CHAPTER SIX

"THROUGH A KLEINIAN LENS"

DISCUSSION

6.1. Introduction.

The purpose of this study was to extensively explore the experience of infidelity or betrayal in intimate relationships through a Kleinian lens, with the view to contributing new knowledge to an existing body of Kleinian theory. Furthermore, the research aimed to elaborate on and modify existing theoretical constructs within a Kleinian framework (see chapter three).

A qualitative approach namely grounded theory, rather than a quantitative approach was used in order to gain a better understanding of the participants' unique and lived experience of infidelity. As the guiding methodology chosen for this study, grounded theory allows the researcher an opportunity to examine the observed actions and interactions in relation to the specific context (Strauss & Corbin, 1990/1998). Furthermore, various conditions and consequences relevant to the context also transpire. In this manner the researcher is encouraged to trail the intricate web of interrelated conditions in analysis. The findings of the phenomenon – **a sense of alienation –** which emerged as central to the experience of infidelity was presented in the previous chapter.

In order to locate the experience of infidelity in the context of individuals' lives, we are reminded that betrayal is a global phenomenon found within the complexity of relationships. Within a grounded theory methodology therefore, it would also be appropriate and relevant to explore the act of infidelity within the greater context of the phenomenon of betrayal (see 2.1). One way of extending the discussion to include the macro aspects of betrayal would be by considering the conditional matrix in the analysis of the data (see 4.4.4). In this manner, the researcher could also choose to consider the conditions in which the actions and interactions occur at *many* levels as one weaves a path through the discussion of the emergent substantive theory of the individual's unique experience of infidelity. However, no further discussion will be directed towards the macro aspect

of betrayal, as the scope and emphasis of this study rests on a micro aspect of betrayal, namely infidelity.

This chapter includes a comprehensive discussion within a Kleinian context of the findings presented in the previous chapter. Significant aspects of the framework used in the analysis of the five participants' data will be included (see chapter five). The data were obtained in response to the three research questions asked in the participants' interviews. The three interview research questions were:

1. **"What is your experience of betrayal in an intimate relationship – specifically your thoughts, feelings and behaviour?"**
2. **"What was your experience of yourself, before, during and after this process?"**
3. **"What was the outcome of your relationship with the other party?"**

Betrayal or infidelity as examined in this study is revealed as an insidious, intensely painful and masked process which for centuries has been recognised as symbiotically flourishing in intimate relationships and which holds the prospect of significantly debilitating consequences in most areas of an individuals' daily functioning. In particular, emotional-, behavioural-, cognitive- and intrapsychic consequences are indicated.

Furthermore, there is no known solution to preventing infidelity from occurring as its prevalence and significance lies in the perceptions and expectations of individuals regarding intimate relationships within societies, which uphold fidelity. In addition, infidelity in intimate relationships is more than the unfaithfulness of a partner. It is also the experience of self in the process of change as a result of the experience of infidelity.

Whilst in an intimate relationship, the self in the apparent security of a shared sense of belonging and union becomes complacently dormant and it is in the light of abandonment that the self is confronted with the choice of re-discovery. This process, set off by the experience of infidelity is continuously in motion, as the past has to be re-visited before the self can accommodate the present and contend with the future in a meaningful manner. Memories are central in retaining continuity of self, while a positive focus on the future facilitates the process.

In attempting to view the findings of this study through a Kleinian lens, it was evident that in the

process of examining and discovering the individuals' experience of betrayal, novel facets, which elaborate on Kleinian theory, become visible. Furthermore, the experience of infidelity, revealed itself as encompassing more than had first been anticipated.

6.2. The experience of infidelity viewed through a Kleinian lens.

Melanie Klein's theory is described in detail in chapter three of this thesis. However, before we embark on our discussion of the findings of this study, it is relevant to recall some of the major tenets of her theory in order to create a context in which to ground our discussion of infidelity in intimate relationships. In addition, as mentioned in the first chapter of this thesis, when describing the infant the masculine gender is used throughout the study merely to facilitate ease of editorial style (see 1.5.).

Klein's perspective of an infant's world suggests that he exists in an environment which is in turn, totally gratifying and comforting as well as totally petrifying. The infant's world consists mainly of his relationship with his mother who is in the early weeks perceived as incomplete and primarily the source of good and bad feelings. His response to what is good produces benign reactions but when faced with what he experiences as bad such as when he is deprived of his basic needs, the infant responds with distress, fear and anger (Sinclair, 1993). These feelings are too petrifying and upsetting to be contained within him, so he projects them outside of himself and is convinced that the part of the outside world which causes him pain is also the only possessor of all the badness in the situation. Thus feeling himself to be threatened from the outside and the inside, he activates a split, which guarantees that he separates himself of the bad feelings within himself such as hunger, pain and rage (Sinclair, 1993).

In this way, the bad feelings, which are projected outside of himself, can remain in his external world. Temporarily therefore, his circumstances improve as the badness has been banished to the outer world. However, the projected badness accumulates as it is added to the badness, which initially motivated the distraught reactions within him, and his circumstances are more petrifying than previously. A vicious spiral develops and the infant's endeavours to split off from them become increasingly frantic and forceful (Sinclair, 1993). Klein considered the stage in which this splitting takes place to be the "paranoid-schizoid" position (Likierman, 2001).

Splitting in this early stage of infant life is extreme. Later the infant learns to endure the fact that only some experience from the external world is good and he learns to interact with his external world in its diversity. He finds out that the mother (initially part-object) who pacifies him and nurtures him is also the same mother whose deprivation of good things causes him anger and anguish (Sinclair, 1993). Furthermore, at this stage, the infant learns to connect with the mother as a whole object, tolerating both her strengths and her shortcomings and becoming aware that he also plays a role in his relationship with her.

In addition, the infant and his mother share a large-scale unconscious communication of internal objects by means of projective identification and introjective identification. Projective identification suggests that the infant projects an unwanted part of the self into the mother, inducing behaviour in her that he unconsciously identifies with and attempts to control rather than handling his inner conflicts (Scharff, 1992). On the other hand, introjective identification occurs when the infant introjects aspects of the mother into his ego as a means of adding to or controlling aspects of his personality and then identifies with some or all of these aspects and behaves as if they were part of himself. Furthermore, in this stage, the infant acquires a capacity for guilt and concern and is able to make the distinction that he is as likely a source of anger and anguish as what his mother is. In being able to make this distinction, the infant enters Klein's second position namely the depressive position (Sinclair, 1993).

The depressive position is complex and follows from the paranoid-schizoid position as in this stage there is a more advanced level of relating to the outside world (in the form of the mother) and there is also recognition of the other as vulnerable. Simultaneously, there is a capacity within the infant to endure distress and pain (Sinclair, 1993). Klein suggested that the depressive position heralded the capacity of concern for others, in conjunction with the ability to experience gratitude (in maturity, the ability to be prompted to actions and attitudes of reparation). The depressive position is a state therefore which does not speak to the processes of splitting and projection as outer reality is no longer experienced and reinforced as persecutory. In addition, the depressive position permits the infant the capacity to live in reality rather than in a world of phantasy (Sinclair, 1993).

Although the transition between the paranoid-schizoid and depressive position was considered by Klein to occur in early infancy, she never suggested that the transition was exclusive and

permanent to early infancy. Rather, infants and the adults they are later to become will continually move to and fro between the two positions throughout life. Specifically as a result of her clinical work, Klein realized that the processes of spitting and projection continue to occur in differing degrees of adult life, when confronted by threat and anguish (Sinclair, 1993).

A strict adherence to Kleinian chronology might suggest that it is most appropriate to first examine and explore the participants' experience of betrayal from the framework of the paranoid-schizoid position before turning to the depressive position. However, the uniqueness of the participant's experience of betrayal is considered to determine the tone and sequence for the interplay between the two positions throughout the discussion.

In the ensuing discussion, themes relating to the nature of the intimate relationship between the participants and their partners, the loss of the loved object or partner as a result of their abandonment of the relationship and the consequences resulting from betrayal, are examined through a Kleinian lens.

6.2.1. The capacity to love another and the experience of betrayal.

When considering the experience of betrayal in intimate relationships we first need to direct our thinking to some of the significant prerequisites of intimate relationships found in the context within which betrayal is experienced (see 5.6.1.1). One such prerequisite is that adult individuals who are able to maintain a committed stable, adult, intimate relationship indicate that they have the **capacity to love** another individual and receive and accept love in return, in a climate of physical and emotional intimacy.

When examined from a Kleinian perspective, individuals who have developed the capacity to love another would have successfully introjected and established a loved, whole object within their ego during infancy. This ability to perceive the object as a whole rather than partly, and to show increased concern for the object as opposed to an egocentric preoccupation with the self is characteristic of the depressive position (see 3.8.1).

In addition, splitting of objects, into good and persecutory ones, characteristic of the paranoid-schizoid position (see 3.8.4.), have been successfully integrated Furthermore, as their love for

their good and real objects increases, the individuals experience greater belief and trust in their capacity to love others and paranoia generated by the bad objects, diminishes. First experienced in relation to the good, maternal breast, the infant's phantasies and instinctual needs enhance the primary object in such a manner that it remains the foundation of hope, trust and belief in goodness (Klein, 1957/1997). The significance of trust is emphasised in Klein's (1935/1975) description of the crises associated with having to overcome the depressive position as this is achieved when "love for the real and the internalised objects and trust in them are well established" (p.178).

The development of trust therefore suggests that individuals in intimate relationships place their trust in others and under benign conditions, they also trust their own capacity to love others. Therefore a mutual desire to love and be loved by another person and to **trust** them exists by virtue of the participants' engagement in an intimate relationship. Trust as noted in the previous chapter (see 5.6.1.1.) is a central prerequisite of intimate relationships.

Linking the relevance of the capacity to love others and trust them, to the experience of betrayal, Klein (1957/1997) suggests that at times of particular stress and anxiety, it is inevitable that for all individuals "the belief and trust in good objects is shaken." However, "…. it is the intensity and the duration of such states of doubts, despondency and persecution that determine whether the ego is capable of reintegrating itself and of reinstating its good objects securely" (p.178).

What is evident from the findings is that the participants' experience of betrayal fundamentally shakes their belief and trust in good objects and due to the intensity and duration of the *consequences* of the experience, poses significant challenges to the ego's capacity for reintegrating itself and of reinstating its good objects securely.

As indicated in the previous chapter, the participants experience their entire being as being influenced by the experience of betrayal, as they question their values, their attitudes, their expectations and themselves in relation to external reality and their relationships with others. Furthermore, as a result of the experience of betrayal, they express their inability at being able to trust others, both persons known to them and those less known to them. They also express their frustration and sadness at not being able to trust themselves or their previously familiar abilities to make significant and informed choices in their lives. In essence, the participants lose parts of themselves, which need to be re-discovered in the process of adjusting to change, and healing. This

aspect of their experience alienates the participants from themselves and their world and transports them back to a paranoid-schizoid position where negative feelings such as insecurity, a lack of self-confidence and distrust of others, is experienced.

Furthermore, as a result of the experience of betrayal, the participants' relationship with their internalised good object is disrupted and trust in the good part of *them* is disturbed. Consequently there is an increased projection of feelings of paranoia and mistrust onto others with an increased sense of loneliness which confines them to the anxieties of a paranoid-schizoid position (see 5.6.1.5).

Of further importance in conceptualising the capacity to love is the individuals' ability to accommodate rather than to fear **intimacy** (Likierman, 2001). The aspect of physical versus psychical intimacy is important in this regard as the phenomenon, which emerges from the participants' experience of betrayal goes far beyond the loss of sexual intimacy. Rather, the experience of betrayal rests in the loss and imminent longing for a connection at a profound psychical level with a significant other. As Klein (1963/1997) indicates, early events in the relationship between the mother and child are far more than sensual, libidinal experiences Rather, the importance of a crucial psychical contact with the first good object implies the workings of the unconscious of the mother and of the child. She suggests that this first psychical intimacy is essentially linked with the pre-verbal state and forms the basis for the most complete experience of being understood. Furthermore, psychical loss of the loved object is one of the early sources of loneliness (Klein, 1963/1997). Loneliness is discussed in greater detail later in chapter seven.

Intimacy presupposes that individuals in an intimate relationship need to allow themselves to become **vulnerable** in order to experience a sense of connectedness or union both physically and emotionally. Therefore, the mature individual knowingly and willingly enters a state of emotional and physical fragility when engaging in an intimate relationship. Defences, which are erected as means of ego-protection, and façades which are usually maintained to the benefit of the self, are lowered and removed in the process of becoming vulnerable.

Paradoxically, individuals have to place themselves in a highly emotional and physical precarious and defenceless position as they surrender their emotional and physical fragility to the safekeeping

of the other, in order to enjoy the safety and security of a sense of belonging and union, which a significant other promises. In addition, the precariousness of their position is not strong enough to deter them from seeking the sense of belonging and sense of connectedness with a significant other in an intimate relationship. The vulnerability, which individuals allow themselves to assume when initially engaging in intimate relationships is not filled with trepidation and debilitating fear to the extent that they shy away from relationship. Rather, it has an anticipatory quality attached to it as the individual enters into the wholeness of relationship and experiences a sense of belonging.

In discussing the concept of vulnerability above, I have mentioned that the individual *allows* him- or herself to become vulnerable to enjoy a sense of belonging with a loved object in an intimate relationship. Allowing oneself to become vulnerable however, by implication infers a process of inner conflict and struggle over opposites, prior to reaching the stage of engaging in a relationship. The inner struggle exists between past experience and present anticipation and the move towards or from vulnerability, becomes a pawn in the internally experienced life and death instincts. Should an individual engage in an intimate relationship, the life instinct is victorious and the love and libido in the relationship manifest as forces, which tend to preserve life (Klein, 1937/1975). Alternatively, should such a relationship be abandoned, the death instinct triumphs and the resultant longing for connectedness and imminent loneliness manifests as forces of the death instinct.

Although the presence of the individual in a relationship increases the security albeit risks of belonging over time, the individuals *feel* less vulnerable over time as they have consciously and willingly surrendered their emotional and physical fragility to their partner. In return, they expect to receive caring and security within the union which leads to a sense of belonging rather than a sense of alienation. In this way then, the individual shares a higher level of psychical connectedness albeit it short lived in the aftermath of the experience of betrayal.

With the occurrence of an act of betrayal, the previously secure state of vulnerability, which the individuals embrace, becomes debilitating and persecutory and plummets them back into the anxieties of a paranoid-schizoid position. Consequently, a regressive tendency towards the death instinct replaces the psychical progress and integration facilitated by a sense of belonging brought about by a shared sense of union and the individual returns to a former state of loss of psychical

union with a loved object. In addition, a sense of alienation is experienced. Vulnerability in the face of betrayal therefore represents relational destructiveness as well as anti-life and death instinct tendencies. In addition, the fragmenting pressure of the death instinct triggers a threat to the preservation of a whole ego (Likierman, 2001).

