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Not Knowing What You're Missing: Autoethnographical Explorations and Reflections of the Potential Effects of Fatherlessness

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NOT KNOWING WHAT YOU'RE MISSING: AUTOETHNOGRAPHICAL
EXPLORATIONS AND REFLECTIONS OF THE POTENTIAL
EFFECTS OF FATHERLESSNESS

by

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Melodi A. Everett

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This study explored the potential effects of fatherlessness through the book,

Whatever Happened to Daddy's Little Girl, by Jonetta Rose Barras (2000). While

examining the text, the author used an autoethnographical method to reflect on her own

experiences in relation to the text. This autoethnography examined the potential effects

of fatherlessness on women to help understand why they communicate and interact

interpersonally in specific ways that may help or hinder them in their adult romantic

relationships. Through dialectical theory, specific dialectical tensions were identified to

be experienced in father-daughter as well as adult romantic relationships. The tensions

that were found to be experienced in both father-daughter and adult romantic

relationships were: autonomy-connection, hopefulness-hopelessness, blaming self-

blaming other, novelty-predictability, and openness-closedness.

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CHAPTER ONE

INTRODUCTION

Rationale

Children who lose their fathers mature into adults, and because of early loss, must develop ways to have love in the world where loss and abandonment are ever-present dangers (Barras, 2000). According to Wilson (2002), 85% of all children that exhibit behavioral disorders, 90% of all homeless and runaway children, 71% of all high school dropouts, and 75% of all adolescent patients in chemical abuse centers. Moreover, 63% of youth suicides, 80% of rapists motivated with displaced anger, 70% of juveniles in state-operated institutions, and 85% of all youths sitting in prisons grew up in a fatherless home(Wilson). These statistics indicate the importance of continued research and reflection of this subject. The following section will present current research that has been done to help understand the selected phenomenon, fatherlessness.

Recent literature on communication in families has focused on family communication (Barbato, Graham & Perse, 2003; Caughlin, 2003; Koesten & Anderson, 2004; Mazur & Hubbard, 2004), families and unhealthy relationships within families (Doucet & Aseltine; Montalbano-Phelps, 2003; Soliz & Harwood, 2003), demand/withdraw patterns (Caughlin & Malis, 2004), communication and health (Bylund & Duck, 2004), interparental conflict (Kitzmann & Cohen, 2003), diversity (Coontz, 2003), alcohol and drug abuse (Miller-Day & Dodd, 2004), ineffective parenting (Krishnakumar, Buehler & Barber, 2003), and stepfamily communication (Afifi, 2003; Afifi & Schrodt, 2003; Baxter, 2004; Braithwaite, McBride & Schrodt, 2003; Golish,

2003). What has not been recently studied in the literature, but is a salient issue

throughout all of family communication, is the importance of a father.

When looking at communication, adolescents need a family member, usually a

parent, whom the adolescent views as caring and supportive when managing their self

esteem (Lanzet al., 1999). When it comes to positive beliefs about one self, children

report that they gain these positive beliefs about the self through their parents (Diggs,

1999). The support parents give in their children's lives can create either consistent or

inconsistent self-esteem (Diggs). Conversations about what happened at school or what

should be prepared for dinner are considered relational work and acknowledge the child

as an individual (Dixson, 1995). A consistent pattern of positive interactions between

parents and their children makes a child more secure to explore new experiences and

relationships (Dixson, 1995). Although the mother is usually the one to display these

supportive traits, fathers convey influence and information as well (Diggs). A positive

father-daughter relationship cannot only help self-esteem, but can protect women from

depressive responses to adult stress (Forest, Moen & Dempster-McClain, 1996).   When

a father does not give support, it can have a significant effect on the psychological health

of adult daughters (Barnett et al., 1991). Negative father-daughter relationships typically

lead to psychological distress and depression (Barnett et al.).

Numerous studies have been done on the impact of absent fathers on males

(Beaty, 1995; Holman, 1998; Paschall, Ringwalt & Flewelling, 2003; Shor, 1995) but the

literature is limited when looking at the effects of an absent father on adult daughters

(e.g., Barnett et al., 1991). Although it is true that studies are beginning to acknowledge

the effects on daughters as well, these studies look at daughters in their childhood and

early teens (Coley, 2003; McCabe, 1997) and continue to ignore the effects on adult daughters. What is apparent throughout the literature is that there are many effects on adolescent daughters (Ellis et al., 2003), yet effects do not disappear in adulthood. The study will focus on the possible effects of fatherlessness on adult daughters, specifically how their romantic relationships are affected by this absence.

The literature review included in this proposal will highlight research that has touched upon the selected phenomena. The purpose of the father in the home is the first section in the literature view highlighting the fact that fathers are not only caretakers in a child's life, but a model for a child's future relationships (Wineburgh, 2000). The second section addresses the consequences of fatherlessness on children, specifically referring to the fact that anything negative that can happen to a child, happens more frequently when a father is absent from the home (Popenoe, 1996). The third section in the literature review looks at the father-son relationship stating that a son is less likely to engage in delinquent behavior if their father figure is in the home. The fourth section focuses on the father-daughter relationship and how a woman learns how to interact with men through the relationship she has with her father (Wineburgh, 2000). The fifth section is based on women in heterosexual romantic relationships and how as a result of fatherlessness women have a tendency to be less trusting when it comes to romantic relationships with men (Secunda, 1992). The last section of the literature review is a detailed exploration of dialectical theory and its utility for understanding fatherlessness for daughters.

Within the study, Jonetta Rose Barras' (2000) text *Whatever Happened to Daddy's Little Girl*, will be compared and contrasted to my own fatherless experiences

through an autoethnographical lens to analyze the potential effects of fatherlessness on adult women in their heterosexual romantic relationships. Specifically, I will look at my own experiences as a biracial woman with the African American parent absent, in comparison to Barras' and other women's experiences identified within the text. The experiences will be related to my own, to find not only similarities but also differences in the tensions that are felt in relation to our absent fathers.

As I recount my interactions with Barras' text, containing her own as well as other's experiences, I reflected on my own events. My reflections were archived in a journal that was an outlet for my thoughts and recalled experiences as I read the text, and throughout the exploration of the selected phenomenon. After the reflections have been made, as a point of analysis, I used personal experiences as well as those outlined in Barras' text to identify specific dialectical tensions that fatherless women are subjected to.

The remaining chapters of this thesis will highlight prior research in the area of fatherlessness and family communication. An in depth explanation of dialectical theory and the tensions that are experienced within this theory will be given, along with other ways the theory has been used and framed to understand different phenomena. Also provided, is the process that will be used to understand what adult women go through in their romantic relationships and what dialectical tensions are apparent when a woman loses her father. Specifically, the methodology of autoethnography is introduced, as well as a description of the Barras' text, and how these two processes answer the research questions.

CHAPTER TWO

LITERATURE REVIEW

Overview

Parent child communication has been an area of interest within the communication field. Researchers have studied mother/daughter relationships (Peington, 2004), demand/withdraw communication between parents and their children (Caughlin, 2004; Dixson, 1995), parent behavior as predictors of their children's psychological health (Doucet & Aseltine, 2003; Kitzmann & Cohen, 2003; Miller & Dodd, 2002), attachment security (Ducharme, Doyle, & Markiewicz, 2002), college adjustment (Orrego & Rodriguez, 2001), and face and facework in conflict between parents and their children (Oetzel et al., 2003).

The purpose of this study is to look at the potential effects of fatherlessness on adult women specifically in their romantic relationships. As demonstrated in this chapter, the majority of research focused on the effects of fatherlessness on males (e.g., Beatty, 1995; Holman, 1998; Shor, 1995); more recently, the effects on women have begun to be recognized as well (e.g. Barnett et al., 1991; Coley, 2003; Ellis et al., 2003). This section will look at existing literature focusing on the father's purpose in the family and fatherlessness, consequences of fatherlessness on children, father and son relationships, father and daughter relationships, and women in romantic relationships. Additionally, the tensions involved in dialectical theory as experienced by these adult women in their romantic relationships.

Father's Purpose

A mother has an immediate connection to her child through the process of conception and birth (Wineburgh, 2000). Therefore, fathers are typically the first representatives of the outside world to a child (Wineburgh). Fathers that are involved and caring are important for the psychological well being of their children, including their happiness, life satisfaction, and the absence of psychological distress (Popenoe, 1996). According to Pruett (2000), fathering means helping with the bills, participating in infant care, acting as a disciplinarian, bandaging cuts, helping with homework, and knowing a child's friends, passions, fears, and loves. Fathers are not only caretakers in a child's life, but also models for relationships with a child's future peers (Wineburgh).

Fathering is important at all points of a child's life. According to Pruett (2000), infants who have time alone with their father show greater social behavior than those who do not. By six weeks of age, an infant is able to tell the difference between its mother and father's voices, and is usually more easily calmed by the voice of their father (Pruett). Father involvement is related to improved quantitative and verbal skills, improved problem solving ability, and enhanced academic achievement in children (Popenoe, 1996). Also, fathers who spent time alone with their children more than twice a week preparing meals and other types of basic care, are more likely to have their children grow up to be compassionate adults (Popenoe). Children who feel a closeness with their father are twice as likely to go to college, find stable employment after high school, are less likely to be involved in teen birth, less likely to spend time in jail, and half as likely to experience multiple depression symptoms than children who do not (Pruett). According to Popenoe, it is the quality of the relationship, not the frequency of

contact, which creates a caring relationship between a father and his children. Therefore, it is not necessarily the amount of time that is spent with a child that makes it feel connected to their father, but the quality of the activities that the child and the father jointly participate (Pruett).

According to Popenoe (1996), although fathers are able to benefit the lives of their children in numerous ways, U. S. American fathers are removed from family life more today then ever in history. Fatherlessness is defined as the absence of a father from a child's life through divorce or separation, situations in which a father was never known, incarceration, relocation, and death (Wineburgh, 2000). Fatherlessness contributes to the many major social problems of today, such as crime and delinquency, premature sexuality, out of wedlock births, deteriorating educational achievement, depression, substance abuse, and alienation among teenagers (Popenoe). Unfortunately, almost all of today's fatherless children have fathers that are alive and well (Popenoe). Additionally, the number of children living without fathers is now one out of three children in America (Wineburgh). This high number is due to the increasing divorce rate, the number of children born to unmarried mothers, adoption, death of a father, and artificial insemination without involvement of a man (Wineburgh).

Consequences of Fatherlessness on Children

According to Popenoe (1996), almost anything negative that can happen to a child happens with much greater frequency to those without a father in the home. Children in today's society have to face the fact that fathers seem to be focusing on things other than their children (Gallagher, 1998). Further, mothers are not always able to satisfy the relationship needs of their children who are missing their father because they are not

solely the only care giver in the household, but also become the primary provider as well (Lanz et al., 1999).

According to Gallagher (1998), a symptom associated with fatherlessness is "father hunger." This involves an ache in the heart, a longing for a man to protect the child, show them how to survive in the world, and a longing for dependable male love. Children yearn deeply for their fathers; in fact, infants in the first few months of life can tell the difference between a mother and father's affection styles (Pruett, 2000). In order to thrive, children must experience affection from both their mother and father (Pruett). Children are born with a drive to find and connect to their fathers, a drive their fathers also usually feel (Pruett). Children who lose their father through abandonment or divorce have a tendency to believe their father views them negatively (Wineburgh, 2000). Children from separated or divorced families have a tendency to have problematic communication with not only their father, the one who is usually absent, but with the mother as well (Lanz et al., 1999). Children that are fatherless may create a fantasized father who is often idealized, the result of a child that wishes for their parent (Wineburgh). The children that are affected by fatherlessness to the greatest degree are those that have been abandoned by their father by relocation, incarceration, remarriage, or who just quietly disappear from the lives of their children (Wineburgh). The loss and depression that a child feels as a result of fatherlessness can last an entire lifetime (Wineburgh).

It is the feeling of abandonment and that the child's father does not care that has the greatest effect on children (Gallagher, 1998). Father deprivation is directly linked to a child's self-control (Pruett, 2000). Children who grow up without their father have a

tendency to be involved in earlier sexual activity, drugs, higher rates of school failure, teen suicide, and juvenile delinquency (Pruett).

It is not only fatherlessness that can create insecurities in adolescents but ethnic differences can weaken self-esteem as adolescents compare themselves to other family members and peers in school settings (Lanz et al., 1999). Single parent families have a tendency to fall into a cycle of poverty and less education (Wineburgh, 2000). It is generally African American fatherless families that breed the low self-esteem experiencing generation after generation of fatherless women whose children then go through the same things they did (Lowe, 2000).

Childhood experiences set the stage for personal competence in difficult situations in a person's adult life (Forest et al., 1996). Depression in adulthood has been directly linked to children who have a family background of parental divorce (Aro & Palosaari, 1992). In fact, children from divorced families have more stressful paths and distress in adulthood than those who do not (Aro & Palosaari, 1992). According to Radina (2003), when a child has infrequent contact with their father the pattern continues into adulthood.

Fatherless children have a tendency not to approach their father with the feelings that they are having, if given the opportunity, because they feel that their father will not understand what they are going through (Dunn et al., 2001). Children that have feelings of confusion, anger, and sadness need to have opportunities in which they can express how they are feeling (Dunn et al.). Because of this, it is important for parents to talk about divorce, separation, or abandonment with their children so that they can understand what is happening and prevent them from assuming it is their fault (Dunn et al.).

Death, unlike abandonment, is not a failure of love (Gallagher, 1998). Therefore, the negative effects of a father's absence through death are far fewer than those of children who have been abandoned (Popenoe, 1996). These children suffer from fewer of the negative effects because they do not have the feelings of rejection and abandonment; this is due to the nature of the father loss to external factors and therefore cannot be interpreted as internal (Popenoe).

Fathers and Sons

A son needs a father to develop his gender identity, and his knowledge of sexual partner roles because these orientations are typically modeled from parental interactions (Wineburgh, 2000). The father serves as a model by which the boy discovers and cultivates his social and personal identity (Wade, 1994). Boys actively and persistently solicit their father's approval, recognition, and confirmation, thus establishing a profound and lasting libidinal bond (Wade). A boy competes with his father for his mother's love and learns through this competition that he is not his mother's mate but her child (Wineburgh).

The idea of a father is idealized in early childhood (Wade, 1994). Consequently, when a father is absent, males have a tendency to try to explore a fantasized relationship with their father through other men (Wineburgh). Also, males with absent fathers have a tendency to act in aggressive ways to counter insecurities of only relating to their mother, and through resentment and envy of the position their mothers hold as the head of the household (Wineburgh). A male child may also take out his anger at his father for not being there on his mother who is unfairly held responsible for his father's absence (Wineburgh). A boy's identification with his father is highly influenced by the mother's

positive or negative attitudes toward the father, which can become part of the boy's self-identity as well (Wade). Aggressive feelings may also be turned against the boy's self resulting in low self-esteem and depression (Wineburgh). In a study conducted by Paschall et al., (2003) they found that African American males demonstrated delinquent behavior more often when the father was absent from the household, and that a father being there to manage his son's behavior was a deterrent to delinquent behavior.

Fathers and Daughters

Male children have been more readily studied when it comes to fatherlessness (Pruett, 2000), but it is important to recognize that they are not the only ones affected. When a woman experiences undesirable events in her childhood, it can follow her into her adult years (Forest et al., 1996). For instance, for girls whose fathers are absent, many positive personality traits remain undeveloped (Popenoe, 1996). Women who experienced early strains in life, especially the absence of a father, are more likely to have depressive symptoms to adult stress (Coley, 1993; Forest et al., 1996; McCabe, 1997). It is not the amount of attachment that brings about the symptoms in females, but the alienation and disengagement that a father has with his daughter that creates these symptoms (Coley). A woman has certain expectations of who her father should be, and when a father is disengaged and has little contact with his child and fails to meet the expectations, it can create psychological problems for his daughter (Coley). Unfortunately the results can be low self-esteem or low self-worth, which then makes the child, especially girls, more likely to be involved in alcohol and drug abuse, chronic criminal behavior, teenage pregnancy, and failure in school (Huang, 1999).

