculine role in their families, black women still by far maintain primary responsibility for household and childcare tasks (Billingsley 1992; McLoyd 2000; Taylor et al. 1990) which may paradoxically be attributed to black men's conservative attitudes regarding gender roles (McLoyd 2000).

Both residential and nonresidential black fathers along with black mothers have endorsed parenthood as their primary role. An interview with 38 African American noncustodial fathers ranging in age from 19 to 46 revealed that the majority of these fathers felt that spending time with and providing emotional support to their children were the two most important functions of fatherhood even in the face of their own ambivalent involvement with their children (Hamer 1997). Insofar as this study is significant in revealing information about black noncustodial fathers, it also shows that black fathers who do not live with their families may still be actively involved with them, as 81% of the men in this study visited their children on a weekly, biweekly or daily basis. Raising children was also found to be the top priority of black men in a 1979-1980 survey of black Americans (Billingsley 1992) whereas for black woman mothering is thought to be their most essential role; however they have had to learn to balance motherhood with the demands of work and other external pressures (Boyd-Franklin 1989; Hill 2001).

Black women contribute significantly to the family income in both black married-couple households and in households where fathers/husbands were absent. In married black families, because of ongoing job discrimination and historical and current societal racism, women's employment, which may be greater than their husband's, is generally accepted and supported by black men (Billingsley 1992). Black married couples have

scored high on satisfaction with life and family and self-worth scales (Billingsley 1992) demonstrating that despite the overall decline in black marriages, black traditional family life continues to serve a positive function.

Interdependence, interrelatedness, and connectedness are dynamics thought to be prominent in African American families and in African American culture (White 1984) as depicted by the interactions (nonverbal/verbal) and boundaries within black families/black community. Black individuals are frequently close to all family members and rely on them for financial and emotional support, guidance, socialization etc. An outgrowth of slavery and their African Heritage, African Americans often help others in their families sometimes at their own expense as a way of keeping the family together and as a way of providing support to loved ones in times of need. Additionally this assistance may extend beyond the family boundaries to include distant relatives as well as nonbiological individuals, reflecting African Americans collective orientation and fostering self-esteem while living in an overtly racist society (in the past) and when facing contemporary racism.

Black parents can be authoritarian as well, as a way of keeping their children safe but also because respect of elders is highly valued. Families may discourage the divulgement of family information as another way of keeping the family secure and protected. Interdependence, interrelatedness and connectedness while extremely vital to black families can nevertheless lead to boundary issues. Boundaries in black families tend to be entangled and one would imagine on some level individuals are less separated and individuated because of the closeness and function of family. In keeping with this line of reasoning, this author believes that this "entanglement of boundaries" while

different from the established norm of this society, which advocates complete individuation and separation, is nonetheless normative and healthy in black Americans. Further in this "healthy protective intertwinement of self-other" the child is able to experience an adequate level of separateness which enables him/her to function both within the family and the larger society, without poor object relations. However, this author argues that the absence of father from black families has a negative impact on what may have been a more normative healthy protective intertwinement of self-other boundaries within the context of the family. With father's absence, the child may be unable to create adequate psychological separateness from mother and hence the family, so when outside realities impinge on the individual he or she may not be able to cope effectively.

Race & Poverty

Race is a multifaceted concept for African Americans, referring to their African ancestry, their shared phenotype and according to Pinderhughes (cited in Boyd-Franklin 2003, p. 261) it also "has acquired a social meaning . . .via the mechanism of stereotyping. Race for black Americans is inextricably linked to racism as they have been excluded, enslaved and discriminated against, with discrimination continuing to date, all because of their race. Bell Hooks (2003) in her recent book on black people and self-esteem views racism as part of the "traumatic violence" that black people have experienced which in turn has affected their "collective and individual psychology." She further discusses how this prolonged psychological trauma while not the sole culprit of black people's low self-esteem nevertheless has a substantive impact on their psychological well being.

The insidious nature of racism causes multiple reverberations in individual's lives, affecting psychological functioning (such as that talked about by Bell-Hooks), child rearing, family structure, employment, income, housing, etc. (Boyd-Franklin 2003; Nobles 1998). Yet many in society share the perspective that class outweighs race in terms of individuals' quality of life. This tendency on the part of some scholars to ignore race and focus only on the common difficulties shared by all poor people regardless of race/ethnicity discounts the fact that being both black and poor (including working poor) in America brings its on unique sets of problems/struggles (Boyd-Franklin 2003; Nobles 1998). For black families racism places them at a greater risk than their white counterparts of being in poverty or being part of the working/lower class.

One anecdote often told in the black community refers to blacks frequently being the last hired and the first fired. Research actually supports this belief showing that the cycle of poverty for many blacks is partially due to their race. Carol Stack (2002) in a two year multiracial ethnographic study of young fast food workers in a major city, most of whom were from low income families, observed clear distinctions between the hiring practices and working conditions for blacks and those from other ethnic/racial groups. She found that African Americans in general had more difficulty obtaining employment at these types of restaurants, with many of the managers in these fast food restaurants preferring to hire immigrants over African Americans. This proved to be the case even if the restaurant was located in a predominately black neighborhood. The black workers typically worked the night and weekend shift and even after graduating from school many of these workers were denied the more attractive day/weekday shifts. Additionally, few of the African American workers were ever promoted to manager; thus they

remained in low wage dead end jobs or if they did quit, they were usually unable to obtain more lucrative paying jobs –those paying more than minimum wage. Stack concluded that "a dreadful gap has arisen between the work ethic of many of these young workers and the opportunities open to them (p. 32)."

It has been documented that a significant number of black families live in poverty; in 2001 roughly 37% of black female headed households and 21% of all black families were in poverty (2002 US Census). However the majority of black families consist of single parents. As indicated elsewhere in this study single black female heads of households earn significantly less money than their white counterparts. Many of these parents as well as some black two parent households have limited education, training and skills and are often unable to find work. While racism is not the sole reason for their limited income, it does negatively impact blacks and contributes to their life circumstances. For example a large scale interview of almost 200 employers of inner city firms revealed that a significant number of these employers tended to view blacks as having a poor work ethic compared to other racial groups. Likewise, when distinctions between blacks were made, those from lower socioeconomic brackets were deemed as even less desirable employees (Kirschenman & Neckerman 1990).

For single black parents not having a male partner to help financially, emotionally or with the day to day realities of raising a family can be quite stressful. Having an additional income would help offset some of the difficulties incurred when raising a family on a single salary. Again this focus is on those fathers who are not involved in any fashion with their offspring as some black fathers may contribute significantly to the household finances although they do not reside with their children. But the high

percentages of black males absent from their families has caused numerous black scholars to focus on identifying and understanding the factors that are barriers to black men being successful fathers and partners. While this approach will provide crucial information, it is also an attempt on these scholars part to avoid labeling black males as being bad fathers and to avoid focusing on what they deem are the negative stereotypic views of black fathers that mass media reports . White and Cones (1999) among others has maintained that historical and contemporary racism have created a world in which black men are confronted with economic and social impediments that inhibit them from an "optimal level of male functioning (p.7)." Some scholars (Billingsley 1992: Cazenave 1981; Majors & Billson 1992) even emphasize a connection between black males' view of their family role and their level of family participation. Based on these studies, black men perceive their role in the family as being related to their ability to financially provide for their family. Hence these researchers argue that racism is part of the mixture of factors that contribute to the decline of black marriages and black men's involvement with their families.

At Risk Families

Many poor black families live in risky environments in which their children attend overcrowded and under performing schools. These types of families are also more likely to live in neighborhoods with low resources, high crime, high unemployment and where illegal drugs are frequently sold and/or used. Research has found a strong link between psychological distress and at risk families. It is believed that being born into an at risk family puts one in a position, beginning in early childhood, of being subjected to vulnerabilities either from the environment or through an exacerbation of certain

genetically based susceptibilities which are in turn impacted by the risky environment, with either of these conditions possibly causing lasting physical and mental health problems (Repetti, Taylor & Seeman 2002, p. 330).

The besiegement of at risk families by multiple psychosocial factors (substance abuse, poverty, unemployment etc) can create an environment high in stress and low in tolerance, a setting which is conducive to overt displays of anger and aggression. Children who live in poverty have been found to be at an increased risk for exposure to family violence and physical abuse or mistreatment (Emery & Laumann-Billings 1998; McLoyd 1998). Not all children, though, experience impairment in their functioning as a result of family conflict with some scholars (O'Brien et al. 1991) noting that some conflict in an individual's life is necessary to help foster the development of effective coping strategies. However the literature does report an association between family conflict/violence and emotional and behavioral problems in adults and children (Emery 1982; Emery & Laumann-Billings 1998; Kaslo, Deering & Racusia 1994; Reid & Crisafulli 1990). These types of families in which high levels of conflict, hostility and aggression are present are also depicted as "lacking in acceptance, warmth and support . . . [and having] poor mental health outcomes (Repetti, Taylor & Seeman 2002, p. 331)."

Children faced with high levels of family violence either in single parent or two parent homes may develop inadequate coping mechanisms or have difficulty processing emotions. There are further indications that children may be more disturbed by conflict involving physical aggression versus less intense forms of conflict (O'Brien et al. 1991). Emery & Laumann-Billings (1998) in fact call for a clearer distinction to be made between family mistreatment and family violence but because the inherent complications

involved in such categorizations would be too confounding for this study, this author will use the term family conflict to include family violence, family arguments etc. unless otherwise specified. Despite their argument for more discriminating definitions, Emery & Laumann-Billings agree that persistent family conflict in general may place one at an increased risk for psychological and/or behavioral problems.