Initially in receiving love from a primary object (mainly our mothers) and significant others, we in turn learn to love others. As we develop the capacity to love others, this also retains our relatedness and connectedness as human beings. Within the context of this study, a sense of belonging and connectedness to significant other human beings is the primary aspect of our relationships.

6.2.2. A sense of an integrated self and the experience of betrayal.

This study reveals that participants initially bring an integrated sense of self to the relationship (see 5.6.1.1). Contained in this sense of self is their encompassing experience of themselves as well adjusted human beings in touch with both the positive and negative attributes of their personality. Furthermore, the participants experience their sense of wholeness as part of their identity, which instils in them a sense of belonging both within a greater societal context as well as within an intimate dyadic relationship.

According to Klein (1921/1975), aspects of the self are gathered over time and integrated to form an inclusive and stable identity. Therefore as indicated in this study, belonging to a group within the wider societal context as well as to an intimate dyad, the participants are connected to significant others and their sense of self is strengthened (see 5.6.1.1). Alternatively, a sense of disconnectedness from others or the prospect of a fragmented or unintegrated self as a result of their partners' betrayal creates anxiety in the participants and their ego comes under the threat of disintegration (see 5.6.1.5).

The processes of fragmentation and integration of the ego are opposite poles in Kleinian theory. Drawing on the work of Winnicott and his formulation of a primary unintegrated ego, Klein (1946/1997) asserted that "…. the early ego largely lacks cohesion so that a tendency towards integration alternates with a tendency towards disintegration" (p.5). It is only in later development

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that the ego emerges as a formed and cohesive entity. Furthermore, in linking Winnicott's ideas on primary integration and disintegration of the ego, Klein (1946/1997), incorporated the work of Ferenczi who upheld the belief that "…every living organism reacts to unpleasant stimuli by fragmentation" (Klein, 1946/1997, p.5).

In the participants' experience of betrayal, evidence of a move towards a destructive-regressive ego process rather than further movement towards a constructive-integrating ego process is evident in their brief but severe dissociative episodes (see 5.6.1.5). The participants experience fragmentation in the light of their partners' unexpected *abandonment* of them and not their partners' act of betrayal. The overwhelming anxiety and feelings of helplessness brought on by the abandonment by their partners, impede the participants' ability to make sense of experiences as the ego cannot effectively organise relationships between their internal and external environments. In addition, breaks in the continuity of experience implies a splitting in time which fits in with Klein's notion that the infant is initially only able to relate to the immediate events of the moment and there is a tendency for the ego towards disintegration rather than further integration.

Consequently, as mentioned in the previous paragraph, the participants react to the realisation of abandonment by dissociation and a sense of a disintegrated self, which leads them to question the validity of their entire being. As Klein (1946/1997) indicates, fragmentation is triggered by the internally experienced death instinct which activates a primal anxiety of an acute persecutory nature. As the participants have difficulty in accepting the existence and possibility of future prospective love objects, this suggests a tendency towards a paranoid-schizoid position rather than increased development within a depressive position.

Therefore, as a result of their experience of betrayal and a sense of a disintegrated self, the participants are initially unable to establish and conceive of an introjected good and loved object which generally elicits feelings of love and gratitude and which aids and maintains ego-integration. The obscurity of an introjected good object leads to feelings of anxiety and insecurity, which exacerbate the participants' feelings and experience of a disintegrated sense of self. Furthermore, the participants express their anxiety, fear and insecurity when considering the prospect of engaging in future libidinally invested relationships.

A further important aspect of the participants' sense of an integrated self is their perception of the abundance and accessibility of internal and external resources. Internal resources such as **resilience** and **hope** play a significant role in the participants' ability to re-establish a sense of an integrated self in their experience of betrayal (see 5.6.1.5). External resources such as the perceived love and support of friends and family members are likely to create a climate for the participant, which confirms their sense of wholeness and integration. For the purposes of this discussion, the emphasis rests on the participants' *internal* resources, which they bring to an intimate relationship such as resilience and hope.

6.2.2.1 Resilience and hope.

Klein considered the aspect of resilience in her thinking on the mystery of individual dispositions and variations in their response to the impact of life's hardships (Likierman, 2001), although she did not elaborate extensively on the term "resilience". She suggested that although it is inevitable that at specifically stressful and anxiety-laden times, an individual is likely to question his belief and trust in good objects, "…it is the **intensity** and **duration** of such states of doubts, despondency and persecution that determine whether the ego is capable of reintegrating itself and of reinstating its good objects securely" (1957/1997. p. 94).

Therefore, in the participants' experience of betrayal, the intensity and duration of their fears and anxiety regarding the good and loved object would influence their perception of their wholeness as individuals and their sense of an integrated self. In addition, Klein (1957/1997) suggests that the impact of both internal and external events is likely to trigger depression and distrust in the self and in the object. "However, the capacity to emerge from such depressive states and to regain one's feeling of inner security is…the criterion of a well-developed personality" (p.196).

It should be noted that Klein's stance regarding the differences in the ability of individuals to cope with life hardships and those regarded as having "fragile egos" is described in her theory of primary envy (3.18). In addition, for the purposes of this discussion, Klein's reference to "fragile egos" is interpreted to also suggest the resilience of an individual.

In her conceptualisation of primary envy, Klein wished to explain *innate* (internal) factors that determine individual variations in people's reactions to the hardships of life and which concurred

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with her theoretical persuasion regarding the direct expression of the internally driven death instinct. In addition, she attempted to portray a *pure* form of primary envy which was uncontaminated by the turmoil of *external* events (Likierman, 2001). Consequently, the influence of external events such as betrayal is likely to influence the conceptualisation of Klein's theory of primary envy.

Turning to **hope** as a further internal resource, which engenders a sense of wholeness in the participants, they hold onto the prospect of hope regarding the possibility of successful intimate relationships in their minds. However, they are initially unable to re-integrate an unwavering sense of hope into their experience of betrayal. In addition, as Klein (1957/1997) indicates, lack of progress in integration such as not being able to make decisions, which was previously quite an accessible skill leads to a decrease in the power of enjoyment and hope diminishes, giving way to depression (see 5.6.1.5). Hope as a feature of reparation is also discussed later in this chapter. A further aspect, which elicits an integrated sense of self, is that of **moral orientation** and is discussed in the following section.

6.2.3. Moral orientation and the experience of betrayal.

Participants bring their moral orientations acquired during the process of socialisation to the intimate dyad. Furthermore, their perception and expectation of their partner's moral orientation is compatible with their own. Specifically, the participants' perceive their partner's moral orientation with regard to mutually exclusive sexual boundaries, as mirroring their own.

Klein does not describe the development of moral orientation at great length, although she does give some indication of inherent moral structures, which are laid down during the developmental course of an infant, in the depressive position (Likierman, 2001). These moral processes describe the infant's ability to feel guilty for attacks on the frustrating and flawed object and therefore accept responsibility for personal aggression. This also facilitates the capacity to engage in reparation after aggressive attacks on the object and so reclaim the internal object and restore it to its loved and nurtured state. The moral processes correspond to an attitude of concern for the object, the ability to forgive and accept its normal shortcomings and progress from an egocentric perspective. Consequently, the influence of society as an external agent on the development of

morality in individuals is afforded little attention within a Kleinian framework. Rather the importance of the infant's innate character development, which assumes a general foundation as opposed to including the influence of culture, in its fundamental development, is emphasised (Klein, 1959/1997).

In the participants' view, a catalyst, which activates their internal processes and behaviours in their experience of betrayal, is their partners' violation of accepted mutually exclusive sexual boundaries within the dyad. The participants have difficulty integrating their partners' rejection of consensually defined moral values with regard to sexual behaviour within the dyad and their behaviour is perceived as unacceptable and cowardly. Furthermore, the manner in which the act of betrayal was orchestrated (see 5.6.1.3) raises significant moral conflicts between the participants and their partners, as they perceive their partners as lacking integrity and conscience.

Within the experience of betrayal, this perception of their partners as morally wanting, has significant negative implications for the participants when exercising their capacity for forgiveness and reclaiming a cared for and loved, internal object.

Furthermore, accepting responsibility for aggression and excessive attacks towards a loved object while in relationship is a sign of moral achievement in the depressive position. In this manner, the internal loved object is restored and persevered and the well-being and continuity of relationship with the external object ensured (Klein 1940/1975). As indicated in chapter three of the thesis, Klein's (1940/1975) conceptualisation of the depressive position promotes the contradictory themes which may be regarded as tragic and moral. The tragic theme focuses on the experience of irrevocable damage or loss of the loved object and is brought about by the infant's aggressiveness. The moral theme focuses on the infant's ability to assume guilt as a result of his assaults on the frustration and flawed object and therefore accept personal responsibility for his aggression.

However, in the participants' experience of betrayal, I would suggest an *externally* imposed- rather than an *internally generated* tragic mental state prevails, as the participants in the light of their partners' unexpected and abrupt abandonment of the relationship, are helpless is attempting to salvage their relationship and the love of the loved object. The loved object is irrevocably lost to them without prior warning of shortcomings in their relationship. Consequently, the participants

cannot conceive of assuming remorse, guilt or responsibility indicative of a moral mental state in the depressive position and persecutory anxieties predominant in the paranoid-schizoid position increase in the face of "not knowing" (see 5.6.1.3.).

In addition, an externally imposed tragic state is intensely painful as the participants initially have no knowledge of the reasons for their abandonment and are unable to assume direct responsibility for aggressive attacks or other sadistic behaviours towards their partner which led to their abandonment and loss of the loved object. Furthermore, the participants' inner world is thrown into chaos as the struggle between preservation of the internal, good and loved object and the actual loss of the loved object in external reality ensues.

6.2.4. Revisiting the Oedipal situation and the experience of betrayal.

As indicated in the paragraph above, sexual betrayal or sexual infidelity refers to the infringement of mutually exclusive sexual boundaries within an intimate dyad by one or both the partners. Consequently, in this context, sexual fidelity within societies, which value and uphold the institution of marriage or committed, long-term mutually exclusive sexual relationships, is a prerequisite (Sinclair, 1993).

As discussed in chapter two of this thesis, the nature of betrayal as a global phenomenon and the experience of sexual betrayal as discussed in this study cannot be divorced from the significance of the socialisation processes inherent to societal life, as well as the interactions and relationships of members in that society (see 2.4.4). Therefore, the implications of sexual betrayal by a partner is not confined to a *personal level* of relationship within the intimate dyad but has implications for the individual in the greater context of the *society* to which he or she belongs.

As the findings of this study suggest (see chapter five), on a *personal* level the *outcome* of the individual's relationship as a result of the experience of betrayal is amongst others, rejection and abandonment at the hands of his or her partner. This leads to feelings of excruciating humiliation, which initially compels the individual to deliberately withdraw from physical or emotional contact with others where possible. Furthermore, at a *social* level, sexual betrayal by a partner significantly erodes an individual's reputation and status in the community. In this instance, sexual

betrayal suggests that the partners and their lovers have not considered the participants to be worthy enough of fidelity (Sinclair, 1993).

In addition, acts of betrayal in adulthood have the ability to carry powerful reverberations of the original discomfort experienced in the Oedipal triangle for both men and women since their first relationship (generally regarded as being with their mother) is intense with violent reactions of love and hate (Sinclair, 1993). One association which may be made with the original Oedipal situation in the findings of this study, is the *husband who is betrayed by his wife*. In this instance, the husband "loses" his wife as a result of her abandonment of him for another and he is thus also presumed to have "lost" his potency, as it proves insufficient to protect his wife and their marriage from rivals on the prowl. Therefore his short-lived perception of himself as having power over the world is swiftly ended and his feeling of impotence increases.

To return to Oedipal theory for a moment, there is the boy who initially fears his loss of future potency as a result of his father's act of revenge by castrating him in retaliation for his love for his mother. In this way then he is made to effectively feel less potent in any event, as is the husband by the performance of the evidently superior ability of his wife's new lover (Sinclair, 1993).

In this study, there is evidence from the data that Participant B, who "lost" his wife and their marriage to numerous rivals, initially exhibited sexual behaviour, which, if following the train of Oedipal theory indicated that he needed to regain his potency. However, his comments on his sexual promiscuity do not restrict his behaviour to the need to regain his potency but go beyond such an explanation. The data suggest that through the acts of sexual intercourse, Participant B was able to gain some access to what he longed for most, namely **a sense of belonging** engendered by a shared union with another. As has been indicated in the previous chapter **a sense of alienation** emerges as the phenomenon most strongly associated with the experience of betrayal or infidelity.

According to Klein (1932/1975), the Oedipus situation emerges gradually as a phenomenon with archaic roots as early as the second year of life, unlike Freud's indication that the Oedipus complex was specific to the fourth year of life (Likierman, 2001). Furthermore, she placed much emphasis on the pre-Oedipal period and in particular, on the importance of the first relationship of the infant with the mother during this stage, as opposed to Freud's emphasis of the father in the infant's development (see 3.3.6.8). Consequently, the infant's first relationship is a non-intellectual one

which engages intense feelings and senses as the infant explores his bond with his mother. In addition, gender formation is considered to occur at an earlier stage in Kleinian theory than in Freudian theory. It is relevant to note that much criticism has been directed at Klein's controversial thinking around the onset of the Oedipal situation (Scharff, 1992), which will be addressed in conjunction with other criticisms of her theory in the following chapter.

Klein identified specific characteristics of the Oedipal situation which suggests the need for **exclusivity in the relationship with the opposite sex parent** and therefore **resentment of third party intervention, sadistic acts against the loved object, aggression, anger, phantasy life, feared rivals** and **territorial possession of the loved object** (Likierman, 2001). In this study, the experience of betrayal as a result of a partners' infidelity as seen in adult, intimate relationships supports aspects of the original Oedipal situation and forms part of the discussion in the ensuing paragraphs. We turn first to the concept of **exclusivity** in intimate relationships.

Exclusivity in intimate relationships, specifically mutual sexual exclusivity is an important criterion in the relationships of the participants. In this manner, the expectation of the "favoured" or "chosen" one similar to the position of the participant in the Oedipal situation is re-created as they feel increasingly secure in assuming that their position in the dyad is one of permanence (see 5.6.1.1). However, with the onset of their partner's betrayal, the participants are unceremoniously usurped from their position as the "chosen one" to that of the outcast.

Furthermore, as a result of initially "not knowing" the true reason for their partners' abandonment of them, the participants are confronted by persecutory anxieties. These persecutory anxieties increase as the participants come to the awareness that they have experienced a dual betrayal. Firstly, as a result of their unexpected abandonment and rejection at a conscious level by their partners, which at face value has no logical explanation and secondly, by virtue of their partner's preference for another. Their dual betrayal elicits feelings of badness both from within and in the external world of the participants. Furthermore, moving towards the depressive position and overcoming their loss of relationship with another and their loss of the loved and good object is delayed as the participants become entangled in the persecutory anxieties of the paranoid-schizoid position.

One of the consequences of having been unexpectedly and involuntarily removed from the position of the "favoured" one as a result of their partners' betrayal and subsequent choice of a rival object, is that a *mingling* of feelings of both **jealousy** and **envy** are elicited. In this regard, Berke (1989) suggests that jealousy and envy are not mutually exclusive and may occur together without either dominating.