A woman who has been neglected by her father can become angry because she may believe that her father has abandoned her and that he does not want to be a part of her life (Radina, 2003). Feeling abandoned by her father, a daughter can become highly emotionally unstable (Coley, 2003). Because of this, women can develop feelings of resentment towards their fathers (Radina). Resentment may also come from the feeling that the father has complete control of the relationship, and that it was the father's choice to do other things with his time rather than spend that time with them, and therefore feel that they have no control over the relationship (Radina). Feeling alienated and disengaged from her father, a daughter may then become involved in problem behaviors (Coley).

Fathers are potentially, the first and most important men in the lives of girls (Popenoe, 1996). A female gains her positive sense of femininity and how to interact with men through her relationship with her father (Wineburgh, 2000). Long-term outcomes for a woman without a father are usually poor heterosexual adjustment and unsatisfactory romantic relationships (Wineburgh). According to Wineburgh, girls who continue to mourn the loss of their fathers have an inability to interact with males during their adolescence. Fatherless girls also have a tendency to idealize their fathers, which leads to disappointment, anger, and self-hatred when dealing with other men (Wineburgh). Father absence is also seen as a predictor of early sexual activity and adolescent pregnancy and can affect a girl's sexual development (Ellis et al., 2003). For instance, Ellis et al. (2003) reports that teenage pregnancy is seven to eight times higher among father absent girls than it is for girls whose fathers were present.

Fathers are typically the ones that provide male role models, and introduce their daughters to female/male relationships (Popenoe, 1996). Girls who grow up without fathers have a tendency to look at men as irresponsible and untrustworthy (Popenoe). While in adolescence fatherless girls can become obsessed with romantic relationships in a desperate pursuit for male affection and therefore take advantage of every short-lived sexual opportunity. Consequently, they may have inappropriate sexual contact, become overly dependent on men, and often allow men to take advantage of them as a result of this (Popenoe).

In a study conducted by Radina (2003), four typologies were identified looking at the different kinds of relationships adult daughters had with their fathers after divorce. The four typologies were listed as father-daughter, friends, ambivalence, and angry (Radina). According to Radina, the father-daughter typology described relationships that got better after the divorce, and that the daughters felt close to their fathers. These women had medium to frequent contact with their fathers over the years and considered their fathers to be supportive both emotionally and financially (Radina). When daughters are satisfied with the relationships they have with their fathers, they typically have higher self esteem (Scheffler & Naus, 1995). These women felt in control of their relationship with their father through having influence on when they visited and interacted with their fathers (Radina).

The friends' typology was similar to the father-daughter typology (Radina, 2003). In both typologies women described feelings of closeness to their fathers, although women in the friend typology described their relationship more as friend-like rather than a close personal relationship with their father (Radina). Women in the friend typology

also described a relationship as achieved rather than as a typical father-daughter role relationship, and felt that was a more positive relationship than trying to force the father-daughter roles (Radina). Also in the friend typology, there was more likely to be change in the relationship, both positive and negative, in terms of contact and closeness (Radina). When a woman feels that she has more control and affirmation in a relationship, she is more likely not to fear intimate relationships (Scheffler & Naus, 1995).   Like in the father-daughter typology, these women also felt a sense of control over the relationship as they confronted their fathers about the status of their relationship and attempted to make the relationship more comfortable and satisfying (Radina).

The ambivalence typology described women as having both positive and negative feelings about their fathers (Radina, 2003). According to Radina, all of these women displayed a resentment towards their fathers. These women described their experiences as having a lack of support both financially as well as emotionally (Radina). One difference that separates this typology from the others is that women felt as though they shared control with their fathers, in that fathers had control by choosing not to be involved with their daughters, while the daughters took control by accepting responsibility for the relationship as well (Radina). Also different within this typology, is that women had feelings of both love and hate towards their fathers (Radina). The women in this typology experience a sense of internal confusion and conflict regarding their relationships with their fathers (Radina).

The fourth and last typology described by Radina (2003) is angry. Angry was experienced by women who had low contact and low levels of feelings of closeness with their fathers (Radina). These women felt as if their fathers had abandoned them and that

they never wanted, and have no desire to have their daughters in their lives (Radina).

These women also had feelings of resentment towards their fathers due to a lack of

interaction, physical abuse, alcohol abuse, a lack of financial and emotional support

throughout their lives (Radina). Father abandonment becomes the belief of the child,

when the father is close enough to continue a relationship, but for whatever reason, does

not (Gallagher, 1998). These women felt as if they had no control within their

relationship with their fathers, in that their fathers chose to do other things with their time

such as abuse alcohol or start new families, as opposed to maintain a relationship with

them (Radina). As such, women who have these negative relationships with their fathers

are more likely to experience psychological distress (Barnett et al., 1991).   Interestingly

enough, the women who fit the angry typology, experienced their parents divorce at an

early age and therefore had less time to establish a relationship with their fathers before

they left (Radina).

<p style="text-align:center">Women in Romantic Relationships</p>

Dating and establishing romantic relationships represent one of the transitions into

adulthood (Seiffge-Krenke, Shulman & Klessinger, 2001). A romantic partner becomes a

major part of attachment, care giving, and sexual behavior throughout late adolescence

and adulthood (Seiffge-Krenke et al.). Young adults who have a secure attachment

history within their family have highly committed romantic relationships without the

need for obsessive closeness and attachment (Seiffge-Krenke et al.). The quality of

young adults' romantic relationships are related to parental divorce (Seiffge-Krenke et

al.).   According to McCabe (1997), males, although affected by divorce, have fewer

adverse effects on romantic relationships once they enter young adulthood than females.

This may be the result of males experiencing a female presence by usually being raised by a member of the opposite sex, while a female does not have that opposite sex exposure and is usually raised by a member of the same sex (McCabe). Similarly, woman's ability to have quality intimate relationships with men is hindered when growing up in a divorced family (McCabe). Women have a tendency to mistrust or believe that a man will leave as their fathers did; in romantic relationships, then women have a tendency to test their romantic partners through arguments to either find an excuse to walk out themselves, or to give their partner an excuse to leave (Secunda, 1992). In addition, women who have experienced parental divorce in their lifetime have more problems with self-esteem in intimate and personal relationships (Aro & Palosaari, 1992; McCabe).

According to Secunda (1992), women may turn off their emotional feelings for a man in fear of him leaving as her father did. Alternatively, they may become over dependent on a man in fear of having to fend for themselves (Secunda). The opposite can happen as well, a woman after never relying on a man, because her mother was her primary caretaker, may be afraid to become dependent on a man, in fear that he will leave her not able to support herself (Secunda). Women may decide to stay single in fear of being left by a man, decide to live with a man out of wedlock to avoid commitment, or get married and unconsciously return to a child like role in the marriage to attempt to live her childhood over with love, and therefore ruin her relationship with her husband because of her over dependence (Secunda).

Girls with adequate fathering, as they grow older, are better able to develop constructive heterosexual relationships based on trust and intimacy (Popenoe, 1996). Females from non-divorced families are more likely than those in families of divorce to

see marriage as a positive step in their lives (Giuliani, Iafrate & Rosnati, 1998). Adolescents from divorced families are more likely to fear marriage and show a high mistrust of other people (Giuliani et al.).

According to Scheffler and Naus (1999), fathers can have a significant effect on a young woman's self-esteem and her eventual choice in men. A father that withdraws from his daughter when she begins to develop physically before and after puberty can make her feel uncomfortable with the sense of herself as a woman, as well as her sexuality (Scheffler & Naus). Often times, a woman's self esteem, self-definition, comfort with her femininity, and comfort with her sexuality are all influenced through her father's acceptance (Scheffler & Naus). When a woman feels accepted by her father, it reduces her fear of intimate romantic relationships (Scheffler & Naus).

In their adult relationships, women can find themselves having many different kinds of feelings and experience many emotions as a result of an absent father. Looking at this phenomenon through a dialectical lens, one that explores the dynamics and possibilities of contradiction will allow the women to sort out the mixed feelings and emotions that they may have to make sense of the chaos in their minds. For example, the desire for women to be independent but at the same time connected to men, and the desire to have a man involved in one's life, while at the same time fearing intimacy. Dialectical theory provides a framework in which these tensions can not only be sorted out, but understood.

Dialectical Theory

According to Werner and Baxter (1994), a contradiction refers to the dynamic tensions between unified opposites in a system. To a dialectical theorist, these

contradictions are essential to both change and growth within interpersonal relationships (Baxter, 1990). Dialectical theory looks at the polar contradictions that are experienced in relationship contexts (Baxter, 1990). This section will review the origins of dialectical theory, the fundamental ideas behind the theory, and the different areas of research utilizing the theory, finally the relevance of dialectical theory to the overall focus of the research will be presented.

Origins

Dialectical theory was introduced by Baxter (1988) as a new way to look at relational development. As most of the previous research looked at relationship evolution as a linear process, Baxter recognized that dialectical tensions have a cyclical process in which you are constantly being pulled in two separate directions, only on different levels. This approach was developed from and similar to dialogism, derived from the work of Bakhtin (Baxter, 1993). Dialogism is the idea that in dialogue there is a simultaneous action between a number of collective voices speaking to one another while at the same time remaining distinct (Baxter, 1993). Dialectical theory shares this idea that there are no tensions that are independent of one another; instead, they are all connected simultaneously. Montgomery and Baxter (1998) have spent the majority of their careers exploring this phenomenon within the context of romantic relationships.

Fundamental Ideas

Dialectical theory encompasses a number of distinct perspectives that are within four core concepts: contradiction, change, praxis, and totality (Werner & Baxter, 1994). As stated above contradiction refers to a dynamic tension between unified objects in a system (Werner & Baxter, 1994). Dialectical tensions are interdependent with one

another and as they are a separate but interdependent contradiction, they create an environment of change (Montgomery & Baxter, 1998). In dialectical theory, contradictions take place in two separate contexts, on the internal and external levels (Montgomery & Baxter).

According to Werner and Baxter (1994), there is a need in every relationship for internal and external tensions in order for the relationship to change, and change is needed for the relationship to grow. Change is a difference that is made to a particular stimulus over time (Montgomery & Baxter). Dialectical theory looks at change as a spiral, as a connection between stability and instability (Montgomery & Baxter, 1998). It is this change that emerges through the separate tensions that promotes growth within a relationship.

Praxis is the idea that individuals both act and are acted upon (Baxter & Montgomery, 1998). This means that prior actions and experiences create the context in which individuals will act in the future, and therefore is ever changing as individuals experience new things (Montgomery & Baxter).

The idea of prior actions and experiences determine how an individual will act in future experiences relates to the concept of totality (Werner and Baxter, 1994). Werner and Baxter described totality in which no phenomena can be understood without being in relation to another. Therefore, one tension cannot be considered in isolation of another and therefore all tensions are interdependent (Montgomery & Baxter, 1998). Dialectical tensions are mutually defining and inseparable, so that change is ongoing and continuous in interpersonal relationships (Werner & Baxter).

Specific Dialectical Tensions

The three primary dialectical tensions identified by Baxter (1988) have been changed through the development of the theory, as Baxter recognized that dialectical tensions are both internal and external in nature (Werner & Baxter, 1994). The existing primary tensions are integration-separation, stability-change, and expression-privacy (Baxter, 1993). For a tension to be experienced internally means that it is within the relationship context (Baxter, 1988). For a tension to be considered external, the tension is between the relationship as an entity and others that are outside of the relationship (Baxter, 1993).

The tension of integration-separation acknowledges the fact that individuals feel a need for independence, while at the same time feel the need to be connected to others (Baxter, 1988). Internally this tension is regarded as autonomy and connection, and refers to the idea that individuals within a relationship have a desire to remain independent as well as be interdependent with their partner (Baxter, 1988). Baxter considers this the principle contradiction of all the other tensions (Baxter, 1988). Externally this tension is termed inclusion-seclusion (Baxter, 1993). This tension refers to the couple's engagement and disengagement with other couples or people outside of the relationship (Baxter, 1993).

The dialectic of stability-change refers to things remaining predictable compared to things being more spontaneous (Werner & Baxter, 1994). The internal dialectical tension under stability-change is predictability-novelty (Werner & Baxter, 1994). In relationships an individual likes to be able to predict their partner's behavior, while at the same time, enjoy a sense of the unexpected in their relationship (Baxter, 1988).

Externally, the tensions are termed conventionality-uniqueness (Baxter, 1993). This tension is between the couple's need to follow societal norms in their communication and rituals in their relationship, as opposed to finding unique ways to relate to one another (Baxter, 1993).

The third dialectic identified by Baxter is expression-privacy, alluding to the act of giving or concealing information (Baxter, 1993). Internally this dialectic is termed as openness-closedness, that is, a couple's desire to be open with information with their partner, while at the same time keeping some information hidden from their partner (Baxter, 1988). Externally the tension is termed revelation-concealment, this refers to a couples willingness to share information with individuals who are outside of the relationship (Baxter, 1993).

Dialectical Strategies

Along with these dialectical tensions, Baxter (1988) developed a list of three strategic responses when faced with these contradictions. Through these strategies, relationship partners have the ability to create a spiraling motion through the management of these tensions and therefore promote change in their relationship (Werner & Baxter, 1994). The first strategy, selection, is the process of selecting particular actions consistent with either tension, therefore making one tension dominant over another (Baxter, 1988).

The second strategy is temporal/spatial separation (Baxter, 1988). This strategy can take on two forms, cyclic alternation and segmentation (Baxter, 1988). Cyclic alternation refers to the individuals attempting to respond to each tension at different times, and therefore creating a spiraling effect (Baxter, 1988). Segmentation, on the

other hand, refers to individuals fulfilling one tension while the other tension is fulfilled

through other designated outlets (Werner & Baxter, 1994).

The third strategy is integration, the attempt to simultaneously balance both

tensions (Baxter, 1988). The strategy of integration can take on three forms, the first

being integrative moderation (Baxter, 1988). Integrative moderation involves the use of

neutral communication strategies so that neither tension receives more favor (Baxter,

1988). The second form, integrative disqualification, involves the ambiguous act of

avoiding both tensions all together (Baxter, 1988). The final form is integrative

reframing, the act of reframing the context in a sense that, rather than the two tensions

being viewed as polar, they are looked at as complementary (Baxter, 1988).

In addition to the strategies developed by Baxter, Hoppe-Nagao and Ting-

Toomey (2002) developed additional strategies while conducting their study on marital

couples. The strategies they found for the dialectic of autonomy-connection were:

activity segmentation, time segmentation, reframing, exclusive selection, interaction

climate, and compromise. Activity segmentation refers to the couple having separate

activities from their spouses, either alone or with friends (Hoppe-Nagao & Ting-

Toomey). Time segmentation is the act of having private time for each member of the

couple (Hoppe-Nagao & Ting-Toomey). Reframing is the act of looking at the tensions

as complementing one another rather than as opposites (Hoppe-Nagao & Ting-Toomey).

Exclusive selection is the act of giving more weight to a specific tension, rather than

trying to balance both (Hoppe-Nagao & Ting-Toomey), this is similar to Baxter's (1988)

strategy of selection. Interaction climate looked at whether or not the marital couples

openly discussed their autonomy-connection tensions, how much information they shared

with one another, and whether or not they were displaying self interest behaviors (Hoppe-Nagao & Ting-Toomey). Compromise was a strategy that was identified that looked at how willing the marital couple was to compromise with one another (Hoppe-Nagao & Ting-Toomey).

