

Once a twin, always a twin

A psychotherapeutic exploration of the intersubjective experience of being a twin.

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Abstract

Being born a twin provides a 'soul-mate' a constant 'felt-sense' companion, a mirror and a potential battle for individuation. From before birth two emerging humans have a non-cognitive awareness of one another, a somatic intensity regarding their primary attachment figure- their twin. From birth the triad of mother/twin/twin presents opportunities for frustration, competition and togetherness, as twins are never alone with their mother. Accordingly mother is not entirely focused on one twin as the other is also in her mind.

Psychotherapeutically, the search for individuation, freedom from the twinship and identity are difficult areas to navigate. The psychotherapist must be aware of the depth of the attachment her twin client has and come to learn of their attachment style. Having this information can be facilitative in processing the fear of being alone, the resentment which can arise in the twinship and the guilt concerning the desire to be an individual.

This research seeks to understand through the process of Interpretative Phenomenological Analysis (IPA) what being a twin means and how they make sense of their inter-subjective connection.

Introduction

“twins have...a relationship for approximately nine months within mother’s womb before any other relationship is encountered. This relationship has survived growing and changing, moving and sleeping, touching and banging, sliding and kicking, pressing and pushing, being comfortable as well as uncomfortable in moving waters, suspension, juices, flavours, energies, hormones, each other’s emerging bodies.

(Lousada, 2009, p. 146)

Being born a twin has captured the imagination of the public in general, education, science and psychotherapy, according to Lousada (2009). Scientists view twins as the “perfect human control group” (Klein, 2012, p. ix) for studying the physical and behavioural attributes of humans. Historically, studies conducted with twins seemed to aim at behavioural genetics, hereditary defects and identical twins reared apart (Wright, 1975) though were not limited to these. However, what of the twin’s subjective experience, what does the twin’s world look like and feel like? Contemporary research has explored the meaning of being a twin by twins and researchers such as Klein (2012) and Lousada (2009) offer a glimpse into these personal subjective worlds.

Lousada (2009) explored areas of sexuality, boundaries and marginalisation in her study. Attachment in twins was researched by Crawford, Livesley, Jang, Shaver, Cohen and Ganiban (2007) and Bowlby’s theories on attachment form the basis for their study. The Attachment styles for twins differs from those of singletons, as Dimitrovsky (1989) reports that twins have a sense of one another, without cognitive awareness, from birth. Outlined in this study are the potential problems a twin may encounter within the twinship as their twin is their primary attachment figure (Dimitrovsky, 1989). Developmentally, twins may encounter difficulty in achieving a sense of identity and individuality (Lousada, 2009). The internalisation of one another in the twinship can inhibit the development of their individual skin. Lousada (2009) speaks of a psychic skin influencing the experience of the self.

The emotional complexities of the twinship are embedded in a childhood of being a novelty (Klein, 2012), having a deep attunement with one another (Lousada, 2009) and the joy and pain of the twin attachment (Klein, 2012). Twins are influenced by the sharing of mother's attention and as the twins are primary attachment figures for one another, difficulties can be encountered in areas such as sense of self or identity (Klein, 2012).

From a psychotherapeutic perspective, twins experience attachments differently to singletons. The singletons attachment to mother is dyadic, whereas the twin attachment is triangular, where the mother is involved in the twinship attachment (Klein, 2012). Wallin (2007) proposes that infants adapt to their parents in order to survive, however this poses a challenge for twins and their parents. Klein (2012) and Gerhardt (2004) report that infants require affect regulation through biofeedback from their parents; however this process is diluted with twins. As Mother's attention is split between the two, there exists a deficit in their supply. Factors for psychotherapy may include resentment, fear, loss and identity confusion (Klein, 2012). Working with twins in therapy requires the therapist to acknowledge the importance of the twin attachment, gain an understanding of their particular attachment style and affirm its importance.

This study was aimed at gaining an understanding of the subjective experience of being a twin. Three participants, each of whom is a twin, took part. They recounted their personal experiences, positive and negative, nurturing and deficient, guided by the schedule of questions (See appendix A).

Chapter two – Literature Review

2.1 Introduction

This literature review will consider the implications for the individual who is born as part of a pair and how they make sense of their experience. The topic of twins has been a research staple for many decades as Wright (1997) observes. He presents the findings of Sir Francis Galton in 1875, the Nazi experiments of J. Mengele in the 1930s and the Minnesota Experience, conducted by Professor T. J. Bouchard in 1979. There have been many studies done in the intervening years; however this research will focus on both recent research and some important historical studies. The themes that will be looked at within this literature review include attachment; development; object relations; twins in therapy; identity and individuation.

2.2 Historical Twin Studies

Galton was a theorist who developed the ‘Classic Twin Method’ for his studies. (Wright 1997, p. 12). This method became the foundation of a scientific study into behavioural genetics and explored the nature versus nurture argument in relation to being a twin. He noted high incidences among twins of illnesses and time of death and that twins in his study married less often than the general population.

In the 1930s, twin studies became part of a political dichotomy, as fascism and communism spread and competed globally. The Russians, for example sought to end twin studies in order to comply with Marxist beliefs that people are the same on a basic level and differences can be explained by environmental factors (Wright, 1975, p. 15). The Nazi research of the 1930s aimed to identify hereditary defects along with racial influences on disease. Mengele became the medical officer at Auschwitz and put his obsession with twins to work (Wright, 1975, p. 18). He used twins to research eye colour by injecting chemicals into their eyes. Some he

starved, some he poisoned and some he killed with chloroform in order to measure differing responses and length of time to die. His acknowledgement of the limited time available to him caused him to work in a constant fever of activity. There is little evidence of what his findings were as most of his documents were destroyed.

In 1979 Professor Thomas J. Bouchard of Minnesota University took an interest in the case of twin boys, separated soon after birth, adopted separately and both named Jim (Wright, 1997, p. 44). The case of the Jim twins offered similarities which Bouchard found exceptional and of interest to his research. His study into behaviour and the influence of nature and nurture on the twins showed that despite being reared apart, they had many identical attributes and characteristics. The Jim twins had the same vocal tone, health histories and lazy eye. They both married and divorced a woman named Linda and subsequently both married a woman named Betty. Both of their first born children were called Alan James and Allen James. They were of identical height and weight, had the same nail biting patterns, used the same physical gestures and had the same sporting interests. James Springer said of meeting his twin brother Jim, having been told he had died at birth, as the greatest thing that had ever happened to him.

2.3 Attachment

Lousada (2009) in her book "Hidden Twins" provides us with her research on twins done on a more subjective plain. She has explored the area of sexuality, boundaries, and marginalisation for her twin sample. Crawford, Livesley, Jang, Shaver, Cohen and Ganiban (2007) cover the area of attachment in twins, relating back to Bowlby's Strange Situation experiment. Beyond this contemporary study, Bowlby aimed to uncover the effects of early attachment types in adult relationships. His work has shown that both environmental and genetic influences will have an impact on attachment styles and that the personality is a

variable which is not quantifiable. Following on from Bowlby's studies into attachment in children, it was demonstrated that this work can inform adult attachment relationships. As humans have a natural inclination towards individuation it is reported by Athanassiou (1986), that the reciprocal element of a symbiotic relationship with the other twin can cause conflict. The maternal symbiotic figure of mother is perceived as a disrupting factor in the twinship, though the twin children are unable to aid each other through the symbiotic phase. This causes a dysregulation in the mother-child fusion (Athanassiou, 1986).

Crawford et al (2007) report that dysfunctional attachment in adults is observed along two dimensions: anxious and avoidant. Anxious attachment can be described as being worried about rejection and abandonment. Avoidant attachment emphasises difficulty having close relationships or a dependency on another. These researchers also report that the self-reported attachment style can affect regulation and plays a part in psychopathology. Crawford et al (2007) propose that participants who experience anxious attachment were influenced by their genetic heritage and avoidant types were largely influenced by their environment. The study also demonstrated that the shared environment of twins bore little influence on similarities in attachment and in fact twins may experience a difference in attachment anxiety depending on adult choices of partner.