In a review of the literature Repetti et al (2002) underscore several findings of high risk families with ongoing family conflict, namely that children are affected by anger when repeatedly exposed to it, with no sufficient recuperative period granted from being in an increased aroused emotional state. This prolonged/chronic state of arousal is thought to interfere in some capacity with emotional regulation, comprehension and expression as well as possibly cause one to have a heightened emotional reaction in general to conflictual situations. Repetti, Taylor & Seeman further hypothesize that because of the child's inability in a high conflict home to mitigate a stressful event, he/she may develop a certain set of enduring behaviors that are activated when in similar situations that increase emotional arousal, some of which may not be adequate or appropriate. Even if adaptive these behaviors can lead to physical problems and impaired psychological functioning.

The way in which emotions are managed will have an impact on all aspects of an individual's life including social skills and interpersonal relationships. Within families that are high in conflict and aggression, children learn to cope with the turmoil in their lives by behaving in certain ways that may not be advantageous to developing effective relationships with others (Crockenberg & Lourie 1996; Pettit, Dodge & Brown 1988). Klohnen & Bera (1998) in a longitudinal study investigating attachment in adult women

observed that perceived high parent-child conflict in childhood was one of the variables associated with being less interpersonally close and more socially insecure. Repetti et al. (2002) contend that risky families compromise "the development of social competence and supportive relationships outside of the family (p. 346)" due to the lack of appropriate role modeling and the families own limited ability to appropriately solve interpersonal/social problems, which in turn shapes their children's social cognitions.

Undergoing a divorce may also place a family at risk. Having only one income can drastically reduce a family's quality of life, subsequently influencing the type of neighborhood they can afford to live in (post divorce) which often brings its own sets of problems as earlier discussed. Most people who divorce in the U.S. usually do so because of some type of marital conflict to which their children may be exposed to in varying degrees. In certain cases, the children are forced to choose sides or are drawn into the marital conflict either by choice or through a parent's manipulation. Interparental conflict causes disruption and creates emotional stress in the entire family. This dynamic has been argued by some as being the leading cause of behavioral/emotional problems in children from divorced families rather than the actual separation itself (Emery 1982).

Many of the variables discussed thus far were examined by Amato & Keith (1991) in a meta-analysis study on divorce and children's well being. Their analysis revealed several outcomes. Father loss was found to have an effect on children's psychological well-being, with children from divorce families having lower levels of well-being than children from intact families. They also obtained results indicating that income and socioeconomic status influences to some degree psychological functioning,

specifically children whose families are economically disadvantaged are more vulnerable to emotional disturbance. The economic disadvantaged perspective however did not account for all the psychological problems experienced by children following divorce, indicating more importantly that other factors are also at work. Finally, investigation of family conflict showed that it was highly correlated with psychological distress in children. Amato & Keith determined that children in high conflict intact families scored significantly lower in psychological adjustment and self-esteem compared to children from either intact low-conflict families or low-conflict divorced families but it was also suggested that children may struggle with psychological problems for years after their parents have divorced and after they have been removed from the high conflict situation.

Resilience & Strength

African American families consisted of (and still do to some extent) large multigenerational groupings of relatives (Billingsley 1968; Boyd-Franklin 1989; Hill 1972; McAdoo 2001; White 1972, 1984) Within African American families, households may include "conjugal and blood relatives [and] nonrelatives as well (Dodson 1996, p. 74)." The prevalence of these types of household configurations as compared to whites has led many to argue that it is a "cultural pattern that distinguishes whites and blacks (ibid)." While this phenomenon is considered a cultural norm in black families it is not meant to describe all black families, as there are significant numbers of black families who do not adhere to this family structure and instead function as nuclear families, varying in the degree to which they interact with extended family members (Boyd-Franklin 1989).

The function of extended family networks also called kinship networks is thought not only to be a remnant of black Americans African heritage but was also necessary for survival in a racist society. Additionally, the support that a black family may receive may not only come from relatives living within the household but also from nonresidential relatives and nonrelatives all of whom may assist the family with economic aid, emotional support and child care among other things. This extra support in black families can help improve the overall functioning of the family. Conner (1998) in a study investigating African American marriages found that many of the couples relied on nonresidential relatives for guidance and emotional support.

The resiliency and strength observed in black families in light of all the hardships they have undergone has been attributed not only to kinship support but also to religion and spirituality. Historically the church has been very important in the black community and has been used to receive support with childrearing, to promote education, to establish a sense of connectedness and belonging, as a safe place to socialize and to be exposed to positive role models, as a source of economic support and it has provided an emotional haven (Hines & Boyd-Franklin 1996; Boyd-Franklin 2003; Bagley & Carroll 1998; Billingsley 1992). The black church also represented freedom and an opportunity for self-esteem and independence, especially as the church was owned and operated solely by blacks (Billingsley 1992). During the civil rights movement, the church and leaders of the church played pivotal roles in helping to organize protests and helping black Americans to feel empowered (Bagley & Carroll 1998).

Overall the church is experienced as a safe and comforting place for many black people, a place where they use their faith in God to help them cope with adversity. Some

blacks however do not attend church but do have a deep belief in God and use their spirituality and faith as a source of strength. Knox (1985, cited in Boyd-Franklin 1989, p.78) asserts that "spirituality is deeply embedded in the Black psyche and is evident in many belief statements about God that blacks make." Examples of these belief statements range from "Let go let God" to "It's in God's hands." Nightly prayers may also be engaged in despite nonparticipation in religious organizations.

Research (e.g. Taylor 1996; Taylor & Roberts 1995; McLoyd et al.1994) has in fact shown a positive correlation between kinship support, family organization, adolescents' school performance, and healthier parent child relations. Taylor's study (1996) in particular noted that in black families having poor kin relations was associated with psychological distress. Research has further indicated that black Americans exhibit greater levels of religiosity than whites (Taylor 1988) and that participation in religious events provides a buffer to psychological distress (Brown & Gary 1987). Despite the extensive body of literature maintaining that kinship support and religion helps strengthen African American families, there is a small but growing body of research that contradicts this well established perspective. Several studies (Chase-Lansdale, Brooks-Gunn & Zamsky 1994; Wakschlag, Chase-Landsdale & Brooks-Gunn 1996; Roschelle 1997) contend that this commonly depicted strength of black families has eroded over the years and that less black families today have kinship support and/or that kinship support either has a negative impact or no impact at all on mothers (particularly young black mothers).

McDonald & Armstrong (2001) based on their interviews with African American midlife women explain these contradictory findings in terms of changes that have

occurred in the black family, governmental intervention and the urban "underclass" culture" which they believed has undermined traditional black intergenerational support. Like kinship networks, church and spirituality has been found not to be utilized as much as a source of strength among younger black inner city families (Aponte 1994, cited in Boyd-Franklin 2003). Some even argue (Poole 1990) that black churches began to lose some of their influence in the mid twentieth century. Nonetheless, both church and black kinship support continue to be a source of strength for many black families and as Boyd-Franklin (1989) discusses in her book on black families although kinship networks are overall positive they can have negative consequences for some individuals/families due to boundary confusion, secrecy etc.

Hypotheses

Based on the literature reviewed, the following hypotheses were developed:

1. Women with fathers absent during childhood will have lower levels of object relations than women with fathers present during childhood..
2. Women with fathers absent during childhood will have lower self-esteem than women whose fathers were present throughout their childhood.
3. Father present women will have higher levels of separation-individuation as compared to their fatherless counterparts.

CHAPTER II: METHODOLOGY

Subjects

The population under study consisted of 35 young black adult females, 25 from father present families and 10 from father absent families. The majority of subjects were from lower middle class and upper lower class backgrounds. Subjects ranged in age from 18 to 23. This population was chosen because the tasks of late adolescence & young adulthood tap directly into object relations and self-esteem. It is during this period of their lives in particular that individuals' self and self-object representations are called upon to help them successfully make the transition into adulthood proper.

Subjects were recruited by flyers placed throughout City College, from announcements made in psychology classes at City College and the Borough of Manhattan Community College (BMCC), from flyers placed in various locations in black communities, and by word of mouth. All subjects were informed that the study was about families and the impact that their family has had on their individual functioning.

Determination of father absence and father presence was not done a priori but instead was defined by the data insomuch as all subjects supplied information (as solicited in the Background and Demographic Questionnaire) about the amount of contact they had with their fathers and surrogate fathers during childhood. The frequency of contact that each subject indicated that they had had with their father from ages 0-10 was examined and based on overall responses, subjects were eventually placed into either a father absent or a father present group. Subjects who endorsed having had monthly or less contact with their fathers from 0-10 were placed in the father absent group whereas subjects who indicated having had contact with their fathers every two weeks are more

frequently were assigned to the father present group. It is important to note that fathers were defined in this study as either biological, step or surrogate fathers (e.g. any male perceived as a father figure by subject).

All subjects came from backgrounds relatively low/moderate in family violence as indicated by their responses to the modified Family Violence Scale. To meet this criterion and the above mentioned criteria of father absent and father present, there was an over sampling of subjects. The original design of the study involved having 25 father present and 25 father absent subjects, meaning that there was to be an over sampling of subjects until the designated number of appropriate subjects for each respective group was obtained, as those who did not meet study qualifications were screened out. However, it proved to be extremely difficult to recruit enough subjects, 25, who came from backgrounds low in family violence and who had very minimum or no contact with their fathers during their childhood; therefore, after 10 months of recruiting, it was decided that to go forward using the data that had already been collected, which resulted in 25 father present women and 10 father absent women.