Other strategies that were found when looking at the tension of openness-closedness were: topic selection, time alternation, withdrawal, probing, anti-social strategies, and deception (Hoppe-Nagao & Ting-Toomey, 2002). Topic selection was the process of separating issues from discussion depending on the topic (Hoppe-Nagao & Ting-Toomey). Time alternation refers to the couples sensitivity to the timing of self disclosure (Hoppe-Nagao & Ting-Toomey). Withdrawal occurred when one of the marital partners felt there was too much talking in the relationship, and probing was when their was using questions to help regulate the openness-closedness tension (Hoppe-Nagao & Ting-Toomey). Antisocial strategies dealt with starting arguments, yelling, crying, using the cold shoulder, whimpering, and pouting (Hoppe-Nagao & Ting-Toomey). Deception was a strategy used as a conscious altering of information stretching or bending the truth (Hoppe-Nagao & Ting-Toomey).

Applications of Dialectical Theory

Dialectical theory originated and has been widely studied in the context of romantic relationships (Baxter, 1990; Baxter & Erbert, 1999; Baxter & Simon, 1993; Baxter & West, 2003; Baxter & Widenmann, 1993; Braithewaite & Baxter, 1995; Hoppe-Nagao & Ting-Toomey, 2002). More recently the theory has been expanded to not only focus on romantic relationships but family issues (Braithewaite, Baxter & Harper, 1998), as well as friendships (Baxter et al., 1997; Bridge & Baxter, 1992; Rawlins & Holl,

1988). Researchers have also taken the theory a step further and began describe other

dialectical tensions present in relationships such as control and emancipation (Papa,

Auwal & Singhal, 1995; Vaughan & Stamp, 2003), health issues (Baxter et al., 2002),

coping with grief (Golish & Powell, 2003), aging (Aleman, 2001), communication

competence (Spitzberg, 1993), women's issues (Downey, 1997), adult survivors of

intrafamilial sexual abuse (Ford, Ray, & Ellis, 1999), and culture (Erbert, Perez & Gareis,

2003).

Within all of these studies, researchers have found that dialectical tensions are

inherent throughout the relationship process (Baxter, 1990; Baxter & Erbert, 1999). In

fact, Baxter established that the dialectical tensions between autonomy-connectedness,

openness-closedness, and predictability-novelty were reported as salient in more than

three fourths of the linear romantic relationship stages. Baxter and Erbert discovered that

the internal dialectical tensions were more salient in turning points in relationships than

external ones, with the exception of inclusion-seclusion and revelation-concealment when

in interaction with individuals outside of the relationship. Baxter and Erbert also found

that the internal tensions that were given the greatest amount of significance within

turning points in a relationship were openness-closedness and autonomy-connection.

In the case of relationship maintenance, Baxter and Simon (1993) established that

autonomy-connection was a salient issue when considering a partner's satisfaction with

their relationship. But when looking at the maintaining of romance in the relationship,

results showed that it was the tension between novelty-predictability that became most

salient (Baxter & Simon).

When looking at studies that have utilized or developed a new set of tensions, researchers have continued to find that there are additional tensions that can exist in interpersonal relationships that are constant as well. For example, Baxter et al. (2002) found that an additional tension is that of presence-absence in relationships with women taking care of their husbands with adult dementia. The researchers concluded that the idea of certainty-uncertainty replaced predictability-novelty, openness-closedness remained as a salient issue in these relationships, and that presence-absence relating to the mindset and physical state of their spouse were all spiraling tensions (Baxter et al.).

Vaughn and Stamp (2003) also developed an additional tension to dialectical theory. In their study of staff/client interaction at a battered women's shelter, they named the tension of control-empowerment (Vaughn & Stamp). The staff had to juggle with attempting to give these women back a sense of power, while at the same time maintain their legitimate status (Vaughn & Stamp). Bauer and Orbe (2001) also discuss the tension of reality-policy that nurses feel in health communication.

Erbert et al. (2003) utilized the traditional tensions proposed by Baxter, but used them within a context outside of romantic relationships. Erbert et al. looked at the internal tensions that occur for immigrants that have recently entered the United States. The results of the study showed that the tensions of openness-closedness and predictability-novelty were perceived as more significant than the tension of connection-autonomy, as the immigrants began to adapt and become a part of the U.S. culture (Erbert et al.).

Golish and Powell (2003) also developed new tensions as they studied the experiences of parents that go through a premature birth. In the study, they identified the

tension of joy-grief; joy was felt through the act of having a child, while at the same time there is grief because they do not know for sure whether their child will be healthy enough to live (Golish & Powell). The second tension identified by Golish and Powell is the tension of acknowledgement-denial. The parents have to acknowledge and accept they are soon going to have their child, while at the same time, they are in denial because there is not only something wrong with the child, but also because they may not be emotionally or physically ready to have the child (Golish & Powell). The third tension identified by Golish and Powell is control-helplessness. The mother's want to be able to take control of their child's birth and postpone the birth until the proper time, while at the same time they are helpless because they cannot control when the baby is to be born (Golish & Powell). The last new tension identified is certainty-uncertainty. The parents were certain that the child was coming into the world, but uncertain about the child's medical condition once it arrived (Golish & Powell).

Baxter, Braithwaite, Bryant, and Wagner (2004), also introduced new tensions in a study that looked at stepchildren's perceptions of contradictions in communication with their stepparents. Baxter et al. found that there was the tension of emotional distance-closeness, representing a child's feeling of distance from a new member of their family, to wanting to feel close to the new parent. The second dialectic that was identified in the study was that of the stepparent status (Baxter et al.). This tension felt by children in stepfamilies was experienced through the desire for the residential parent to have the majority of the authority in the household, with the desire for both parent and stepparent to share the authority (Baxter et al.).

These studies have demonstrated the different ways dialectical theory can be adjusted or reframed from the idea of romantic relationships, to apply to all relationships. These studies not only advance the study of relationship contexts, but also provide a framework in which an under studied area, such as father abandonment of women in romantic relationships, can be related.

<div align="center">The Tensions Felt in Fatherlessness</div>

As stated above, dialectical theory is a framework in which romantic relationships have been frequently studied.   The focus of this proposed research, adult women with absent fathers in romantic relationships, can be linked to the theory's dialectical tensions concerning autonomy-connection, openness-closedness, and predictability-novelty.

Research has shown that women who have had absent fathers are more likely to initiate more contact with and seek more attention from adult males (Ellis et al., 2003). Research also reveals that as a result of an absent or neglectful father, women believe that men cannot be trusted and will constantly have their guard up in relationships (Scheffler & Naus, 1999). Simultaneously a woman seeks the connection with males as a result of not having a male influence in their lives, while at the same time seek autonomy to protect themselves from being hurt by another man not remaining in their life.

This proposed research also reflects the tension between the dialectics of openness-closedness. When a woman seeks out an intimate relationship with a man, she is going to be open to increase the intimacy within the relationship (Scheffler & Naus, 1999). As the research also notes, the woman who has had an absent father will also have lost trust in men. Consequently, while she is trying to open up to create intimacy,

her guard also remains up and continues to have a sense of closedness to protect herself from getting hurt (Scheffler & Naus).

What the research has failed to look at, and can be viewed through this theoretical framework, is that women with absent fathers will especially struggle with the idea of novelty and predictability. Without a male role model in their lives, these women have little to nothing to compare how a relationship with a man is supposed to be, besides the little or no relationship they had with their fathers.

The goal of this proposed research is to gain insight on how women with absent fathers interact in romantic relationships. In particular, the following research question will be addressed,

RQ1: What are the tensions experienced by women in the text as well as the

author in their adult romantic relationships as a result of fatherlessness?

Through a dialectical lens, this study will be able to look at and analyze the contradictions and tensions that these adult women go through when choosing their mate, as well as interacting and remaining in romantic relationships. Dialectical theory will provide a framework that recognizes the pull between uncertainty and the desire to be loved that the women experience because of the lack of a father.

Researchers have looked at the potential effects of fatherlessness on both boys and girls throughout their adolescence (Lowe, 2000). Research has also stated that once boys move in to adulthood they are not affected as significantly as women are in their romantic relationships by their fatherlessness (McCabe, 1997). This study is an attempt to continue to question the importance of fatherlessness on the lives of women, specifically in their romantic relationships. Therefore, this study will attempt to uncover

the potential effects fatherless women feel, when attempting to establish romantic relationships within their adult lives.

CHAPTER 3

METHODOLOGY

This paper is not only a learning process for myself, but also offers a way for other women to understand the things they have experienced as a result of fatherlessness. By choosing autoethnography, I am integrating my body, mind and emotions into my scholarship (Spry, 2001). Autoethnography can be defined as a self-narrative interacting with self and others in the context of researching lived experience (Spry). Autoethnography is like a cultural billboard for people to read and interpret their own experiences (Jovanovic, 2003; Spry). It allows researchers the freedom to tell their own stories and explore their own experiences as research (Jeffries, 2002). It allows you to look at yourself to get to culture (Pelias, 2003), a culture that is shared by others. In autoethnography, you are stripped for a moment of who you are as the researcher, and your emotions and experiences are captured for others to experience (Jovanovic).

When performing this autoethnography I had thoughts of doubt because of the amount of personal information and feelings that will be shared with others, that for so long have been kept private. But that is also a reason that it is so important to have this kind of research done. Without the Barras (2000) text, I would have thought I was the only woman affected by fatherlessness. In fact, I was unaware that there was a term to define what I felt. I anticipate the readers of this autoethnography will be moved both emotionally and critically by the text (Spry, 2001). Within this method I hope to invite women to think about their lives in relation to mine, and experience my experience through the research (Ellis, 1999). Through this autoethnography I intend to help other women who have had the same possible effects understand, and then begin to heal

themselves of the negative consequences of the fatherless syndrome, as well as see the potential positive consequences that come from this experience.

For this autoethnography I analyzed Barras' (2000) text *Whatever Happened to Daddy's Little Girl*. This was instrumental to help identify the feelings that I was having; it was also key to begin the process of journaling as a means to uncover past memories. In this text Barras looks back on her own fatherlessness and the effects it has had on her adult life. Moreover, she also looks at her daughter's experiences, as well as a number of other women's stories that she collected to include with her own. By analyzing my own experiences through this text, I have been able to identify what some of the experiences and emotions I have felt mean, as well as understand that I am not the only woman that has gone through this.

Autoethnography

Spry (2001) defines autoethnography as "a self narrative that critiques the situatedness of self with others in social contexts" (p. 710). It is the culture of the writer's own group textualized (Van Maanen, 1995). Autoethnography allows researchers to look at their personal lived experiences with the scholarly freedom to craft "their story" and explore their own lives as research data (Jeffries, 2002). In autoethnography, the researcher is what is researched (Jeffries); it connects the ideas of personal identity and culture that reside in the researcher (Jovanovic, 2003). The researcher becomes an object of inquiry rather than the inquirer (Crawford). As such the text and the researcher's body cannot be separated (Spry), it is solely derived from the identity of the author (Buzard, 2003).

According to Crawford (1996), historically autoethnography was a way to minimize the arrogant nature in ethnography in which researchers attempted to tell the lives of others without experiencing it. From an anthropological perspective, ethnography was only seen as valid if there was prior knowledge of the people studied and the researcher was able to "pass" as a native member (Hayano, 1979). Crawford saw autoethnography as bringing something new to the discipline, a different lens for scholars to look through when studying phenomena. Ethnographers that studied their own culture, society, ethnicity, race, religion, or sex were then seen as autoethnographers concerned with their self-identity (Hayano). Consequently, autoethnography changes how others experience others by taking a cultural context and positioning it into a researcher's own life experiences (Crawford).

Autoethnography is true, honest, and candid thought (Jeffries), examining the researcher's self, mind, and emotions (Jovanovic, 2003), and is written by scholars with many diverse interests and backgrounds (Hayano, 1979). It offers a passionate emotional voice that eliminates the line between researched and researcher (Van Maanen, 1995). Autoethnography can be difficult for researchers as they confront things about themselves that are less than flattering (Ellis, 1999). Autoethnographers share feelings of empathy as well as other emotions by knowing the subject of study on a personal level (Hayano). Readers of autoethnography reflect on their own lives and can therefore understand things in their own life; the reader is moved emotionally and critically (Spry, 2001). Autoethnography is more than telling one's experiences, it is a critical look at power relations and finding meanings through the writer's life and text (Banks & Banks, 2000). According to Hayano, autoethnography can be used to develop new theories,

concepts, and methods. It can adapt theories and techniques from other disciplines, and allows the support of one's people and self (Hayano).

Autoethnography has been used to look at racial and ethnic identity (Gatson, 2003; Jeffries, 2002; Jovanovic, 2003), battered women's experiences (Olson, 2004), experiences of cancer patients (Ellis, 1999), academic life (Nicotera, 1999; Pelias, 2003), sexism and racism (Patton, 2004), autoethnographic performance (Spry, 2001), ethnographic representation (Buzard, 2003; Crawford, 1996), health communication (Geist & Gates, 1996), sexual abuse (Ford, Ray, & Ellis, 1999), and emotion in the workplace (Miller, 2002). This study will use autoethnography to look at a fatherless woman and how she has experienced adult relationships in life, in comparison to other women in the Barras (2000) text. In particular, Jeffries (2002) provides a helpful model for this methodology because she also used journaling as the process of reflection, as well as conducted a textual analysis as well.

Description of Text

Throughout the 19 chapters of Barras' (2000) text *Whatever Happened to Daddy's Little Girl*, Barras (2000) tells a story about her life and how she experienced fatherlessness on a first hand basis. Intertwined with her in-depth and emotional stories, are stories of other women that she interviewed who have gone through similar situations and feelings. Barras (2000) paints a picture of the fatherless experience and allows readers to truly understand and identify with what it means to be fatherless.

The Barras (2000) text was selected due to the vivid and emotional stories that are described throughout the twelve chapters. The narrative of the author, along with quotes that come from diverse women those who reside in poverty to women who have held

government positions allow a wide range of perceptions that all women can relate. This text is offered as the perfect text for studying this phenomenon as it recognizes the need for the literature, while at the same time displays the major focus of what this paper is trying to accomplish. This text not only allows women of different classes to relate, but also through her stories and identifying this trait with her young daughter, it can be reflected on by women of all ages as well.

The text is separated into four sections with a total of 19 chapters describing Barras' (2000) experiences as well as other women she interviewed in her process of writing the book. The first section contains the chapters: (1) Strange Fruit, (2) A Choir of the Wounded, (3) Noonday Fights, (4) What is this Pain I Feel, (5) Manifestations of Pain: The Fatherless Woman Syndrome, and (6) Self-Examination. Within this section Barras (2000), gives the background of her own life and the three different father figures that she was either abandoned by or never knew in her life. Barras gives a detailed description of her upbringing, her brother and sister, and how she begins to pick apart her feelings of fatherlessness. She also begins to introduce other women that have shared their stories with her in relation to her own experiences.

The second section contains the chapters: (7) Searching for My Father's Image, (8) Stay, Go, Stay, Go, No Please...: The Triple Fears Merry-Go-Round, (9) Feeding, Drowning, Working, (10) What's All That Screaming About, (11) Purple Dresses, Lavender Bedrooms, and Noone Loving Me, and (12) Home Remedies. Within this section, Barras (2000) begins to specifically discuss the events that went on with her daughter and how she began to see the fatherless syndrome in her daughter's discourse. Further, she begins to talk about how women seek other outlets to replace the love that

has been lost or never known because of fatherlessness (e.g.; early pregnancy, promiscuity) through her own as well as other women's experiences. She also begins to address the remedies that fatherless women try to find to make the pain of a lost father disappear. Barras describes the feelings of fear of commitment, abandonment, and rejection as a triple fear factor that all fatherless women experience. While experiencing this she describes the rage, anger, and depression that is directed towards other men, as a result of fatherlessness. At the end of this section, Barras provides a 25-point list of ways fatherless women can cope with the pain.