Separation in childhood promotes fear and this is evident particularly with twins. Klein (2012, p. 35) warns of the potential damage that fear and anxiety will cause when twins experience separation. Depression, she found can occur where the loss of the twin due to separation is not mediated by a parent. Regression may occur though it can be worked through, provided the parents or carers are sensitive to the twinship needs in relation to attachment. The needs as identified by Klein (2012, p. 20) and arising from a deep affection for the other, are feelings of comfort and security when together. She introduces the concept

of twins having been born ‘married’; this term describes their interconnectivity regarding moods, actions and reactions.

Where separation for twins causes extreme anxiety there will be difficulties for them in making friends and concentrating on schooling (Klein, 2012). The anxiety stems from the different experience they have of mother after their birth, where a twin is always in company when with mother and is never alone (Lousada, 2009). This can be described as having a sense of one another without the cognitive awareness of the other at this young age. This raises the question of the potentially deeper connection existing between twins than they have to mother (Lousada, 2009). This mirrors Dimitrovsky’s (1989) report, which outlines a number of issues inherent in the twin relationship. One such issue is the difficulty each twin has in securing a strong symbiotic connection with mother when the other twin is a constant companion. This may cause difficulty for each twin in achieving individuation, both from mother and their twin.

2.4 Development

According to Klein, the developmental process for twins can include loss and confusion. The close bonds of childhood are challenged by maturity and freedom seeking (Klein, 2012, p. 19). The affectional bond of the twinship carries with it an irreplaceability which holds great significance in the lives of twins. As Gerhardt (2004, p. 22) promotes the importance of early bonding in the physiologic regulation of the early attachment figure, so too does Klein (2004, p. 20) who posits the importance of the twin attachment for security and comfort. According to Lousada (2009) twins internalise one another and so there is an inadequate development of each child’s individual skin. Body boundaries can result in the perception of a ‘psychic skin’

which influences the experience of the self. This can cause deficient regulation individually as the skin between the twins is thin but the skin around them is thick (Lousada, 2009).

Internalising issues including anxiety, withdrawal and depression can occur in childhood and continue increasingly into adulthood. Moberg, Tichtenstein, Forsman and Larsson (2011) for example, propose that there exists a bi-directionality in relation to parenting and child behaviours. These can be described by the findings of depression in adolescents occurring alongside or influenced by a low rate of parental warmth. This depressive adolescent behaviour further decreases parental warmth. With twins the low rate of parental warmth is decreased further, as when mother is attending to one twin the other is experiencing a further deficit as their twin is always present (Dimitrovsky 1989).

2.5 Object Relations

Melanie Klein (2015) describes the introjection of an external object, the mother and mother's breast as being both pleasurable and painful for the child. With each twin, this internalisation will include the other twin, along with mother (Lousada, 2009). The infant's desire is projected into the object or other twin. Kleinian (2015) theory emphasises the importance of the internalised object in the developing individual, from a psychological perspective. So then, the investigation begins to find out how twins navigate this separating out of themselves from their twin in order to achieve individuation.

2.6 Factors for Twins in Psychotherapy

Eudaimonia refers to what is considered the good life and from a psychotherapist's perspective, the meaning a client attributes to their values and experience is key (Van Duerzen and Kenward, 2005). The well-being of an individual can be described as being psychologically supported by three needs; relatedness, self-governance and skill. (Archontaki, Despina, Lewis and Bates, 2013). The genetic component was found to be

greatly influential in self-acceptance, which is central to Eudaimonia. In her research Klein (2012) discovered that the upset twin can be calmed by the arrival in sensory or visual awareness, of their twin. She reports on the exaggerated feeling of belonging to one another which twins experience and this becomes a firm bond over time. Consequently for therapy, the question of who is who without the other arises.

From a therapeutic perspective, individuation and coming to terms with the self may be an issue for a twin. Van Deurzen (1988) tells us that each person exists with their 'given' factors, however, with twins the confusion of which factors belong to which twin may take time to untangle in therapy. It has also been pointed out by Dimitrovsky (1989) that the sharing of complementary attributes may lead to impairment of functioning in one twin when the other is not present. In this way the development of complimentary attributes rather than identical attributes could be the cause of an expectation of the availability of the attributes in each other.

Bonding in the twinship is initiated by parents and remains an influencing factor for twins throughout their life. To enable a twin to view and experience themselves as an individual is one aim that can be achieved through participation in psychotherapy. Klein (2012, p. 10) offers the concept of twins experiencing difficulty in seeing themselves as a complete personality as the sharing of attributes promotes the feeling of being part of a unit. The goal of therapy for her will be to seek their own personality and not exist with shared attributes to the fore (Klein, 2012, p. 10). Existentially, Van Deurzen (1988) tells us of the importance of the therapist gaining understanding of the client's world on a physical, social and personal dimension. Inherent in this is the anchoring of the individual in the real world, and for twins the potential existence of the 'we-self' or the strength of the psychic skin may be a barrier to this. Joseph (1971) tells us that for each twin, particularly opposite-sex twins there is the question of which role each takes in the family. Again, this highlights the difficulty in

finding the self within the twinship and as reported, there is a need-gratifying element of the twinship which is thought to be a reciprocal arrangement between them.

2.7 Identity

Ortmeyer (1970) speaks of the 'we-self' of identical twins, where he describes the two personalities as functioning as one. This is comparable to Lousada's (2009) psychic skin, described as the internalisation of each other, which can impede the development of each child's individual skin.

Being alone is a greater fear for twins than singletons, according to Lousada's (2009) research. The conflict between symbiosis and individuation is noted by Athanassion (1986) where the powerful drive towards individuation is in contrast with the reciprocal symbiotic connection. Dimitrovsky (1989) speaks of the importance of being a twin when exploring the development of a twin's personality. Klein (2012) has recognised five patterns of identity relating to twins: Unit identity; Interdependent identity; Split identity; Idealized identity and Individual identity. With Unit Identity twins, Klein describes an enmeshed attachment where existence without the other becomes problematic. A lack of nurturing on the part of the parents is proposed here. Interdependent Identity twins have been treated as being half of the unit. Observable in these twin types are the good and bad and the strong and weak twin. The attention seeking parent is proposed as the influencing element in these cases. Idealized Identity twins have the sense of being special due to their twinness and they are defined by the twinship. They are invested in the twinship which garners for them attention and admiration. Individual Identity twins have been nurtured as individuals and subsequently experience greater harmony in life and relationships than other identified twin types (Klein, 2012, p. 13).

Dimitrovsky (1989) reports on the particular focus of research to date, on problems-in-common for twins and less on the individual's discomfort. She wonders if the twinship may be more fulfilling for one than the other; and as a consequence the meaning of being a twin may be favourable to one, both or neither.

Lousada (2009) also reveals in her research that twins can experience confusion in their roles. The masculinisation of the female and the feminisation of the male twin, coupled with the reported dominance of the female twin (80%) would potentially be the cause of raising the question for both twins of 'who am I?' Along with this lies the question of the consequences later in life when a twin navigates the world alone, without the assurance of certain attributes, previously ascribed to their twin. Dimitrovsky (1989) also reports findings that, within the fraternal, opposite-sex twinship, the female may be closer to the father. This can be another issue for the male twin regarding his relationship with his father and twin sister.

To uncover what it is to be a twin will require looking into the prevalence of identity fusion, which is primarily observable in identical twins, but has been documented in some fraternal twins. Dimitrovsky (1989) speaks of the importance of being a twin when exploring the development of a twin's personality.