6.2.4.1. Jealousy and envy

Jealousy has always been associated with the Oedipal triangle within a psychoanalytic framework. Regarding the Oedipal situation, Klein (1957/1997) suggests that jealousy is experienced first in infancy in relation to a twosome or couple (parents) and triggered by possessive desires for a loved object (mother) when it is out of reach and perceived as belonging to another. Whilst in the relationship, the participants experience jealousy towards their partner particularly at times when they themselves are feeling insecure about the relationship as a result of their partners' perceived lack of attentiveness. These insecurities provoke fears and anxiety within the participants which they project onto the relationship and their partners and which cause them to behave possessively over them.

On the other hand, once their relationship has been abandoned, the participants unsuccessfully attempt to suppress any feelings of jealousy towards their former partners, as they do not regard themselves to be insecure individuals. In addition, the participants indicate that should they act possessively towards a partner who has rejected them and abandoned them for another, this could suggest their dependency and vulnerability on them as well as indicate the significance of their loss, which they would prefer to conceal particularly from them and from others. This aspect of their functioning is managed when participants maintain a façade after their partners' betrayal (see 5.5.2).

Consequently, the participants unsuccessfully attempt to temporarily split off and disown that part of them which shows that they have the potential to be jealous of their partner when their relationship is threatened or taken over by a rival, as this would indicate their vulnerability and dependency on their partners. In addition, when confronting their partner (see 5.6.1.4), the anger, which the participants initially express towards them, is also fuelled by their possessive desire for the loved object whom they have lost to a rival.

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When introducing the concept of **primary envy** (see 3.18), Klein (1957/1997) sheds further light on the infant's first emotional partnership. In distinguishing between envy and jealousy, Klein suggests that "envy is the angry feeling that another person possesses and enjoys something desirable-the envious impulse being to take it away or spoil it…and…. jealousy derives more from a fear of losing what one has" (in Grosskurth, 1986, p. 414). Consequently, envy invades what should have continued to be a carefree relationship of pleasure and love with the breast but one in which the infant is undermined and distressed in his efforts to establish a secure base in the world. Furthermore, envy is internally driven, insatiable and will always find an object on which to focus (Klein, 1957/1997). In particular, Klein's emphasis on primary envy refers to the aggression which is directed not on rivals of the object but on the object itself and represents a malign resentment of its goodness (1957/1997).

However, as discussed in chapter three of this thesis, two primary forms of envy were conceptualised by Klein (1957/1997). She proposed the first form of primary envy as aggression towards the good available object (the breast) and she proposed a significantly overlooked *second* form of envy that is triggered by the unavailable breast which induces the pain and suffering of *deprivation.* It is this second form of primary that we also focus our attention on in the participants' experience of betrayal as it is a manifestation of their intense suffering in the face of deprivation as a result of the absence of a loved object. In addition, deprivation by and of the loved object increases the participants' sense of alienation which emerges as the central phenomenon in the experience of betrayal.

The participants project feelings of loathing onto their partners in the form of **private gloating** (see 5.6.1.5). Gloating is fuelled by pain and anger at the *loss* of the loved object and is a manifestation of the participants' experience of deprivation and unavailability of the loved object. Of significance here is that as indicated in the previous paragraphs in this section, Klein (1957/1997) suggests that pain and suffering as a result of deprivation by the unavailable, loved object elicits feelings of envy towards the loved object. Therefore, one could also consider whether feelings of envy which are elicited as a result of deprivation in the participants' experience of betrayal as well as whether feelings of jealousy, do not also play a role in the manifestation of gloating? It should be noted that this suggestion is not based on a theoretical finding in this study as the participants' intrapsychic processes were not explored in exhaustive detail. Rather, it is aimed at facilitating

further thought around the role of envy as a result of deprivation by the loved object, in the participants' experience of infidelity.

Furthermore, the participants internalise and relish the sadistic pleasure they experience when hearing that their partners are experiencing problems in their relationships either with the affairee or with extended friends and family members outside the new dyad. By privately gloating about their partners' misfortunes, the participants indirectly attack the perception of the goodness of the lost loved object and not the lost, loved object directly as they are no longer in the relationship. Private gloating therefore becomes a means through which the participants are able to express their loathing and contempt of the loved object in his or her absence.

Not only do the participants gloat about the difficulties which their partners encounter in their new relationships but they are also resentful of any windfalls or successes both in their careers and their relationships which their former partners may experience once the relationship has been abandoned. In addition, the participants entertain fantasies of either humiliating their loved object in public or fantasize about their partners' true, devious natures being exposed (see 5.6.1.5).

Furthermore, the participants experience a sense of injustice when they learn via acquaintances, friends and family members of their former partners' apparent happiness and success. In this regard, the participants believe that *they* deserve to be happy and their partners, punished for having betrayed them, whereas they perceive the tables as having turned on them. Consequently, feelings of envy towards their partners may also be elicited as a result of the perceived goodness (happiness and success) which the partners appear to enjoy and of which the participants are deprived.

In addition, their partners' act of betrayal and abandonment becomes encompassing in the participants' experience over time and their association with the bad aspects of their partner increases which intensifies their persecutory anxiety. Also, the participants' difficulty in attempting to integrate both good and bad aspects of the loved object once the relationship has been abandoned increases giving rise to further persecutory anxiety. The dangers associated with persecutory anxiety are felt to threaten the ego and conjure up fear of death (Klein, 1957/1997).

A clarification of jealousy and envy needs to be re-emphasised at this point. Although as mentioned previously, Klein (1957/1997) indicated that feelings of jealousy are manifested in the presence of a rival object and focus on the rivalry for a good object, I suggest that the feelings which the participants experience in this instance may be a *mingling* of feelings of jealousy and envy as they are directed at both the rival object and at the *goodness of relationship* which their former partners and the rival objects are perceived to share and enjoy and of which the participants are consequently deprived.

6.2.4.2. The rival object.

A further aspect associated with a mingling of feelings of envy and jealousy is significant in this discussion namely the conceptualisation of the **rival object**. It should be emphasised that as discussed in Chapter Two of this thesis, the inherent nature of betrayal, is one of secrecy and therefore the rival object or objects, although very much a presence do not covertly impact on the inner or outer world of the participants as they have no knowledge of them and they only become a reality once their partners' infidelity has been disclosed.

Consequently, prior to the disclosure of their partners' betrayal, the rival object does not present a real threat to the participants or to the relationship. This occurs for two reasons. Firstly, the affairees as rival objects and their potential to threaten the participants' relationship with their former partners is only recognised retrospectively (see 5.6.1.2). Secondly, fantasies of potential rival objects or other threats to the relationship in the course of the participants' relationship with the former loved object are firmly suppressed and denied (see 5.6.1.5). Therefore, for the participants in this study, rival objects or threats to their relationship do not exist for the duration of the relationship as their unconscious fear of abandonment and alienation overrides and represses thoughts and behaviours which may alert them to behaviour in their loved object which may suggest a threat in the form of a rival object.

In this regard, I acknowledge that rival objects are not always hidden and may openly pose a threat to a relationship as well as openly pursue the loved object of another. However, evidence in this study suggests that the participants are initially unaware that their partners have extended the trusted and sexually exclusive dyadic boundaries of the relationship to include rival objects with

whom they have a secret relationship. Furthermore, the loved objects betray the participants by *colluding* with rival objects and allow themselves to be seduced into depriving the participants of the goodness of relationship and a sense of belonging.

Klein (1957/1997) places a strong emphasis on the *infant's* experience of the Oedipal situation as rivalry and less on the aspect of *collusion* in the relationship between the parental figures. A collusive relationship between a loved object and a rival object in the Oedipal triangle is significant and remains an inherent feature of betrayal (see chapter two). When one considers the participants' experience of betrayal, they perceive their loved objects as having colluded with a rival object/s, against them and the relationship, thereby increasing their feelings of anxiety and persecutory fears. Therefore, an act of betrayal is perceived as taking on the form of a conspiracy against the participants by their former partners and the affairees and they are powerless to intercept or challenge the process, as it remains concealed.

Furthermore, other than in the Oedipal situation, where rival objects take on form in the infant's world and threaten to possess the loved object, the magnitude of the impact and ensuing consequences of the experience of betrayal lies in the cunningly veiled but very real threat of *hidden* rival objects. Due to the importance of secrecy in an act of betrayal, rival objects remain outside any overt interaction between the participant and the partner. Therefore, they do not exist in the participants' conscious mind or external world.

As the participants do not engage in rivalry for the loved object due to their unawareness of any threat or need to compete for their loved object, the rival objects emerge as victors without engaging in any form of rivalry with the participants. Therefore, only once their partners' act of betrayal has been exposed, do the participants become aware of rival objects which threatened their relationship and ultimately robbed them of their loved object. This results in persecutory fears manifesting as heightened vigilance and paranoia which are some of the significant behavioural and intrapsychic consequences of the participants' experience of betrayal (see 5.6.1.5).

In addition, once the partners' infidelity has been disclosed, the participants experience a compelling and insatiable need to know what the rival object looks like if they are not known to

them. Participants, who have not met the rival object, fantasize about the person which persists and which creates anxiety in the participants.   In this manner therefore, the participants are able to identify an object which will become the target of their feelings of jealousy. However, I suggest that a mingling of feelings of envy as well as feelings of jealousy may be elicited in relation to the rival object in the following manner:

Firstly, the participants grapple with the experience of pain and suffering as a result of deprivation by the loved object as a result of his or her preference for the rival object. Furthermore, they also grapple with wanting the goodness of relationship which the loved object and the rival object are perceived to enjoy, but which has become unavailable to them. Consequently, feelings of envy towards the loved- and rival object may be elicited. Secondly, the participants grapple with the perception that the rival object must in some way be superior to themselves otherwise their loved object would not have abandoned them for the rival object. Furthermore, feelings of jealousy and possessiveness of the loved object are elicited as the participants compulsively compare themselves to the rival object. In addition, feelings of envy towards the rival objects may also be elicited as a result of the superior attribute/s which they are perceived to possess and which the participants lack.

In addition, the rival object does not pose a current threat to the relationship as it is already destroyed. In essence, there is no rival object or rivalry as the rival object has been concealed. Furthermore, the participants suppress their wish to resume the relationship with their loved object as they are intensely humiliated and feel rejected. Therefore, the participants do not vie for the loved object as he or she is seen to have indicated a clear preference for a relationship with another.

In the participants' experience of betrayal, the rival object or the affairee is initially perceived to be the *good* and *better* object by virtue of the fact that their partners have chosen them above the participant. Therefore, feelings of jealousy are elicited when seeing the rival object. They consider the affairees' physical attributes as well as their personality, placing both under scrutiny and attack from the participant and from close friends who attempt to pacify the participant by emphasising the negative aspects of the affairee. This however, causes them much confusion as their former perception of themselves as lovable and acceptable individuals is rejected as a result of their partners' abandonment.

Furthermore, they grapple with attempting to integrate the affairee as a bad object in their experience of betrayal because if they were not good objects, their former partner is likely not to have abandoned the relationship in their favour. Identifying the authentic bad object in the participants' experience of betrayal is a difficult one as they in turn consider themselves, their partners and the affairee to assume this role, prior to later integration of their experience of betrayal.

A significant aspect in the participants' experience of betrayal is the little considered avenue of unconscious self-destructiveness which they follow in their attempt to hide their feelings of jealousy from others and from their partners. In particular, they deliberately attempt to suppress their feelings of jealousy towards their partners for fear of appearing desperate and needy of them. However, by attempting to suppress their feelings of jealousy, the participants therefore also need to suppress their aggression towards their loved objects.

As Klein (1932/1975) indicates, the capacity for envy is linked to the death instinct or by inference, is the expression of inborn aggression and is seen as the infant's response to frustration. In this regard, the participants attempt to internalise their feelings of jealousy and envy. However, as a result of their increasing anxiety, they are obliged to expel their intensity, suffering and longing for relationship by means of projections onto the perceived good relationship which is being enjoyed by their former partner and the affairee and which has been taken from them. The perception of a good relationship remains part of the intrapsychic processes and consequently remains internal to the participants' experience.

Furthermore, being both abandoned and betrayed, the participants are unable to reach a resolution to the crises by either totally rejecting their loved object because they have idealised them (Grosskurth, 1986). Klein (1957/1997) suggests that this form of defence erected by the ego occurs as a means of protection against the ravages inflicted by envy.

In addition, the participants have difficulty finding an avenue leading to compromise and forgiveness and have feelings of ambivalence towards their partners. Therefore, idealisation and ambivalence are two intrapsychic processes which come into play at this time, which significantly

influence the participants' inability to successfully negotiate and overcome both the persecutory and depressive anxieties associated with their experience of betrayal. Further discussion of the idealisation of the loved object in relation to the participants' experience of betrayal is presented in 6.2.5. In addition, an alternate mode of defence is also erected by the ego namely, **devaluation of the object** (Grosskurth, 1986). However, devaluation of the object does not emerge as a theme in the data.

Furthermore, as a result of their inability to forgive their partners at this time, the participants introject the resented loved object and launch a revenge attack on them in fantasy in which they imagine them to be eternally searching in vain, for a fulfilling intimate relationship. Introjection of the object amounts to its "displacement from reality on to the psychic process" (Deutsch, 1935/1965, p. 152). In addition, the participants fantasise about the disintegration of every intimate relationship which their former loved object pursues or attempt to pursue. However, this infers a process of introjective identification by the participants as they are tormented by the perception of themselves never being able to succeed and find fulfilling and lasting love in an intimate relationship (see 5.6.1.5).

It must also be noted that the participants' anger as a result of their partners' betrayal is initially particularly intense and amounts to what could be considered sadistic tendencies, which they harbour. However, as the participants are trapped in feelings of depression, they are neither able to accept and forgive their loved object nor to reject and relinquish it. In fantasy, the participants continue to seek love and approval from the same object who is repeatedly betraying.

Furthermore, the pain and aggression which the participants experience in the face of the perceptions of goodness of the others' relationship and which they attempt to confine to their internal world, contaminate the source from which feelings of jealousy and envy originate, namely, the participant him- or herself. In this regard, the suffering and pain of deprivation in the participants' experience of betrayal is exacerbated, as they are initially unable to project their feelings of jealousy and envy. Anxiety increases, depressive tendencies which require professional help is sought and the growing toxicity which has its source in jealousy and envy in the internal world of the participant intercepts their effective daily functioning.

6.2.5.   Idealisation of the loved object in the experience of betrayal.

As indicated in 6.2.4, **idealisation** of the loved object makes way for anger and ambivalence once the participants learn of their partners' betrayal (see 5.6.1.3). Whilst in the relationship, idealisation of the loved object as a source of the life instinct occurred as a result of the sense of belonging and wholeness which the participants experienced.