The third section contains the chapters: (13) Fathers among us, (14) Surrogates, (15) Missing Daughters, and (16) His Perception. Within these chapters Barras (2000) describes the way women seek out father figures if there is not one present. She also discussed the idea that fatherless women have to imagine what a biological father would be like, because of the lack of exposure to the real thing. She also notes that a network of family and friends, although are unable to replace a father, can be a strong backbone for a fatherless child. What is also important to note about this section is that Barras begins to not only look at the syndrome of fatherlessness from the perspective of the daughter, but from the father's perspective as well. She discusses the pain that a father can go through after leaving his child. The final chapter of this section gives a 21-item list of remedies to heal a hurt father after leaving his children.

The final section contains the chapters: (17) Locating the Missing, (18) Finding Peace With or Without a Father, and (19) The Healing Balm. This last section of the text is focused on the healing of the fatherless woman. Barras (2000) stresses identifying the pain and viewing it through "adult eyes" rather than remaining in the children's

perspective. Also within this section, she gives personal as well as other women's stories of how they have or are in the process of healing and finding peace with or without a father. The last chapter gives a 15-item list of how to find the peace that so many fatherless women are searching for. The 19 chapters make up a total of 239 pages of text.

By telling the stories of other women who lost either a father through death, abandonment, divorce, or not being emotionally present, and integrating her own as well as her daughter's experiences, Barras gives a eclectic picture of the fatherless syndrome. She explicitly shows the reader that no matter how you lose your father, there are definite effects on a woman, not only in her childhood, but also in her adult life, especially in romantic relationships. Within the text, Barras (2000) reflects on and analyzes her experiences in comparison to others to help her understand what she went through, and feels the need to understand the fatherless syndrome so that she can help soften those effects that have already begun to take effect on her daughter.

The writing of Barras' text began when she covered a story in the *Washington City Paper* supporting the Million Man March in 1995. As she reflected on the three fathers that came and went in her life, Barras realized that she needed to sort out these emotions to help her daughter sort out hers as well. Additionally, the five-year national fatherhood movement prompted her writing as it focused on the need for fathers to be in their son's lives, while failing to recognize the importance of fathers and daughters. In December of 1995, Barras received a phone call that her biological father she barely knew had died, and therefore triggered her journey into exploring the issue of fatherlessness. She found that a lot of the literature on father-daughter relationships had been written in the 1980s and none were composed by African Americans. The book

started as an essay that appeared in the *Washington City Paper*, but because of the response she got after the paper was on the stands for only 24 hours, she determined that she had not only skimmed the surface of this topic, but wanted to discover and write more. She began to talk to numerous women across the country about their experiences, incorporated her own as well as her daughter's, and ultimately produced the text.

Process

As I read the text I journaled thoughts, emotions, and experiences that were triggered by the text. I also journaled significant experiences and thoughts that I had after reading the text as I began preparing and writing the first few chapters of this proposal. The model that was used when writing the autoethnography was Jeffries (2002) autoethnographical exploration of racial identity. In the article, Jeffries used journaling as a method to organize, as well as reflect on, feelings and emotions that she experienced. The study uses journaling as well to lay out all emotions and thoughts related to the selected phenomenon. Jeffries' (2004) thesis was also utilized as a model for describing the text, as well as, a framework for analysis. As an autoethnographer, the goal is to analyze previous journal entries in an attempt to make sense of the emotions and relationships that I had (Jeffries, 2002) as a result of being a fatherless woman. Therefore, the primary text (Barras, 2000), was used to contextualize the narratives of other women to the experiences to be analyzed in the study.

My thoughts, reflections, emotions, and memories were recorded as I read the text and related to the other women's experiences. These experiences were used to conjure my own memories and feelings of my father that may have been forgotten. As I read, I was reminded of experiences that happened between my father and I, as well as between

my father and my sisters. I journaled on a yellow legal pad as I read, and after reading the text, as thoughts or emotions came to me, I added those as well. Random thoughts, emotions, words, expressions, and feelings filled 22 pages. When I came to experiences that were similar to my own, I would stop reading and close my eyes. I took myself back to that time and place to be able to reflect and journal my true emotions caused by my own fatherlessness. As a researcher I began to understand, and even began to feel emancipated from, the fatherless syndrome that affects so many women. I learned that I was not solely experiencing these things, but that there is a fatherless culture that knows these feelings as well. I also began to recognize how my experiences reflected particular dialectical tensions. Identifying these feelings of tension, through the theory, allowed me to discover and understand why I felt I was constantly being pulled in two different directions when it came to my father.

CHAPTER 4

ANALYSIS

By analyzing the Barras (2000) text, within the context of my own experiences it became evident that the tensions felt in father-daughter relationships were experienced differently than those in adult romantic relationships. In order to identify the tensions felt, I drew from contradicting feelings within the text as well as in the journaling that were felt within the father-daughter as well as romantic relationships. After finding patterns within the contradicting feelings, the tensions were named and developed. The tensions identified in the text, as well as in my own journals, experienced in the father-daughter relationships were: substitute-real, presence-absence, helpful-no help, and happiness-sadness. No tensions were found in romantic relationships that were not experienced in father-daughter relationships. The tensions that were felt in both father-daughter and in adult relationships were: autonomy-connection, hopefulness-hopelessness, blaming self-blaming others, novelty-predictability, and openness-closedness. What is important to note is that each one of these tensions are opposite interdependent tensions that are desirable from both aspects and are each felt on different levels at different times in a fatherless daughter's life. At certain points one tension may prevail over the other, but at all times both tensions are present. The following sections will give an in depth analysis of the tensions felt in both the text and my own experiences. My own experiences will be block indented and italicized to make them more distinguishable for the reader.

Father-Daughter Tensions

Substitute-Real

The tension of substitute-real identifies that at times a daughter searches for a substitute father through a person or a substance to numb the hurt feelings and to replace the love that she did not receive from her father. At other points in a child's life, they desire to have their biological father whom they have desperately longed for throughout their life. In the Barras text, Afrika desired to have a baby when she was a child. She wanted to have something in her life that no matter what, would always love her. She felt that a baby would replace the love lost through her father. "I felt my father didn't love me anymore. I felt lonesome. I didn't have a boyfriend. A baby will change my life. It will be something of my own. A baby will show me love. A baby will love me in all ways" (p. 81).

Other relatives have also been used as substitutes for a father. Barras discusses in her text that her grandfather as well as aunts and uncles made the absence of her father more bearable. Although, it did not completely heal the wounds. "I cannot say for certain what triggered the realization that regardless of what my grandfather did, he was not my father,"(p. 189). Barras goes on to talk about how even though her grandfather was there for her, he could not erase the longing she felt for her father.

Certainly, he couldn't quite erase my longing for my own father. He couldn't quite make up for the fact that I didn't have one to attend Brownie and Girl Scout programs or the father-daughter dances. There wasn't a father at the door telling my prom date to bring me home early and not to make any detours to any secluded parks. My grandfather

couldn't get out on the pitcher's mound and toss balls for me to practice my batting. He never pushed me in the swings or helped me practice riding my bike without hands. In the final analysis, he was just a grandfather, a good one, but still a grandfather-limited by age and an arduous work schedule. I needed a father, (p.189).

As a child I used many different forms of finding substitutes for the loneliness I felt for my father.

When I was younger and would go next door to have my friend play with me and hang out with her family, and she couldn't come out because she was at dance class or tutoring or something else. I would play board games by myself. I would set up four players around the board and play as if everyone was there. I didn't want to be lonely. I had no one to play with. Mom at work. Sister, who knows. Brother doing boy things. I didn't have a dad around. Mom had to work all the time so that was not an option. Mother not being around, father not being around. Mother not around because without her working, we wouldn't eat. Father not around because he chose not to be. Forced me to play by myself. I felt like such a loser. It's embarrassing to write this. Knowing it will be read by others. Lonely. Lonely for father. But those moments when I would pretend others were there were my sanctuary. When I could control when they left. I couldn't control when he did.

Growing up I had a Godfather named Tony. He was missing a finger and it always creeped me out. But I still loved being around him.

His house smelled like pipe smoke. I love that scent to this day. He was

fun to be around and play with. But one day he just moved. And I never

heard from him again. But it wasn't too much of a shock, it's not like I

had the opportunity to get used to a man being around anyway. I also

looked to my best friend's father, who was also my neighbor, but there

was always that fine line that showed me he was not my father. I couldn't

go on yearly vacations with them. I wasn't allowed to be over there

whenever I wanted. I wasn't a part of their family. But in reality I didn't

want to be, I just wanted her dad. It was cool to hang out and go over

there. He still treats me like a daughter. He wants to meet my fiancé

before I get married. He feels he needs to give his approval. These things

are all cool. But when he says those types of things to me, it's always in

the back of mind that my father is the one who should be doing that, not

him.

As a child my substitute was my imagination and the brief moments I had with a

friend's father. My father was not around, so, to help me deal with that, I would use my

imagination and other people's fathers to help me get through the loneliness that I was

experiencing. The whole time I knew there was supposed to be a father present. But he

wasn't, so a substitute had to do.

Presence-Absence

Presence-absence is a tension that reflects a child's desire for their father to be

around, while at other times the child is satisfied with his absence. The desire for the

father to be absent may be due to the father hurting them in the past and their desire to

not be hurt again. The tension of presence-absence is knowing that a father is supposed to be around, while he is not.

Barras knew that there was something different about her than the rest of her family. She felt like she was the black sheep because her facial features were significantly different than the majority of her family. She had dark skin, nappy hair, and a broad nose. The presence of her father's features as a part of her physical makeup made it even more difficult for her to cope with his absence, as she had no one to physically identify within the family.

Tanya, a woman that contributed to Barras' text, had similar experiences with her physical features, "I did not look like my mother; I wanted to. People kept coming up and saying, 'Oh she looks just like him.' Him who? I guess I was haunted" (p. 214).

As a child I was constantly reminded of my father's presence because of my skin color, and of his absence because he was rarely there physically and emotionally.

My mother is White, and I am reminded everyday that there is
someone else that should have been there to take care of my siblings and I.
My father is Black, although he never really wanted to be. He never had
very many Black friends, and acted funny around Black people. Couldn't
wait to move away. Detroit bad. White suburbs good. What a way to
help your children identify with their Blackness. Coward. So I carry
features I know nothing about, except they belong to a man that never
embraced his heritage. The few weeks or days that I would see him a
year, I went to all White areas and then came back to Detroit,
predominantly Black. People asked which I identified with more. Who

knows, what does it mean to be Black? There was never a true connection between us. My father was there physically, but the only emotion that he showed passion through seemed to be anger. While living with my mother, my facial features always reminded me that I had a father. But at the same time, I felt as though I did not. It was hard to understand that there was a father figure, but no fathering took place. The joke was on us. We had a man that demanded respect once a year. Never took the time to earn it. I only carry the physical of him, and sometimes am reminded of him through my temper. Nothing positive.

Deborah Tannen, a woman who contributed her experiences to the text, knew she had a father somewhere, and wished for a way to tell him about the struggles she experienced in her life. "I spent hours typing letters to my father telling him what happened to me during the day and laying out grievances against my mother. I can't have any grievances against him, because he isn't there" (p. 23). Tannen wrote to her father because she knew he was out there, she knew that he was supposed to be there, but at the same time she had to understand that her letters may never be read, because in reality, he wasn't around.

The tension of presence absence makes a child feel that their father should be there with them, but at the same time he is absent. While experiencing this tension, the child realizes that the desire to have a father there would help them not only grow but understand who they are. Consequently, they realize they do not have that help because their father is not around.

Helpful-No Help

The tension of helpful-no help is identified as the child desires to see their father as helpful and to be there in their time of need, although he is not. At certain points in a child's life, they need their father to help them in situations they cannot rectify on their own. At the same time a child can see their father as being no help because of his absence, and as a result, they are empowered by the opportunity to be able to help themselves.

When Barras was a child she had a trumpet stolen from her, in her text she describes that if her father would have been there to protect her, he would have gotten that trumpet back for her. She needed help. While at the same time she was angry. She asked where was this father that is supposed to rescue her. "Where were you?" wrote Barras.

Misty had a similar feeling when a boy in her neighborhood tried to rape her. "Who could come to help her? Not her father; he was no different from the boy who had won her confidence only to abuse it" (p. 103). Misty knew that a father would be helpful, to save her from the bad people in her life. But, her father was no help through his absence.

Afrika, Barras' daughter, felt this tension when she wanted her parents to get back together so her father could help them get away from all the strife they were having in their lives. At the same time Afrika was angry with her father because she was the one always making the effort to maintain a relationship with him. "He needs to call me sometime. I'm always calling him, leaving messages, and he doesn't call back. I get

tired of always being the one to call. I'm not calling him. I'm part of his family. He can make time for me too" (p. 225-226).

I also experienced the desire for my father to help rid me of the pain I felt, but all that was there was a helpless unconnected man. I did not want my father to necessarily help me with my homework, or teach me how to ride my bike, my mother did that. I needed a father to help rid me of the loneliness I felt for my father.

I was the only one in my house that worked the hardest to believe and have faith in my father. Maybe the dumbest. I would always believe in his word for as long as possible with only being disappointed time and time again. My father never did anything to help me as a child besides horse back riding lessons. He was a worthless man, lacked any intention to think of other's before himself. I always wanted a father that would bring me out of my fatherlessness and make all the hurt and confusion go away. He never did. I began to wonder if he was doing it on purpose. Was it fun for him to make up stories and give us a false sense of security. For the longest as a child, I wanted him to just once do what he said he was going to do. Be there to help me when I needed him to be. Nothing but a man a worthless man.

"What fatherless woman has not imagined at least once in her life, late at night in the privacy of her own bedroom, the universe presenting at her door the perfect daddy? The all powerful, all wise hero, who would sacrifice his kingdom if necessary to save his little princess" (Barras, 2000, p. 246). The problem is for most fatherless women, he never shows up.

A fatherless woman looks for her father to help her in many different ways. To protect her, to be her hero, to teach her about life, and to help her rid herself of the pain she feels from his absence. By a father not being there for his daughter, he becomes no help in all of the many ways she needs him. Along with the tension of help-no help, the tension of happiness-sadness is experienced as a woman longs for her father.

Happiness-Sadness

The tension of happiness-sadness describes how at different times of a child's life they want to be happy with their father. They want to do and experience special memories and share joyous times with their father. When these experiences do not take place, there is sadness. Consequently, a small gesture made by a father can increase a child's happiness as the child reaches for any small indication that their father cares. At other points in a child's life they are content with being sad and have accepted that emotion as a result of becoming used to their relationship with their father remaining stagnant. "I lied when I said I was happy that Noel was gone. I lied when I said I was happy. I did not know what happiness was" (p. 24). This is how Barras felt after her stepfather left. She acted as though she was happy that he had left to hide her pain and hurt that she felt as a result of being abandoned.

> My childhood was one long, empty night. I owned an
> overwhelming sadness and loneliness. I can not situate the precise
> moment I began to have this experience. But it was the very air I
> breathed, surrounding me and suffocating me with its pollution. Part of
> me did not want to escape it; I wallowed in this shattered emotional

landscape…Years later I attributed it to Noel's mysterious departure (p.22).

A fatherless woman longs to be happy, but is continually saddened as she feels abandoned by a man that she needs and possibly cares for very deeply.

The tension I felt regarding happiness-sadness was more of a desire to be happy and to end my sadness. Although, by sadness being an emotion that I was used to, I had become comfortable with it, and therefore expected to feel that way. My father rarely brought me happiness. Rather, through the few things that he would do, I would create my own happiness by framing the event in a more positive manner.