General background information was obtained from all subjects via a Demographic & Background Questionnaire. Information obtained from this questionnaire was used to ascertain that father absent subjects' mothers did not become emotionally or physically incapacitated following father's departure, with all subjects being directly asked if their mother was able to function after their father became absent from the family. All father absent subjects reported that their mothers were able to function. The Demographic & Background Questionnaire was used to determine that father absent subjects experienced fatherlessness prior to the age of 7; it was also used to

determine subjects' socioeconomic status during childhood based upon the Hollingshead Social Index Scale and it solicited information about family and household constellation.

Procedure

Subjects were given study packets consisting of all questionnaires which they completed at their leisure. Subjects who were students at either City College or BMCC were informed that she should drop off her completed study packet to a designated box located in their psychology department. For subjects who were not students, a preaddressed stamped envelope was given to them in which they mailed their completed study packet to the investigator. All participants were informed via an introduction letter included in the study packet that the study was an investigation into their family dynamics and how these dynamics impact later adult functioning. See example of study packet in Appendix. Subjects were also told (via introduction letter) that all information was confidential and that all responses were anonymous, with the investigator having no way of identifying or contacting them. Moreover, it was clearly stated in the introduction letter that subjects could withdraw from the study at any time.

At the end of the introduction letter which subjects were told to keep, this investigator's name and contact information as well as general information about the study was listed. The study packet that each subject was asked to complete included a Demographic & Background Questionnaire, the Bell Object Relations Inventory (BORI), the Separation Individuation Test of Adolescence (SIPTA), the modified Family Violence Scale (FVS) and the Rosenberg Self-Esteem Test. Subjects were informed that they needed to complete all measures and that it should not take more than 1½ hours to complete all questionnaires. Subjects were thanked for their participation and informed

that if they had questions about study they could contact the investigator. Also included in the study packet was a resource list of mental health agencies and subjects were told that they should contact one of these resources if they felt especially stressed by questions asked in the study and/or if they wished to further explore their feelings about their fathers, families or their psychological functioning.

Instrumentation

A. Demographic & Background Questionnaire

The Demographic and Background Questionnaire is a 30 item questionnaire that was designed by this investigator. In addition to asking questions about subject's age, race, and ethnicity, and whether or not they were in college, it also asked detailed questions about their family background, the amount of contact they had with their father figure, parents' educational levels and occupations and their relationship with their mother (See Appendix A). Some examples of specific items on the questionnaire are: subjects were requested to say who they lived with throughout their childhood; how long they lived with this person or persons; if their biological father was not in their life where was he; was there anyone else in their life that they perceived as a father figure, if so, from what ages; etc. All subjects were asked to answer all parts of each question as it applied to them. There was also blank space left at the end of the questionnaire for subjects to add any other information that they thought was important to know about their families but had not been asked about.

B. Hollingshead Index of Social Position

The Hollingshead Social Index is a standardized measure of social class which uses a two factor index (education and occupation) to determine socioeconomic status.

Based on an overall score which is determined by a mathematical formula using both education and occupation, one is assigned to a certain class. Occupations are categorized into seven groups ranked according to their level of skill and responsibility. The group assignment number of a particular occupation equals the number of points that someone with that occupation would receive for their occupational score. For example, professions that require a high amount of skill and managerial responsibility are listed in category one and would receive a score of one. Lesser professionals are ranked at level two with a score of two and so on and so forth with the least skilled employees being ranked at level seven, with a score of seven. Educational status is also divided into seven categories and assigned corresponding point values. Individuals with post college education are placed in group one and receive a score of 1 as well. Those with a four year college degree receive a score of two reflective of their group two status whereas those at the low end of the educational hierarchy would consist of individuals who partially completed grammar school. A mathematical formula involving the scores that the person received on education and occupation is then computed and depending on the outcome, the person will be ranked in either class 1, 2, 3, 4 or 5. Class one is representative of the upper social class; class two of the upper middle social class; class 3 the lower middle class; class 4 the upper lower and class 5 the lower lower class (Hollingshead 1958).

C. Family Violence Scale (FVS) –Modified

The Family Violence Scale was developed by Panos Bardis (1973). It is a 25 item self-report instrument designed to measure the degree of verbal and physical violence in an individual's life during childhood (See Appendix B). Each item is rated on a scale of 0

to 4 in terms of whether the situation never occurred (0); very seldom occurred (1); seldom occurred (2); often occurred (3) or very often occurred (4). Cumulative scores range from 0 (least violent) to 100 (most violent). The FVS has been used in various studies examining family violence and psychological functioning (e.g., Johnson 1998; Barnes 1997; Greco 1994; Marks 1987; Marshall 1995).

The advantages of using this scale are multifold: the simplicity of its language, its easy scoring method, its brief completion time, and its focus on childhood family violence. However, because of the nature of this study, this scale (along with other violence/conflict measures, i.e. conflict tactic scales and the interparental conflict scales) does have a shortcoming. It does not take into consideration father absence at a young age, insomuch as an individual's father may have been absent from birth or starting at age two, etc. What this translates into is that for individuals representative of this situation there may not be any conscious recollection of father which would prevent them from answering father specific questions on the scale. Because of this, in conjunction with the fact that there are no demarcations between high, moderate and low levels of family violence, the FVS was modified. Modification occurred by adding a sentence to the instructions stating that subjects should answer questions to the best of their knowledge based on first hand experience or knowledge learned from other sources (e.g. family members).

Lastly, to combat the problem of no severity indicators on the FVS, only items on the scale that clearly identify physical and verbal violence within the family will be used. Based on this determination, only 13 out of the 25 items will be administered to subjects, with the other items being discarded because they assess individuals' world views about

violence. The items selected are all items which specifically ask about a physically or verbally violent act committed by either parent. Subjects who rate any one of these items as often or very often will be considered to come from highly violent families versus subjects from not highly violent families, those who rate items as very seldom or seldom. All subjects deemed to come from highly violent families will be screened out of the study.

D. Rosenberg's Self-Esteem Scale (RSES)

The Rosenberg Self-Esteem test is a widely used measure of global self-esteem. It consists of 10 statements measuring individual's attitudes about themselves (See Appendix C). The items are rated according to a four-point likert-scale, ranging from strongly agree to strongly disagree. The scale is scored by assigning point values to each response. The highest point value is 30, representing very high self-esteem. The SES has been administered to diverse groups and has been found to have good reliability and validity.

E. Bell Object Relations Inventory (BORI)

The Bell Object Relations Inventory (BORI) is a component of the larger Bell Object Relations and Reality Testing Inventory (BORRTI). The complete test consists of two parts. One part measures object relations and the second part examines various aspects of reality testing (i.e. hallucinations and delusions, reality distortion). Only the BORI (see Appendix D) will be used for this study, based on the idea that "formative relationships with early caregivers become incorporated into a sense of self and influence subsequent development and relationships (Lyddon, Bradford & Nelson 1993)." The BORI is a 45 item self-report (true-false) inventory developed from object relations

theory and designed to measure individuals' general capacity for interpersonal interactions and self-other organization. The BORI taps into individuals' internal self-object templates or self-other representations which are derived from experiences early in life with caregivers, as it is believed that "personality develops from experiences in early childhood relationships and produce internal self-other representations [that] serve as templates for contemporary experience (Bell, Billington & Becker 1986). The BORI actually examines four dimensions of object relations: Alienation, Insecurity, Egocentricity and Social Competence. All four subscales have been found to be statistically valid, to have good internal consistency and have been tested on both clinical and nonclinical populations (Bell, Billington & Becker 1986). The subscale of Alienation examines one's inability to achieve trust, closeness, and intimacy with others. Anxiety, excessive concern about being rejected by others and the ability to tolerate loss is measured by the Insecurity subscale. The Egocentricity subscale refers to the manipulation of others for one's own ego gratification and the existence of others only in relation to oneself. Lastly, problems with shyness, difficulty forming close relationships, comfort level with interacting with the opposite sex and unsatisfactory sexual adjustment are all examined by the Social Incompetence subscale (Bell et al. 1986; Buelow, McClain & McIntosh 1996 p. 615).

The BORI has been used in numerous studies such as investigating the relationship of self and family organization, identity and interpersonal attachment in college women (Deason & Randolph 1998); measuring object relations and self-representations in individuals from dysfunctional families (Hadley, Holloway & Mallinckrodt 1993); with eating disorders, with most of the findings indicating a positive

correlation between the severity of the eating disorder and object relations disturbances. There have also been numerous dissertation studies conducted with the BORI. Populations studied include private preparatory high school males (Bessetta 1987), depressives (Gibbs 1989), adult children of alcoholics (source), mother-daughter dyads (Sarf 1988) etc. Individuals' scores on all four factors are analyzed to understand their levels of objects relatedness as opposed to one object relation score being determined.