Klein (1946/1997) conceptualised idealisation of the loved object in two ways. Firstly, she suggested that the primary good object is ideally experienced in early infancy as it represents the **core of the self,** embodies the infant's instinctual desires and unconscious phantasies and forms "…. the foundation of hope, trust and belief in goodness" (Klein, 1957/1997, p.180). The infant projects what amounts to his entire loving capacity, as well as his capacity for pleasure onto the object and this is then introjected together with the object's actual goodness to become his very core (see 3.7.4).

In this regard Klein (1960/1997), went so far as to suggest that "….without the good object at least to some extent becoming part of the ego, life cannot continue" (p.180). In this manner, the primary good object symbolizes the life instinct and therefore remains a source of all-giving, mental nourishment to the infant. Therefore at any one moment, the ego consists of states of pleasure such as feelings of love and gratitude when the good object has been introjected and states of persecution when the bad object is projected or re-introjected. Klein's thinking on the depressive position accounts for how this early state of flux gradually settles into a more permanent structure when repeated introjection and introjective identifications enable the setting up of more permanent features of the personality, optimally with the good object prevailing (Likierman, 2001).

Secondly, idealisation of the object serves to act as **a psychic defence mechanism**, whereby the object's goodness is protectively exaggerated. Idealisation in infancy is bound up with the splitting of the object to ensure that "….the good aspects of the breast are exaggerated as a safeguard against the fear of the persecuting breast" (Klein, 1946/1997). **Splitting** functions as a protective mechanism towards the ego, which facilitates a means of managing anxieties (see 3.17). This form of idealisation is seen to occur with increasing developmental integration in the individual and is able to accommodate a distorted sense of reality (Likierman, 2001).

In the participants' experience of betrayal, I suggest that idealisation of the object represents both forms of Klein's thinking in the following ways. Firstly, whilst in the relationship, the loved object embodies the life principle as he or she provides psychical sustenance in the form of a shared sense of psychical union with the participant. As a result, the participants experience a sense of belonging, psychical connectedness and continuity of relationship which is sustained over time and which are consequently aspects in the relationship symbolizing and strengthening the life instinct. The participants also experience an increasing sense of wholeness as they give and receive love in the intimacy of their relationship with a loved object.

Klein states that in the depressive position, an unconscious, lingering fear of loss of the loved object is also evident in the intimacy of a shared sense of union (Likierman, 2001). Whilst in the relationship however, the participants give little conscious thought to the possibility of losing their loved object either as a result of abandonment or to a rival object. Furthermore, the participants give little conscious thought to the possibility of the relationship disintegrating or being abandoned.

Therefore, in the process of being sustained by a rewarding and meaningful relationship representative of the life instinct, the prospects of rejection or abandonment by their partner indicative of the death instinct, are unwelcome alternatives to a sense of belonging and a shared sense of union. The participants idealise what their partners as life sustaining objects represent, as these aspects are vital in establishing the sense of wholeness the participants experience by being in relationship with them. The participants split off evidence, which is unconsciously communicated by the partner whilst in the relationship which points to rejection and the potential threat of disintegration of the relationship. In this manner therefore, the partner is preserved as a life giving force rather than representing an object, which has the potential to become persecutory.

Secondly, in having to deal with the unexpected abandonment of the relationship, which is initially perceived as illogical and does not endorse the continuity and daily contact with their partner in the intimacy of relationship, the participants defensively exaggerate the positive aspects of their partners as they idealise them and initially hold onto them in mind. In this instance, idealisation as a psychic defence mechanism protects the participants from the perplexing and curt termination of

the relationship by their partners who were initially experienced as loving and caring but whom in an instant exhibited the potential to be unpredictably persecutory. Consequently, the participants attempt to split of this aspect of their partners' behaviour as it is overwhelming and elicits debilitating anxiety.

At this point, it is important to emphasise that although our focus is on the experience of the participants' betrayal by their partners, we need to consider that the participants in fact deal with two aspects related to their experience of betrayal. The first is their abandonment by their partners as a forerunner to the second namely, exposure of their partners' betrayal.

Furthermore, it is evident that in the absence of the formerly loved object, it is only over time that the participants are able to conceive and sustain the image of the former partner as a bad object rather than a loved object, as they initially feel powerless in resisting potential attempts at reconciliation from their partners (5.6.1.5). The participants therefore, attempt to stifle their feelings of love for the loved object which has deceived them as they are unable to integrate the experience of betrayal as abruptly as what it is forced upon them.

Klein (1957/1997) suggests that stifling feelings of love and intensifying of hate is a frequent defence employed by individuals in the depressive position which is less painful to carry than the guilt which arises from the combination of love, hate and envy. Moreover, it may not express itself as hate but it may take on the appearance of indifference. A related defence is to withdraw from contact with people. As noted in the previous chapter, the participants initially choose to distance themselves both physically and emotionally from their former loved object to prevent themselves from being drawn into a relationship with them again while they attempt to come to terms with their experience of feeling alienated and the implications of betrayal (5.6.1.4). Their withdrawal is marked by persecutory anxiety, which increases in the light of the loved objects' abandonment.

6.2.6. Ambivalence in the experience of betrayal.

A concept related to idealisation which Klein describes and which is relevant in the participants' experience of betrayal is that of **ambivalence** (see 3.8.3)**.** Ambivalence, a feature of the depressive position, refers to the irreconcilable and conflicting feelings of love and hate which an infant

experiences towards a disappointing but none the less loved and intensely needed object (Klein, 1940/1975). Furthermore, this anguished state of ambivalence is considered to be crucial to feelings of depression and depressive illness. Without ambivalence, feelings of depression may never occur, since if either love or hate prevailed in the individuals' mind, he or she would resolve the situation by being able to either reject or accept the object (Likierman, 2001).

Within the ambivalent relationship, the early processes of splitting, characteristic of the paranoid-schizoid position continue to evolve but these are less aggressive in the depressive position. This higher level of integration enables the infant to experience guilt and depression and the anxieties that centre around the fear of losing the good object (Likierman, 2001). In addition, in adapting to the knowledge of loss, the infant reacts with anger towards the object thus experiencing ambivalence towards the object. Linked with depressive states, ambivalence towards the loved object in infancy is elicited in the face of loss, for example, as evident in the process of weaning (Klein, 1935/1975).

The participants' initial reaction to their partners at their abandonment and their own sense of alienation is that of anger and they confront them to gain clarity as to the reason for their apparent, sudden decision to terminate the relationship. In this confrontation with them, the participants' shock, fear, anger and anxiety at their abandonment and loss is projected onto their partners. We recall that in the first interaction with their partners' subsequent to the disintegration of the relationship, the participants have no knowledge of their partners' betrayal and are reacting to their perception of their sudden abandonment. Furthermore, their partners' unsatisfactory response and illogical explanation for the abandonment of the relationship, merely serves to increase their anger, fear and anxiety.

Furthermore, as a result of the partners' projections of hostility and defensiveness, the participants introject their partners as loved objects who now have the potential to become persecutors. However, splitting of the negative aspects of the partners occurs in order to preserve the perceived goodness of the loved object, which results in feelings of ambivalence towards them. These feelings of ambivalence as a consequence of betrayal, are also experienced in some instances towards people external to the dyad which influence the participants' inner world and their judgement of reality (5.5.3).

Ambivalence and concomitant splitting of the negative and positive aspects of their partners continues to occur as the participants learn of and are faced with having to integrate their partners' betrayal. Initially, the participants physically and emotionally withdraw from others (see 5.2.2.) and they deliberately have very little or no contact with their partners as they attempt to manage the chaos of their internal world.

Their initial physical and emotional withdrawal from a Kleinian perspective suggests that at this time, the participants' internal good object which was previously securely established within their egos, takes on a precarious quality. Consequently the participants' internal world temporarily becomes an unsafe environment, dominated by their bad rather than their good objects. As the participants reintroject the bad object into the ego in this instance, they experience a state of persecution rather a state of pleasure. This in turn delays the opportunity for optimal functioning with the good object predominating (Likierman, 2001). This process underscores their physical and emotional withdrawal.

Furthermore, at this time of temporary retreat, murmurings of the Oedipal complex reverberate through the process as a healthy Oedipal complex depends on the ability to establish a good object within (Likerman, 2001). Therefore, in the light of a temporarily compromised internal good object and dominant bad objects, the female participants in this study in particular, have no desire to engage in an intimate relationship at this time. From a Kleinian perspective regarding the good object in the Oedipal situation then, the female participants temporarily reject the penis and temporarily retreat from "….assuming the responsibility for creating new life and offering nurture" (Likierman, 2001, p. 131). Similarly, by losing the loved object (in infancy the maternal object), the male participants in this study, are rendered helpless in having protected their partners or having the ability to restore the relationship. Consequently, at this time of physical and emotional withdrawal (see 5.6.1.4), they display some measure of resentment and become demanding of the resources of the loved object rather than "….becoming a generous, impregnating father" (Likierman, 2001, p. 131).

Furthermore, during the stage of physical and emotional withdrawal, the nature of the splitting processes associated with ambivalence in the participants' experience of betrayal does not diminish in aggression but rather assumes a paranoid-schizoid characteristic thereby *increasing* in aggression as the loved object is seen to have abandoned them and is irrevocably lost to the

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participants. The splitting processes that occur during ambivalence become exaggerated as the ego faces the potential threat of fragmentation and disintegration in the light of overwhelming internal chaos (Likierman, 2001).

Exaggerated regressive splitting processes of a paranoid-schizoid characteristic in turn elicit the psychic defence of idealisation (see 6.2.5.). Therefore, I would suggest that in the participants' experience of betrayal in this study, ambivalence in the depressive position is a transient state in the face of real and irrevocable abandonment by a loved object, which initially accommodates the participants' persecutory anxieties of an intense, paranoid-schizoid characteristic. However, as these persecutory anxieties persist and increase, idealisation occurs.

Of further significance in the participants' experience of betrayal, is the indication that idealisation of the loved object serves as a transient psychic defence and distortion of reality, as the participants are immediately challenged with the external reality of their partners' physical absence and the abandoned relationship (see 5.6.1.2.). This external reality is validated once their partners' act of betrayal has been disclosed (see 5.6.1.3.). Furthermore, in the conscious presence of external reality, the participants are faced with the challenge of integrating their experience of betrayal, over time.

Further discussion continues regarding the participants' internal distortion of reality as a result of exaggerated splitting processes of the object. In the following section, **denial** as an additional feature of the exaggerated splitting process of the object into good and persecutory aspects, is discussed.

6.2.7. Denial of the persecutory aspects of the loved object in the experience of betrayal.

As indicated in 6.2.5, idealization of the object occurs as a result of exaggerated splitting processes of a paranoid-schizoid character. Furthermore, idealization is a corollary of persecutory fear. In this instance, two processes come into play in idealization, namely splitting of the object into good aspects and persecutory ones and the **denial** both of feelings of frustration and of persecution (Klein, 1946/1997).

Therefore, in the paranoid-schizoid position, the bad object is not only separated from the good object but its very existence is denied, as are the feelings of pain and frustration. This is inextricably interwoven with the aspects of denial of inner (psychic) reality (Klein, 1946/1997). Of importance however, is that not only a bad situation and bad object are denied but an *object-relation* is also denied and is in early infancy, annihilated. Therefore, a part of the ego from which feelings towards the object originate, is denied and annihilated as well (Klein, 1946/1997).

What is evident in the participants' experience of betrayal is that splitting of the good and bad aspects of the object as seen in the process of idealisation does not only occur once the partners have abandoned the relationship and after their infidelity has been disclosed. Rather, splitting processes of a paranoid-schizoid nature that result in denial of persecutory aspects of the loved object while the participants are still in relationship with their partners, are evident in the data (5.6.1.2).

Furthermore, the participants retrospectively come to the awareness during the stage of physical and emotional withdrawal (see 5.6.1.4) that whilst in the relationship, they unconsciously denied any aspects of the relationship or of their partners' behaviour, which could be perceived as threatening to the continuity of the relationship or loss of the loved object and feelings of alienation. In particular, it is evident that the participants employed the psychic defence mechanism of denial when faced with anxiety-provoking situations such as conflict between themselves and their partners, as this is perceived as threatening to the continuity of the relationship. Denial as a psychic defence however, provides only temporary relief from pain and cannot be adopted as a long-term developmental strategy. Consequently, if used excessively, it can actually interfere with the integration of a sense of reality (Likierman, 2001).

In addition, the participants realise that they unconsciously denied parts of themselves and sacrificed of their personal needs, in order to retain the love of their partners (5.6.1.5). Therefore, as indicated in the opening paragraph of this section, a part of the participants' ego is denied and annihilated in order to preserve the loved object and retain the relationship and sense of belonging.

Of further importance in the participants' experience of betrayal in this study, is that the *length* of their intimate relationship (see Table 4.1) is *independent* of an indication that denial of persecutory

aspects of the loved object occurred. Consequently, in this study, it is evident that denial of persecutory aspects of the loved object takes place in an intimate relationship as a result of splitting processes of a paranoid-schizoid nature.

Although splitting processes of the paranoid-schizoid position are considered by Klein (1946/1997) to dissipate in aggressiveness and intensity once the infant reaches the depressive position and progressively matures, it is apparent in the participants' experience of betrayal that engaging in a relationship of an intimate nature cannot be separated from the intensity of an underlying and ever-present unconscious state of anxiety regarding the loss of the loved object (see 3.17) and an unconscious **underlying fear** of abandonment by the loved object. The state of anxiety and the underlying fear of abandonment that the participants experience however, indicate an archaic quality rather than having been acquired or learned and I would therefore suggest, have their roots in the paranoid-schizoid position.

6.2.8. The interplay between internal world and external reality in the experience of betrayal.

A further feature, which has bearing on the participants' experience of reality, is the ambiguity they develop towards their perception and experience of their partners' behaviour and of the relationship, as a result of their experience of betrayal (see 6.2.6). In particular, they mirror the **internal world and external realities** that they believe they experienced whilst in the relationship, against the internal and external realities of their current experience, as a result of their partners' betrayal.

Furthermore, once the participants learn of their partners' betrayal, they retrospectively question the authenticity of their experience of their partners' consistently loving, rather than abandoning behaviour towards them, whilst in the relationship. This line of questioning elicits feelings of ambiguity within the participants, as they in retrospect, perceive the relationship to have taken on a superficial and fake quality, rather than providing and reflecting the profound depth and sense of belonging which they believed they experienced whilst they were in the relationship (see 5.6.1.2.). In addition, the participants' ambiguity continues and increases over time, as closure regarding their partners' true reason for the abandonment of the relationship remains elusive.

Questioning the reality of their experience whilst in the relationship and comparing it to their subsequent experience of reality after their partners' betrayal, is disturbing for the participants. In their search for truth, they are unable to secure a coherent link between the pre- and post betrayal realities of their experience, of their partners' behaviour and of their experience of the relationship. As indicated in 5.6.1.5, the participants have particular difficulty in integrating this aspect of their experience of betrayal and they are compelled to seek professional assistance.