As I was naïve and believed that one day my father would wake up and want to love me, I would be happy when he called even if it were days later because that showed he cared. He could have not called at all. And since that would have made me more unhappy, I was happy to get what I could. I always hoped for those times it would be just me and him. He would actually take time out and make me feel like I was a focus in his life. I invited him to numerous softball and soccer games. I always looked for him in the crowd. Sadness. Never there. Happiness when he would call and give me some lame excuse why he wasn't there. Must have wanted to be there right? He called. I prayed that he would treat me like a daughter rather than a responsibility. But the sadness always remained. Nothing ever changed. Didn't give a damn about what was going on with his children, but he was having a fulfilled and happy life away from them.

New woman, new house, new child, fuck the old ones. As he increased his

personal happiness, or so it seemed, he decreased mine.

The tension of happiness-sadness is what a child feels as a result of how their

father's efforts in their relationship affects them. A child, through their happiness and

sadness, develops a sense of whether or not the sadness they feel is truly worth feeling

repetitively, and whether their relationship with their father has the potential to keep re-

opening their wounds. Through this they negotiate the idea of maintaining a connection

with their father.

Autonomy-Connection

The tension of autonomy-connection is felt as a daughter has the desire to

maintain a connection with her father, while at the same time, does not want to be hurt

again. The daughter wants to remain independent because of the initial abandonment,

while at the same she desires to be connected to her father that she has longed for.

When Barras was 37 years old, her mother called her and asked her if she wanted

to meet her real father.

> I wondered about this father I never knew existed: How will I
>
> receive him, and he me? Why did it take all of this time to ask about me?
>
> What should I wear? What should I call him-daddy? If I said no, I
>
> thought then I would close the door forever. If I said yes, I didn't know
>
> what Pandora-type box I was opening. Who was this man? What baggage
>
> would he bring? Could I handle the consequences of allowing him in,
>
> after all these years, to enter my life? In reality, fate gave me no choice, I
>
> had to say yes (p. 15).

Barras was unsure of how he would react to her. She was also unsure if she was ready to let the man that was never there, back into her life. She was anxious to meet him, to see the man that matched her image. But she also a fear of repeated abandonment. As a result of this she did not know if she wanted to go through with the meeting. Therefore, she struggled with maintaining her autonomy, but at the same time she longed to have a connection with her father.

Misty, a woman who contributed her story to the text, also expressed a struggle to maintain autonomy in relation to her father. She has blanked out his face from her mind because acknowledging her pain would be too overwhelming for her to handle. Sandra, another woman who contributed to the text, desired to have her father dead. She felt that at least then, there would be a reason for him to be neglecting her.

Throughout my entire life I have felt the tension of autonomy-connection. I have wanted to be a part of my father's life. But at the same time I felt as though he did not want me there.

I have wanted my father to be in my life, I even took strides to attempt to connect with him emotionally. I feel like all of my attempts have failed. It's like I want my father to see my accomplishments, I want him to know what I am doing with my life, and know my joys and fears. But he never will. It is a no win situation. I do not believe my father has the capability to care as I need him to. So I don't include him. Excluding him makes it easier to bare as I try to forget about him day after day. I wish that I could erase all memory of him. I don't know what would be more difficult if I had never known him, or the way I feel now. Although,

if I had never known him, I wouldn't feel like I was treated like shit. I haven't talked to my father for two years. He called me on my 23rd birthday and wanted to know when I could come pick up my gift from him. He lived about ninety minutes away, and I was in school. I told him I wasn't sure. He blew up at me. We haven't talked since. Sometimes when I am thinking about all the positive things in my life that are happening, I want to tell him so he can be proud of me. But then I remember how negative he has always been, and how that will then bring me down. Sometimes I sit and cry for my father to know who I am. I think I'm a pretty cool accomplished person. But you can't make someone want to be there or want to know you. This is an issue I have battled with for a very long time. Give up. I have. No more trying. No more new wounds. Only old ones to heal.

I am not certain and don't know when I will be, I am unsure if I truly want to pursue another relationship with my father. Not knowing his true intentions, and not knowing if he is going to continue to hurt me makes me almost certain to keep my distance. When I graduated from undergraduate school, I hadn't talked to my father in about two years. Since I decided to not go to graduation, I did not invite anyone and just sent out graduation announcements to family and friends, my father not included.

When I went to my half sister's graduation in Colorado a couple of months later, I was walking around her mother's house, my father had

been there that day, although I hadn't seen him, and on the table I saw my schools graduation booklet. Confusion. Why would there be a booklet from my graduation at my step mother's house in Colorado? I asked my step mother where it came from, and my grandmother told me that my father had left it. He had gone to my graduation, and was angry with me for not only not inviting him, but for not being there. He left the pamphlet to make a point. All his actions did was hurt me, to act like he cared and then threw it in my face, in front of other family. He never called to let me know he was in the city for my graduation. But it was my fault that he was mad. I am uncertain if we could ever have a good relationship, but certain that I don't want to be continually purposely hurt by my father.

The tension of autonomy-connection is a tension felt by fatherless women who go back and forth with whether or not they want to have a relationship with their father. This tension can lead to a sense of hope in being connected, while at the same time a sense of hopelessness and a decision to remain independent.

Hopefulness-Hopelessness

The tension of hopefulness-hopelessness recognizes that at certain points in a child's life they attempt to have a sense of hope that their father will return or that they will have a better relationship with him. On the other hand, in other points of their lives they are content with being hopeless because they believe that nothing is going to change the way of the relationship. The latter tensions seems safer for fatherless women because it does not allow the possibility of having their feelings hurt again.

The tension of hopefulness-hopelessness was identified in the text most readily when Barras had the experience of losing a very close step-figure. By the time she was eight years old she had been left by three different fathers. The one she was closest to left when she was 13 years old and she missed him desperately. She would wander the streets of the city she lived in hoping to see him somewhere in the streets, although she knew he was not coming back. She began to shut herself off from everyone and would close herself in her bedroom. She felt that nothing could help end the sadness she felt, she felt unlovable. She was hopeless. For a long time she hoped that she would find her step father. But she lost faith in not only finding him, but that she would ever be loved by any man.

Meri, a woman who contributed her story to the text, had a similar experience after her father left.

> I used to sit at the window of my bedroom, which faced on to the parking lot of our apartment building, and would look at all the cars coming into the lot. I would just look and I would wait. The first few weeks, I was half hoping, half expecting that he would come home. After awhile it just became this huge gaping hole that was occupied with sorrow (Barras, 2000, p. 37).

Meri, like Barras, searched and hoped for her father, who she knew would most likely not return. Along with this hope, she knew in the back of their mind, those desires were hopeless. But just having that hope to hold onto made it easier for both Meri and Barras to cope with their loss.

As a child I also hoped for my father's love and attention. I soon learned that those desires were truly hopeless.

I used to sit by the phone on holidays and my birthday and wait for this man to call. Sometimes he would. Sometimes he wouldn't. The excuse was I forgot, I heard that way too many times. You would think he would write it on a calendar or something. At one point his new wife Jane would remind him. How many birthday cards and gifts did I actually receive on time if at all. Who knows. My brother and I would make bets to see if he would remember. Birthday gifts from dad. Nonexistent. He always promised to send some extraordinary gift, of course we would never see him on those important days. But no gift would come, I would look in the mail for months for gifts he would continually say were on the way, and sometimes, somehow, always got lost in the mail. The mail carriers must have a lot of great stuff they kept for themselves.

Wishing for my father to actually act like he gave a fuck about me was there for a long time. What child doesn't want to feel like they matter? Like they weren't a mistake? Like they are not a responsibility but someone to be loved? When we did spend time together it only reinforced that it was hopeless. Oh I would love to go visit and have him be gone all the time, so we were really visiting his wife, someone we didn't even care to be around. Man she was a bitch to us. But he was taking care of his responsibilities. He created the hopelessness by continuing to kill the hope every time he wouldn't call back, every time he made a

promise he couldn't keep, every time he attempted to relate to me but

never knew who I truly was. I wished that I would have a chance to show

him. That didn't fit in his schedule.

As I knew in my heart that everything I desired was hopeless, I still hold on to a string of hope, that maybe one day things will change. Fatherless daughters always wish for their fathers to be fathers, but at the same time they also realize that their desires may be impossible. When a daughter is faced with these emotions, she begins to place blame on why she is feeling them.

Blaming Self-Blaming Other

The tension of blaming self-blaming other is the endless emotional battle as fatherless women fault themselves as well as their father for their abandonment. In Barras' text she describes feelings of anger toward her mother for driving her father away, she blamed her father for leaving, and blamed herself for being too ugly for her father to want her. Eventually, she began to blame God for turning his back on her and leaving her without a father.

"Even as I knelt on the wooden floorboard in Epiphany Catholic Church agonizing over the loss of Noel, I could not fully describe the interior damage his departure caused. Nor could I tell anyone how I blamed myself for his leaving" (p. 60), said Barras. In the text, she illustrated this experience as she went to confession to tell the priest how she felt, hoping that God would heal her of her pain. Barras blamed herself for Noel leaving, a father figure that she deeply admired.

Afrika blamed her father's new wife, as well as herself for the tainted relationship she had with her father.

I had been around and I did things with him. Having a wife meant he couldn't do as much as I wanted him to. She stole from me," Afrika says, contradicting the impression she gave when she first met the woman. Then she pretended to like her; she even took to calling her Mama. Later, however, after it appeared her father's new female friend was a permanent fixture and couldn't be conned into leaving nicely, "I would spit on her and climb the curtains to get away from her. I didn't like her, especially when she moved him away from me." Afrika's soft voice turns hard, tinged with anger. "I didn't do anything for him to leave," she says. "I wanted what every other daughter wants: someone who will love her, someone who will guide her, and someone who will put her on the right path. I wanted my father back. I ask God, what did I do to make my father not love me anymore?

I experienced similar feelings as a child when my father remarried. My father remarried and didn't tell anyone until after the wedding. Although this happened on more than one occasion, the first time affected me the most.

Oh wow, you got married and didn't want your children there. Embarrassment. Why drag the past into your bright future? Definitely didn't want her parents to be reminded that you had a family before her, and that it actually mattered to you. We found out after the ceremony. Coward. And then he wanted us to be happy for him and respect this bitch that he was dating before he even left my mother. Jane, who was this

woman really. And at no point was she worth it. Looking at the wedding

pictures sent a pain in my heart I didn't know was possible. All these little

kids in the pictures smiling and happy. Not one I knew. Not one was me.

Coward. He wasn't happy with us, so why would he try to include us in

this new happy life.

    Maybe it was my fault. Maybe three kids were one too many and

he left because of me. I was the only child not planned. I was too much to

handle. Too much to deal with. More than he wanted. Then why was he

having more children with Jane? Was I not good enough so he decided to

try again?

In Barras' text, the Reverend Bernice A. King discussed how she felt about her

father, Martin Luther King Jr.. King's father died when she was five years old, which led

her to feel like she had no concept of who he really was. When she was around fifteen or

sixteen she became angry with her father for leaving her. She didn't want anything to do

with him. Unlike Barras and myself, King didn't blame other people or herself, she

blamed her father for leaving, even though he had no control over his assassination.

Carolyn, another woman who contributed her story to Barras' text, felt the same

way toward her father when he died. She was thirteen when her father finally began to

attempt to have a relationship with her as a result of her mother's death. Two years later,

her father died as well. She was mad at him for coming into her life after so long, and

then leaving her alone again. As a result, the idea of a father remained novel to them.

Novelty-Predictability

The tension of novelty-predictability is a fatherless daughter's desire to understand how a true relationship with a father is supposed to be like, while at the same time not knowing what a father daughter relationship would consist of.   It is the idea of having an ideal concept of a father, but not really knowing because as a child you have never had one.

Women often look to other people's fathers to help understand what a father is. In her text, Barras states that she does not have a solid definition of a father. She does not know what he is supposed to do, how he should talk to his children, or what fatherly values he should have. Other fathers are what helps her define what a good father should be. "I watch and listen to men like Russell; along the way I come to understand what constitutes a good father," (p. 73).

In the text, Barras discussed how she would watch the fathers in her neighborhood going to work in the morning, sitting on porch stoops in the evenings and on the weekends, shouting at children not to play so rough, and telling children to watch for cars when crossing the street. While at the same time, she never had a clear definition of what a father should be. "I had spent those critical years searching endlessly for something I could neither define nor describe. If someone asked me what I wanted, I would have stood slack-jawed, unable to articulate any of its features, even the most prominent." She got an idea of what a father is supposed to be like from the fathers in her neighborhood. Although, she did not know what to look for in a father.

When I thought of what a father was supposed to be, I thought of my best friend's father that lived next door.

My neighbor's dad was the best. He took her to father daughter

dances, would barbecue with his family. She played softball in the same

little league I did. He would practice with her. Buy her bats and gloves.

He was the father I always wanted. I wanted to be daddy's little girl. But

what exactly did that mean. What did it mean to have a family vacation?

I had an idea from what I saw from them. But what would a good father

be to me. What are the things that we would do together? Some things

they did seemed fun, but what would My father want to teach Me?

By observing how my neighbors father interacted with his family, gave me

an idea or prediction of how a father should be. While at the same time, I didn't

know who *my* father was supposed to be, and the things that he was supposed to

do for me. Although, I had occasional contact with my father, I was never truly

able to be as open as I wanted about my father ignorance.

Openness-Closedness

The tension of openness-closedness is the desire for a daughter to express to her

father what she is feeling, in comparison to keeping her feelings to herself. A fatherless

daughter wants her father to know what she has gone through as a result of her

fatherlessness. While at the same time, she does not want to show her feelings, to protect

herself from being hurt as she has in the past.

Barras felt this tension as she desired for her father to feel the same pain she felt.

Though I was silent, I wanted him to know about the lacerated life

I had lived. I wanted to show my war-torn interior landscape, littered with

bodies that all looked like me and tears that fell only from my eyes. I was

the simultaneously attacker and the attacked, victim and victor. I was the casualties; I had spent most of my life looking for the Red Cross Station. I wanted him to soothe this thing I called my soul.

Although Barras felt this way on the inside, she did not have the courage to tell her father. A man she had met for the first time, after 37 years of pain.

As I experienced the tension of openness-closedness I wanted my father to know how I felt, but at the same time I felt that he may not be sensitive to what I was feeling.

There were so many things I wanted my father to understand and feel with me. I wanted him to be able to reach out and feel the pain that I was feeling in my chest. He would never be able to even imagine what he has done to me. Tell him? Yeah I tried that. In high school I was in therapy because I was contemplating suicide I felt so unworthy of love. The counselor told me to write all my feelings down and then read them to him, so that I would have the courage to say everything I wanted to say. That paper was stained with blood as the wounds were reopened as I composed this letter. Did I read it to him? Sure I did. Did it make a difference? For about five minutes. He apologized after telling me that I could call him too. That I could make a larger effort. God forbid anything be his fault. He said he was sorry and that he had been busy. I don't remember exactly what else he said. But after the phone call I remember crying to my mother that I felt worse than I had before hand, and that somehow all that I was feeling was my fault. As a child it was my responsibility to call my father to see how he was doing. Not his.

Remaining closed. Yeah that seems to be what worked out best from then on.

The desire for a fatherless daughter to tell her father how she is feeling can be extreme. For a fatherless daughter to attempt for her father to understand the things she has gone through as a result of his absence is a scary process. A fatherless daughter is afraid that as a result of telling him how she feels, he will once again walk away. That is the reason fatherless women also have the tension of remaining closed and keeping the feelings to themselves. These women may be afraid that by telling their father about his faults, which has created difficulty in their lives, will result in him leaving again. Therefore, the tension of openness-closedness is very difficult to negotiate for fatherless women.

The tensions felt between a daughter and her father have effects not only in her relationship with her father, but in her daily life as she attempts to manage and make sense of what she is feeling. A fatherless daughter manages these tensions within her relationship with her father, while as she grows older, these tensions leak into her romantic relationships. Fatherlessness has the potential to not only affect the relationship a daughter has with one man, her father, but also men in their adult lives as they reach out for a man's love.