F. The Separation Individuation Test of Adolescence (SITA)

The SITA is a 103 item self-report measure created by Levine, Green & Millon (1986) aimed at investigating the intrapsychic phenomenon of separation-individuation as first conceived by Mahler in her description of the process of separation-individuation in early childhood (See Appendix E). As noted elsewhere in this study, "others have analogized Mahler's schema to the adolescent separation process, noting parallels in both normal and pathological developments (Levine, Green & Millon 1986, p. 123)." In conceptualizing the SITA, Levine et al. (1986) strove to develop an objective measure to validate the phase specific progressions postulated by Mahler and to examine how later developmental periods are influenced by earlier childhood separation-individuation phases as specified by Mahler. Taking this into consideration, Levine et al. identified six basic dimensions (nurturance-symbiosis, engulfment anxiety, separation anxiety, need denial, self-centeredness and healthy separation) of adolescent separation which have since evolved into the nine subscales of the SITA. The SITA unlike other separation-individuation measures is not limited to assessment of parent-child relationship but also investigates the adolescent relationships in general to significant others, especially those

in authority and peers. The nine subscales are as follows (Jones et al. 2003; Levine, Green & Millon 1986; Quintana & Kerr 1993):"

1. Nurturance-Seeking (caretaker enmeshment)–evaluates the dependency needs of adolescents. Individuals who score high on this subscale seek close, enmeshed relationships denoting "underlying feelings of merging, fusing and in some way achieving a sense of oneness with the other person (Levine et al. 1986, p. 125)."

2. Engulfment Anxiety – examines the level of fear adolescents experience in close interpersonal relationships which threatens their sense of autonomy and selfhood. "Adolescents with a high degree of this anxiety may feel controlled, overpowered or enveloped within the context of interpersonal relationships (Jones et al. 2003, p. 90)."

3. Peer Enmeshment – examines the adolescent's strivings for fusion, merging, and sense of oneness with peers.

4. Teacher Enmeshment – evaluates individual's strivings for fusion, merging and sense of oneness with teachers.

5. Practicing Mirroring – examines adolescent's narcissistic strivings which is often simultaneously reinforced by the mirroring responses of others.

6. Dependency Denial – measures the degree to which individuals defend against separation anxiety by denying or avoiding dependency need.

7. Rejection Expectancy – evaluates the degree to which the adolescent experiences others as callous and hostile, and expects rejection from significant others.

8. Separation Anxiety – measures the adolescent's fear of losing emotional or physical contact with a significant other.

9. Healthy Separation –measures the adolescent's progress toward resolution of the conflicts associated with separation-individuation. Higher scores on this subscale reflect an appreciation of both dependency and independence needs and similarities with and differences from others. Attaining this developmental milestone is indicative of a sense of whole selfhood and the experience of others as separate distinct objects "which allows [for] involvement in interpersonal relationships where one's individuality and sense of separateness are not threatened and where dependency needs can be met without fear of engulfment or abandonment (Jones et al. 2003, p. 81)."

The SITA has been widely used to measure the process of separation-individuation in adolescents (e.g., Gnaulati & Heine 2001; Holmbeck & Leake 1999; Jones et al. 2003). The SITA has been found to have adequate validity (Levine, Green & Millon 1986; Lopez & Gover 1993; Jones et al. 2003). All items on the SITA are rated on a 5-point Likert scale, ranging from, strongly agree or always true for you (5) to strongly disagree or never true for you (1). All subscales of the SITA tap into aspects of the separation-individuation process and are examined individually to understand a respondent's experience of separation-individuation, with higher scores on a particular subscale reflecting a higher degree of separation-individuation manifestation as defined by that subscale.

Please refer to Appendix for review of all test measures.

CHAPTER III: RESULTS

Demographic Variables

There were a total of 35 females (N=35) with a mean age of 20 who participated in this study. All subjects self-identified as black females, with varying ethnicities. Twenty four subjects, 68.6%, chose African American as their ethnicity; eight of the women (22.9%) identified as Caribbean /West Indian; one subject chose African as her ethnicity; one Hispanic and one reported her ethnicity as multiracial. Almost all of the subjects (29) were in college or had graduated from college, 92% of the father present women and 60% of the father absent women. This 32% difference between the two groups was found to be significant (chi square=5.149, df=1, p=.02), however, a Pearson correlation showed that this variable was not correlated to any of the outcome measures of self-esteem, object relations and separation individuation, as all p>.05. See table 1. One of the subscales of the SITA (rejection expectancy), however, showed that there may be a near significant trend (p=.072) between this outcome variable and education, but because of the small sample size of this study, this could very well be due to chance.

Results on the Hollingshead's Index of Social Status, which uses two index factors, head of household's educational level and occupation, to determine socioeconomic status, show that the majority of the women in this study, 40% and 34.3%, respectively, came from lower middle class and upper lower class backgrounds. These women's parents' educational levels ranged from advanced degrees to some high school and their occupations ranged from civil engineering to baby sitting. Only one woman, though, met criteria for class one on the Hollingshead SES scale which is the upper social class; five additional women came from upper middle class backgrounds and three from the lowest socioeconomic class. Table 2 reveals that when socioeconomic status is

analyzed by groups, the means of the father-present and the father-absent groups (3.36 and 3.40 respectively) are almost equal. A t-test of equality of means failed to show that socioeconomic status was significant ($p=.912$, $p>.05$), meaning that socioeconomic status did not affect the outcome on any of the three dependent measures (The BORI, Rosenberg's Self-Esteem Scale & the SITA) or stated differently, socioeconomic status is not a confounding variable.

All subjects sorted into the father absent group reported that while their mothers may have been upset about their biological father's departure from their lives, she was nevertheless able to function. Although the word "function" was not defined explicitly, it was presumed that subjects would interpret the word at face value. Mother's ability to function after father's departure was a study criterion, as was low levels of family violence. All 35 subjects, as measured on the Family Violence Scale, reported having minimum to no family violence.

Descriptive statistics further revealed that 30 of the subjects had siblings and five were only children. Specifically, 22 of the father present women had siblings and only eight of the father absent women. A chi-square test, though, revealed that whether one had a sibling or not did not influence the outcomes on the dependent measures ($p=.541$). Two other descriptive variables assessed on the Demographic and Background Questionnaire, father's emotional involvement and quality of relationship with mother, were also examined. Subjects' subjective experience of their fathers (biological, step and surrogate) as being emotionally involved was found to be quite significant, as 65.7% of the subjects reported that they experienced their fathers as emotionally involved. Specifically, 92% of the father present women experienced their fathers as being

emotionally involved with them while a 100% of the father absent women reported that their fathers were not emotionally involved. These respective percentages help to validate that subjects were sorted into the proper group of father present or father absent, as one expect that fathers who are not in their offspring's life would not be emotionally involved with them whereas fathers who are present in their daughters' lives would be expected to be emotionally involved.

The majority of subjects, 63%, in the study also expressed having a very good relationship with their mothers, with 14% rating it as being good and 22% rating it as okay (neither good nor bad). No subject rated their relationship with their mother as poor or very poor. Father present women had a mean of 1.48 and father absent women a mean of 1.90 on this variable, suggesting that father absent women viewed their relationships with their mothers as slightly worse. However, this small difference was not found to be statistically significant, p=.189. Quality of maternal relationship was therefore not deemed to be a confounding variable.

Subjects were assigned to either one of two groups (father present or father absent) based on the frequency of contact that they reported having had with their fathers (biological, step, or surrogate) during childhood, ages 0 – 10. Twenty five of the 35 women indicated that between the ages of 0 to 10, they had weekly to biweekly contact with either their biological father, stepfather or surrogate father; whereas the remaining 10 subjects reported that during childhood they met with their biological father either once a month, once a year, rarely or never. For the majority of these 10 women, there were no other men in their lives who they viewed as a father figure. The 25 women who endorsed biweekly or more frequent contact with their fathers were assigned to the father

present group and the remaining 10 women who indicated monthly or less frequent contact with their fathers were assigned to the father absent group. See table 3. Although 25 of the women had regular contact with their biological fathers (weekly or biweekly) only 14 of these women's biological parents were married/or together throughout their childhoods. Another 10 subjects' biological parents were divorced or separated, while two biological fathers were in prison and two had died during subjects' childhood. The status of three of the subjects' biological fathers was unknown.

Statistical Analysis of Hypothesis 1

Hypothesis 1 stated that women with fathers absent during childhood would have lower levels of object relations as measured by the Bell Object Relations Inventory (BORI).

The means on each respective subscale of the BORI were found to be almost identical (see table 4). The multivariate t-test of statistical significance also indicated that, taking the four BORI outcome variables together, the two groups of women (father present & father absent) do not differ significantly ($F=.39$, $df=(4, 30)$, $p=.81$). To account for the possibility that this test may not have had enough power because of the small sample size, which could have led to the results not being statistically significant, four univariate tests were done. These univariate t-tests analyzed each outcome variable of the BORI (subscales) individually and found that all $p>.05$ (see table 4). Moreover, four effect size measures (partial eta squared) were conducted to rule out the effects of sample size, i.e. partial eta squared does not take sample size into account when testing for effects between means. Partial eta squared was used to characterize the magnitude of the differences between the father present and father absent groups' mean scores, so each

BORI measure each suggests that these mean differences are small or even very small. Partial eta squared equals .003, .008, .044 and .000 for the respective BORI subscales of Alienation, Insecure Attachment, Egocentricity and Social Incompetence. These three statistical tests all indicate that the null hypothesis is true and there is no significant difference in object relations between the two groups.

Statistical Analysis of Hypothesis 2

Hypothesis two stated that women with fathers absent during childhood would have lower self-esteem than father present women as measured by Rosenberg's Self-Esteem Scale.