In addition, the participants' experience of the physical absence and loss of psychical union with their partner is intense and very real to them. However, managing this externally imposed reality as a result of the abandonment of the relationship and absence of their partner, maintains internal distortions of reality, such as idealisation and denial which had already occurred whilst in the relationship (see 6.2.7). As indicated in the preceding paragraphs, the participants initially maintain the internal distortion of their partners as loved objects once the relationship has been abandoned, to avoid the potentially ego-consuming fear of persecution and annihilation by them.

Furthermore, as evident in this study, the participants experience additional significant internal distortions of reality as a result of their partner's abandonment rather than as a result of their partners' betrayal. Various forms of brief but severe dissociation such as depersonalisation and de-realisation, as well as psychogenic amnesia are experienced (see 5.6.1.5). This is in keeping with Klein's (1957/1997) emphasis on the defensive principle of maintaining internal divisions acquired in infancy that aim to isolate the source of disturbance whether this be the bad, anxiety-inducing imago or the sadistic aspect of the self. However, she did not assume that such internal divisions could actually succeed in altogether removing the source of disturbance from awareness. Instead, she located it in a single entity which though persecuting could now be addressed at an ideational level (see 6.2.5). Consequently, in the participants' experience of betrayal, their defensive processes of dissociation are what Klein refers to as active strivings to separate specific portions of experience from the psyche, as they have the potential to overwhelm the individual (Likierman, 2001).

In addition, within a Kleinian framework, the mind is able to accommodate and address negative experiences and disturbing aspects of the self when they no longer threaten to overwhelm the good object (Klein, 1957/1997). Initially however, accommodation of negative aspects of the

participants' selves as a result of their partners' abandonment and the later awareness of their betrayal is deferred as the participants struggle to come to terms with the apparent irrationality of their partners' behaviour. It is only much later in the process of assimilation and integration of the knowledge of their partners' betrayal, that the participants feel less overwhelmed by feelings of inadequacy and unworthiness imposed on them as a result of their partners' preference for another.

Furthermore, Klein (1930a/1975) states that as an increasingly integrated sense of reality develops, the small child is able to recognise the good parental figures and mitigate the internally distorted harsh ones. However, in the participants' experience of betrayal, the partners who are introjected as loved and idealised objects during the relationship and who remain idealised for a brief period after the termination of the relationship and the exposure of betrayal, become cruel and persecutory figures over time.

In addition, the partners are experienced as threatening to the continued emotional and physical well-being of the participants. As a result of internal distortion of objects due to abandonment by the partner, the loved object is initially idealised (see 6.2.5). However, the external reality of the loss of a partner as a result of the abandonment of a relationship specifically presents itself as relentlessly undistorted and the participants become increasingly and intensely aware of their partners' very real and tangible absence. The loved objects therefore increase in their potential to be punitive and persecutory and are perceived as such.

Furthermore, as the participants retrospectively reflect on their perception of external reality whilst they were in the relationship, they painstakingly scrutinize their perception of their partners' behaviour prior to his or her betrayal. They do this in an attempt to validate or negate aspects of their perception of their experience of the relationship, in the hope that it will extract an element of authenticity in their lived experience of the relationship (see 5.6.1.2).

The importance of reality in Kleinian thinking contradicts primitive subjectivity. Therefore for the purpose of overcoming the depressive position, what matters about external reality is not merely its authenticity but the fact that through it the infant discovers an account of events that are governed by principles of continuity (Likierman, 2001). Since the principles of continuity are internalised, an inner life evolves from a series of initial momentary omnipotent urges to one that survives the

omnipotent moment. Only when this independent continuity of the external world is accepted, can the infant establish within his psyche a good object that can outlive his temporary rages. In this view, reality offers healing by asserting the continuity in time and space of good objects and life's goodness (Likierman, 2001).

6.2.9. Continuity in the experience of betrayal.

When considering the phenomenon of internal distortions in an infant's psyche, Klein (1940/1975) alludes to the importance of **continuity** in the relationship between the infant and the loved object. She indicates that continuity is generated in the repetitively reassuring contacts that the infant has with the actual loved and undamaged object and that such reassuring contacts with an external object gradually correct internal distortions in the infant's psyche. In this manner, his sense of reality increases and primitive anxieties are diminished (Likierman, 2001). Principles of duration or continuity of the external world are independent and internalised in infancy in order to establish a good object in the psyche. In this manner, reality itself offers emphasising the duration, in time and space of good objects and life's goodness (Likierman, 2001).

Furthermore, this also suggests that such goodness can be subject to temporal processes that dissipate or disperse it such as sadism or greed (Likierman, 2001). Therefore, continuity of external reality is an important facet of the participants' relationship and affords them a sense of ongoing, rather than erratic psychical intimacy with their partners. This in turn increases their willingness to trust their partners and remain physically and emotionally vulnerable to them in the relationship. In addition, the participants experience an increased sense of belonging and connectedness to their partners (see 5.6.1.1).

As a result of the partners' betrayal however, the participants experience a disruption in the continuity of previously perceived, reassuring contact with the loved object, as a result of the unexpected abandonment of the relationship. This temporarily leads to the resurrection of primitive anxieties. Furthermore, the disruption in continuity of relationship with a loved object negatively influences the participants' continuity of the experience of external reality which results in a temporary disturbance in their integrated sense of inner reality (Likierman, 2001).

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Continuously consistent experiences of external reality therefore engender trust in the external world and an increased confidence in an individual's capacity to perceive and understand the things around him. This aspect of continuity in external reality becomes the infant's most important means of overcoming persecutory and depressive anxieties and is what Klein (1952a/1997) considers to be reality testing. In addition, continuously consistent experiences of external reality underlie part of the **mourning** process in adults (see 3.8.2).

6.2.10. Mourning in the experience of betrayal.

In Klein's description of mourning, she suggests: "Whenever grief arises, it undermines the feeling of secure possession of the loved internal objects, for it revives the early anxieties about... a shattered inner world….and persecutory anxieties in the depressive position are reactivated in full strength" (1952a/1997, p.77). Furthermore, the successful *reinstating* of the external love object which has been lost and is being mourned and whose introjection is intensified through the process of mourning, suggests that the loved *internal* objects are restored and regained. In this regard, reality testing as a feature of the mourning process is the manner in which connections to the *external* world are renewed and the disrupted inner world of the individual is re-established. Consequently, mourning involves a repetition of the emotional situation which the infant experiences during the depressive position as he struggles with the task of establishing and integrating his inner world and of securely building up good objects within himself (Klein, 1952a/1997).

We recall that according to Klein (1948/1997) an internal object is a dynamic phenomenon which exerts an influence on the individual's way of experiencing life and crucially affects relationships with others (also see 3.9). Furthermore, it is wedged in the inner world of the individual, which both becomes identity and yet differs from what the individual feels to be himself. However, it is not visualised and unchanging as a representation might be but rather a spirited process constantly interacting with individual mood, perception and psychosomatic sensations (Likierman, 2001). In addition, it is particularly during the process of mourning that the infant battles to retain a good relation to the internal object, which existed previously, and to sustain a feeling of strength and comfort through this internal companionship (Klein, 1963/1997).

Klein (1952b/1997), states that a successful mourning process depends not only on establishing within the ego the person who is mourned, but also on re-establishing the first loved objects, which in early infancy were felt to be endangered or destroyed by destructive impulses. Furthermore, a fundamental factor which determines whether or not the loss of the loved object will be normally overcome, is the extent to which the depressive position has been successfully worked through and the loved introjected objects securely established in the inner world of the individual (Klein, 1952b/1997).

In the participants' experience of betrayal, a state of mourning is activated by their unexpected and abrupt loss of their loved object. Loss of the loved object is an internal event related to the internal object and is also bound up with the perceived loss of the external object or its qualities due to frustration, weaning and separations (Likierman, 2001). According to Klein (1960/1997), loss of the loved internal object as an essential feature of an individual's functioning, leads to an internal disaster. Segal (1978) refers to the experience of the loss of the loved object as the infant's internal world having been shattered. Similarly, Riviere (1991) refers to a "nightmare of desolation" (p. 145), which describes the chaos of the infant's internal world following the loss of the loved object.

As is evident in the participants' experience of betrayal, loss of the loved object is exacerbated by their increased awareness and their experience of a sense of disconnectedness from their partners and significant others. Not only do they mourn the physical separation and absence of their partner but also the psychical intimacy and connectedness they shared and experienced in their relationship. In addition, they mourn the loss of contact with mutual friends and their partners' family members with whom they have little further contact, as a result of their partners' abandonment of the relationship (see 5.6.1.5). Furthermore, as a result of their partners' betrayal, the participants mourn the loss of fantasies, hopes, dreams and the loss of expectations of a shared future, which they perceived the relationship to have initially promised. The participants also mourn the temporary loss of an integrated sense of self (see 5.6.1.5).

During the process of mourning the loss of their loved object and their relationship however, the participants find it difficult to retain their good relation to their introjected loved object, as they experience their inner world as being shattered and in complete chaos as a result of their partners'

betrayal. As Klein (1952a/1975) suggests, during the process of mourning, intense persecutory anxieties of the depressive position are reactivated and the participants experience a sense of disillusionment and distrust of prospective external loved objects.

Recalling the source of these persecutory anxieties, Klein (1952a/1997) states that when the infant feels he contains good objects, he experiences trust, confidence and security. On the other hand when he feels he contains bad objects, he experiences persecution and suspicion. Therefore, as a result of their severed relationship with the external object, the participants struggle to hold on to their conviction that a successful, intimate relationship is possible with a significant other. This is evident in their attempts to summon up images of an external reality of successful, intimate relationships which they know exist as seen in their friendship and family circles (5.6.1.5).

6.2.11. Loss of the loved object in the experience of betrayal.

Klein (1948/1997) purports that during the first three months of life, when splitting processes and persecutory anxieties are at their peak, a stage of depressive anxiety and guilt arises. Persecutory anxiety therefore arrests the process of ego-integration and experiences of depressive anxiety, guilt and reparation are only of a transitory nature. Consequently, the loved, *but injured* object may change into a persecutor and the urge to repair or revive the loved object may turn into the need to pacify a persecutor. Therefore, in the depressive position, when the ego is more integrated, persecutory anxiety persists. Persecutory anxiety relating to the bad aspect of the super-ego as well as grief, depression and guilt exist. In addition, defences against persecutory anxiety exist in conjunction with defences against depressive anxiety (Klein, 1948/1997).

As the participants experience a temporary shattering of their internal world in the light of the external reality of their partners' abandonment of the relationship and of their partners' betrayal temporary order of internal psychic processes is disrupted. Consequently, a disruption in the relationships to the internal and external objects occurs in the face of increasing persecutory anxieties. In particular, the participants no longer experience their partners as the loved object but rather as a persecutor who is capable of inflicting intense psychic harm on them in the light of their abandonment and betrayal (see 5.6.1.3). We recall that the participants do not initially experience their loved object as persecutory once the relationship has been abandoned as the psychic defence mechanism of idealisation (see 6.2.5) and ambivalence towards the partner is in place.

Although the participants have little contact with their loved objects once the relationship has disintegrated, the participants increasingly experience their loved object as persecutory. Two sources that give rise to feelings of persecution are evident in their experience of betrayal. Firstly, feelings of persecution are experienced as the participants initially experience themselves as being reluctantly vulnerable, and accommodating towards their partners as they entertain the fantasy that their partners may wish to reconcile with them.

Therefore the external loved object, namely the former partner, is internalised as a persecutory object, which disturbs the participants' sense of integration and experience of a secure internal loved object. Secondly, the participants experience their former partners as increasingly persecutory over time. This occurs because the participants perceive their partners as lacking integrity. In addition, the partners' ability to inflict unforeseen and extensive harm to the participants and to their relationship is experienced as persecutory.

6.2.12. Depressive anxiety, guilt and forgiveness in the experience of betrayal.

Klein (1957/1997) states that depressive anxiety, guilt and the reparative tendency are only experienced when feelings of love for the object *predominate* over destructive impulses. Therefore, recurring experiences of love, or ultimately the life instinct overcoming hatred or the death instinct are imperative for the ego's capacity to integrate itself and to synthesize the conflicting aspects (good and bad) of the object. In these instances, the association with the bad features of the object including that of persecutory anxiety have diminished (Klein, 1957/1997). Furthermore, Klein (1948/1997) suggests that these processes are usually experienced simultaneously.

As indicated in the participants' experience of betrayal, they experience increased feelings of ambivalence and indifference, rather than love. Consequently, the tendency towards the death instinct surmounting the life instinct is greater and persecutory anxiety rather than depressive anxiety escalates. Also, feelings of guilt and the ability to forgive their partners are inaccessible at this time as the participants hold their partners responsible for the act of betrayal (see 6.2.3). Therefore, in the participants' experience of betrayal, they entertain the perception of having been grievously injured and unfairly treated by their loved object and the processes of guilt and forgiveness in the depressive position is arrested.

In addition, Klein (1948/1997) indicates that depressive anxiety is the process whereby the ego synthesizes destructive impulses and feelings of love towards one object. However, in the participants' experience of betrayal, an increase in persecutory rather than depressive anxiety, is evident in the manifestation of paranoia, suspicion and brief but severe episodes of dissociation, which they experience (see 5.6.1.5). The manifestation of these episodes of dissociation indicates the work of primitive defence mechanisms inherent to the paranoid-schizoid position (see 3.12). These defence mechanisms aim to annihilate not only pain and anxiety but also the very awareness that leads to them. Therefore, the participants aim to sever painful experiences from the self and also remove those aspects of the loved object which they experience as being malevolent (Likierman, 2001).

6.2.13. Guilt in the experience of betrayal.

In Kleinian thinking, the origin of guilt lies in the infant's experience that harm to the loved object is caused by his aggressive impulses. This feeling of guilt "…. may extend to every evil which befalls the loved object – including the harm done by the infant's persecutory objects" (Klein, 1948/1997, p. 36; also see 3.8.5). Furthermore, Klein states that in the depressive position, the infant experiences guilt and remorse and this functions as the starting point of moral development (Likierman, 2001). Specifically, the depressive position has been felt to mark the beginning of intersubjective awareness and suggests the infant's ability to recognise, and show consideration and concern for a whole mother. In this understanding, the depressive position necessarily lays the foundation for internal moral structures (Likierman, 2001).

In this study however, the participants report few feelings of guilt in their experience of betrayal, although they do gloat privately when informed of their former partners' subsequent relationships that fail (see 5.6.1.5.). When gloating however, the participants do not report feelings of guilt that originate as a result of persecutory thoughts and feelings towards their former partners. The tendency towards gloating in the participants' experience of betrayal appears to be restricted to the area of intimate relationships rather than to *general* misfortune that befalls their former partners. However, this aspect of the participants' experience of betrayal was not explored in this study and may indicate the *uniqueness* of the individual's personality structure and ego-integration, rather than being representative of the experience of betrayal.