Adult Romantic Relationship Tensions

The focus of this section will describe the tensions found in Barras' text as well as in my own journaling of the dialectical tensions felt in adult romantic relationships. Although some tensions are identified as the same tensions felt within father-daughter

relationships, in adult romantic relationships they are experienced and managed differently.

Autonomy-Connection

The tension of autonomy-connection felt in adult romantic relationships is the desire a woman has to connect with a man and share his affection and love. At the same time, the fatherless woman is afraid to be hurt again, and therefore desires to remain independent.

Barras felt this tension of autonomy-connection in her romantic relationships. She would date men, but have fear at the same time that they would leave. Within the text, Barras discussed how fatherless women begin to resent men, but at the same time have a tremendous yearning for them.

> The fatherless woman is a fireball of fear. She fears rejection. She fears
> abandonment. She fears commitment. The questions repeatedly posed in
> her mind in any situation, but most especially in male-female encounters,
> are these: If I extend myself will I be accepted; will I be rejected? Will
> this person, or these groups of people one day walk away and leave me alone?
> Should I commit myself, knowing there is a possibility that this person,
> or these people will leave? Why bother getting close; it wont last anyway (p. 68).

As a result of their fatherlessness, some women begin to choose men that will ultimately leave them. It is as if they are trying to satisfy both tensions at once. If they are with a man that will leave them, they can still maintain their autonomy, while at the same time, they have the connection to a man for a short period of time to satisfy the need of attachment. "Unconsciously she has reached for the person she instinctively

knows will leave; something in her psyche already has forecasted that person's departure. When the announcement finally comes, a part of her is relieved. The veil of fear has been pulled down again until the next time (p. 69).

At other times, the woman decides to run away from the relationship as she fails to manage these tensions. She wants a man's love, but does not want to deal with the hassle of being hurt or left, so she is the one to leave the situation.

Is it worth the hassle? But the fatherless woman responds to real or imagined threats more strongly and sooner and, in most cases, by fleeing. She fears that she will lose the battle and so she runs away; often her decision to flee is precipitous, but it is better to leave than to be left, better to determine the circumstances and timing of loss than to have someone impose it on her (p. 69).

I experienced the tension of autonomy-connection in my romantic relationships as I wanted to be with a man, but was afraid if he got too close then I would open myself up to be hurt again.

When I was in my sophomore year of college I had a boyfriend named Ricco. Ricco was absolutely wonderful to me. He was affectionate and loved to spend time with me. He made me his world. We rarely got into arguments and his family loved me. A few months into the relationship when I began to have stronger feelings for him, I began to be afraid that he would leave me. Things seemed to be too perfect in our relationship. Why would a man honestly care about me this much without a motive to hurt me. It wasn't possible for a man to care that much. Look

at my dad. Should I even call him that. So I ran, yup ran. It probably

wouldn't have lasted anyway because of the different directions we were

going in life. But I didn't even leave that up to discussion, just used it as

an excuse. He tried to hold on. Hell, I just got him to quit calling me. But

the fear in my heart of being left by someone that I cared so much about

caused me to eventually leave him. He will never understand. Being

connected to someone that wanted to hold on to me as bad as I wanted to

hold onto him, actually it seemed that he wanted to hold on more. Only

made me believe in ulterior motive or a risk that I was unwilling to take.

Peace out Ric.

Barras also discusses that promiscuity for a fatherless woman is likely as they try

to find love in sex, attempting to be healed by the physical closeness. "I go from house to

house, from bed to bed, from wrong man to wrong man-sometimes a right man but for

the wrong reason. I am impatient and intolerant" (p. 89).

High school was an amusing time for me. I didn't have a steady

boyfriend, that was too dangerous. But I wanted to have men in my life. I

found myself dating up to five guys at a time. When I was bored or

annoyed with one, I would drop him and pick up another. It was a game.

Who could I get to like me the most in the shortest amount of time. I was

good. I did what my dad did. Fed empty promises. Told them I cared

when I didn't. But if they started to walk away I would freak out.

Although, I wouldn't let them know that. Can't let them know they have

you. Then they can take advantage of you. So I played with hearts, using

them, protecting mine. I loved to hear the praise from men and how they desired to be with me. It was like a rush to find men that actually wanted me. Unlike my father. It's crazy that I dated so many men that I have trouble remembering names and faces. My mother used to joke because she lost count as well. I recently went home to Detroit to visit my mother, there was a guy that knew my name and remembered me from back then, but because these men had been so insignificant and disposal to me, I had no idea who he was, and wasn't interested in trying to figure it out. I think he was a little offended with the way I blew him off. But what can you do.

Sometimes the desperation to attempt to keep a man in our lives is so terrible we will practically do anything to keep that connection. Barras began to practice this destructive pattern in a relationship she had with a married man.

Each time he left, I panicked and hurt, as if something were being torn from my body, without my permission. Each time, I worried that he might not return. The first time that he rose out of my bed to leave, I simply asked him not to go. I'm sure he was flattered, initially, by my desire to be with him all the time. Later, the softly spoken plea was laden with tears and desperation. Sometimes he would have to peel me away from him, the way someone might a leech. He pleaded with me to be understanding. But I couldn't; each time he left, I felt as I had that day when I discovered Noel wasn't coming back (p. 110).

Fatherless women after losing their father, have the possibility of having a reenactment of those feelings each time they are left by another man in their romantic relationships.

My freshman year of college I was more in love than I had ever been. I met Dewaan when I was in my senior year of high school and we became inseparable. That man was my world. I almost left the school I was at to transfer home to be with him. The night I left we both cried and cried on the walk home. He had me believing all types of beautiful stories about our lives. Nothing would separate us. I was the only woman he ever wanted. We were going to be married. I went home almost every weekend that he couldn't be up at school to see me. My studies suffered. So, I had finally found a man that loved me and would take care of me.

That was a joke. He left me for a girl that looked just like me. He told me it was because I wasn't able to be there for him when his uncle died. And she was. So she got to play the pitcher and I was kicked off the team. It was crazy when I first saw her. She looked like me, but not as cute and she had cheated on her boyfriend with him. So I knew he had it coming.

At no point did I handle this well. I dropped four sizes. I would be walking and become so overwhelmed with grief that I would lose the strength to stand, and fall. How could I have let that happen again. How could I allow another man to get close enough to me to ruin me once

again. All that talk, bullshit just like my dad. Promises. Bullshit like my dad.

      So the result was looking for physical rather than emotional love and only becoming more disappointed with myself each time. I began to play the high school game and tried to see how much I could get a guy to want to be with me before I changed my number, ignored numerous phone calls. And dodged when I saw them in the street. A horrible destructive pattern.

All I wanted was to be accepted and loved by a man, while thinking at the same time that it wasn't possible. After being left by my first love, it brought back memories and feelings that I never wanted to experience again. Therefore, I would run to a man for affection, but run from him when I began to feel anything other than like for him.

In her text, Barras (2000) describes the tension of autonomy-connection as being a feeling that a fatherless woman cannot control.

      We are drawn to intimate encounters because we desperately need their affirmation. We race inside as close as possible, often unconscious of the threat they pose to our fragile emotional stability. It is a classic approach/avoidance dynamic that we cannot control. Even as we attempt to get comfortable, even as we recognize how much we enjoy a relationship, in our peripheral vision we are plotting an exit strategy. Our fear can be overwhelming. Either we hold on too tightly, smothering our

mate and our relationship, as I did with Willie, or we run fast as we can, as

if our life depended on a swift escape, (p. 111).

Barras states that it is an automatic reflex for fatherless women, to run away

rather than be left on the curb.   According to Barras (2000), fatherless women are unable

to trust men, while at the same time, they can't be without them. A fatherless woman

believes that if she is without a man than she is undesirable. Fatherless women need men

for validation. Although, they are scared to death of getting too close to one.

One specific instance that Barras addresses in her text, is when she went into the

hospital to have a lump removed from her breast and her boyfriend at the time wanted to

take her to the hospital,

> My boyfriend wanted to take me to the hospital; I refused. He wanted to
>
> pick me up from the hospital; I still refused. And so, after spending all
>
> day at Providence Hospital in Washington, D.C., I stepped out alone to the
>
> curb to catch a taxi to a pharmacy to purchase pain killers; then I caught
>
> another taxi home.
>
> My actions clearly indicated that I had determined the bruising
>
> from the surgical procedure was much more bearable than permitting
>
> myself to be vulnerable, to be at the mercy of someone else, someone who
>
> could disappoint me or, God forbid, abandon me. It wasn't that I was the
>
> Amazon, or Iron-Jonetta. The truth is, I was exhausted, and because I had
>
> made the choice I did, at the end of the day I felt extremely lonely. But
>
> for me, being lonely was much more bearable than being rejected (p. 132-
>
> 133).

Autonomy-connection is a tension that is experienced on a daily basis by fatherless women. A fatherless woman that has lost her father is then scared to give herself to another man that has the potential to hurt her as her father did. But the longing to have love from a man is still there, and therefore makes her hopeful that one day she may be loved the way she needs to be. Although, as a result of fatherlessness, it remains in the back of a woman's mind that a true connection with a man is hopeless.

Hopefulness-Hopelessness

In adulthood the tension of hopefulness-hopelessness has the same characteristics as when a woman is a child, only the tension is felt differently. As an adult the tension of hopefulness-hopelessness deals with the tension of hope to find love in a romantic relationship, while at the same time feeling as though you will never find lasting true love. The hopelessness is desirable to a fatherless daughter as she struggles to remain in a realistic mind frame in that she may never have a fulfilling relationship with a man. It is more constructive for her to not believe in a fantasy type relationship. Barras discusses this tension in her text when she describes the desire to be in a relationship, as she continually feels that no relationship will work out and no man will ever stay.

> If someone had asked during those early months with Tommy and
> Afrika if I was happy, I wouldn't have been able honestly to answer yes. I
> never expected to be happy; I had not been for most of my life. I didn't
> believe I deserved that emotion. As long as there wasn't any confusion,
> and there was a ready companion, I was satisfied, (p. 85).

Barras felt that no man could guarantee that he would never leave her, although she longed for it to be true. In the back of her mind she always wished that maybe this

time it would work out. While at the same time keeping her bags half packed. Barras began to believe that love and loss were intertwined and inseparable.

Barras wrote about a woman named Helen who contributed her story to the Barras text, and how Helen described negotiating this tension,

> "Every once in a while my boyfriend and I will have a conversation, I'll tell him, 'if you think you don't want to be with me, let me know right now.' He'll say, 'What are you talking about?'" Continues Helen, who admits that a feeling comes over her, an overwhelming feeling, that maybe she's not wanted, maybe she'll be alone; maybe she only deserves to be alone.

Although Helen is in a relationship, she is always suspicious that her boyfriend does not want to be with her and may leave. I did not understand my own experiences with this tension until reading the Barras text.

> *I always hoped to fall in love, even though I never thought I would be married. I never thought that I would find a man to love me the way that I needed him to. It didn't take long for me to walk away from a guy if I felt he was being inconsiderate towards me. Not only wouldn't I allow him to be inconsiderate as my father had been, but there was no way that I was going to be left by another man who was inconsiderate and acted like he didn't care. Just like my dad. This time it was my turn to walk away. But I continually walked away only to meet someone else and continue the cycle. Now that I am engaged, I have to catch myself when little things happen, saying to myself that 'it is okay, just because he's not doing this*

little thing doesn't mean that he is going to leave'. I want so terribly to be

in a marriage to the man I love, yet I continually fight with feelings that he

may walk away. Fortunately, as time goes on these feelings are

evaporating.

The tension of hopefulness-hopelessness is the desire for a heterosexual woman to want to have a positive loving relationship with a man while at the same time she has to remain in reality and realize that every relationship is not going to be perfect. The hopelessness that the fatherless woman experiences allows her to preserve her sense of reality. The hopelessness allows a woman to understand that a perfect relationship is impossible. By realizing this, she can manage the feelings she experiences within these relationships in a more positive manner. When it comes to having hope and being hopeless a woman also looks for someone to blame for her hopelessness.

Blame Self-Blame Other

The tension of blame self-blame other carries the same components as it did in the tension experienced as a child, only there is a slight difference in the context in which the tension is felt. The fatherless woman continually looks for someone to blame for their fatherlessness. Audrey Chapman, a psychologist talked about a patient of hers in the Barras text, about how she felt about her fathers death. "If he knew he had a heart problem, why didn't he take care of himself? He didn't love me enough to take care of himself. So as a result of [his] not loving me very much, I must not be lovable. Therefore, no other man will love me" (p. 63). The patient is 34 years old, still a virgin, and has never had a relationship with a man.

Other daughters blame their mothers along with themselves. They blame their mother for not being a good enough woman to their father, and themselves, for not being a good enough daughter. This tension, like the others, follows women into their adult romantic relationships. Women begin to blame themselves when romantic relationships don't work out. They feel that they have not been a good enough woman to keep their partners. While at the same time, fatherless women blame all men for what their fathers have done to them. Therefore, fatherless women begin to treat all men they come in contact with unfairly as a result of their past.

As much as fatherless women look for love in sex, some actually look to get even. They want to find a man who will fall in love and who will want to make a commitment. These women will maneuver until every duck is in its proper place, and then set the man up for major disappointment. Now the father substitute feels what his daughter once felt, (p. 89).

While in college, I began to blame men for the way I felt about myself and not wanting to be in a relationship, while at the same time placing blame on myself.

Throughout my college years, as I dated numerous men, there were many times that a man would stop calling or start acting different towards me. At first I felt as though there was something wrong with me. I felt that I was unlovable, or unlikable for any man and that I needed to change who I was so I could be who they wanted me to me. That mind set lasted very briefly as I began to blame them for not being good to me. I then began to reverse the role and began dating men just to hurt them, or to see

if I could get them to begin liking me, only for me to cut them off and leave

them alone. It was like a game. A game that I always won. I refused to

give the chance for me to be hurt again. I believed that I was unlovable,

and that somehow it was their fault.

The tension of blaming self-blaming other is healthy for a fatherless woman to experience as she does not take all of the blame on herself. It is important for these women to acknowledge that the men in their lives have a hand in how the relationship turns out. Moreover, it is just as important that fatherless women recognize their own responsibility in the outcome of the relationship as well. What is difficult for fatherless women to understand when they are in their heterosexual relationships, is that they may be having difficulty understanding their partners as a result of their father's absence.

Novelty-Predictability

The tension of novelty-predictability does not only reflect the tension of having an ideal of what a father should be, but at the same time having no real definition. Additionally, a fatherless woman does not know how they are to be treated by a man, as they struggle to know what kind of man they want in their life. Barras discusses this tension as feeling, "We are navigators without working compasses. Even now, I sometimes find myself searching for meaning in a male companion's actions. I am not sure how to discern if a man loves me, without his saying it (p. 91)."

Not knowing how a man's love is supposed to be is not the only problem. A fatherless woman has a hard time not giving her all to a man that appears to be exactly what she needs. "The smell of our fathers, real or imagined. The dreams we had of their holding us, nurturing us, telling us we are beautiful. And so with the first guy that comes

along to mimic what we imagine, we fall under the spell and into his bed,"(p. 97). As stated in the literature review, women appear to others as promiscuous as they continually make the same assumptions about the wrong men (e.g.; Popenoe,1996).

For the longest time I was confused. I thought that if a man was interested in me physically he must care about me. Boy was I wrong. I learned that men will say what you wanna hear to get what they want. But I didn't know how to look for the signs. The red lights that showed that this man was wrong for me. My father showed me very little emotional as well as physical love. I wasn't sure for a long time which one was more important. Or if they were equally important. Could you have one without the other? I didn't think so for a long time. Boy was I dumb. The only relationship that I had to look at growing up that was positive was my grandmother and grandfather. My grandfather died when I was pretty young. So I had no model, just ideas and how my mother told me things were supposed to be. But what did she know, right? So my models came from what I saw on television or in the movies. Childhood fantasies too. So I had to learn from trial and error of how things are "supposed" to be. While having way too many errors in the meantime. Huge emotional strains.