2.8 Individuation

Klein (2012, p.1) reports on the difficulty twins experience with autonomy and with finding their individuality. Identifying with the 'soul-mate' twin in early life is seen as life sustaining and Klein (2012, p.4) reports that twins long for a twin-like relationship in adult life. The life of twins she purports is of no interest to non-twins and this has implications for the family life where there are twins. Less obvious to observers is the anxiety and resentment between twins (Schave Klein, 2003. p.1). The closeness of twins can be causal in limited development, however they also experience strength and security. The capacity to share is

contrasted by the problems which arise from separation and boundary setting and being alone proves difficult for some twins (Schave Klein, 2003, p.2). Also reported in Schave Klein's study is the seeking of substitutes for the lost twin, having children of their own, being an example of this. It is noted that a contrast exists between twins where one may experience deep comfort from their twinship and the other can suffer deep loneliness if separated from their twin (Schave Klein, 2003, p. 2) .

2.9 Conclusion

In conclusion, it is observed that the experience of being a twin can be supportive and comforting or difficult and isolating. Studies referred to here have highlighted the twinship bond as being as important as the mother and child symbiosis although the inability of the twin to aid in regulation causes developmental issues. To engage in the natural human progression of individuation has implications for twins as the separating out of who they are beyond their twin can be difficult. Engaging with a psychotherapist will assist on this strange journey from unit identity to new autonomy. The subjective experience of twins in this study will hopefully allow for a better understanding of the needs of one twin as differentiated from the other.

Chapter three - Methodology

3.1 Research Design

This research was undertaken with a view to exploring the subjective experience of being a twin and gaining some understanding of this experience through the lens of psychotherapy. Attachment, whether it is to a parent or twin sibling, and the nature of this attachment is a key component of this piece. The exploration of the twin experience, through recounting the lived experience (Smith, Flowers, and Larkin, 2009) is undertaken with the twin's focus on their inner processes and their outer existences.

3.2 Methodological Approach

For this research project, a qualitative research design was engaged with to glean subjective data on the experience of being a twin. A pilot study was undertaken with a participant who is not one of the twin sample. This served to assess the flow of questions, the quality of the recording method and assess the approximate timing of the interview. Subsequent to this, data was collected through the means of one to one interviews with twins in a relaxed environment. The relaxed format of the qualitative interview provides a more conversational tone and facilitates an interaction that promotes freedom of expression (Smith et al, 2009). The conversational interviews were guided by a schedule of questions (see appendix B) which were generated to promote thoughtful reflection and elaboration of themes. The questions were compiled to seek out subjective experiences regarding the relationship these twins had with their twin and with other family members. This open style of questioning encouraged a reflective narrative which provided topics and themes only guessed at prior to commencement. Thirteen questions were compiled and when these had been exhausted, there was an opportunity for each participant to mention any further comments or observations they thought relevant to the subject matter at hand. The use of the schedule of open questions

served to draw participants back to the topic at hand, that is, the topic of the twinship. The conversational format engendered an openness and story-telling element for some participants which resulted in going off topic, however, the next question on the schedule served to re-align the interview. In this way the co-determined element was present but did not over-influence the interview (Smith et al, 2009).

For the interviews to facilitate the exploration of the subjective experience of being a twin, a qualitative approach for the responses provided a fertile ground for study. An open engagement through a qualitative interview provided insights and experiences that could not be gleaned from a survey, which engages in a limited manner and does not utilise conversation (Smith et al, 2009).

3.3 Participants

Three participants, each of whom is a twin took part in this study, all of them were chosen from the general population and they were recruited through acquaintances. The ages of these twins varied from mid- 20s to mid- 50s. To facilitate a more homogenous group for this study, the chosen participants were similar in that their twin sibling is living and they are culturally comparable. Two participants were female and one male, two are in full-time employment and one is engaged in the arts.

Table 1. Participants

Male	Mid 20s	Same sex fraternal twin	Irish	Employed in the arts	Single
Female	Mid 40s	Same sex fraternal twin	Irish	Full time employment	Married
Female	Mid 50s	Identical twin	Irish	Full time employment	Married

3.4 Data Collection Method

Being aware of the value of a more relaxed interview style rather than a rigid schedule lent a conversational element to proceedings. The interviews were conducted using the “smartphone” voice recording application and were transcribed from this. Each interview was conducted at a venue and time of the participant’s choice. The interview was guided by a schedule of thirteen questions, which served to frame the conversation but to also allow a recounting of personal anecdotes and memories.

3.5 Data Analysis

For this research, IPA was considered a suitable method, as it allows for the expression and interpretation of the subjective experience of being a twin (Smith et al, 2009). The philosophical study of an individual’s experience is the aim of this work and phenomenology allows for the study of ideas and the understanding of the twin’s lived experiences. Husserl, as presented by Smith et al, (2009) offers that the principle of phenomenological enquiry is based on examining experience in the manner in which it occurs in its own terms. To this end the transcripts of each participant’s interview were read and reviewed using methods as outlined by Smith et al (2009). Among these suggested methods is the concept of decontextualizing the content as delivered by the participants. This is achieved in part, by reading each paragraph backwards, to engage with words or phrases that become more noticeable. In this way the researcher becomes familiar with the participant’s inner nature and can discern their subjective experiences in certain relationships. Using descriptive, linguistic and conceptual commentary (Smith et al, 2009) the data was read through and annotated many times. The descriptive commentary was the gateway to gleaning data on a superficial level, which then led onto the linguistic exploration. Focusing on the participant’s linguistic manner allowed focus on phraseology, pauses for reflection, repetition, laughter and the use

of metaphor. These emergent themes then gave a body of data to interpret (Smith et al, 2009). In this way, the focus was moved from the explicit experience as recounted by the participant to the meaning it had on a wider level within relationships in their lived world.

The next step taken was to list the themes for each participant, cut them up into separate pieces and they were laid out on a table. This provided an accessible over-view and facilitated the grouping of themes into similar or opposing elements. From this exercise a super-ordinate list of themes was generated for each participant through the process of abstraction (Smith et al, 2009) which involved finding similar themes and clustering them together. Having printed out this super-ordinate list for each participant, they were analysed for patterns appearing across the twin experiences.

3.6 Ethical Considerations

Oliver (2003) advises the researcher to engage with their participants on a basis of informed consent. To this end, consent forms (See appendix C) were emailed to each participant along with an information sheet for their perusal (See appendix B). Having approved the format and outline of the study, the interviews were arranged. Prior to commencement of each interview a hard copy of the consent form was signed and retained by the researcher. Also acknowledged here was the potential for emotional reaction while in the interview process and should this occur, to only continue with their agreement. The researcher proposed that should emotional responses cause distress, the details of psychotherapists would be made available.

The participants were made aware that their responses were to be interpreted by the researcher. Each participant was offered the opportunity to decline to answer questions they found difficult and to withdraw from the study (Oliver, 2003). Prior to commencement each participant was advised of the method of data analysis, namely Interpretative

Phenomenological Analysis, and that this method would render their content unidentifiable to any audience.

3.7 Study Limitations

This study was undertaken with a small sample of three twin participants and so is particular to their experience and is not generally applicable to twins. One side of each twin unit was represented and each spoke on their own behalf.

Chapter Four – Findings

Table 2. Participant quotes.

Theme 1: Twins in relationship	Theme 2: Judgement as an attempt at individuation	Theme 3: Attachment and ambivalence
<p>“It’s an interesting thing about me”</p> <p>“We’ve always had that between us, you take care of this part and I’ll take care of, so it’s always been shared”</p> <p>“if were asked to read in the class we would die... it was horrendous, so that’s why being together was so important”</p>	<p>“so you see, you’re helping him to pass”</p> <p>“nothing I can do or say can change it, it has to come from her”</p> <p>“I’d have been the one who would have gone after things, and she would have...come after me”</p>	<p>“I was just kind of fed up having this other person that was always there”.</p> <p>We’re like photocopies of each other”</p> <p>“I actually couldn’t tell her, I didn’t want to break her heart”</p>

4.1 Theme 1 – The twin in relationships

From early development in the womb, twins are in deep attunement and have a sense of their twin which is embedded bodily. Amelia alluded to this in her comment that she always knew she was one of a pair. From the family perspective, twins can be seen as a novelty as

described by Brigid below or as the attention getters for Amelia's mother. Nathan's mother uses a name in common for both twins which may serve to compromise their individuation. Nathan's assertion that he does not have a deep connection to his twin is in conflict with his delight that his mother calls them her 'babies', perhaps a factor for difficulties in individuation.