Hypothesis two was also found to not be significant (F=1.05, df= (1, 33), p=.31, es=.03). On the dependent variable of self-esteem, father-present women had a mean of 24.72 and father-absent women a mean of 23.10 but again these means were not statistically significant (p=.31). Moreover, the effect size statistic is consistent with the significance test because it showed only a small effect size. Hence there is no statistical difference in self-esteem between the father absent and father present women.

Statistical Analysis of Hypothesis 3

The third hypothesis of this study stated that father-present women would have higher levels of separation-individuation as compared by their fatherless counterparts when measured by the Separation-Individuation Test of Adolescence (SITA).

On the SITA, which had nine subscales, the multivariate t-test of the group effect was not statistically significant (F=.35, df= (9, 25), p=.95) indicating that the two groups of women do not differ with regard to the entire set of separation-individuation subscales. The nine univariate significance tests (see table 5) of the SITA outcome variables also

support the conclusion that there is no significant mean differences between the father present and father absent groups. With regard to the effect size statistics (partial eta squared), one can observe that, with the exception of "Rejection Expectancy" outcome variable, these statistics indicate that the mean differences are quite small. For the rejection expectancy variable, there is a moderate sized effect on the mean difference between the father-present and father-absent groups (i.e. father-absent mean 22.33 vs. father-present mean 18.90).

In conclusion, statistical analysis of the data did not support any of the hypotheses. There was no significant difference as measured by multivariate and univariate t-tests between the father present group and the father absent group in terms of object relations, self-esteem or separation-individuation. The effect sized statistics of partial eta squared also found very small effects, which is equivalent to no significance, between the two groups' means on both the outcome measures of object relations and self-esteem. This test also found very small effects between the means of the two groups on eight of the subscales of the SITA. However, partial eta squared showed a very moderate difference between means on the ninth subscale of the SITA, the Rejection Expectancy subscale.

Table 1: Correlations of College Variable and Outcome Measures

		RECORDED COLLEGE V ARIABLE
ROSENBERG SELF ESTEEM	Pearson Correlation Sig. (2-tailed)	.192 .270
BORI: ALIENATION	Pearson Correlation Sig. (2-tailed)	.072 .683
BORI: INSECURE ATTACHMENT	Pearson Correlation Sig. (2-tailed)	.029 .869
BORI: EGOCENTRICITY	Pearson Correlation Sig. (2-tailed)	-.134 .444
BORI: SOCIAL COMPETENCE	Pearson Correlation Sig. (2-tailed)	-.037 .835
SITA: ENGULFMENT ANXIETY	Pearson Correlation Sig. (2-tailed)	.166 .340
SITA: PRACTICING MIRRORING	Pearson Correlation Sig. (2-tailed)	.092 .598
SITA: DEPENDENCY DENIAL	Pearson Correlation Sig. (2-tailed)	-.101 .563
SITA: SEPARATION ANXIETY	Pearson Correlation Sig. (2-tailed)	.030 .865
SITA: TEACHER ENMESHMENT	Pearson Correlation Sig. (2-tailed)	-.011 .948
SITA: PEER ENMESHMENT	Pearson Correlation Sig. (2-tailed)	.078 .658
SITA: NURTURANCE OR CARETAKER ENMESHMENT	Pearson Correlation Sig. (2-tailed)	-.022 .898
SITA: HEALTHY SEPARATION	Pearson Correlation Sig. (2-tailed)	.257 .137
SITA: REJECTION EXPECTANCY	Pearson Correlation Sig. (2-tailed)	-.308 .072

N=35

Table 2: Group Statistics for Demographic Variables of Age, Hollingshead SES and Quality of Relationship with Mother

Demographic Variable	GROUP	N	Mean	Std Deviation
AGE	Father Present	25	20.36	2.059
	Father Absent	10	19.90	1.663
				.860
HOLLINGSHEAD SES	Father Present	25	3.36	1.174
	Father Absent	10	3.40	
QUALITY OF MOTHER RELATIONSHIP	Father Present	25	1.48	.770
	Father Absent	10	1.90	.994

Table 3: Amount of Contact with Father Figure in Childhood 0-10) Crosstabulation

FATHER TYPE AMOUNT OF CONTACT		GROUP FATHER PRESENT	FATHER ABSENT	TOTAL
Biological Dad Weekly	Count	17	0	17
	% within Group	68.0%	0%	48.5 %
Biological Dad Monthly	Count	0	1	1
	% within Group	.0%	10%	2.9%
Biological Dad Yearly	Count	0	2	2
	% within Group	.0%	20.0%	5.7%
Biological Dad Rarely/ Not at all	Count	0	6	6
	% within Group	.0%	60.0%	17.1%
Step Dad Weekly	Count	1	0	1
	% within Group	4.0%	.0%	2.9%
Step Dad Yearly	Count	0	0	0
	% within Group	.0%	.0%	.0%
Surrogate Dad Weekly	Count	3	0	3
	% within Group	12.0%	.0%	8.6%
Surrogate Dad Monthly	Count	0	1	1
	% within Group	.0%	10.0%	2.9%
Biological Dad q2wks & Surrogate Dad Weekly	Count	1	0	1
	% within Group	4.0%	.0%	2.9%
Biological Dad Monthly & Step Dad Weekly	Count	1	0	1
	% within Group	4.0%	.0%	2.9%
Biological Dad & Step Dad Weekly	Count	2	0	2
	% within Group	8.0%	.0%	5.7%
TOTAL	Count	25	10	35
	% within Group	100.0%	100%	100%

q=every

Table 4: Univariate t-tests – Descriptive Statistics, Statistical Significance Tests, and Effects Sizes of the BORI

Depependent Variables	GROUP	Mean	Std Deviation	df	F Values	Signi-ficance	Partial Eta Squared
BORI: Alienation	FATHER PRESENT	49.24	8.609	1, 33	.091	.765	.003
	FATHER ABSENT	50.40	13.770				
BORI: Insecure Attachment	FATHER PRESENT	46.40	8.175	1, 33	.267	.609	.008
	FATHER ABSENT	48.30	13.275				
BORI: Egocentricity	FATHER PRESENT	47.52	8.181	1, 33	1.529	.225	.044
	FATHER ABSENT	51.50	9.641				
BORI: Social Incompetence	FATHER PRESENT	47.72	9.039	1, 33	.001	.982	.000
	FATHER ABSENT	47.80	10.696				

Table 5: Univariate t-tests –Statistical Significance Tests and Effect Sizes of the SITA

Dependent Variable	df	F value	P Value	Partial Eta Squared
SITA: Engulfment Anxiety	1, 33	.343	.562	.010
SITA: Practicing Mirroring	1, 33	.071	.791	.002
SITA: Dependency Denial	1, 33	.802	.377	.024
SITA: Separation Anxiety	1, 33	.611	.440	.018
SITA: Teacher Enmeshment	1, 33	.083	.774	.003
SITA: Peer Enmeshment	1, 33	.003	.960	.000
SITA: Nurturance or Caretaker	1, 33	.246	.623	.007
SITA: Healthy Separation	1, 33	.000	.998	.000
SITA: Rejection Expectancy	1, 33	2.427	.129	.068*

*The Rejection Expectancy variable while not significant at p.05 level does show a moderate sized effect mean difference between the father-present and father-absent groups on Partial Eta Squared

CHAPTER IV: DISCUSSION

This study sought to investigate the influence that black fathers, either through their presence or absence, had on their daughter's psychological functioning in terms of self-esteem, object relations and the process of separation-individuation. It was presupposed, based on psychoanalytic literature, that fathers are important to their children's early development (ages 0-6) and that their presence and their interactions with their daughters gets internalized, helping to lay the foundation for healthy self-esteem, healthy relations with others later in life and helping to generate a more developed sense of self. This presupposition was the crux of the three hypotheses which were made about the women in this study. It was hypothesized that there would be a significant difference between both groups of women on all dependent measures, specifically that women whose fathers were absent during their childhood would have lower levels of object relations; lower self-esteem; and be less separated and individuated than women from father present childhoods.

As reported in the results section, none of the hypotheses were proven to be statistically significant; but there was a moderate size effect between the means of the two groups of women on the Rejection Expectancy dimension of the SITA. The Rejection Expectancy subscale refers to the psychological experience one has of others as being uncaring, hostile and rejecting, especially significant others. This moderate effect size, one could speculate, speaks to the idea that if one experiences father absence early in life, the abandonment is experienced intrapsychically, shaping that person's internal object world and sensitivity to perceived rejection. Nevertheless, because there was only one moderate effect size on only one dimension of the SITA, the idea that a relationship

with father creates a template from which the offspring interacts with others later in life must be cautiously held.

The Rejection Expectancy mean for the father absent group (22.33) is quite similar to the Rejection Expectancy mean (22.54) of a group of 61 heterogeneous African American undergraduate students, who had the highest score on this variable, in comparison to their Caucasian, Asian and Hispanic counterparts in a study (Gnaulati & Heine 2001) investigating gender and ethnic differences in separation-individuation in late adolescence. Conversely, the mean score (18.89) of the father present group of women in this study was slightly lower than the mean (19.54) of the Caucasian group of students, who scored the lowest on this variable, in the above referenced study. In their study, Gnaulati & Heine surmised that the difference between blacks and whites' scores on the Rejection Expectancy variable may be due to the "adverse impact of racial discrimination on their self-esteem, internalized as a general predisposition to expect rejection and negative evaluation (p. 5)." In this study, though, that does not hold true, as one could argue that both groups of women being black and similar in social class would have encountered similar levels of societal racism. Another explanation, put forward by this investigator, which considers both the fact that black children are exposed to racial discrimination and their fathers influence, is that it is father's presence in his daughter's life that somehow compensated for the racial discrimination experienced by the father present women, which would result in them having lower expectations of being rejected by others. One could also argue that it was the possible greater inclusion of black students with histories of father absence that may have resulted in the Rejection

Expectancy scores for the group of African American students in Gnaulati & Heine's study.