Furthermore, as indicated earlier in this study, Klein describes the depressive position as giving rise to two main conflicting strands, namely a tragic and a moral strand (Likierman, 2001). The moral strand allows the infant to experience guilt for attacks on the imperfect and frustrating object and so accept responsibility for personal aggression. This enables the infant to engage in reparative processes that salvage, restore and preserve the internal object, establishing it securely in the mind as mostly good and as a lasting presence that can be preserved. In addition, this moral process corresponds to an attitude of concern for the object, an ability to forgive and accept its normal limitations (Likierman, 2001).

These psychical realities of tragedy and morality are concurrent descriptions that work on two levels within the Kleinian texts. Tragedy however, can only initially be known as a total situation that dominates experience and is a subjective but powerful psychical reality. Klein (1945/1975) suggests that in the socialized individual, a continual underlying level of tragedy ensures that the secondary higher level of morality retains its prudence, for morality must assume the possibility of irrevocable loss all the time. Therefore, the subjective internal scenario that corresponds to this is the overcoming of tragic states (Likierman, 2001). Further discussion on Klein's concept of overcoming in the participants' experience of betrayal is discussed later in this chapter (see 6.2.16).

While the world of tragic, irrevocable loss implies a world that has been overwhelmed by destruction and guilt, the world where a moral framework is secure is one in which an order has been set up specifically to prevent tragic consequences. This means that underlying the description of morality with its powers of reparation, hope and continuity and with its measure of control over events is the tragedy that ends in destruction and loss, and that leads to despair and madness (Klein, 1935/1975). As suggested in Kleinian writings, its essence is the ability to carry some guilt, experience the state of the internal object, continually make good any damage inflicted on it and therefore preserve it. Within such an arrangement, damage is not allowed to reach absolute proportions for a continual internal awareness implies a continual reparative movement (Likierman, 2001).

When referring to the earlier discussion in the preceding paragraphs regarding the aspect of gloating in the participants' experience of betrayal, I would suggest that one reason for the

suppression of *general* gloating, which the participants express, is linked to their moral development and ego-integration. In addition, the suppression of guilt regarding the disintegration of the relationship is also linked to the moral development and ego-integration of the participants in this study.

Moral development as noted earlier is also influenced by the values of the society in which the individual is raised (see 5.6.1.1). Consequently, in this study, gloating at others' misfortune would go against the perception that the participants have of themselves as individuals with integrity. Furthermore, the participants' religious values would not accommodate gloating without experiencing guilt and consequently persecution by their superegos.

Also, the participants share perceptions regarding the moral nature of intimate relationships, which upholds fidelity. As noted earlier, the participants have been raised in similar cultures and share similar expectations of a partner in an intimate relationship (see 5.6.1.1). Therefore, as a result of their partners' betrayal, the participants suppress a tendency towards guilt as they absolve themselves from blame and do not assume responsibility for the disintegration of their relationship.

Rather, in their experience of betrayal, the responsibility for the loss of relationship and the participants' subsequent suffering as a result of their partners' damaging behaviour is largely deferred to their partners and the participants experience them as persecutory. Consequently, due to the participants' level of moral development and integration, they suppress feelings of guilt in service of their expectations regarding intimate relationships and their partners' violation of these expectations.

Furthermore, in the participants' experience of betrayal, the occurrence of injury is reversed as they (their egos) are perceived as having been injured rather than themselves having inflicted injury on their partners. In addition, the external, loved object becomes persecutory not as a result of the participants' doing but rather by the partners' own doing as they betray the participants. Therefore in this instance, the superego overrides the individuals' tendency which Klein (1948/1997) describes, towards feelings of guilt and remorse in the depressive position. This process is characteristic of processes evident in the paranoid-schizoid position.

6.2.14. Reparation in the experience of betrayal.

It is also evident within the context of this study that the participants do not express a tendency towards reparation. Rather, reparative themes do not exist in the data. Klein (1948/1997) suggests that reparation is the urge which the infant experiences to undo or repair harm which he has caused to the loved object. Therefore, the reparative tendency can be considered as a consequence of a sense of guilt (see 3.8.4). Furthermore, the reparative tendency complements the fundamental need for human beings to be aware of the significance of preserving both psychical and material resources on which life depends (Klein, 1940/1975).

Reparation (see 3.8.2) is an important intrapsychic process that enables an individual to surmount the difficulties associated with a depressive position. Klein (1955/1997) indicated that this process enables the infant after a bout of mistrust and sadistic attack, to restore the mother as loved object to her wholesome and loved state. The reparative tendency is an expression of the life instinct in its battle against the death instinct. Therefore, an inability to make reparation colludes with the pull of persecutory anxieties in the paranoid-schizoid position, coercing the individual to remain trapped in an egocentric chasm (Likierman, 2001). Reparation is a lifelong activity when there is **hope** that the attacked object can be recovered and grows from a temporal awareness, which enables the individual to address the destructive consequence of his own sadism.

In their experience of betrayal, the participants have difficulty in forgiving their partner as they have been abandoned with little hope or mutual desire for reconciliation. The internal, good and loved object is not readily predominant and the participants grapple with rescuing and preserving it as they are unable to forgive their partners. Consequently the lasting presence of the good and loved object is compromised as the participants attempt to retain it in mind as mostly good. A further aspect of the participants' inability to forgive their partner is that they do not accept some responsibility for the disintegration of the relationship.

Furthermore, the participants have difficulty in coming to terms with the flawed nature of the external, loved object and are initially unable to relate to them in a forgiving way. At the time of the interviews, Participant E had been able to forgive her former partner two years after he had

abandoned her and his act of betrayal had been disclosed. On the other hand, although an equal length of time had passed in Participant A's experience since her partners' betrayal, she was unable to access her capacity to forgive him up until the time this study was being conducted. She also indicated that she did not foresee herself being able to forgive him in the near future.

Therefore, as the participants suppress feelings of guilt about their possible contribution to their partners' betrayal, they are also unable to engage in the process of forgiveness towards their partners. In this instance rather, the external loved object is experienced as persecutory due to his or her perceived moral deficit. In addition, due to the overwhelming nature of the disclosure of their partners' betrayal, the participants do not naturally contemplate the notion of hope in regaining the external loved object. Rather, their immediate experience of their partners' betrayal, catapults them into an intense state of pain and despair.

As noted earlier in this chapter, the pain the participants experience as a result of their partners' betrayal gradually increases as progress in integration is arrested. This manifests in the participants lacking some initiative, a decrease in their ability to make decisions which the participants were previously able to reach with greater ease and in general, experiencing difficulty in expressing themselves spontaneously. This is linked to an increasing inhibition of the participants' capacity to forgive their partners. In addition, their power of enjoyment decreases in many ways and feelings of hope remain elusive. These feelings are seen to alternate with feelings of depression (see 5.6.1.5).

6.2.15. Hope in the experience of betrayal.

In Klein's theory, hope is inextricably linked to the good and loved object and represents the life instinct. The infant's search for psychical nourishment and life is projected onto the nurturing and loved object which is invested with a basic life-giving significance and introjected to form the core of the ego. In this manner it provides the basis for "hope, trust and belief in goodness" (Likierman, 2001, p. 119). According to Klein (1957/1997), this hope is based on the growing unconscious knowledge that the internal and external object is not as bad as it was felt to be in the split-off aspects. Through mitigation of hatred by love, the object improves in the infant's mind and it is no

longer so strongly felt to have been destroyed in the past and the danger of it being destroyed in the future is lessened. Consequently, it is also felt to be less vulnerable in the present and in the future. The internal object acquires a restraining and self-preservative attitude and its greater strength is an important aspect of super-ego function.

However, in the event of loss of such an object such as in the experience of betrayal, this event is equivalent to the intense loss of the life-orientated, self-nourishing aspect of the psyche namely, the core of the self (Klein 1957/1997). Therefore the loss of the loved object is an internal event related to the internal object and is also intertwined with the perceived loss of the external object or its qualities due to frustration, separation or abandonment as in the experience of betrayal.

The findings in this study indicate that in their experience of betrayal, the participants lose hope in the possibility of future rewarding relationships with a loved object. In addition, they place little trust and belief in the goodness of a prospective love object. Furthermore, the lack of hope that the participants experience is evident in their feelings of disillusionment (see 5.6.1.5). Disillusionment in the participants' experience of betrayal grows from an increasing awareness that their partners have dismissed who they are and what they bring to a relationship. Consequently, cynicism temporarily replaces optimism regarding images of successful and rewarding relationships.

In this instance, I suggest that the participants as individuals do not usually give themselves to cynicism. However, in their experience of betrayal, cynicism acts as a temporary defence employed by the ego against the intense and unanticipated pain inflicted on them by their partners' abandonment of the relationship. Their humiliation and shame at having been rejected prevents them from wanting to appear vulnerable and expectant of the prospect of future relationships as they consider the recent implications of their partners' behaviour and their perceptions of themselves as inadequate in an intimate relationship.

In addition, as a result of their partners' abandonment of them and preference for another in an intimate relationship, the participants suppress feelings of hope should they arise, for two reasons. Firstly, the pain inflicted on their egos by their partners' behaviour is persecutory rather than of their own doing and therefore comprises the security of a previously introjected loved object. In these conflicting circumstances of external reality and inner chaos, the ego comes under threat and the death instinct (despair and fragmentation) rather than the life instinct (hope) prevails.

Secondly, their partners' abandonment of the relationship and rejection of themselves as a result of their partners' betrayal at face value, leads the participants to believe that there is little hope of regaining their loved object as they are no longer available to them by virtue of their affiliation to another in an intimate relationship.

In this instance, suppression of the participants' feelings of hope should they arise, is governed by their superegos, which upholds their moral values regarding fidelity in intimate relationships. Further work of the participants' superegos is seen in the images they entertain in fantasy of the *external* loved object attempting to repair the damage the participants perceive them to have caused to the relationship. However, the hope that these images of reconciliation by their external loved object, will be realised gives rise to inner conflict as the participants experience both desire and fear.

In describing the early formation of the super-ego in the infant's development, Klein suggested that the substance of each of the infant's sadistic attacks is projected and displaced onto the parents. The internalisation of his aggression to form imagos is the setting up of the first law-enforcement agency in the mind. Therefore, by fearing attacked parents the pre-condition is laid for the development of social morality in the child (Likierman, 2001). The projection-laden Oedipal parents are consequently not only transformed into internal imagos but continue to function inside the child's psyche in the form of the mental agency of the super-ego (Klein, 1928/1975). The super-ego thus emerges in archaic mental life as an immediate result of the introjection of harsh parental imagos and is acutely sadistic, creating a measure of fear in direct proportion to the measure of projected infantile sadism (Likierman, 2001).

As indicated in the preceding paragraphs, desire is fuelled by the participants' intense sense of alienation and psychical union with the external loved object. Alternatively, fear originates as a result of the participants desire and need for relationship, and they experience themselves as offering little resistance to their partners as persecutory objects. However, they also perceive their partners as fulfilling the present vacuum created by a sense of psychical disconnectedness. Once again, the life and death instinct compete for pride of place, which increases the participants' anxiety.

The wish to belong and psychical connectedness (the life instinct), representative of a securely introjected loved object, comes into conflict with the fear of the external persecutory object (death instinct) which may inflict further injury on the participants should it be reinstated as a loved object. Therefore, chaos regarding the introjected loved object and the former external loved object, which has turned persecutory, confounds the participants' ability to forgive their partner and arrests the process of continually recreating internal goodness. Retaining an inner sense of the object's goodness or having an established notion of goodness as an inner resource, is an accomplishment for which all individuals must struggle (Likierman, 2001).

Furthermore, as persecutory attacks are not inflicted on the external object but rather experienced as being inflicted on them (the ego) by the external object, the participants (their egos) experience their internal loved object as malevolent and consequently, precariously rather than securely introjected. The secure establishment of the loved object in the psyche is a developmental path riddled with challenges to states of integration that enable the mental accommodation of a whole rather than a part object inasmuch as ambivalence can lead to tragic states of loss of the loved object, which if not overcome can become the fixation point for later manic-depressive psychosis (Likierman, 2001). This experience of the internal object reflects Klein's thinking in her formulation of the depressive position as well as Rado's anticipation of events that occur as a result of the "…situation of loss of love" (Likierman, 2001, p.172).

6.2.16. Overcoming in the experience of betrayal.

The importance of "overcoming" in the depressive position remains imperative in Klein's (1944/1991) vision (see 3.8.4). Overcoming is achieved when love for the real and the internalised objects and trust in them are well established, in other words when primitive ambivalence recedes so that "….the infant is able to feel that his mother will return, because his experience of regaining the loved object has proved this to him"(p.779).

Furthermore, Klein (1944/1991) suggests that overcoming has two central features. Firstly, it embodies the mastering of hate by love, a process that corresponds to the secure establishing of the good object within the ego as a strong core which underlines security. The infant's internal situation which corresponds to this is the overcoming of tragic states, so that when primitive

ambivalence subsides, confidence in his own as well as other persons' goodness increases. In this manner, his hope that his good objects and his own ego can be saved and preserved also increases at the same time as his ambivalence and acute fears of internal destruction decrease (Klein, 1948/1997).

Furthermore, overcoming as the initial step in growth indicates a shift from a helpless experiencing of the object's absolute damage or loss, to a capacity to anticipate such a possibility, and a new experience enters the infant's world, namely fear for the object's safety (Likierman, 2001). Fear indicates the growing ability to retain the significance of destructive aggression and so anticipate it, instead of helplessly surrendering to its effects at the moment when it arises and swamps the mind. In addition, fear suggests the developmental beginnings of moral concern, but it is also initially a primitive, overwhelming phenomenon (Klein, 1940/1975).

Overcoming the tragic strata of the depressive position towards a more evolved moral mode is a necessary task that awaits the individual during the course of his or her development. Although the tragic anxieties cease to dominate experience, their overcoming does not suggest that their significance recedes altogether. Their presence in the primitive layers of the psyche affords them the continual power "….of an emblematic tale of warning" (Likierman, 2001, pg.124). This "tale" is essential to a moral framework that protects the good internal object even though it essentially represents a negation of the security and progress achieved through morality (Likierman, 2001).

From the discussion in the preceding paragraphs, two important features need to be emphasised namely, **accountability** and **anticipation**. Accountability indicates the level of responsibility which the participant needs to assume for harm which they believe they have caused to their partner. As mentioned earlier in this study, acknowledging accountability, facilitates the process of reparative action and consequently secures and retains the relationship with the internal and external good and loved object. Therefore, accountability plays a significant role in the participants' relationship with their partner as it exacerbates their experience of betrayal. In particular, the participants defer accountability for the loss of the external loved object, in service of their perceptions of their partners' moral deficit (see 5.6.1.1).

The second aspect is the notion of *anticipation* which suggests that the infant during the course of development has the capacity to anticipate his or her aggressive action which may lead to the

destruction of the loved object. Consequently he or she may prevent irrevocable harm and concomitant loss of the loved object. Anticipation therefore, provides an individual with a measure of control, particularly self-control which is acquired in the depressive position. Self-control is born out of fear of loss of the good object and progressively managed by the superego during the course of development.