For twins in therapy, their views of the twinship will give the therapist an outline of the type of connection they experience with their twin. Therapists will benefit from a sense of knowing how enmeshed they are, as Brigid pointed out how important her twin sister is in her life. To affirm the importance of the twin bond can provide the conditions for healing in a 'single' orientated world. This is highlighted by Brigid's comments regarding stuttering, which is a shared element of the twinship for her and her sister, and is perhaps a uniting feature. To recognise the glory and the agony of the twin attachment is a valuable element of therapy. This was shown by Amelia as she related her love of her sister in the past and her difficulty in loving her now.

The participants in this study were engaged with to speak about their experience of being a twin. Each participant reported that they take delight in being a twin when they were asked about the first time they realised they were part of a pair. Their responses appeared to be that of surprise, delight and contemplation in that order. Two participants mentioned having never been asked this before and their delight was apparent. On contemplation of their twinship, an air of playfulness and joy was evident in two participants and an air of melancholy for the third. One twin said she felt special, another reported that it is an interesting thing about her and one reported that being a twin is seen by others as 'cool'.

Page 14 **Nathan:** "If I'm like with somebody that I know... and Chris doesn't really know them, I'd be like this is Chris my twin brother".

Page 15 **Nathan:** "... and they'd be like Oh cool, you're a twin".

Highlighting the sometimes confusing experience of relating as a twin Nathan also commented:

Page 3 **Nathan:** “You might think it’s a brother with a really similar age”

Being a twin creates ambivalence and gives confidence which can create confusion for the twins as each is derived from their intersubjective experience with their twin sibling.

In a positive way, Amelia reports on her early relational experience with her twin.

Page 13 **Amelia:** “That’s one of the benefits of having a twin. You don’t have to face any of the scary situations on your own...someone to walk home with, someone to stick up for you”.

She recalled having her twin to stick up for her and this could represent a shared attribute.

However there is also the conflict of not agreeing with her twin’s lifestyle choices:

Page 4 **Amelia:** “and then at the same time, there’s a conflicting kind of, you know feeling there in the back of my head, ‘you should love her, you should... and I do, I do love her, I just don’t feel connected to her at the moment”.

Brigid acknowledged the ability to function well as a team with her twin, who is important to her and plays a large role in her life.

Page 13 **Brigid:** “When we go to family... parties we’d add a bit of life to it”

This denotes the recognition of her twin’s importance on a social and personal level and depicts the togetherness they shared beyond all other family members.

When asked to describe her connection to her twin, Brigid reported her difficulty in imparting news which would cause upset:

Page 11 **Brigid:** “...well I know I actually confided in a friend when we were going to get married. And we were only 22, 23 getting married so, but I remember consciously not telling my twin because I was terrified and upset for her”.

Brigid appears to be addressing her twin sister's emotional strength here but there is in her use of language, perhaps an admission that she was also "*terrified and upset*". In relation to Brigid's plans for her future, she described her difficulty in telling Lucy. She confided in a friend first. This could be indicative of Brigid not wanting to witness Lucy becoming emotionally destabilised as she may have felt that she too may be overwhelmed by the impending separation. Brigid's focus on the difficulty in telling her twin sister of her impending move highlighted the lack of difficulty in telling all other family members, most significantly, her mother. The twinship strength seems to depend on both of them sharing attributes and this new situation had the potential to undo their closeness, compromise their safety and challenge the depth of feeling they shared.

Page 11 **Brigid:** "...and to be honest, now, I didn't pine when I went to America, but my Mother reckons Lucy lost loads of weight and she pined for the first six months 'til she came out to visit us...it was a heartache, a huge loss..."

Brigid's description of her twin sister pining was delivered with a weight that perhaps denoted a depressive quality to her twin sister's experience. She noted that it was a double loss for her sister:

Page 11 Brigid:"...it was a heartache, a huge loss for her. And she's extremely close to my husband too..."

When asked if there was anything else of relevance that had not been mentioned, Brigid reported that both she and her twin sister developed stutters in childhood. She proposed a psychological factor in their stutters and interestingly, at their school there were four or five other children with stutters.

Page 19 **Brigid:** "Our school...actually brought in a speech therapist for us just for a short time but it was really interesting that five or six within our year all had stutters".

Page 19 **Brigid:** "so that was huge that we both had it... throughout the years and we would talk about that a lot".

These twins were brought up in a large family and perhaps did not experience a satisfying level of parental care. This could be causal in their psychological distress which in turn engendered in them the deep comforting capacity for one another. “*So that was huge that we both had it*” acknowledges the importance of being the same. Brigid disclosed that her parents were somewhat distracted by the large family responsibilities and so did not realise the extent of their stuttering.

Page 19 **Brigid:** “We would just talk about what that meant to us, which I thought was great that they did that. But up until that point my parents were really unaware of our stutter. Oh, we just think it’s a little ah, ah, ah and that they’re excited and they’d go uh, uh, uh, like that”.

This comment appears to downgrade what was a debilitating experience for them which is highlighted in the following extract:

Page 16 **Brigid:** “If we were asked to read in the class, we would die...absolutely die, it was horrendous. So that’s why being together was so important”.

This shared difficulty with speech for these twins may have deepened their attachment to one another. Brigid reported that anxiety exacerbated the speech impediment however their attuned relationship allowed them to monitor and care for one another.

There is the possibility that the twins were seen as special because of their stutters.

Page 19 **Brigid:** “...and the interesting thing though was there were five or six in our year that had stutters, which was unheard of”.

This type of special connection to her twin also featured in the interview with Amelia. When asked if her sister’s behaviour denoted a need for a closer connection to her, Amelia responded:

Page 31 **Amelia:** “interestingly enough my twin would say she has...felt my labour pains. So I don’t know if that’s the case or not. I don’t know whether she wants to feel that, or whether she thinks she does”.

When asked if her twin sister’s declaration was a need for connection, Amelia reported:

Page 31 **Amelia:** “it could be yeah, or attention. (Being a twin) should be fun in a positive way”.

Here Amelia admonished her twin sister for her attention seeking, but perhaps Amelia is in need of her sister's close attention. She expresses anger and frustration towards Lucy and it appears that she wants to pull away from the attachment figure that is her twin.

All three participants described being prized by their parents for being twins. There appears to be a lack of attention to the individuals involved in the twinships.

Page 9 Brigid: "well that's how I'd always feel, special. Because I've always felt we were a novelty in the family compared to...one of my sisters is just 13 months older...people were always drawn to the twins...because you were a novelty, right?"

Amelia similarly recalled the specialness of the twinship for her mother:

Page 39 Amelia: "mom was very proud of the fact that she had twins...so she loved that. when we were out and about she would, you know, shout Twins! you know, so people would really know and pay attention to that".

Nathan's mother attended to the twinship by rarely using their names. When asked how his mother refers to him when talking to others, he replied:

Page 27 Nathan: "my baby...yeah she calls both of us 'my baby'".

There was a note of pride evident in the tone and phraseology when recounting these memories, as though the twinship is more important than individuation when talking specifically about the twinship.

4.2 Theme 2 – Judgement as an attempt at individuation

Two of the participants found that individuation was a hard won achievement and also involved an abandonment of their twin sibling. One felt pride at his brother's attempts to finish his degree as twins understand the hard work that is necessary to become an individual. Through the lens of psychotherapy a twin can be dealing with pride, sadness, relief, confusion, judgement, disappointment and devastation all relating back to their twinship, as each participant has outlined in their subjective experience. A twin seeking individuation will be proud at being able to stand alone and relief that there is some new freedom from the

twins, as Amelia discovered. New freedom will bring on sadness as they may miss their twin.