The tension of novelty-predictability reflects the idea that fatherless women have an ideal of how a heterosexual relationship is supposed to be. They have ideas from different influences in their lives and develop a template on how the ideal relationship is supposed to go. However, fatherless women never truly know and are sometimes

surprised in their relationships. The surprise is a result of them not having a father show them how to interact with men. By not knowing how to interact with men, it is difficult for women to open up and reveal their fatherlessness to their significant others.

Openness-Closedness

The tension of openness-closedness carries the same components as the tension felt by a child, but the context in which the tension is felt is different. The tension of openness-closedness is wanting a relationship partner to understand a woman's issue with fatherlessness. While at the same time, the fatherless woman does not want to reveal her feelings as she is afraid that her partner will not understand. In her text, Barras describes closedness as a shield to prevent anyone getting close enough to see her despair. By most women not understanding that there are other women out there that feel the same way they do, they want to keep it to themselves. Nevertheless, finding someone that can understand is truly an emotional experience.

In the summer of 1998, I made my final break with fatherlessness.
I was consoling a young woman at American University. We had met
days earlier when I presented a lecture to her class. As I was leaving,
engaging in closing chitchat with a couple of students, she walked up to
me and began crying. She had thought herself alone in her fatherlessness.
Speechless and deeply moved, I put my arms around her and hugged her
for several minutes (p. 255).

Throughout my relationship with my fiancé, I have attempted to be open with him about my relationship with my father to help him understand the things I have gone through.

It is so difficult to try to get a man to understand what I feel. It's already hard to get him to empathize with me. He wears a hard exterior and interior. I am a ball of mush. Man I hate to try to get him to understand. I know he never will. He needs to know why I freak out about stuff. Especially around Halloween. Dad's birthday on Devil's night. Coincidence right. I wonder if he thinks I'm crazy. Sometimes I do. Problems in the relationship. Gotta explain my issues. It's hard to go through, replay memories. Is he pretending to understand. What is he really thinking about me. Does he think I'm weak because of it. It made me stronger although sometimes I feel weak. I try to get him to understand why. Are there really words that can express the pain. This paper should spell it out. But will it. Is that what I am trying to do? So hard to share everything. How will it be taken. Gotta get it off my chest. Deep. He needs to know. He'll be with me the rest of my life, right? Man this is hard.

I try to tell my fiancé the stories and the feelings that I have, but it is difficult for him to relate, which then makes it difficult for me to want to explain it to him. I feel the tension of openness-closedness as I want him to understand, but I'm not sure if he ever will.

As the reflections both from the text and my journaling process show, dialectical tensions are apparent for fatherless daughters in their childhood as well as in their adult romantic relationships. As a fatherless daughter attempts to balance each of these

tensions, she reflects upon what is more important or significant at the time and therefore determines which tension receives more weight over the other.

The analysis has shown that there are a number of dialectical tensions that overlap within father-daughter as well as romantic relationships. What the analysis also shows, is that although these tensions overlap, they are experienced differently as they are experienced in a different context. The tensions felt in father-daughter relationships that are not identified as tensions felt in adult romantic relationships within this analysis, show the volume of effects that fatherlessness has on daughters and how they then simply overlap into fatherless women's adult romantic relationships.

The following section will take the tensions identified in the analysis and show how themes were developed in which the tensions can be integrated. The themes will therefore show trends that have been identified within the tensions in the analysis. These themes will then distinguish primary and secondary tensions that are felt within the father-daughter and adult romantic relationships.

CHAPTER 5

DISCUSSION

The preliminary tensions that were found in the present study for fatherless daughters in their father-daughter relationships were substitute-real, presence-absence, helpful-helpless, and happiness-sadness. There were no tensions found in romantic relationships that were not experienced in father-daughter relationships in some form or fashion. The tensions that were identified in both sections, father-daughter as well as in adult romantic relationships were: autonomy-connection, hopefulness-hopelessness, blaming self-blaming other, novelty-predictability, and openness-closedness.

When conducting the analysis it became evident that some of the tensions felt within both types of relationships were similar in nature. After identifying that the tensions were parallel, they were combined and renamed to create both primary and secondary tensions. Many of the tensions had parallel themes that displayed similar feelings and tensions felt by fatherless women. Therefore these themes were grouped together to create an easier template to not only understand but analyze the potential effects of fatherlessness.

After identifying these tensions both in my own journals and in the text, I began to re-reflect on these tensions and develop a framework to demonstrate how the tensions experienced in childhood are directly related to the tensions felt in adulthood. There were three primary tensions identified with two secondary tensions that represented the tensions felt in childhood and adulthood (See Table

I). The three primary tensions identified are ideal-real, autonomy-connection, and internal responsibility-external responsibility.

The following sections will explain the primary tensions that are experienced by fatherless daughters. Additionally, secondary tensions will be identified to distinguish between the tensions that are negotiated in father-daughter relationships. The tensions will then be related to the tensions experienced in adult heterosexual romantic relationships as a result of fatherlessness. The framework that will be provided helps give a more organized view of what was represented in the analysis; in addition, it will illustrate how different tensions in these two different types of relationships can be combined to show how the tensions are similar yet different. By doing this, I present a model that future researchers, as well as fatherless women, can use to further understand this phenomenon. As explained earlier, each dialectic in each of the tensions is desirable, and continuously negotiated.

Ideal-Real

The primary tension of ideal-real was generated by encompassing two tensions identified in the analysis: novelty-predictability and substitute-real. The tension identified in the analysis as novelty-predictability adds to this primary tension through a recognition that a fatherless daughter has an ideal of what a father-daughter relationship should be. On the other side of the spectrum, the fatherless daughter is unsure of what the relationship should be like as a result of the relationship with her father is nonexistent. Therefore, her reality is that she

does not know how a father-daughter relationship should be because her father was not around to develop one with her.

The tension of substitute-real can be integrated into the primary tension of ideal-real as the daughter attempts to fill her void with something that she sees as a positive influence in her life. While at the same time nothing can truly replace the love that she is missing from her father. By combining these two tensions it is obvious that there is an ideal developed as a daughter attempts to predict what a father should be like and tries to find these qualities within her substitute. At the same time, however, she is unable to predict the relationship because her father was absent. Therefore, a fatherless woman is stuck in the reality that she may never find a man that can replace the relationship she never had with her father.

After combining these tensions and developing a primary tension, the analysis helped identify that a fatherless woman has a kind of fantasy of how a relationship with a father/romantic partner should be. The ideal relationship in some sense becomes a sort of guideline or blueprint of the kind of relationship she desires to have with her father or significant other. At the same time there is the actual relationship that exists between a fatherless daughter and her father; which can affect the way a woman will interact in her adult romantic heterosexual relationships. The tension is therefore a constant pull in two directions. The first direction is finding a substitute to help create a model of an ideal father and ideal future relationship with a man. The other direction is that a fatherless woman has to deal with the reality that she does not know what to expect in either type of relationship.

Hope-Disappointment

There are two secondary tensions related to the primary tension of ideal-real. The first is hope-disappointment. This secondary tension is a result of the combined tensions identified in the analysis as helpful-no help, happiness-sadness, and hopefulness-hopelessness.

The tension of helpful-no help identifies how a fatherless daughter longs to have a father in her life that will show ways of life and help her when things go wrong. By desiring this, the daughter shows a sense of hope, that one day her father will be there the way she needs him to be. Her hope is that her father will be there to protect her and guide her as she stumbles through life. But because the father is absent and not in her life he is not able to help her and therefore leaves the daughter having to be more independent. In many ways this can disappoint the daughter as she wishes to not only have a hero but a teacher for life.

The tension identified as happiness-sadness alludes to the fact that by having a sense of hope, a daughter can create a sense that happiness with her father is possible. If she can create a sense of happiness through all of the strife that she encounters, it can give her a sense of hope that the relationship with her father can improve. However, through a recognition of the distress that she feels as a direct cause of her fatherlessness, the daughter will feel depressed from the continued disappointment she experiences with her father.

The tension of hopefulness-hopelessness is very similar to the identified secondary tension. The feeling of hope is rather self-explanatory as a fatherless woman hopes to not only have a positive relationship with her father, but in her

romantic relationships as well. At the same time, she feels a sense of hopelessness, whether it be with her father or in her romantic relationships, the results are repeatedly unsatisfactory and disappointing.

As stated in the above paragraph, a fatherless woman desires to have a healthy relationship with her father, but after numerous disappointments she becomes accustomed to the feeling of disappointment. The pull towards hope is positive because a woman should not feel that the relationship with her father is beyond repair and that she will never get over the hurt. Yet, it is also important for a fatherless daughter to be realistic, as she has been continuously disappointed in the past, should not out rule that as a possible outcome in the future. The disappointment a woman feels from her father permeates the reality of the father being absent. As the daughter realizes this, she then has the opportunity to accept that reality, although it may be difficult, and move on with her life. It would be unhealthy for a child to solely live in a fantasy about what might happen. Therefore, being realistic is positive as well. By being realistic, the daughter is able to have a better understanding of how the relationship truly is with her father and is not solely focused on how the relationship could be.

High Expectations-Low Expectations

The other secondary tension related to ideal-real is high expectations-low expectations. For a fatherless daughter in her adult romantic relationships, she has high expectations of how she would like the relationship to be and how she would like the relationship to turn out. These expectations are developed through seeing other fathers with their daughters, the media, or from discourse from others

about an ideal father. But, because of her father's absence, she has low

expectations as she is uncertain of whether or not a good relationship with a man

is obtainable. She has high expectations of being loved by a man, while at the

same time does not expect to be possible as a result of her past experiences.

Although this tension was not identified specifically in the analysis, it is reflective

of the tensions of hopefulness-hopelessness and novelty-predictability.

The tension identified in the analysis as hopefulness-hopelessness is the

tension a fatherless woman experiences when she hopes that she will find a man

that loves her the way she deserves to be loved. While at the same time, a

fatherless woman does not believe she will find that true love. A fatherless

woman seeks to find a loving and fulfilling relationship after the relationship with

her father failed. A woman, even if she cannot identify what it is, has a hole in

her heart for the love that her father did not give her. Therefore, she seeks this

love in other men, father figures or romantic relationships, to fill that void.   Yet,

the fatherless woman also feels a sense of hopelessness because the relationship

did not work out with her father. She then feels that no man could truly love her

if her own father abandoned her. Feeling this way about relationships with men, a

fatherless woman will most likely have low expectations in her future

relationships. She, therefore, has high expectations of how she would like her

relationship to be, while at the same time has low expectations because of past

relationships with men that have failed.

The tension of novelty-predictability can also be identified as a tension

that contributes to the secondary tension of high expectations-low expectations.

A fatherless woman may come into the relationship with the tension of both high expectations-low expectations because she does not know what to expect from a relationship with a man. What she does know and is able to predict is what can go wrong in a relationship. Consequently, she is going to naturally have low expectations for her romantic relationships.

Reflecting on these tensions, the high expectations-low expectations tension emerged as central to adult romantic relationships. It is a benefit for adult women to have high expectations in their relationships, especially in terms of how they feel an ideal relationship should be. It is also important for fatherless women to realize that they are worthy of these relationships, and that a positive relationship with a man is possible. Yet instill, this is the opposite of what they experienced with their father. As fatherless woman understands that although the reality of her relationship with her father is prevalent, a similar relationship to her ideal is possible.

The opposing tension to have low expectations, is also beneficial because it keeps women in touch with reality that they may not find a perfect relationship. Fatherless women do not necessarily know how a relationship with a man is supposed to be so they are more likely to stumble in their romantic relationships (Barras, 2000). By being aware of this rational tension, makes it possible for these women to understand that although they might want things to be perfect, they may not be. By realizing this they can recognize that it is okay to not have a perfect relationship as they go through the learning process of what a healthy relationship with a man is supposed to be like.

Autonomy-Connection

The second primary tension, autonomy-connection, was adopted from Baxter's (1988) internal tension of an individual having a desire to be independent in a relationship while at the same time maintaining a connection with their partner. When adjusting this tension to the father-daughter and adult romantic relationships, a fatherless daughter experiences that same tension of independence and connection in both of these relationships, but for different reasons. In fact, according to Baxter (1998), the major turning points in a relationship usually centers on the tension of autonomy-connection.

The tension of autonomy-connection in regards to fatherlessness relates to the idea of a fatherless daughter wanting to be connected to a man, while at the same time needing to remain independent from men. The desire to be connected to a father/significant other is natural for a woman. According to Wineburgh (2000), part of a father's purpose is to teach his daughter how a healthy relationship with a man is supposed to be. Naturally, a child is drawn to her father for this reason, and as a result uses what she has learned from him in her adult heterosexual relationships. The tension of autonomy is positive as it allows a daughter to remain self-sufficient in both of these kinds of relationships. If a daughter is too connected to her father, she may never get over the loss, and therefore, be affected negatively throughout the rest of her life. As a daughter is independent she will understand that it is okay that the connection is not there with her father. Therefore, the daughter may then become a stronger, more determined person as a result of her fatherlessness.

Autonomy-connection in adult romantic relationships is very similar but also different. As a heterosexual woman you have a desire to be with a man romantically, but

at the same time it is important to remain independent and not become too attached. As shown in the analysis, Barras (2000) became so attached to a man, that him leaving in the morning to go to work would drive her crazy. It is important for an individual to have independence and allow the other partner to have their own freedom as well.

Presence-Absence

There are two secondary tensions related to the primary tension of autonomy-connection. The first secondary tension identified as experienced in father-daughter relationships is presence-absence. As stated in the analysis, in a father-daughter relationship there is typically a sense of the father's presence. The father's presence can be felt through the daughter resembling her father, relatives discussing the father, the mother's discourse regarding the father, and the daughter knowing that a father is supposed to be there. But there is also the constant reminder of the father's absence as he is not there for his daughter in the numerous ways that she needs him.

This tension is related to autonomy-connection. There is a constant connection that a child has through the father's presence, whether it be that the child looks like the father or that the father is discussed by family members around the child. The child typically knows that there is supposed to be a father figure there, the child may even long for the father to be there, and through that longing, has a direct or indirect connection to him.

Absence can be related to autonomy. Even though the father is there in one aspect, the father has left their child and therefore he is absent. Through the father's absence, his daughter is typically forced to become independent in a variety of ways. A daughter has to learn how to stand up for herself because her father is not there to rescue

her from certain situations. Additionally, a daughter has to learn how to interact with her peers, especially boys in a positive manner. A daughter therefore, learns these things independently as her father is not present to teach her. What is positive about a father's absence in this sense, is that fatherless girls then have the possibility of becoming more independent and self-sufficient. As a result of this independence, fatherless women then have the opportunity to be less dependent on men in their lives and possibly have the personal drive to exceed to higher levels in life. The desire for the absence of a father as well as remain independent can come from the daughter's feelings of betrayal by her father. By a father not being around, a woman may therefore fulfill her desire of autonomy to prove that she can be self sufficient without him.

Togetherness-Separateness

The next secondary tension related to autonomy-connection that is negotiated in adult romantic relationships is togetherness-separateness. Togetherness-separateness can be related to the tension identified in the adult romantic relationships section of the analysis of autonomy- connection. This tension can be related for obvious reasons to the primary tension. But what is important to note is that in adult romantic relationships the tension of autonomy-connection is a woman's desire to be together with a loving man in a healthy relationship; yet she also desires to have a separate life from men as she is afraid that they will hurt her as her father did in the past.