On the remainder of the SITA dimensions, the group means of the women were almost equivalent to the group means of the black heterogeneous sample in Gnaulati & Heine's study and they were similar to a non-clinical sample that was administered the SITA (Levine, Green & Million 1986). Both groups of women in this study, though, as with the group of African American students in Gnaulati & Heine's study, had means higher (28.96 & 27.14 respectively) than the Caucasian group of students on Engulfment Anxiety: the Caucasian students' group mean equaled 23.69 compared to the African American students' mean of 28.32. On the SITA dimension of Nurturance/Caretaker Enmeshment, the father present and father absent women also had higher means (33.15 & 34.25 respectively) than Gnaulati & Heine's Caucasian students (27.23) but roughly equal to the African American students' mean (32.55). This seems to support the belief that blacks are more emotionally attached to, entwined with and dependent on their families in comparison to whites. One could speculate that this is due to blacks historically needing to foster closer family ties and dependence to help offset some of the effects of racism/slavery, as well as the reliance and guidance from family observed in many black families may be part of their African heritage.

For the BORI, neither the overall mean of the group of women as a whole, the father present group or the father absent group had an elevated score. An elevated score on any BORI subscale is one that is equal to or greater than 60 which would indicate that the person had poor object relations as defined by a particular subscale. Interestingly, both the father present and father absent women had slightly lower scores than the

student sample that the test was initially administered to (Bell 1995). Hence this would suggest that overall this group of women had fairly good object relations, as defined by the BORI. It may be that for the father absent subjects the quality of their relationships with their mothers and the fact that most of them also lived with at least one other adult aided them in developing healthier levels of self-esteem and object relations than normally would have been expected. In fact, four out of 10 of the father absent subjects lived with at least two adults: mother & grandmother; mother, aunt & grandmother; grandmother & aunt; and mother & aunt. The presence of another adult, different from mother/primary caretaker, who had daily contact with the subject as a child, due to their close proximity, may not only have helped facilitate healthier object relations and self-esteem in the subject, but may also have helped the child to create psychic space in which to experience herself as separate and different from mother, thus facilitating the separation-individuation process.

Concomitantly, although the presence of siblings was not statistically controlled for; that is to say that it is possible that those subjects with older brothers, who had minimum/no contact with their biological fathers and stated that there were no other males in their lives whom they perceived as a father figure, may have nevertheless unconsciously experienced their older brother as a father figure, especially as six of these subjects reported having older brothers. Stated differently, having an older brother in their lives may have mitigated the effects of their not having had a father. Additionally, as this sample overwhelmingly consisted of students, it may be that they, especially the father absent group, had to have fairly good object relations, self-esteem and be fairly separated and individuated in order to get themselves into college and succeed; whereas

father absent women who had not been to college might have shown more significant differences between themselves and father present women.

It should also be added that failure to obtain significant differences between the two groups of women may be explained by the quality of the relationship that the women had with their fathers. While emotional involvement was measured, the actual quality of the relationship subjects had with their fathers was not, and it may be that women who had fathers in their lives may not necessarily have had a good relationship with their father, although he was emotionally involved. Hence because of possible poor relationships with their fathers, these subjects could actually be more similar to the father present group of women.

Historically, examinations of internal stimuli have relied primarily on projective measures, but with the advent of more empirically driven tests aimed at studying psychological functioning, it was believed that the phenomena under study would be more accurately measured. In other words, objective tests have very good face validity. Yet, even though these tests directly ask about what they're measuring, this in of itself may paradoxically generate invalid responses (Masling 2002). Respondents may get stirred up by the material and defend against it or respondents may answer test questions in socially desirable ways in order to make themselves look better, hence faking their responses (Borstein, Rossner et al. 1994; Huang, Liao & Chang 1998). Likewise, as all of the tests in this study were self-report measures, it is conceivable that some subjects may have given socially desirable responses and/or they may have been emotionally threatened by the questions asked, possibly causing them to defend against the material.

Both of these possibilities could have led to the insignificant outcomes obtained in this study.

Limitations of Study

While this study was unique in its purpose, there were unfortunately several inherent limitations to the study which most likely impacted the outcome. The most glaring limitation, of course, is the very small sample size. This no doubt greatly compromised the results that were received and most likely precluded any statistical significance from being obtained on any of the outcome measures. Also some of the variables (presence of older brothers and other older adults living in household) that were discussed earlier, that may have also confounded the study, were not able to be statistically analyzed because of the small sample size and subsequent small cell sizes.

Another limitation was that the study did not examine the whole family unit and instead made hypotheses based on one parent's interactions or lack of interactions with their child. Much of the early research and psychoanalytic literature on understanding adolescent/adult functioning has focused primarily, with a few exceptions as noted elsewhere in this study, on the mother-child dyad, thus ignoring the role of fathers. Conversely, in this study mothers and their influence on their offspring's development have been more or less ignored, the only exception being the assessment of the quality of the mother-daughter relationship and mother's functioning after biological father's departure, which was used as a screen out variable. In actuality, it is a combination of mother and father's relationship with the child that shapes intrapsychic functioning as well as lays the foundation for later psychological development. Because mothers' involvement with their daughters was not examined, it is unknown how much of the

outcome on the three dependent measures in this study is due solely to father's presence/absence or to mother's influence or some combination of the two.

The expansive definition used for father presence in this study resulted in this investigator having an abundance of subjects meeting criteria for the father present group compared to the small percentage of subjects recruited who indicated that they had no to limited contact with their biological fathers during childhood and no surrogate fathers. This inclusive definition for father presence is unique and was originally thought to serve the purpose of reflecting the complicated family constellations of blacks and the fact that although some blacks may not have had fathers in their lives there were other men (like mother's boyfriend, etc.) whom they viewed and experienced as father figures. In trying to denote this aspect of black family life, this investigator may not have truly represented women whose biological/step fathers were present throughout their childhood and the effect that this had on their psychological functioning and development. Fortunately since over 60% of the women in the father present group indicated that they had regular contact with their biological fathers throughout their childhood, this issue is not paramount.

Despite this, one wonders if the definition of father presence was too broad, including surrogate fathers as well as biological and stepfathers. Surrogate fathers in this study included anyone that the subject perceived as a father figure during childhood: uncles, brothers, male family friends, etc., but is viewing your uncle or older brother as a father figure the same as having a relationship with one's biological father/stepfather or even mother's boyfriend? Some would say yes the relationship is the same, but the psychic space that a father holds in a person's life one would imagine is different from

the psychic space that a brother or uncle would hold, even if viewed as a father figure. Uncles, brothers, family friends, ministers etc. all have a different type of emotional relationship with mother and it is the mother-father-child triad, which exists both externally in the environment and internally within the mother's psyche that has an influence on the way the mother interacts with the child. It may be that significant results would have been found between purer cases of father present subjects, those who had regular contact with their biological/stepfathers, compared to those in the father absent group who had minimum to no contact with their biological fathers. This, though, introduces another quandary insomuch as some research (Kellam et. al 1977) has noted that many black family structures are very complicated and that the majority of black families do not adhere to the more traditional model of family. But, by controlling for this to ensure purer cases of father presence, one's subject pool may be greatly reduced and would not truly reflect the reality of many black families.

In summary, the investigation into the object relations, self-esteem and separation-individuation process of women from father present and father absent backgrounds revealed no statistical significant differences between the two groups of women. One of the main reasons why these results probably were obtained is due to the very small sample size that was used in the study (25 father present women compared to 10 father absent women). However, when sample size was statistically not taken into consideration, a moderate sized effect was shown on one dimension of separation-individuation, the Rejection Expectancy subscale. The outcome of this study suggests that maybe healthy object relations, positive self-esteem and a well-developed sense of

self may (when father is absent) be influenced by the presence of other individuals like older brothers or other adults living in the house.

Suggestions for Future Research

Given the complications of this study and the questions raised in an attempt to better comprehend the outcome of the study, more research is needed about black families and how these family structures might affect certain psychological phenomena in black children/adolescents/adults. It would also be important to examine different types of father figures, including secondary paternal figures as well as to assess both mothers and fathers influence. Finally, this investigator strongly feels that the study undertaken here should be duplicated with a much larger sample size and with a better balance of college and non college students in both the father absent and father present groups.