These three participants appear to be the stronger of the pairs, have a sense of their individuation, have made progressive decisions and wonder how their twin is so different.

The participants reported some difficulty in accepting some of the choices their twin sibling made which were quite different to their own. One participant reported her disappointment at her twin sister's behaviour which perhaps reflects back on her. Another reported her early judgement of her twin sister's lack of motivation and another is critical of his twin brother's lack of achievement.

Nathan described his feelings concerning his brother's engagement with his education:

Page 21 **Nathan:** "he just doesn't care for it... he wasn't bothered going back".

Nathan is judging his brother harshly for his lack of focus and his inability to select a degree course that is more suited to his personality and talents. He outlines his difficulty with his own chosen course:

Page 18 **Nathan:** "I did modern languages... then it turns out modern languages was all languages... I was like listen, I have no interest in doing this..."

Nathan who found himself conversely judging his twin for a badly thought out decision, re-enacted that very thing himself and denoting the difficulty in becoming an individual within the twinship.

Page 19 **Nathan:** "I suppose definitely that the fact that my twin was in second, going into third year of college, and I come back...and I was doing nothing for seven or eight months... I suppose yeah, that made me... I filled in my CAO".

Nathan goes on to say he feels he is instrumental in his twin brother attaining his degree and that to do it Nathan's way is better.

Page 21 **Nathan:** "so you see, you're like helping him to pass, like he just doesn't want to do law, he just doesn't care".

In this excerpt lies the conflict of individuation versus sameness, which appears to be problematic for Nathan. While he appears to demand his twin brother behave more like him, he speaks freely of their differences, thus depicting the complex conflict inherent in the twinship. He goes on to say:

Page 11 **Nathan:** "I'm happy that ... I'm quite positive about life and everything...that's what the difference now would be".

Nathan brought attention to their different looks:

Page 16 **Nathan:** "so we look different enough, so it's sometimes funny... he'll be like 'this is my twin brother' ...and they're 'what, no way'. He couldn't even tell, you could barely tell you're brothers".

This perhaps denoting Nathan's unconscious desire to be recognised as part of the twinship despite his assurance that he is happy that he is more optimistic and not obviously a twin.

Amelia feels that her twin's life choices are inappropriate and not in keeping with their family values. Her sister's use of alcohol is problematic. The loss of the twin is indicated in this case through addiction. The addiction seems to be unacknowledged in the family at large but keenly felt by Amelia.

Page 11 **Amelia:** "nothing I do or say can change it, it has to come from her.

Page 17 **Amelia:** "she was always quite different. Party, party party, she never wanted the fun to stop, but life isn't like that and I don't know how she can't realise that".

Amelia appeared to feel some anger towards Fiona's lack of responsibility for herself, respect for her family and particularly for her twin, Amelia. Amelia's feelings around this issue expand into resentment towards Fiona which is perhaps a projection of the anger she feels towards her parents. Where their parents seek to rescue their troubled twin daughter, Fiona, the question arises: who can rescue Amelia?

Amelia appears to accuse her twin of being the centre of attention:

Page 18/19 **Amelia:** "she needed the support and there was always a crisis. There was always 'you have to come and get me'. I think I've grown and matured

and grown into an adult that I don't need them but I want them in my life...there was always the rescue me... whereas I tried to figure it out first. The last thing I do is bring it to my parents”.

There appears to be a stark contrast here as Amelia is expounding her individuation and at the same time questioning her twin sister's inability to be more like her.

Brigid described herself as a more out-going individual than her twin sister, Lucy. She is aware of being the more adaptable twin and perhaps the leader.

Page 4 **Brigid:** “I'd be, um, a bit more out-going. I would have been the one who would gone after things first and she would have kind of come after me...”

This excerpt and the previous one from Amelia depict the idea that the twinship is more beneficial for one twin than the other.

Page 4 **Brigid:** “I've lived more than she has...without sounding...I'm being judgemental... her life has gone...I've had a much more exciting life”.

For one twin to progress beyond their twin sibling's ability perhaps requires the unconscious sacrifice of the other. Individuation is inferred here, although Brigid appears to experience her individuation as a separating factor in the twinship.

4.3 Theme 3 – Attachment and Ambivalence

Resentment and frustration towards each other can develop in the twinship, if some attempt at viewing them as individuals is not made. Amelia's experience is that while she reports herself as being the mature twin, she seems frustrated that her twin is not more like her, thus is in conflict internally, around individuation. Their parents seem to view Amelia as the stronger twin; her sister is viewed in a lesser capacity. It is on this path to psychological separation that twins can encounter vulnerabilities which may require psychotherapeutic exploration to mediate.

All three participant's responses alluded to an awareness of their attachment to their twin. Nathan's experience of the rivalry in the twinship offered a glimpse into his need for a greater attachment to his twin and the only way he can remain engaged is in a competitive manner.

Amelia's attachment to her sister has troubled her and Brigid's attachment to her twin sister is comforting and welcome.

Nathan reported that there is a demand of parents on their children, particularly twins, to engage in a harmonious relationship.

Page 7 **Nathan:** "but actually...some siblings as well might actually grow distant as they get older, like cause when they're younger, they family might be like, 'you have to'...so for that reason them might be really close because they kind of have to be".

This comment from Nathan depicts a fear of losing his twin.

Page 8 **Nathan:** "if one of them moves out...their relationship with their sibling might diminish".

Nathan wondered here if his twin were to move out with a partner, it might create a distance between them. In contrast to this fearful element is Nathan's response to being asked to tell what it was like to first realise he was a twin.

Page 3 **Nathan:** "I don't know if you know what a twin is...unless your mom or dad were like 'you're a twin'".

Recognising her attachment to her twin sister, Amelia reported that she always knew she was one of a pair.

Page 1 **Amelia:** "from day one, I've always known. Yeah, I've always felt that there was, there's two of us, yes, that was never a question or a revelation. That was just always known".

However, in recent times Amelia denies this close attachment.

Page 2 **Amelia:** "the connection to Fiona definitely has changed over the years dramatically and at the moment, I wouldn't feel very connected to her at all. Just the way our lives have gone in, not just different directions, we've gone in totally opposite directions".

For Amelia, the recollection of her teenage exasperation at her twin sister denotes the pattern of being the stronger twin. Her twin sister's emerging neediness had become a fixture in her life and Amelia reported:

Page 35 **Amelia:** "I do remember a time in my life when I got to 'oh God'... I was going

into secondary school... I was just kind of fed up having this other person that was always there...and what would it be like to just do something on my own...you wish you could...just be on your own or not be associated”.

The need for Amelia to be seen as a person in her own right came across clearly here, “*not to be associated*” relates her level of discontent with her twin sister’s neediness. She further commented:

Page 58 Amelia: “I can’t get into that with you, I can’t step into that space”.

Despite Amelia’s report that “*I can’t get into that with you*” it sounds more that she is sorry her twin Fiona is different; she is sorry she has not got resilience for both of them, sorry she judges Fiona and is sorry she misses her. The complex conflict of being a twin brings up not only how a twin judges herself, but also how she judges her twin who is mirrored in herself. The difficulty is further exacerbated in how a twin judges herself based on her twin’s differences. Addressing their differences from childhood, Amelia reported:

Page 37 **Amelia:** “I do remember as a senior infant, sitting there wondering what she’s crying for crying, with her arms wrapped around mom the way my daughter is with me”.

Underlying this is the strong desire to be seen as a strong individual, operating from a singular space. Amelia’s more mature personality has eclipsed her sister’s development from childhood. Perhaps the need to be seen as the good and strong twin was facilitated by unconscious parental messages. It appears that Amelia assumed the role of assertive twin and Fiona took the role of the needy child. There may not have been enough capacity for their parents to facilitate their differences. She compares her twin sister to her young daughter. It appears that Amelia never accepted being childlike and so could not accept that her twin was a child.