Within the tension of togetherness-separateness, a woman desires to be connected to a man, while at the time, she continues to desire to have a separate life from them. Although this tension was not identified in the analysis, it can be linked to the tension identified as autonomy-connection. The tension identified in the analysis as autonomy-

connection is the same tensions identified in the analysis when looking at adult romantic relationships. In adult heterosexual relationships, a fatherless daughter desires to be connected to a man. On the other hand, she wants to keep herself separate from men to prevent being hurt as she has in the past. This tension is different than the tension that is felt in father-daughter relationships as the fatherless woman desires to maintain independence from her father through autonomy, but in adult romantic relationships, the fatherless daughter seeks to remain independent from all men, not just her father. As a result of her father not being around, a woman does not necessarily know how to interact with a man and will therefore separate herself from all men. When it comes to adult romantic relationships, a woman desires to know what it is like to have a positive connection with a man romantically.

Internal Responsibility-External Responsibility

The third primary tension, internal responsibility-external responsibility, focuses on who is accountable for the quality of the relationship. It is important for females, as children and as adults, to take responsibility for their relationships. However, it is also important and healthy for women to understand that every failed relationship also includes another responsible party. It is important for a fatherless woman to recognize that both parties in a relationship are mutually responsible for the outcome.

The tension of internal responsibility-external responsibility can be directly related to the concept of locus of control (Stone & Jackson, 1975). If an individual has an internal locus of control they feel as though they are in control of the events that take place in their lives (Stone & Jackson). In comparison, an individual that has an external locus of control looks to outside sources to explain events that have happened in their

lives (Stone & Jackson). It is important for fatherless women to negotiate both locus'

when considering relationships with their fathers and other men. Fatherless women need

to be able to identify that they have some control over what happens in both relationships,

but simultaneously recognize the lack of control of others as well.

Blaming Self-Blaming Other

There are two secondary tensions that can be related to the primary tension of

internal responsibility-external responsibility. The first secondary tension is negotiated in

father-daughter relationships is termed blaming self-blaming other. This tension, also

described in the analysis, is a father-daughter tension in which a fatherless daughter

blames herself for her father leaving, while simultaneously blaming her father as well.

As a child, it is important to recognize that at some point, depending on the way the

father was lost, the child may have been able to make an effort to rekindle a relationship

with her father. In this regard, it is crucial for a child to look at themselves and take some

responsibility, not necessarily for the father leaving, but for helping to maintain or

address the relationship with him. Alternatively, a daughter should also recognize that

the situation may have been out of her hands and that some of the responsibility belongs

to her father. It is important for a daughter to recognize that she is not necessarily the one

to fault for her father leaving, and that her fatherlessness is also related to the choices that

her father made as well. Therefore both father and daughter hold some responsibility for

the relationship. The tension of blaming self-blaming other exists and is negotiated

because a daughter wants to understand the source for her hurt. She wants to blame

herself because she can not think he would leave for no reason. While at the same time, a

daughter wants to blame her father because she knows that she did not do anything extreme enough to make her father abandon her.

Caution-Trust

The next secondary tension, caution-trust, although not identified as a tension in the analysis, can be directly related to the primary tension of internal responsibility-external responsibility. The tension of caution-trust involves the fatherless woman being hesitant as she moves into romantic relationships with men. A fatherless woman does not want to give the opportunity to get hurt again, if she did, she would see it as her fault for entering the relationship without her guard up. While at the same time, she wants to trust a man who will take responsibility for his part in the relationship. Therefore, a woman feels that it is her responsibility to be weary of a man's intentions in order to insure that she is not hurt again. Alternatively, a woman attempts to put her faith in a man's intentions and believes that he may truly want to be with her, and places the outcome of the relationship in his hands.

This secondary tension can be directly related to the themes found in the tension of blame self-blame other in adult romantic relationships. The tension of caution-trust in adult romantic relationships is experienced differently than in the father-daughter dyad. The tension in adult romantic relationships is that women fault themselves for all of the failed relationships in which they have encountered. But what is different than in the father-daughter dyad, is that fatherless women have a tendency to hold all men responsible for the confusion and hurt that they feel in their relationships, and therefore take out their anger on them.

There are two sides that are desirable within this tension. On one side, it is important for a woman to take responsibility for what might happen in a relationship. She takes this responsibility through being cautious with her heart because of what she has already gone through. As shown in the analysis, trusting too much too soon can wound a fatherless woman almost as severely as when her father initially left. Yet, it is also important for a woman to trust a man enough that she will get to know him, and allow him to take responsibility for his part in the relationship. By trusting and revealing to him what has happened with her father in the past, it can show him that he has a responsibility to be sensitive to her heart.

As evident in my description, these three primary tensions are all related to one another as they are experienced in both father-daughter relationships as well as adult romantic relationships. As the six secondary tensions relate to the primary tensions, they relate to one another as well. They are all struggles that a woman goes through as a result of fatherlessness. All of these tensions are experienced as a woman desires to keep herself safe from being hurt again, not only by her father, but in her romantic relationships as well.

Limitations

The need for research on the potential effects of fatherlessness on adult women is clear and evident. The research has the ability to interrupt the pattern of fatherlessness that takes place in a number of women's lives. Expanding and exploring the research on this topical area can help women understand what they have gone through and what they are going through as the result of their father being absent. By doing this, it can help create a healthier society as women discover the need for a father figure to be in the

home. Through knowledge of this research, women may attempt to end the growing number of children that are born without a father in the home. It is also important for men to once again realize their importance not only in the home, but in the growth of their children. This research project proposes that through this project alone, the problem may not be solved. As limitations are realized, future studies can enhance the research and continue to fight fatherlessness.

One limitation that has been identified in this research project is the existence of other possible influences that can affect the way a fatherless woman experiences her fatherlessness. In particular, whether or not the mother remarries or if there is a male in the household that can act as a father figure to the child can affect the way the tensions of fatherlessness are felt. Although the child may know that the male influence in the home is not her father, the potential effects may be experienced differently with the presence of a male being in the home. For instance, in the Barras text, she wrote of numerous father figures in the home. Her mother was married to two different men before Barras turned 13 years old. On the other hand, I did not have a father figure in the home, although I saw my father occasionally in the summers. By specifically focusing on how that father figure or biological father is in the child's life, can give a greater insight into the effects felt as a fatherless woman.

Another limitation relates to variables and differences in socioeconomic status. Coley (2003), found socioeconomic status to be a contributing factor in father-daughter relationships in African American families. Therefore, if a child grows up in the upper middle class, the opportunities offered to them to cope with their fatherlessness may be different. For example, there could be a nanny in the home if their mothers choose to

work. Alternatively, the mother may not have to work as often if she makes more money, which then allows her to be more available to her child. In addition, the opportunities to get involved in drugs and violence may be less likely as drugs might not be as readily available to fatherless children in the upper middle class neighborhoods. On the other hand, if a child grows up in an impoverished situation, they may have less opportunities for their mother to keep track of what they are doing. In poverty stricken areas, gangs, drugs, and crime are typically more prevalent; the result of which are likely to be lower education, teenage pregnancy, and criminal activity (Popenoe, 1996).

Although not found in current research, the age of the child could possibly change the effects as well. If a daughter loses her father at an early age and never knew him, she may not feel the same effects as a daughter who bonded with her father for a number of years before he left. Also, the level of responsibility taken and given for the father's departure, can be a result of that relationship and how long it lasted before the father became absent.

While adding to the richness of descriptions of lived experience in this analysis, an autoethnographical approach also has some inherent limitations. Although numerous stories and experiences were reflected upon within the text as well as through the journaling, all of the stories only represented one perspective, that of the daughter. Therefore, the original study did not reflect the standpoint of the father or any other members in the women's lives. The stories were all emotions and reminiscence of what had happened to the women, told by the women, meaning that they only represent a partial truth to the full father-daughter relationship.

A fourth limitation identified is that the romantic relationships reflected on were past relationships. By reflecting on past relationships, women have the ability to look back and reflectively analyze, something that is not as easily done in present relationships. Events that can be linked together may not be looked at until a full picture of the relationship can be given from beginning to end. Therefore, to know how things are working out currently for the women that shared their stories is difficult. The women only reflected on the past rather than on the present, with a small exception of the small journaling that took place. As research looks at this phenomenon from a temporal perspective, the tension of stability-change, not mentioned in the original study, could be utilized within the analysis.

According to Montgomery and Baxter (1998), an overarching tension of stability-change is not a singular tension, but a feature of all dialectical tensions. The concept of stability-change is to desire consistency in a relationship, while at the same time desire variation (Montgomery & Baxter). The dialectic of stability-change allows researchers to locate temporal differences within different dialectics (Montgomery & Baxter). The tension allows research to look at how time effects the way different tensions are negotiated in relationships. Although the present study analyzes tensions that are negotiated in father-daughter relationships in comparison to adult romantic relationships, the tensions are not studied over a period of time. To study these relationships within a longitudinal methodology would help identify deviations from the patterns distinguished within the current study.

Implications for Future Research

The following section will describe potential research plans in which the limitations can be addressed within future projects on the selected phenomenon. A number of implications will be explained that identify research projects that can enhance the current research. The purpose of the current study was to identify the dialectical tensions that are felt by fatherless women in their father-daughter and adult romantic relationships. Although the process of autethnography is effective, the process of interviewing may be a more valuable way to address the limitations to see how fatherlessness affects women over time (Ellis et al., 2003).

One implication for a future study would address the surrogate father's role in the home. Within the in-depth interview process, questions regarding whether or not there was a father-figure in the home would generate additional insight on the father figures status (e.g., mother's boyfriend, step-father, relative, or friend). The above implications would then provide valuable understanding as to whether or not a surrogate father in the home has the ability to affect the tensions felt as a result of fatherlessness.

One specific demographic that may also have an effect on the tensions experienced in fatherlessness is the socioeconomic status of the family. Questions that could be implemented into the study could focus on the average income of the household, the average number of hours the mother worked, and the area(s) in which the family lived. Through these questions, the researcher may discover that as a result of socioeconomic status, the effects of fatherlessness can be more or less negotiated.

As past research has indicated, when looking at familial relationships the methodological technique of interviewing is effective. Radina (2003) conducted

interviews when looking at daughters of childhood parental divorce and their relationships with their fathers. Baxter et al. (2004) also used the process of interviewing when looking at stepchildren's perceptions of the contradictions in communication with their stepparents. Therefore, as other qualitative studies have shown, the above proposed research process of interviewing seems most effective.

Another implication for the original research is to get more than one perspective when studying this phenomenon. The fatherless daughter is not the only one involved, nor affected by her father being absent. Another perspective that would be greatly beneficial to the current study, would be to interview the father as well. The dialectical tensions that are felt by the father after leaving their children could then be assessed. Although it may be difficult to find fathers that are willing to participate in this process, I would solicit the daughters of absent fathers that still have a way to contact them. After gaining permission from the father, after his interview, I would then describe the feelings he felt as a daughterless father to help her understand what he had gone through as well. After making the other side of the story available to the daughter, I would then re-interview the daughter to see if any of her initial feelings had changed and to see which tensions remained prevalent.

Hoppe-Nagao and Ting-Toomey (2002) used a similar method of interviewing multiple individuals within a relationship when they looked at relationship management strategies in marital couples. By interviewing both parties in the relationship, a father and daughter, enhances the richness of the study. Other research that has followed a similar methodology looked at the effects of parenting, father absence, and affiliation with delinquent peers on adolescents (Paschall et al., 2003). Within this study, the

children were interviewed twice as well, once before and then after, their parents. This allowed the researchers to have a more clear picture of the true behavior of the adolescents.

A final implication that I would like to see as an extension of the original study is to see how age is a factor in the effects of fatherlessness. While interviewing women to determine the age in which they lost their father would be effective, to do a longitudinal study with daughters who had lost their father would be more informative. This methodology would provide a framework in which the dialectical tensions could be identified at different points in a child's life. Additionally, the way the tensions are managed at different ages could be assessed as well.

As stated earlier, Montgomery and Baxter (1998) feel that the overarching theme of all dialectical tensions is stability-change. Using the proposed methodology would allow the researcher to identify which tensions remain stable throughout adolescents and adulthood, and which tensions change.

One previous study that used a longitudinal interview method was Ellis et al. (2003), when they looked at father's absence and the risk of early sexual activity and teenage pregnancy. The interviews began with mothers with their children at the age of 5, 11, and 13 (Ellis et al.). The proposed study would interview the daughters at a later age of eight or nine, an age in which they would be more able to articulate their feelings and would be interviewed for a longer number of years. Thomas et al. (1996) conducted interviews over six different yearly intervals with adolescents to discover the effects of single-mother families with absent fathers on delinquency and substance abuse. Within

the Thomas et al. study, the interviews were with both parents and children; the proposed study, however, would focus on the effects on the daughter.

For the above mentioned studies, in-depth interviews would be conducted with fatherless daughters recruited from a fatherless daughter group that is located on MSN, as well as other groups identified on Meetup.com. I would then ask recruited members of these groups to spread the word to other women they feel may be interested in doing the study as well. This kind of sampling is network sampling in which participants ask other participants creating a snowball affect of participants to be included within the study (Frey, Botan & Kreps, 2000). I would continue to use dialectical theory to strengthen the findings of the original study. Dialectical theory will also allow the researcher to see how different factors affect the way the tensions are felt and negotiated. Although there are many fatherless women, they do not all experience the loss in the same manner. Therefore, the above implications will help discover the differences felt in fatherlessness.

Conclusion

After looking at the statistics on fatherless children, one can get the impression that the future of fatherless children is hopeless. 85% of all children that exhibit behavioral disorders, 90% of all homeless and runaway children, 71% of all high school dropouts, 75% of all adolescent patients in chemical abuse centers, 63% of youth suicides, 80% of rapists motivated by displaced anger, 70% of juveniles in state-operated institutions, and 85% of all youths sitting in prisons grew up in a fatherless home (Wilson, 2002). As this study has demonstrated, when the tensions that are experienced by fatherless daughters, in both childhood and adulthood, are understood and negotiated effectively the results can be quite positive. When a fatherless daughter is aware of her

feelings and begins to understand what she is going through, she can begin to heal from the pain she has felt as a result of her father's absence. Additionally, she can also use the tensions to her advantage as she moves throughout childhood and encounters romantic relationships in her adult life. I have benefited enormously from being able to name and identify the tensions that I felt and continue to feel as a fatherless woman. By knowing and understanding the feelings that I experience I am now able to take some responsibility for them and heal the wounds that I have encountered as a result of fatherlessness.

Fortunately, current literature such as Hoppe-Nago and Ting Toomey (2002) has already begun to examine strategies to manage the dialectical tensions felt in romantic relationships. In the Barras (2000) text, in her final chapters, she also gives strategies, although not directly linked to tensions, to manage the feelings that fatherless women experience as they go about their lives. As more strategies and outlets are not only identified but also utilized, fatherless women can begin to overcome the strife and hurt they feel at an earlier age and not become one of the statistics.

Until I read the Barras text, I was unaware that there were other women that were experiencing the same tensions that I was negotiating. It was a breathtaking experience as I read the text to learn of other women's testimonies that had internally been my own. For so long, I kept all of the hurt feelings to myself. I had the mind-set of being alone, that a man would never want me, and that I was not worthy of love. These feelings made me feel incomplete and imperfect. I knew that there were other women out there who were without fathers, but what I never realized is that they were feeling the same way that I was; but remained silent for the similar reasons. Therefore, as I hesitate on a daily basis

to share my experiences through this analysis, and other outlets, I continue to give voice to my experiences so that I can be that testimony to help other women in need.

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Appendix

Dialectical Perspective

TABLE I

Father-Daughter Tensions   Adult Romantic Relationship

Ideal-Real	
Hope-Disappointment	High Expectations-Low Expectations
Autonomy–Connection	
Presence-Absence	Togetherness-Separateness
Internal Responsibility-External Responsibility	
Blaming Self-Blaming Other	Caution-Trust

Tensions