Of further significance in the notion of anticipation and self-control in Klein's texts, is her strong emphasis on the *internal* world of the individual in relation to the loved object. What is less emphasised however, is how the aspects of anticipation and self-control are managed when attempting to retain the loved object, particularly in the light of *external* catastrophic events such an act of betrayal by a loved object.

As indicated in chapter two of this study, the inherent nature of an act of betrayal is one of deviousness and secrecy. Consequently, the act of betrayal disempowers the participants and renders them helpless as they are unable to anticipate and prevent the loss of their partners as loved objects. Furthermore, anything in and of the participants themselves which alludes to their ability to preserve the loved object, is sacrificed as a result of their coerced inability to anticipate or control their partners' betrayal and abandonment. The inability to anticipate their partners' act of betrayal, also gives rise to paralysis of clear and logical thought and the participants initially have very little alternative but to succumb to their feelings of helplessness in retaining the external loved object. Therefore, the frequently unpredictable nature of an act of betrayal confounds the inability to accurately anticipate when such an act will occur, making it an internally and externally catastrophic event.

In addition, the participants' helplessness in preserving rather than losing the loved object is deliberately imposed on them by their partner as each of the partners releases him- or herself from further psychical and physical intimacy with the participants. This results in the participants being overwhelmed by fluctuations between resurrected anxieties of a paranoid-schizoid nature, as well as those of a tragic-depressive nature. In this scenario then, the process of overcoming is arrested as the participants are faced with the additional challenge of internal chaos. Within this "nightmare of desolation" (Riviere, 1936/1991), the security of the introjected, loved object is significantly compromised.

Furthermore, the participants' egos are unable to wholly identify with their good internalised object and simultaneously become aware of their inability to protect and preserve them. The external reality of loss of the external loved object therefore, has significant implications for the ego's future optimism in retaining the internal loved object. In this manner a relentless cycle is created. However as the findings of this study indicate, should their internal loved object not be safely reinstated into the ego and the process of overcoming not be embraced and successfully negotiated, the participants will have difficulty in subsequent intimate relationships as both their persecutory and tragic anxieties resume a prominent position within their egos.

In addition, integration of both the good and the bad aspects of the external object would need to be securely established within their egos. This is a significant challenge facing the participants during the course of overcoming the depressive position and integrating the experience of betrayal. Should the loved object not be securely internalised, the ego is subjected to threats of fragmentation and disintegration. In this instance, the strong possibility of depressive illnesses looms in the face of self-imposed and involuntary isolation and concomitant loneliness (see 5.6.1.4). Specifically in the Kleinian model, mental illnesses such as paranoia and manic-depression result from an early and later overall failure, to successfully overcome the tragic states associated with the depressive position (Likierman, 2001).

A brief comment is relevant at this point. As Klein (1940/1975) indicates, while in the one sense the *emergence* of tragic anxieties is the first step in moral development, which in itself is a positive step in the development of the individual and is thus a prerequisite for healthy object relations, another such prerequisite is the *overcoming* of tragic states. Ironically however, in the participants' experience of betrayal, a catastrophic *external* situation in the form of betrayal, which carries inherent moral connotations is imposed on the internal world of the participant and challenges their perceptions of healthy object relations.

While morality is perceived to uphold and assist good, healthy object relations and is a measure of development in the life of an individual, the perceived lack of morality, evident in an act of betrayal, suggests a newly created negative association with the tragic anxieties in the depressive position. The intense pain of the experience of betrayal acutely centres on the perceived moral deficit of the partners. This occurs due to previous complacency regarding a perceived mutually

consensual moral code which was agreed on between the couple before engaging in the intimacy of relationship. Therefore the external reality of a relationship which was unbeknown to the participants, violated the mutual moral code regarding sexual exclusivity, intensifies the participants' experience of betrayal rather than cementing their belief and trust in the integrity and moral development of the individual.

Therefore, the persecutory and specifically the tragic anxieties, which result from the experience of betrayal are exacerbated rather than progressively leading to a position of overcoming and to the prospect of future, healthy object relations. Furthermore, the re-emergence of these tragic anxieties pertaining to moral development, has a negative rather than a positive connotation and assumes prominence in the participants' experience of betrayal. In addition, these tragic anxieties are not temporary as indicative of overcoming in the depressive position and are not replaced by mature awareness. Rather, as indicated in the preceding paragraphs the awareness of the moral nature which emerges from the tragic anxieties leads to disillusionment and the threat of ego-disintegration.

Klein's texts reveal her conviction that it is crucial to successfully overcome rather than simply tolerate the depressive position. In particular she suggests that failure to do so may result in depressive illness (1940/1975). Furthermore, Klein (1940/1975) specifically assigned depressive anxieties such as sorrow, grief, depression and feelings of loss to the class of emotions that needed to be overcome as failure to do so provides a rife hunting ground for both persecutory and depressive anxieties, which if excessive may lead to mental illness such as manic-depression and paranoia. Referring to feelings of depression in particular, Klein (1940/1975) suggested that depression is a prototypical human reaction to loss first experienced in infancy even though the loss experience itself is not initially structured in conceptual adult terms. As indicated in 5.6.1.5, the participants are confronted with feelings of mourning and an intensely painful sense of alienation as a result of their partners' abandonment and later disclosure of his or her betrayal.

In addition, their sense of alienation and resultant, persistent pull towards feelings of depression threatens to overwhelm them and the participants are obliged to seek assistance from medical doctors and psychotherapists. Therefore, the participants' difficulties which arise as a result of

their partners' betrayal, originate from both depressive and persecutory anxieties which are resurrected in the course of their experience. These difficulties need to be successfully overcome in order to preserve effective ego functioning. The process of overcoming, although generally seen as a challenging aspect of an individual's development, has a positive connotation in this study. As part of the process of overcoming, the participants need to confront the challenges associated with the experience of betrayal.   In this manner, they are likely to be empowered to cope with future difficulties which may cross their paths.

Therefore, overcoming in the depressive position would suggest an integration of good and bad aspects of the object whereby the good absorbs and modifies the bad, and is securely established within the core of the ego. However, should this process be intercepted, an inability to overcome tragic depressive anxieties would abandon the participant in the throes of primitive ambivalence (see 3.8.3) and he or she will experience a constant re-occurrence of a catastrophic loss of the good object with resultant excessive anxiety.

6.2.17. Separating bad from idealised aspects of the loved object in the experience of betrayal.

In the preceding paragraphs, we have traced the participants' perception of their partners as loved objects, as initially being that of idealisation (6.2.5) and ambivalence (6.2.6). Although ambivalence towards their loved object, is still part of the experience of some of the participants betrayal in this study, it is apparent that over time, they begin to integrate the bad aspects of their former loved objects into their internal world, rather than maintaining their psychic defence of idealisation. Participant C for example, has had the most recent experience of betrayal and was interviewed only four months after having been betrayed by her partner. It was evident that she was displaying both idealisation of and ambivalence towards her partner during the interviews. In addition, she was evidently more vulnerable to reconciling with her partner at that time, specifically as a result of the magnetism of idealisation.

On the other hand, Participant E who had been betrayed two years previously, was beginning to integrate the bad aspects of her partner as loved object into both her internal world and external reality. It was evident in this instance that the bad aspects of her former loved object, outweigh the desire or need to reconnect with him in the intimacy of relationship and therefore deliberate

contact with him is avoided. She states: "Now I know he was mainly bad news and I have no further desire to see him ever again. I definitely won't initiate any contact with him again." Earlier however, Participant E felt that even though she was aware of the "badness" of her partner's act of betrayal shortly after the disintegration of the relationship, she felt helpless in resisting any efforts he may have wanted to make towards reconciliation.

In their experience of betrayal however, the participants evidently grapple with the difficulties of the depressive position as closure regarding the reason for their partners' betrayal remains elusive. Here an interesting facet of the depressive position in adulthood arises as a result of the lack of closure. The term "closure" suggests that the participants pursue a rational and logical explanation for their partners' behaviour in order to assist them through the throes of the depressive position. However, should closure regarding the reason for their partners' betrayal remain elusive during the course of rational deductive thought processes, the participants are coerced into employing rationalisation as a defence mechanism. The cognitive process of rationalisation does not often appear in the early stages of the participants' experience of betrayal, as idealisation and ambivalence are prominent. Instead, as the participants increasingly become aware of the elusive nature of closure, rationalisation as a defence mechanism is unconsciously summoned and employed, in an attempt to quieten their anxieties and internal chaos as a result of their feelings of rejection and inadequacy.

Consequently in this study, the participants' ability to integrate external events into their internal world is significantly influenced by the role of highly evolved cognitive processes which manifest in the depressive position. These cognitive process which occur in adulthood will be referred to later in this chapter. Klein makes little reference to cognitive processes in the depressive position however, as her emphasis was on the infant's earliest recognitions of good and bad experiences, which were not thought to be conceptual (Likierman, 2001). Consequently her findings pre-date an ability to acquire a secure mental grasp over what is experienced (Likierman, 2001). Further discussion regarding the significance of cognitive processes in the participants' experience of betrayal is offered in 6.2.20.

Furthermore, as indicated earlier in this chapter, overcoming the depressive position in the participants' experience of betrayal in this study, remains problematic as they are trapped in the

experience of being the injured party. In addition this experience and pain is exacerbated as the partners appear to be dismissive and unremorseful of their (partners) act of infidelity. Consequently, their sense of alienation from the loved object remains internally devastating and escorts them into feelings of depression which need to be intercepted via medical- and/or psychotherapy routes in order for the participants to resume effective, daily functioning (see 5.6.1.5.).

Klein (1935/1975) held the view that the adult depressive is someone who in infancy has failed to cope with the depressive position as a result of excessive anger and an inability to process his ambivalence towards the loved object. Consequently, rigid manic defences are adopted and his psychic reality or inner state is denied. Such an adult is not easily able to engage in psychical reparation nor mourn the normal imperfections of others and of life and is therefore repetitively prone to disappointments and depressive bouts. In this study however, depressive illness as a phenomenon which features in Klein's thinking was not extensively explored in the participants' experience of betrayal as it falls beyond the scope of this discussion.

What is evident however, is that as the participants become increasingly aware of the consequences which follow their experience of betrayal, they indicate some measure of what Rado (1927) described as "the rebellious state", which is associated with the depressive adult. Klein concurred with these findings regarding the "earliest human rebelliousness against an imperfect existence, conveyed via an imperfect mother" (Likierman, 2001, p. 106).

In particular, the participants display some feelings of **rebelliousness** towards their loss of relationship and their recently acquired aloneness. They experience themselves as unhappy and alone whereas they perceive their partners as enjoying and belonging to an undeserved union resulting in happiness. This occurs as the participants firstly perceive themselves as having been treated unjustly by their partners and secondly, being unjustly treated in the overall scheme of life. Consequently, these feelings of rebelliousness tap into the unresolved anger that the participants still harbour towards their partners and which in their absence are projected onto the partners in fantasy. However, the participants also internalise these feelings thereby contaminating their previously good internal object and stirring up anxiety.

In addition, the participants do not project or express their feelings of rebelliousness directly in their behaviour. Rather, as with their unresolved, suppressed anger (see 5.6.1.5.), the participants introject their partners as bad objects and attempt to suppress their feelings of rebelliousness. However, this contributes to maintaining their feelings of depression. Furthermore, by internalising and attempting to suppress these feelings, the participants' persecutory and depressive anxieties are exacerbated and their ability to overcome the depressive position is further compromised.

6.2.18. Projective identification in the experience of betrayal.

In describing the concept of projective identification, Klein (1946/1997) suggests the inner turmoil aggression or pain of the infant is projected "into" rather than onto an object as in projection. Therefore, this is seen as a mode of relating that Klein (1946/1997) thought took place under the influence of the paranoid-schizoid position. In this manner, a person (the projector) places an unwanted part of the self into the other, inducing behaviour in the other that the projector unconsciously identifies with and attempts to control in lieu of handling conflicts inside him- or herself (Scharff, 1992).On the other hand, projective identification is also a way of managing cherished parts of the ego that are felt to be threatened inside the self and which are considered to have a better opportunity of surviving if wedged in the object (Scharff, 1992).

Let's pause momentarily and consider the process of projective identification in the experience of betrayal, given that sexual exclusivity as an indicator of morality is a prerequisite of intimate relationships in this study. A few questions have been posed in the course of the ensuing paragraphs which serve to provoke further thought along the lines of sexual morality and the process of projective identification in the relationships of the participants in this study. It is emphasised that the discussion that ensues serves to provoke additional thought regarding sexual betrayal in intimate relationships from a Kleinian perspective and should not be regarded as a factual finding pertaining to individuals' experience of betrayal in intimate relationships in general.

As indicated earlier in this study, in the participants' experience of betrayal, morality regarding sexual exclusivity is pivotal in determining whether the relationship will continue or disintegrate (5.6.1.1). Although an externally imposed perception which the participants form during the

socialisation process, they internalise and integrate this aspect of moral functioning as a prerequisite for intimacy and relationship. This may lead us to question: Is adherence to sexual exclusivity in intimate relationships, not continuously projected by both parties onto the other in an attempt to sustain their morally controlling superegos?

Furthermore, in the unconscious communication between the couple, which up until the act of betrayal is of a morally reassuring nature regarding mutual sexual exclusivity, could the violation of sexual exclusivity which the "errant" partner demonstrates not in essence be an accumulation of the participants' disowned and unwanted immoral parts regarding sexual exclusivity which they have projected into the partner? In the process of projective identification then, the partner internalises the participants' disowned parts of sexual immorality as well as the unwanted awareness of his or her potential to betray others. Consequently, the participant is able to control these unwanted parts of his or her internal worlds.

In addition, could sexual betrayal not be seen to occur as a result of acting out of negative projective identification in intimate relationships? In this manner parts of the ego are lost and remain disowned as participants distance themselves from the potential to betrayal their partners rather than reclaiming and owning those negative aspects of themselves and integrating them into their egos in a move towards optimal wholeness.

In this manner the sexually immoral nature of an individual and consequently the potential to betray others, is severed from the awareness of the participants by means of splitting. Furthermore, these split off parts are then projected *into* the partner who in turn internalises the disowned parts of the participant and invariably becomes the "perpetrator". Therefore, the participants need not reclaim or own the disturbing aspects of the ego as by internalising and acting on these projections, the partners clearly show by their act of betrayal that these parts are intolerable to the internal world of the participants. Consequently, in an event such as betrayal, the participants do not reclaim and integrate the split off parts of their potential sexual immorality as well as their potential to betray others, because they defer responsibility associated with the disintegration of the relationship and their partners' betrayal.

Let us also consider the concomitant loss of the split off parts of the participants themselves which are not reclaimed. The participants mourn the loss of a part of their ego but they do not mourn the

loss of the hostile projection or have any desire to integrate it into their egos. Rather, they experience some relief at being able to disown this disturbing aspect of their personality, namely having the potential to betray another human being. Here I would suggest that splitting off the negative aspects of the ego, occurs constantly during the course of an intimate relationship and these are projected onto the partner. These manageable portions are initially briefly tolerated by the loved object and returned in the form of unconscious communication of moral reassurance.