In contrast, Brigid’s experience with attachment to her twin is reported as very positive and comforting. She identifies heavily with her twin and emphasises how close they are. When asked about the first time she realised she was part of a pair, Brigid reported:

Page 1 **Brigid:** “going to school...very very aware that I had somebody with me, and when we were put sitting in different places. The fear of that would be the big thing for me going back that far. That we were separated”.

Her difficulty in moving away and breaking her sister’s heart seemed to weigh heavily on her.

Page 2 **Brigid:** “We’re like photocopies of each other as in how we live our lives out. In the earlier years...we started to separate a little...when I was...making the choice to get married and move away... I actually couldn’t tell her...I didn’t want to break her heart”.

Brigid is aware of the pain of loss caused by her marriage and departure.

Page 2 **Brigid:** “you wouldn’t have thought that possible years ago but we’re extremely close, like I would share almost every detail with her”.

Brigid depends on her twin, is aware of the deep relational quality to the twinship and this attachment perhaps makes her aware of being lost without her twin.

Amelia is affected by her twin’s inability to take her part in the twinship.

Page 59 **Amelia:** “and it’s an awful feeling of helplessness...because I have helped her. I’ve always been there...”

Page 58 **Amelia:** “and I feel incredibly bad about it, I can’t handle this for her, there’s nothing I can do”.

Amelia feels let down by her twin and also is conflicted by her abilities in comparison to her twin’s. There is evidence of depression in Amelia’s sister which is causal in the helplessness Amelia feels.

Page 47 **Amelia:** “I always did better and I felt guilty for doing better. And she didn’t want to feel guilty”.

Where Amelia wanted to do well, she experienced conflict in two areas: if she did well her sister’s lack of academic prowess would be highlighted; and she wanted and needed to be the smart and good twin.

Where Amelia and her twin experience a battle in their attachment, Brigid is acutely aware of maintaining her close attachment to her sister.

Page 3 **Brigid:** “like, she’d be the first one I’d call in everything and I’d be the same for her.

This closeness is further emphasised:

Page 3 **Brigid:** “ and she’d be very good, like, I think we’ve had one argument in all the years. You know, which is really good, amazing. I mean, we’d have words where we’d say, ‘I don’t agree with that’ ...or whatever. But we had just one time when we were really cross with each other”.

The themes presented here cover the intersubjective experiences from early childhood, focusing on the relationship between the twin siblings and other family members. Early childhood patterns are seen to emerge in adulthood and seem to cause difficulty and conflict arises from the proximity of the twins lived experiences. Judgement of the twin sibling was evident for each participant, perhaps as a way to be seen as an individual themselves.

CHAPTER FIVE – Discussion

“Once a twin, always a twin”

(Klein, B, 2012, *Alone in the Mirror*)

5.1 Introduction

The primary focus of this study was that of the subjective experience of being a twin. Three participants were interviewed for this purpose. Interpretative Phenomenological Analysis (IPA) was used in order to gain an understanding of the themes each participant introduced. Three super-ordinate themes emerged: the twin in relationships; judgement as an attempt at individuation and attachment. Looking at these themes and exploring the difficulties inherent in being a twin, factors for psychotherapy became evident, particularly in the area of individuation, identity and attachment. The following factors emerged: the polarisation of good and bad in the twinship; the common occurrence of deep division in the twinship and depression which is common when the twin is prized for being part of the unit, rather than for their individuality.

Klein (2012) proposes that twins seeking therapy are looking to be more accepting of the differences while maintaining the twin attachment; and enmeshed twins seek a ‘fix’ to remain in harmony but find it difficult to work in therapy with their twin. Amelia’s relationship with her sister mirrors this as she is having difficulty accepting her twin’s lifestyle choices and resentment and anger has developed.

5.2 The Twin in relationships

Each participant reported an initial feeling of delight in being a twin. Descriptions that emerged were ‘special’ ‘interesting’ and ‘cool’. The closeness and comfort that their twin

offered appeared to be important to them all. From an object relations perspective the twin is an internalised object, along with mother (Lousada, 2009). The development of an individual is influenced by the internalised objects and so for twins, there is confusion and loss, (Klein 2012) as the close childhood bonds are challenged by freedom seeking. For the twin seeking individuation and identity outside the twinship there is the difficulty caused by the existence of the 'psychic skin' (Lousada, 2009). This psychic skin reportedly causes a deficiency in regulation as twin children internalise one another and this internalisation of the other hinders the development of the individual.

The closeness of childhood described by two participants in this study identifies with what Ortmeier (1970) referred to as the 'we-self', where two personalities function as one. One participant demonstrated this type of existence with her twin, particularly with regard to stuttering, a shared impediment.

For a twin, being alone is a greater fear than it is for singletons (Lousada, 2009). Two participants reported on the safety of being with her twin. One focused on the horrendous experience of being separated from her twin in school. Another commented on not having to experience any of the 'scary stuff' on her own. However this close symbiotic derived closeness is causal in identity problems for twins. Klein (2012) recognised five patterns of identity attributable to twins: unit identity; interdependent; split; idealised and individual identity. For one of the participants it is possible that in the early years she and her twin could have been described as unit identity twins, where existence without the other is painful. This twin described her connection to her twin now, as being special and she reported being defined by the twinship. This could be a marker for the change in adulthood from one type of twin to another, as her experience now is that of the idealised identity twinship. This twin commented on the twinship prizing of their parents, particularly their mother.

Another participant could potentially be described as belonging to a unit identity twinship. However, it appears that her sister has experienced the enmeshed attachment feature but this twin denies her own enmeshment. Split identity could better describe this pair, where parents are conscious of the differences between the twins mainly because they are focused on the sameness, which attracts attention for the parents. Mother will see parts of herself in each child and projects onto them these parts, causing the split in the twinship of one strong and one weak twin.

5.3 Attachment

From “conception”, twins have their primary attachment to one another (Klein, 2012). As they grow and develop they may long for the perfect mirror of their twin, however the natural drive towards individuation will bring up emotional disturbances and identity struggles (Klein, 2012). There is loss and loneliness inherent in the twinship. Psychotherapy can help to address the vulnerabilities which develop from this pairing (Klein, 2012). Amelia’s loss of her twin through lifestyle choice is a difficult field to navigate, having had her soul-mate for all of her childhood.

Separation in childhood can promote fear in children, however for twin children who are, according to Klein (2012) born ‘married’ the loss of their inter-connected other can cause anxiety and lead to depression if not mediated by a parent. Regression can occur, however with good enough care it can be worked through. Twins offer each other comfort and security and have done so since before birth and the inter-connectivity outlined by Klein (2012) describes how they experience one another’s moods, actions and reactions. This is outlined in Brigid’s comments regarding how she and her sister can finish one another’s sentences and provide entertainment, as a duo for the family.

Goleman (1996) writes of the lasting impact a parenting style has on children. He proposes that children are attuned to their parent’s emotional world and learn from the models of

behaviour of the parents. Given that twins arrive in to the world together and relate to others from the position of deep attachment, there will arise for parents, a difficulty in soothing the twin child, as the other twin is the desired comfort (Klein, 2012). Although twins are attuned to one another, there is a need for psychological, biological and emotional regulation from mother (Gerhardt, 2004). One of the participating twins reported her awareness of her parent's constant rescuing of her twin sister and this may be a pattern dating back to childhood. In her interview she questioned her twin sister's neediness and appeared to be resentful of the attention her sister got from their parents.

Bowlby's study of attachment styles in children aimed to explore the effects of those attachments in adult relationships (Crawford, Livesley, Jang, Shaver, Coen and Ganiban, 2007). Environmental and genetic influences will have an impact on an attachment style, as will personality which is not a quantifiable variable.

Wallin (2007, p. 99) describes the infant as "extraordinarily vulnerable and dependent". Infants need parental input and protection to promote growth. Where Wallin reports that the infant must and will adapt to the attachment relationship and that these relationships are co-created, the twinship provokes a challenge to both parents and twin siblings. Felt security is the aim of attachment and affect regulation is the result of the emotional connection. Where affect regulation involves what Wallin (2009) terms social biofeedback, with twins this process is diluted by the fact that two children are drawing on mother's capacity to nurture. Klein (2012) depicts this in her report that having to share parental attention fosters a competitive nature in twins, which can be causal in the emergence of perfectionistic and high achiever personalities.