APPENDIX A: DEMOGRAPHIC & BACKGROUND QUESTIONNAIRE

DEMOGRAPHIC & BACKGROUND QUESTIONNAIRE

(Please read carefully and answer all parts of each question as they apply to you)

1. Age _____

2. Are you in college? **Yes** _____ **No**_____

3. Did you live with both your mother & father (or stepfather) throughout your childhood?
   Yes _____ **No** _____

4. State how old you were when you started and stopped living with both your mother & biological father (for example from birth to 7, from birth to 10, from birth to 18 etc.)? _____
   _____

5. If you had a stepfather how old were you when you started and stopped living with mother & stepfather? _____

6. If you did not live with both of your parents (including stepfather) during childhood who did you live with for most of your childhood/life_____
   _____
   _____

   a) how long did you live with them?_____
   _____
   _____

   b) how old were you when you started and stopped living with this person(s)? _____
   _____

7. If you lived with only your mother, where was your biological father? **Circle one answer**

   a. parents divorced/separated
   b. father abandoned family
   c. father died
   d. father in prison
   e. other _____ (fill in blank)

8. To the best of your knowledge when your biological father became absent from the family, how did it affect your mother? **Circle the one answer that fits best.**
   a. no effect
   b. she was upset but **able to function**
   c. she was/became **unable to function**

9. If she became unable to function and care for the family how long did this last?_____
   _____
   _____

10. If your biological father or stepfather was not in your life, was there anyone in your life that you perceived as a father figure (**a surrogate father**)? **Yes** _____ **No** _____

    a. what was this person's relation to you (i.e. uncle, grandfather, older brother, mother's boyfriend, etc.)?_____
    _____

b. how many years did you perceive this person as a father figure (surrogate father)?_____

c. how old were you at the start and end of this relationship with surrogate father?

Please use this scale to answer questions 11-16. Use scale to determine how much contact you had with each person and write in corresponding letter.

A=weekly
B=every 2weeks
C=monthly
D=twice a month
E=yearly (i.e. once/twice a year)
F=rarely or not at all
G=no stepfather
H=no surrogate father

11. How much contact did you have with your **biological father between the ages of 0-10?** ___

12. How much contact did you have with your **biological father between the ages of 10-18?**___

13. How much contact did you have with your **stepfather between the ages of 0-10?** ____

14. How much contact did you have with your **stepfather between the ages of 10-18?**____

15. How much contact did you have with your **surrogate father between the ages of 0-10?**____

16. How much contact did you have with your **surrogate father between the ages of 10-18?**___

Please use the scale below to answer questions 17-19. Use scale to determine how emotionally involved each person was with you. Make sure to write in the blank space the letter that corresponds to the amount of emotional closeness person had with you.

J=very involved
K=involved
L=somewhat involved
M=not emotionally involved
N=no stepfather
O=no surrogate father

17. How emotionally involved with you was your biological father?_____

18. How emotionally involved with you was your stepfather?_____

19. How emotionally involved with you was your surrogate father?_____

20. How would you rate the overall quality of your relationship with your mother?
Good ____ Very good_____ Okay (not good/bad)_____ Poor_____ Very poor____

21. Were your parents married or living together at the time of your birth? Yes_____ No_____

22. What is the total number of years your parents were married or lived together? If parents are still married/together put total number of years married/together_____

23. Who else resided in your household during most of your childhood? (please list everyone who lived with you, i.e. mother, father, uncles, aunts, grandmother/father, brothers, sisters, etc.)

_____
_____
_____
_____

24. If you had sisters and brothers who lived with you please indicate their position in the family (e.g. one brother 2 years older than me, sister one year younger etc.)._____
_____
_____
_____
_____

25. For most of your childhood did you live in your parents house or someone else's?
Lived in parent household_____ Lived in someone else's household_____

a. please say whose household this was (grandparent, uncle, cousin etc)? _____
_____

b. how old you were when you started and ended living there? _____
_____

Please use the scale below to answer question 26.
A=some high school **D=graduated from college**
B=graduated from high school **E=attended/completed graduate school (MA, Ph.D etc.)**
C=some college

26. During your childhood what was the educational level of your _____?
mother_____ stepfather_____
biological father_____ surrogate father _____

27. Please state the type of work your mother, father, stepfather and surrogate father did during your childhood? _____
_____
_____
_____

28. What country were you born in? _____

29. Do you identify yourself as a black person? _____Yes _____No

30. What is your ethnicity (Check only one)?
___African American ____African ___Other (_____)
___Caribbean /West Indian ____Hispanic Please write in ethnicity

PLEASE MAKE SURE YOU ANSWERED ALL PARTS OF EACH QUESTION!!

If there is anything else that you think is important to know about your family in regards to these questions, please write it here and on back of this page.

APPENDIX B: FAMILY VIOLENCE SCALE (FVS)

A Family Violence Scale

Below is a list of questions concerning family violence. Please read *all* questions very carefully and respond to *all* of them honestly. Answer all questions based on your knowledge of your family, based on first hand experience or knowledge learned from other sources (e.g. family members). Do this by reading each question and then writing, in the space provided at its left, only one of the following numbers: 0, 1, 2, 3, 4. The meaning of each of these figures is **0-Never; 1-Very seldom; 2-Seldom; 3-Often; 4-Very often.**

For research purposes, you must consider all questions as they are, without modifying any of them in any way. Remember that all questions refer to *your own* family during your childhood.

____ 1. Did your father beat you?
____ 2, Did your father seriously threaten physical violence against you?
____ 3. Did your mother use really violent language in dealing with your father?
____ 4. Did your father use really violent language in dealing with your mother?
____ 5. Did your mother throw or break things in violent anger?
____ 6. Did your father throw or break things in violent anger?
____ 7. Did your father seriously threaten physical violence against your mother?
____ 8. Did your mother seriously threaten physical violence against your father?
____ 9. Did your mother use really violent language in dealing with you?
____ 10. Did your father use really violent language in dealing with you?
____ 11. Did your mother beat your father?
____ 12. Did your father beat your mother?
____ 13. Did your mother beat you.

APPENDIX C: ROSENBERG'S SELF ESTEEM SCALE (RSES)

HOW I FEEL ABOUT MYSELF

Please circle the answer beneath each statement that you think best applies to you. Answer the best you can, making sure not to skip any.

1. On the whole, I am satisfied with myself.

Strongly Agree Agree Disagree Strongly Disagree

2. At times I think I am no good at all.

Strongly Agree Agree Disagree Strongly Disagree

3. I feel that I have a number of good qualities.

Strongly Agree Agree Disagree Strongly Disagree

4. I am able to do things as well as most other people.

Strongly Agree Agree Disagree Strongly Disagree

5. I feel I do not have much to be proud of.

Strongly Agree Agree Disagree Strongly Disagree

6. I certainly feel useless at times.

Strongly Agree Agree Disagree Strongly Disagree

7. I feel that I am a person of worth, at least equal to others.

Strongly Agree Agree Disagree Strongly Disagree

8. I wish I could have more respect for myself.

Strongly Agree Agree Disagree Strongly Disagree

9. All in all, I am inclined to feel that I am a failure.

Strongly Agree Agree Disagree Strongly Disagree

10. I take a positive attitude toward myself.

Strongly Agree Agree Disagree Strongly Disagree

APPENDIX D: BELL OBJECT RELATIONS INVENTORY (BORI)

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BORRTI Form O

Microcomputer Answer Sheet

Morris D. Bell, Ph.D.

Directions

First fill in the background information. (If you don't know your ID Number, ask your examiner.) Next, read each item with care, then fill in the circle that shows your answer. Respond according to your most recent experience. If a statement tends to be true for you, mark the circle in the column labeled True. If a statement tends to be false for you, mark the circle in the column labeled False. Fill in only one circle for each statement. Please try to respond to all the statements.

Name: _____

ID Number: _____ Age: _____

Education: _____ Ethnicity:

Gender: ☐ Male ☐ Female

☐ Asian ☐ Hispanic
☐ Black ☐ Native American
☐ White
☐ Other _____

Administration Date: _____

Examiner Name: _____

	True	False	
1.	Ⓣ	Ⓕ	I have at least one stable and satisfying relationship.
2.	Ⓣ	Ⓕ	If someone dislikes me, I will always try harder to be nice to that person.
3.	Ⓣ	Ⓕ	I would like to be a hermit forever.
4.	Ⓣ	Ⓕ	I may withdraw and not speak to anyone for weeks at a time.
5.	Ⓣ	Ⓕ	I usually end up hurting those closest to me.
6.	Ⓣ	Ⓕ	My people treat me more like a child than an adult.
7.	Ⓣ	Ⓕ	If someone whom I have known well goes away, I may miss that person.
8.	Ⓣ	Ⓕ	I can deal with disagreements at home without disturbing family relationships.
9.	Ⓣ	Ⓕ	I am extremely sensitive to criticism.
10.	Ⓣ	Ⓕ	Exercising power over other people is a secret pleasure of mine.
11.	Ⓣ	Ⓕ	At times I will do almost anything to get my way.
12.	Ⓣ	Ⓕ	When a person close to me is not giving me his or her full attention, I often feel hurt and rejected.
13.	Ⓣ	Ⓕ	If I become close with someone and he or she proves untrustworthy, I may hate myself for the way things turned out.
14.	Ⓣ	Ⓕ	It is hard for me to get close to anyone.
15.	Ⓣ	Ⓕ	My sex life is satisfactory.
16.	Ⓣ	Ⓕ	I tend to be what others expect me to be.
17.	Ⓣ	Ⓕ	No matter how bad a relationship may get, I will hold on to it.
18.	Ⓣ	Ⓕ	I have no influence on anyone around me.
19.	Ⓣ	Ⓕ	People do not exist when I do not see them.
20.	Ⓣ	Ⓕ	I've been hurt a lot in life.
21.	Ⓣ	Ⓕ	I have someone with whom I can share my innermost feelings and who shares such feelings with me.
22.	Ⓣ	Ⓕ	No matter how hard I try to avoid them, the same difficulties crop up in my most important relationships.
23.	Ⓣ	Ⓕ	I yearn to be completely "at one" with someone.
24.	Ⓣ	Ⓕ	In relationships, I am not satisfied unless I am with the other person all the time.
25.	Ⓣ	Ⓕ	I am a very good judge of other people.
26.	Ⓣ	Ⓕ	Relationships with people of the opposite sex always turn out the same way with me.
27.	Ⓣ	Ⓕ	Others frequently try to humiliate me.
28.	Ⓣ	Ⓕ	I generally rely on others to make my decisions for me.
29.	Ⓣ	Ⓕ	I am usually sorry that I trusted someone.
30.	Ⓣ	Ⓕ	When I am angry with someone close to me, I am able to talk it through.
31.	Ⓣ	Ⓕ	Manipulating others is the best way to get what I want.
32.	Ⓣ	Ⓕ	I often feel nervous when I am around members of the opposite sex.
33.	Ⓣ	Ⓕ	I often worry that I will be left out of things.
34.	Ⓣ	Ⓕ	I feel that I have to please everyone or else they might reject me.
35.	Ⓣ	Ⓕ	I shut myself up and don't see anyone for months at a time.
36.	Ⓣ	Ⓕ	I am sensitive to possible rejection by important people in my life.
37.	Ⓣ	Ⓕ	Making friends is not a problem for me.
38.	Ⓣ	Ⓕ	I do not know how to meet or talk with members of the opposite sex.
39.	Ⓣ	Ⓕ	When I cannot make someone close to me do what I want, I feel hurt or angry.
40.	Ⓣ	Ⓕ	It is my fate to lead a lonely life.
41.	Ⓣ	Ⓕ	People are never honest with each other.
42.	Ⓣ	Ⓕ	I put a lot into relationships and get a lot back.
43.	Ⓣ	Ⓕ	I feel shy about meeting or talking with members of the opposite sex.
44.	Ⓣ	Ⓕ	The most important thing to me in a relationship is to exercise power over the other person.
45.	Ⓣ	Ⓕ	I believe that a good mother should always please her children.