Klein (2012) goes on to say that as mother is aware of sharing her attention this awareness can unconsciously promote the competitiveness in the twins. This element is evident with one

participant whose re-admission to college was a contentious response to his twin brother's college career.

Klein (2012) posits the argument that parental engagement with twins can respond to or create differences between them. This has implications for psychotherapy as self-differentiation and the emergence of individuality stem from the twin's internalisation of parent's reactions. For Amelia this is relevant as she has had less parental attention than her sister and though she eschews their input, is nonetheless missing her mother's care.

Distinctions made between the pair will determine whether they are healthily or unhealthily attached. Crawford et al (2007) offer two categories of dysfunction attachment in adults: anxious and avoidant. Anxious attachment describes the fear of being rejected and abandoned, which was a factor for one of the participant's twin sibling. Avoidant attachment emphasises the difficulty experienced in maintaining close relationships, a factor for Amelia and her twin. Different attachment styles in twin pairs is recognised by Crawford et al (2007), which informs their individuation and separate identity even though they have shared their environment. Each of the participants in this study has commented on their differences in life choices and confidence and two of them recognise the polarisation of the twinship.

5.4 Individuation

Lousada (2009) proposes that individuation is a vital step towards intimacy between two people, where fusion and symbiosis are avoided. This clearly is difficult for twins as being born as part of a pair means that individuation must be learned. Difficulty in gaining a sense of self is acknowledged as all twins are deeply attuned to one another before birth. Freud, cited in Lousada (2009) commented: "the ego is first and foremost a bodily ego, derived from bodily sensations...developing a sense of self".

From the very beginning of their lives, twins are always present in a felt-sense with one another (Klein, 2012). The consequence of this constant togetherness can be extreme anxiety in some cases, as they grow. Klein (2012) speaks of the entanglements and closeness that are the result of this attachment which inhibits the emotional boundaries relating to who is who in the twinship. An important factor for psychotherapy is the acknowledgement of the developmental differences between singletons and twins. Klein (2012) proposes the idiosyncrasies of twin development where they grow up with two identities to manage: their identity as a twin and their identity as an individual.

Twins are never alone with mother and Dimitrovsky (1989) outlines the problem of the compromised symbiosis between mother and both twins. Gaining a clear sense of individuality is a painful process for twins as they question who they are within the twinship and who they are without their twin (Klein, 2012). The twin's experience of the deficit in the symbiosis is further exacerbated by the deficit in parental care on a physical plane. Lousada (2009) proposes that twins do not experience enough eye contact, playing, idolising and attention in comparison to singletons. Being viewed as a pair may affect their ability to cope. The shared experiences can promote their working together as a pair or in opposition to one another (Lousada, 2009). One participant in this study recounted the differences in opinion, behaviour and values between her and her twin sister. She is opposed to her sister's life choices and stands in judgement of her.

Hopwood & Donnellan as cited in Klein (2012) propose that change and stability are influenced largely by genetics. In their research into personality development in twins they describe the transition into adulthood as an exploration and consolidation of identity. Gaining autonomy and individuation presents difficulties for twins (Klein, 2012) as from early in life they have identified with their 'soulmate'. This connection is described as life sustaining and is causal in twins seeking out a twin-like relationship in adulthood. Two participants reported

that they are very connected to their twin. One is anxious regarding the potential disruption of a new partner in his brother's life and one has reported that her twin sibling has a good relationship with her husband which is important to her. For the other participant, not having a good connection to her sister appears to be a distressing and anxiety provoking experience. Individuation for each participant appeared to be difficult to achieve and complex feelings arose in relation to their twin siblings.

5.5 Conclusion

This study has highlighted the different subjective experiences of three pairs of twins. Each pair grew up within the same family and had the same general environment from birth. Though each participant reflected on the positive or fun aspects of the twinship, each appeared to experience difficulty in accepting their twin sibling's life choices at times. Rivalry for the attention of parents featured along with the need to remain close to one another. This need to maintain their twin bond has been shown to be in conflict with the psychological separation that is necessary for mental well-being (Klein, 2012). The participants in this study self-report to be the stronger one of their pairs and at times stand in judgement over their twin siblings. This judgement seems to have been brought about by the need for a sense of separateness, of individuation. The conflicting emotional arena of needing their twin to be the same as them and the need for separateness has shown to be causal in the emergence of either pity or resentment for their sibling.

The original question centred on the subjective experience of being a twin and this was answered with the twin sibling always in mind, to offer an inter-subjective report. Theory and findings largely complement each other as Kleinian theory (2015) proposes the internalisation of an external object, and in the case of twins both mother and twin sibling are

internalised. This presents the issue of never being alone with mother and mother is never singularly attending to one child.

The twinship from the twin's perspective has been shown to offer comfort, safety, challenge, judgement, expectation, attention and connection. Twins cannot be other than a twin despite the desire to be an individual. Klein's (2012) use of the phrase 'soul-mate' gives some notion of the depth of their inter-subjective, relational experience. The novelty factor although reported in a light hearted manner, can lend an air of unreality to twins, as though they are not two full persons but a unit sharing attributes and personality.

Given the findings in the area of connection and shared attributes, in contrasting felt-sense experience there is the 'glory and agony' of being a twin (Klein, 2012, p.159). Two of the participants spoke of a rivalry which has grown out of their need to become an individual in their parent's eyes and one spoke of her much needed and welcome enmeshment with her twin. This depicts the enormous struggle of who is who within the twinship and who they are individually. Psychotherapy can be facilitative in the search for individuation, identity and a sense of self beyond the twinship.

Families featured in this study as almost a backdrop to the twinships. There are instances of the twin pairs being seen as novelties, or partly ignored as it was observed that they had each other. Klein, (2012) alluded to the comfort of the twin bond in the 'single' orientated world. Fear of being alone was evident for two of these twins in the early years.

Individuation for twins is a difficult process as it must be learned. Twins are at a disadvantage in this area due to their significant bond to their twin since before birth (Lousada, 2009). Parental input which is vital for affect regulation of the child can be a cause of difficulty for twins. Sharing their mother's attention leaves each twin experiencing a deficit as her capacity to nurture is diluted (Klein, 2012). This deficit can be causal in the

emergence of a competitive nature, which promotes perfectionistic and high achiever personalities.

For twins in psychotherapy it appears that the achievement of a sense of individuation is sought, but with it comes the psychological separation from their twin. To understand the attachment that twins have is to view the early bonding as a triad – mother/twin/twin (Lousada, 2009) and this sharing of mother results in a deficit in the mother-twin connection. While mother is bonding with one twin, her attention is somewhat on the other twin, accordingly, when one twin is bonding with mother, their twin sibling is a constant companion in a felt sense (Dimitrovsky, 1989). The security of this twin attachment can be a disrupting force in the search for identity beyond the twinship and a mediating presence is required (Lousada, 2009). The therapist's ability to affirm the importance of the twinship can facilitate healing conditions for the twin who is struggling with individuation (Klein, 2012).

5.6 Areas for further research

Further investigations into twinships could include; same sex fraternal twins and the subjective experience of the surviving twin is an area which has had limited research to date.

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APPENDICES

APPENDIX A

SCHEDULE OF QUESTIONS FOR TWINS

1. Could you tell me about the first time you realised you were one of a pair?
2. How would you describe your connection to your twin?
3. Do you feel that this has changed over time ?
4. What would you say are the main differences between yourself and your twin?
5. Are you aware of any differences in how you and your twin relate to your parents?
6. Do you speak regularly about being a twin?... in what way?
7. Do you see being a twin as having an effect on decisions you made in life?
8. How does your mother/father refer to you when speaking to others?
9. Depending on this answer, can you say how you feel about that
10. When did you first feel separate from your twin?
11. Depending on this answer do you feel and think this was positive or negative
experience for you
12. How has being a twin affected other relationships in your life?
13. Has there ever been a time that you wondered what it would be like not to be born a
twin?
14. Is there anything else you feel is relevant that we haven't spoken about?

APPENDIX B
INFORMATION FORM

My name is Breda Farrell and I am currently undertaking a BA (Hons) in Counselling and Psychotherapy at Dublin Business School. I am inviting you to take part in my research project which is concerned with being a twin. I will be exploring the views of people like yourself regarding your experience as a twin.

What is Involved?

You are invited to participate in this research along with a number of other people because you have been identified as being suitable, being a twin. If you agree to participate in this research, you will be invited to attend an interview with myself in a setting of your convenience, which should take no longer than an hour to complete. During this I will ask you a series of questions relating to the research question and your personal experience. After completion of the interview, I may request to contact you by telephone or email if I have any follow-up questions.

Anonymity

All information obtained from you during the research will be kept by me and anonymity is assured. Notes about the research and any form you may fill in will be coded and stored in a locked file. The key to the code numbers will be kept in a separate locked file. This means that all data kept on you will be de-identified. All data that has been collected will be kept in this confidential manner and in the event that it is used for future research, will be handled in the same way. Audio recordings and transcripts will be made of the interview but again these will be coded by number and kept in a secure location. Your participation in this research is voluntary. You are free to withdraw at any point of the study without any disadvantage.

DECLARATION

I have read this consent form and have had time to consider whether to take part in this study. I understand that my participation is voluntary (it is my choice) and that I am free to withdraw from the research at any time without disadvantage. I agree to take part in this research.

I understand that, as part of this research project, notes of my participation in the research will be made. I understand that my name will not be identified in any use of these records. I am voluntarily agreeing that any notes may be studied by the researcher for use in the research project and used in scientific publications.

Name of Participant (in block letters) _____

Signature _____

Date / /

**APPENDIX C
CONSENT FORM**

Protocol Title:

A Qualitative Exploration of the Twinship
--

Please tick the appropriate answer.

I confirm that I have read and understood the Information Leaflet attached, and that I have had ample opportunity to ask questions all of which have been satisfactorily answered.

Yes No

I understand that my participation in this study is entirely voluntary and that I may withdraw within reasonable time, without giving reason.

Yes No

I understand that my identity will remain anonymous at all times **Yes No**

I am aware that audio recordings will be made of sessions **Yes No**

I have been given a copy of the Information Leaflet and this Consent form for my records.

Yes No

Participant _____

Signature and Date

Name in Block Capitals

To be completed by the Principal Investigator

I the undersigned, have taken the time to fully explain to the above participant the nature and purpose of this study in a manner that she/he could understand. We have discussed the risks involved, and have invited her/him to ask questions on any aspect of the study that concerned them.

Signature

Name in Block Capitals

Date

BE-Thesis Submission Form

Dear Student,

Please complete all information fields listed below as applicable. Leave fields that do not apply to you blank. Sign this cover sheet by typing your name in the appropriate field below and submit as a separate MSWord document alongside your thesis via the designated Moodle Submission Page.

If you have any questions concerning this submission form, please contact the library at esource@dbi.ie. If you have any questions regarding online submission on Moodle, please contact your supervisor.

MANDATORY FIELDS	
Information categories	Information (enter details below)
Title Full title, including any subtitle	Once a twin, always a twin. A psychotherapeutic exploration of the intersubjective experience of being a twin.
Author Your full name - family name and forename(s) - e.g. Smith, Andrew J.	Farrell, Breda
Student Number Your student number	1718547
Supervisor(s) Thesis supervisor, other supervisors, and advisors. Format as for author	Dr. Grainne Donohue
Supplementary material Specify what kind of (if any) material accompanies your thesis (e.g. ppt., audio/video file etc.). Submit this material via Moodle as a separate file	
Email Provide your permanent email address for future correspondence	<i>Breda248@gmail.com</i>

ADDITIONAL FIELDS	
Information categories	Information (enter details below)
Alternative Title Other titles for the work, e.g. translations or abbreviations	
Subject keywords Keywords that you feel will best describe your thesis	Psychotherapy, attachment, attunement, conflict, judgement, ambivalence, twinship, inter-subjective, expectation, connection, object relations, individuation
DBS School Name of the relevant DBS School where you are based (School of Arts, School of Business and Law, Professional School, etc.)	DBS, School of Arts
Qualification Name Name of the qualification awarded to you (e.g. BA (Hons) Social Science, MSc in International Business, etc.)	BA (Hons) Counselling and Psychotherapy
Publisher	

Name of the publisher if the thesis or any version of it has been/will be formally published	
Sponsors Name of your sponsor if applicable (e.g. a corporate organisation that supported you financially or otherwise)	
Year of graduation The year that you will complete your studies/graduate in format: YYYY (e.g. 2014)	2016
Do you agree to have your dissertation made available online on e-Source (the College's institutional repository)? [yes / no] If you answered no, please complete the "Opt-out application form" (see Appendix 2 in the e-thesis submission guide)	Yes
If you chose to make your dissertation available online, do you wish to restrict access to it to DBS students and staff only? [yes / no] If you answered yes, please complete the "Restriction-of-access application form" (see Appendix 1 in the e-thesis submission guide)	No

I hereby declare that the above information is correct to the fullest of my knowledge.
Thank you for completing this form. (Type your name in the field below)

Student signature: [Breda Farrell

Date: [01/05/2016]

Deposit Agreement

Please read this deposit agreement carefully. It contains important information that may apply to you and/or your work(s).

This agreement is BETWEEN: Dublin Business School (“The College”) AND:
The Author (“Depositor”)

For the purposes of this Deposit Agreement, the expression “Work(s)” shall mean the document(s) being deposited including abstract, text, images and related data and stored in an electronic format. This Deposit Agreement applies to all Work(s) submitted to the open access institutional repository (the “Repository”) of the Dublin Business School Library at Dublin Business School, Dublin. By submitting your Work(s) to the Repository, you accept and agree to all of the provisions of this Deposit Agreement.

1. SCOPE OF THIS DEPOSIT AGREEMENT

The rights granted to the College under this Deposit Agreement are non-exclusive. Nothing in this Deposit Agreement shall prevent you from publishing your Work(s) in its/their present or future version(s) elsewhere and, unless an agreement exists to the contrary, no ownership is assumed by the College when storing such Work(s).

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(c) incorporate metadata or documentation into public access catalogues for the Work(s). Citations to the Work(s) will remain visible in the Repository during its lifetime.

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The Depositor hereby declares and warrants to the College that:

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- (b) it has all necessary authority to enter into this Deposit Agreement and to grant the rights and licences clearly contemplated by this Deposit Agreement;

- (c) the Work(s) is/are original and does not, to the best of the Depositor's knowledge, information and belief, infringe the copyright or other rights of any other person or party, nor does it/do they contain libellous or defamatory material; and
- (d) neither the execution and delivery of this Deposit Agreement nor the performance by the Depositor of any of its obligations hereunder, nor the consummation of any of the transactions contemplated hereby will to the best of the Depositor's knowledge, information and belief, violate or conflict with any agreement to which the Depositor is a party or may otherwise be bound.

5. GENERAL

5.1 Any questions in relation to this Deposit Agreement should be directed to the library esource@dbs.ie.

5.2 This Deposit Agreement shall be governed by the laws of Ireland.

Please sign this deposit agreement electronically and return it to your thesis supervisor for filing, and keep a copy for your own file.

Signature: Breda Farrell

Date: 01/05/2016

DBS School: School of Arts

Contact details: Breda248@gmail.com

Dear Student,

Please complete all information fields listed below as applicable. Leave fields that do not apply to you blank. Sign this cover sheet by typing your name in the appropriate field below and submit as a separate MSWord document alongside your thesis via the designated Moodle Submission Page.