APPENDIX E: SEPARATION INDIVIDUATION TEST OF ADOLESCENCE (SITA)

ATTITUDE AND FEELINGS SURVEY

Directions: Listed below are a number of statements which best describe various feelings, attitudes, and behaviors that people have. Read each statement and then mark on your sheet:

(a) if the statement is always true for you or you strongly agree with it,

(b) if the statement is usually true for you or you generally agree with it,

(c) if the statement is sometimes true for you or you slightly agree with it,

(d) if the statement is hardly ever true for you or you generally disagree with it.

(e) if the statement is never true for you or you strongly disagree with it.

Please answer all of the questions. If you have difficulty answering a particular question, choose the response which is closest to your feelings on that item, even though you may not feel strongly one way or another.

Please use a #2 pencil to complete the answer sheet and erase completely any answer you may wish to change. In marking your choices, be sure the number of the statement you have just read is the same number you are marking on the answer sheet.

_____1. Sometimes my parents are so overprotective I feel smothered.

_____2. I sometimes feel so powerful that it seems like there is no feat which is too difficult for me to conquer.

_____3. Being alone is a very scary idea for me.

_____4. Often I don't understand what people want out of a close relationship with me.

_____5. I enjoy being by myself and with others approximately the same.

_____6. I can't wait for the day that I can live on my own and am free from my parents.

_____7. Sometimes it seems that people really want to hurt me.

_____8. I worry about death a lot.

_____9. Most parents are overcontrolling and don't really want their children to grow up.

_____10. Sometimes I think how nice it was to be a young child when someone else took care of my needs.

_____ 11. I am friendly with several different types of people.

_____12. I don't see the point of most warm, affectionate relationships.

_____13. I particularly enjoy looking at my own body in the mirror.

_____14. One of my parents knows me so well they almost always know what I'm thinking.

_____15. If I told someone about the troubles I have, they would probably not understand.

_____16. I do best when I'm by myself and don't have other people around to bother me.

_____17. Even when I'm very close to another person, I feel I can be myself.

_____18. Usually when I'm doing something with my friends, I act like a leader.

_____19. I feel lonely when I'm away from my parents for any extended period of time.

_____20. During the past 10 years I have not slept more than 3 hours per night at any time.

_____ 21. Most people are basically worried about their own good and don't care about helping other people.

_____22. I feel so comfortable with one of my friends that I can tell him/her anything I feel.

_____23. I frequently worry about being rejected by my friends.

_____24. My friends and I have some common interests and some differences.

_____25. I can't feel that love has much of a place in my life.

_____26. I frequently worry about breaking up with my boyfriend/girlfriend.

_____27. My parents seem much more concerned about their own plans than they do about mine.

_____28. Even with my good friends I couldn't count on them to be there if I really needed them.

_____29. I feel that other people interfere with my ability "to do my own thing."

_____30. Being close to someone else is uncomfortable.

_____31. Although my best friend does things I do not like, I still care about him/her a great deal.

_____32. Considering most of the people I know, I find myself comparatively better off.

_____33. I often feel rebellious toward things my parents tell me to do.

_____34. I am comfortable with some degree of conflict in my close relationships.

_____35. Sometimes I feel very sad about having to say goodbye to a teacher I really like.

_____36. Sometimes I amaze myself with my own capabilities and talents.

_____37. I think about some of my friends when I'm alone because I miss them.

_____38. My life is fulfilled without having best friends.

_____39. Although I'm like my close friends in some ways, we're also different from each other in other ways.

_____40. I am quite worried that there might be a nuclear war in the next decade that would destroy much of this world.

_____41. My friendships tend to be of the "best-friend" kind.

_____42. I feel dominated by my boyfriend/girlfriend.

_____43. I feel that other people admire and look up to me.

_____44. One of my friends knows me so well I feel he/she can practically read my mind.

_____45. Friendship isn't worth the effort it takes.

_____46. While I like to get along well with my friends, if I disagree with something they're doing, I usually feel free to say so.

_____47. I have a habit of switching from one close relationship to another.

_____48. The teacher's opinion of me as a person is very important to me.

_____49. My parents seem very uninterested in what's going on with me.

_____50. I know some of my friends so well, it seems like I can read their minds.

_____51. I feel overpowered or controlled by people around me.

_____52. When I'm with a group of friends, I sometimes act like the leader and at other times more like a follower.

_____53. I think it is silly when people cry at the end of an emotional movie.

_____54. With my favorite teacher, I can share some of my most personal fears and concerns.

_____55. I believe that God looks over and protects me from danger.

_____56. It sometimes seems that my parents wish they hadn't ever had me.

_____57. I don't really need anyone.

_____58. It's quite a struggle for me to be a person independent from my parents.

_____59. I had many fears of monsters and/or ghosts when I was younger.

_____60. I'm quite worried about the possibility of one of my parents dying.

_____61. When I think of the people that are most important to me I wish I could be with them more and be closer to them emotionally.

_____62. I feel particularly comfortable when I'm doing things with a group of friends together, rather then by myself.

_____63. It's hard for me to really trust anyone.

_____64. One of my favorite teachers is amazingly similar to me in personality.

_____65. Even when they don't say it, I can sometimes tell that people admire me by the look in their eyes.

_____66. I don't really love anyone.

_____67. My parents keep close tabs on my whereabouts.

_____68. In school, I have a special relationship with one teacher that goes further then the average teacher-student bond.

_____69. I feel my parents' roles restrict my freedom too much.

_____70. I have not seen the sun shine for over a year now.

_____71. People sometimes seem amazed by my own abilities.

_____72. When I am truly friendly with someone, it's usually the case that they know both my good parts and my bad parts.

_____73. Eating delicious food is one of the greatest pleasures in my life.

_____74. I feel that the degree to which I satisfy the needs of my friends and they satisfy my needs is approximately equal.

_____75. There's a certain sense of oneness that I feel with other people.

_____76. I see dependency as a sign of weakness.

_____77. When I hope somebody will do something for me, I often find myself disappointed.

_____78. No one seem to understand me.

_____79. Before I go to sleep at night, I sometimes feel lonely and wish there were someone around to talk to or just to be with.

_____80. If I let myself get close to someone else I would probably get burned.

_____81. There is a sense of interconnectedness that links people of all kinds together.

_____82. God knows my life, I will go where he leads me.

_____83. Other people are easily impressed by me.

_____84. Sometimes it seems my parents really hate me.

_____85. I have no living relatives on this earth at the present time.

_____86. As long as I don't depend on anyone, I can't get hurt.

_____87. Knowing that other people find my physical appearance attractive is very pleasing to me.

_____88. I often sense admiration from those around me.

_____89. At home, I seem to be "in the way" a lot.

_____90. The idea of going to a large party where I would not know anyone is a scary one for me.

_____91. I feel special, compared to other people.

_____92. In my group of friends I am often the center of attention.

_____93. I preferred the younger years of life when I could rely more on my parents for guidance to get along.

_____94. I usually get positive "vibes" from other people regarding how they feel about me.

_____95. I can't have much of a need for close friendships with others.

_____96. I worry about being disapproved of by my teachers.

_____97. Other people seem to be impressed by my capabilities.

_____98. I would like to always live in the same town as my parents and siblings so we could spend a lot of time together.

_____99. My teachers give me advice about my social life.

_____100. I like parties best when my close friends are there and there is an intimate atmosphere.

_____101. My personal plans are more important than my relationships.

_____102. I am greatly looking forward to getting out from under the rule of my parents.

_____103. I would get upset if I found out my teacher was mad at me or disappointed in me.

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