However, in an act of betrayal, I suggest that continuous splitting may occur at a more rapid pace than the ability which the partner has to accommodate and tolerate the disowned immoral parts of the participants, as they have to contend with the conflicts and anxieties of their own internal worlds. Furthermore, in conjunction with their internal world, the disowned parts of sexual immorality and the potential to betray another, which the participants project into their partners, may accumulate in their partners' internal world until the anxieties surrounding these projections become intolerably excessive. Consequently, it may be possible that once the split off sexual immoral parts of the participant's ego can no longer be accommodated as they become internally intolerable to the inner world of the partner, he or she may expel them from his or her internal world in order to get rid of the escalating anxiety they create.

Therefore, I would suggest in this instance that an act of betrayal in an intimate relationship may also be seen as an act of intolerance as a result of the accumulation of split off and disowned parts of the other. The participants' split off and disowned parts are **initially** internalised and accommodated. However, as a result of their partners' own continuous conflict between sexual morality as a life instinct and sexual immorality as a death instinct, the partners are unable to continue to tolerate the disowned immoral parts of the participants and are therefore coerced into expelling them in an act of sexual betrayal.

Furthermore, it is relevant to consider the role of the external seducer in the form of the affairee in this study as he or she exacerbates the process of projective identification and the partners' resultant betrayal. Once the partner becomes aware that the external potential seducer will fulfil a physical and/or emotional need, he or she experiences an increase in internal conflict and anxiety. However, it is possible that the partner is not immediately seduced by the external seducer early in

the process preceding the act of betrayal, but initially entertains him or her in fantasy. These fantasies may occur in conjunction with the immoral projections which the participants continue to project into their partner.

At this stage this potential threatening situation may still be tolerable for the partner. However, once the anxiety surrounding the increased pull towards the external seducer increases in conjunction with the partner's own internal conflicts and pressurising super-ego, the partner may not be able to tolerate the conflict and anxiety any longer and they may be expelled and manifested in an act of betrayal.

6.2.19. The onset of loneliness in the experience of betrayal.

In Klein's (1963/1997), writings on loneliness she suggests that loneliness is "..the yearning for an unattainable perfect *internal* state" (p.300). Klein adds that loneliness is a human inevitability in a mind that is shaped by object relations from birth and which subsequently depends on them (Likierman, 2001). Life is seen as a pursuit to dispel loneliness and much of what motivates it is regarded as our yearning to have a sense of being mentally accompanied on our life's journey. Therefore loneliness is inextricably linked to an inherent longing to develop a mind that is understood and recognised, both by others and by ourselves (Klein, 1963/1997).

When considering the participants' experience of betrayal, what is most prominent is their loss of a sense of belonging with a significant other. This loss of belonging suggests a loss of identification and connectedness with a significant other and indirectly with the larger group. As indicated in chapter two of this thesis, belonging is an integral part of our human existence specifically within society. Therefore rejection and being ostracised by a partner in an intimate dyad does not only have implications for an individual at a personal level but also at a societal level. This occurs as we, in our development identify with and are part of larger groups in society.

Here it is important to emphasise that "belonging" in this context does not imply possessiveness by or of a group but rather the reassuring sense of identification, acceptance and inclusion which is elicited in both small and large groups. In a small group such as the intimate dyad for example, "belonging" in this study, suggests a mutually exclusive alliance, with a loved partner.

In addition, as indicated in this study, belonging also implies connectedness, in an intimate dyad. Connectedness however, is not mutually exclusive as the participants experience connectedness with their partners as well as with individuals outside their relationship. Furthermore, it is also evident that the participants' sense of belonging is not restricted to the intimate dyad but extends to include family members and friends outside the dyad.

In addition as indicated in 5.6.1.5, the sense of alienation which the participants experience, also refers to the participants' relationship with themselves. This occurs as during the course of their relationship, the participants alienated themselves from their familiar selves in order to retain the love of their partners and preserve the continuity of relationship. Associated with their feelings of alienation, is the difficulty they encounter with their previously securely established good internal object which now takes on a precarious form as a result of their experience of betrayal.

In describing the importance of a securely introjected good object in her vision of loneliness Klein (1963/1997) reiterates the necessity of splitting defences in early infancy. These necessary splitting defences facilitate positive growth and alternate with integration. This in turn becomes essential for the secure introjection of the good object into the psyche, to form the core of the developing ego. She also re-emphasises these early events in infancy as not merely referring to sensual and libidinal experiences but also a crucial, "….close contact between the unconscious of the mother and of the child" (Klein, 1963/1997, p. 300). Alluding therefore to the significance of psychical intimacy, Klein (1963/1997) suggests that this first psychic intimacy is "..the foundation for the most complete experience of being understood and is essentially linked with the pre-verbal state" (p. 301).

Furthermore, she elaborates on the view that since the pre-verbal understanding of earliest infancy is never recaptured in quite the same way again, its loss is one of the early sources of loneliness (Likierman, 2001). Therefore, this implies that the later quest for intimacy is never fully satisfied so that "…however gratifying it is to express thoughts and feelings to a congenial person, there remains an unsatisfied longing for an understanding without words" (Klein, 1963/1997, p.301). For Klein therefore, psychical intimacy remains paramount in object relations (Likierman, 2001).

As in Klein's (1963/1997) description of loneliness, the participants in this study feel immensely vulnerable in what has become a hostile world of intimate relationships and they are plagued by persecutory anxieties which lead to increased vigilance and paranoid ideation. In addition, the task facing them at this stage is that of psychical integration which remains elusive as they grapple with attempting to understand the reason for their partners' betrayal. Particularly in this instance, as psychical integration feels incomplete, the participant does not reach a state of "complete understanding and acceptance" (Klein, 1963/1997, p. 301) of his or her emotions.

Furthermore, this process is destined to remain a lonely journey as the participants continue to question aspects of themselves, which although intensely experienced, escape their understanding. This partial self-alienation generates a sense of incompleteness , a longing for unavailable aspects of the self and a concomitant internal loneliness (Likierman, 2001). As seen in the participants' experience of betrayal, they feel alienated from themselves, humiliated, unworthy and inadequate as a result of the permanent absence of the good object.

In Klein's final paper she indicates that the state of loneliness motivates us to search for social ties and creates an intense need to turn to external objects (Likierman, 2001). What is evident therefore is our human need for others. Therefore, the lonely states portrayed by Klein are eventually traced to a lifelong conflict between love and destructiveness which is rooted in our very sociability as a human species. It is the degree of our need for others as well as our ceaseless quest for kindred souls in the world, that is partly responsible for the intensity of our disappointments. Others are seldom as fully accessible to us as what we would like them to be and in like manner, nor are we as accessible to them as we would like to believe (Likierman, 2001).

Consequently, part of their feelings of alienation in the participants' experience of betrayal, can be attributed to the fact that their partner is no longer as accessible as what the privilege of relationship affords. Therefore their disconnectedness from their partners and from others is intensely felt and contributes to feelings of despair surrounding their sense of alienation.

In reciprocal manner, the participants are also no longer as accessible to their partners as when they were in relationship. This is seen in the firm boundaries which they set regarding lack of subsequent contact with their partners. In this instance the participants' self-imposed loneliness

and disconnectedness from the loved object serves as a protective shield for their vulnerable selves. Accessibility of the other in an intimate relationship is often an area which is taken for granted as its significance can only be experienced once access has been denied or terminated. Even whilst in their relationships, participants experienced the deliberate unavailability of their partners' which made them anxious and which was frequently experienced as punitive.

In particular, Participant A described her partners' tendency to withdraw and become unavailable both physically and emotionally during conflict chiefly as a result of her display of emotionality. However, she was lulled into complacency prior to his act of betrayal as she believed that he would be available to her and the relationship again as he always returned to her. Similarly Participant C's partner practised sport frequently during the week and over weekends which made him less accessible and available to her and their relationship. Although secretly longing for more time with him, she did not try and persuade him to be more accessible for fear of losing him, should she be seen as attempting to curb his freedom.

Therefore, even whilst in relationship, these participants in particular, experience periods of longing and loneliness as the significant other is not as accessible to them. These feelings are exacerbated by the perception that there is no one whom they can identify and share themselves with and connect to in a meaningful and profound manner. Each of the participants indicates their sense of wholeness and fulfilment when they belong to and "have someone" and how lonely their existence is at times when they no longer belong to a significant other (see 5.6.1.1).

What appears to be of significant importance to the participant, is the knowledge that there is a significant other with whom they share a fulfilling and rewarding intimate relationship. Participant D describes his experience of engaging in a relationship shortly before leaving for an overseas trip as follows: "….I left on a cloud…I felt fantastic…I was so alone before but I knew then .. I had someone…someone whom I was coming back to...it was a wonderful feeling". This knowledge that they belong to an intimate dyad and as a result, a significant other, provides them with self-worth, a sense of emotional and physical security as well as a sense of psychical connectedness.

Furthermore, their sense of belonging is not merely dependent on the accessibility or physical presence of their partner but is dependent rather on the context created and suggested by the promise and experience of psychical and physical intimacy. In addition, whilst in the relationship,

the participants hold their partners in mind during periods of absences, as part of their psychical and physical connection which they have forged. In this manner, the perception of continuity of relationship is ensured and the participants retain their sense of connectedness to the intimate dyad. This engenders a sense of belonging and validates their sense of emotional and physical security within the dyad.

In this manner, the participants' internal good objects remain securely established in the knowledge that their partners do not leave or are not lost to the intimate dyad due to the participants' destructiveness or aggression. Consequently, the participants' egos are not weakened but rather sustained in the knowledge that their partners' absences are of a temporary nature. "Knowledge" as an important feature of the participants' experience of betrayal was previously described in 5.6.1.3. However, this aspect of their functioning suggests the involvement of higher order cognitive processes as information is assimilated and integrated. Further discussion of the role of cognitive processes in the participants' experience of betrayal, as an elaboration of Kleinian theory, is provided in 6.2.20.

Although Klein (1963/1997) emphasises her conceptualisation of loneliness as an inner state, that is as: "..a sense of being alone regardless, of external circumstances, of feeling lonely even when among friends or receiving love" (p.300), the relational component inherent in the concept of loneliness, whether in relation to oneself, as Klein (1963/1997) indicates or in relation to others, cannot be ignored.

Furthermore in describing how the internal state of loneliness is reached, Klein (1963/1997) emphasises the influence of the early relationship with the mother, which the infant longs for but can never achieve in subsequent relationships. This longing is derived from the depressive feeling of an irretrievable loss (Klein, 1963/1997). Therefore, Klein (1963/1997) alludes to the significance of the external loved object in the individual's state of inner loneliness. However, she places greater emphasis on the paranoid and depressive anxieties of the individual which arise as a result of longing and irretrievable loss.

Furthermore, I would suggest that in this study, the findings indicate that the participants' partners as *external* objects play a greater role in determining the sense of loneliness which the participants

ultimately experience. In addition, the prospect of belonging to a subsequent intimate dyad in the near future is bleak. Therefore, as Klein (1963/1997) suggests, the findings indicate that during the period of physical and emotional withdrawal (see 5.6.1.4), the participants do not find lasting solace in the support of family and friends.

At this time, although the participants are increasingly introspective, they spend little time considering their internal state but rather are initially overwhelmed by their partners' unanticipated abandonment of relationship, the permanent absence of the external loved object and the consequences of being alone again. Their source of fulfilment and happiness is seen to be externally derived and deprivation of such an external source leaves them feeling at a loss and intensely alone. The relational emphasis, as evident in this study, therefore changes in the context of an intimate dyad as the participants first and foremost realise that they are alone again and no longer belong to the mutual exclusivity afforded by the intimate dyad. In particular, this awareness exacerbates their sense of rapidly declining self-worth as well as their negative, emotional disposition.

Furthermore, as indicated in the preceding paragraphs, Klein (1963/1997) does not place much emphasis on the significance of belonging or not belonging to a person or a group, as she reiterates her view of longing and loneliness as ultimately focusing on the yearning for a perfect *internal* state. Consequently, according to Klein (1963/1997) loneliness can never be eliminated as its source remains internal. The internal loneliness and longing which Klein (1963/1997) describes, has greater bearing on the relationships which individuals have with themselves rather than the influence of the relationship with an external object.

However, as evident in the participants' experience of betrayal, the initial most prominent facet of a sense of loneliness, is that its onset occurs as a result of the participants' abandonment. Therefore it is *externally* induced and initially overwhelms the relationship which the participants have with themselves and with their internal world.

In addition, as the participants in this study perceive the antithesis to loneliness being belonging and connectedness within the intimacy of a dyad, this external event has significant repercussions for their sense of emotional and physical security as well as their cognitive processes. These

cognitive processes also manifest in the altered perceptions which the participants have of themselves, their partners and of intimate relationships.

6.2.20.Cognitive processes in the experience of betrayal.

Klein's theory does not elaborate on the role of cognitive development as her thinking mainly focuses on intrapsychic processes during pre-verbal and rudimentary verbal development in early childhood. Consequently, she had no complex awareness of the role of language in mental life and she also did not attempt to offer a complete account of cognitive development. Although she did have original and revolutionary ideas on various stages of cognitive awareness and on the primitive origins of cognition, the essential factor that promotes mental development or in Kleinian terms, namely, the drive towards integration, was unexplored. Klein's insights were meant to clarify rather than account for this process and to explain how it is either arrested by anxiety and aggression or facilitated by life instincts, curiosity and love (Likierman, 2001).

Specifically in her conceptualisation of the term "phantasy" (see 311), Klein (1948/1997) hypothesized a primitive psychical activity that exists from birth. Its initial function is to give both structure to the instinctual life of the infant and also to represent and elaborate events internally, gradually enabling the emergence of clearer cognitive capacities in the infant. Furthermore, Klein asserted that in the adult, phantasy continues to be active in the deep unconscious layers of the mind. It parallels normal, daily thinking, consisting of a rudimentary, unconscious running commentary on the flow of conscious experience (Isaacs, 1943/1991). In earliest infancy, well before the emergence of cognition, phantasy is the main activity of the psyche and in this context therefore, the earliest form of mental life (Likierman, 2001).

In addition, by suggesting that the Oedipal situation arises much earlier in an individuals' experience than stated by Freud (see 3.3.6.7), Klein implies that the earliest recognition of good and bad experiences are not conceptual as they are initially located in partly recognized rather than fully recognised aspects. Consequently, she pre-dates the individual's ability to obtain a secure mental grasp on experience (Likierman, 2001).

Furthermore, due to his primitive discriminating abilities, the infant can only for instance, experience goodness although intense as momentarily, which materializes and then disappears

along with the introjected nurturing breast. In this manner an impression remains behind which soon vanishes under the impact of new experiences (Segal, 1978). Therefore, in primitive phantasy life, the well-nourished infant associates his satisfaction with a good, incorporated breast which has become a concrete internal substance (Likierman, 2001). At this point it is relevant to note that much criticism was directed against Klein's (1957/1997) exclusion of the significance of the role of mothering, in the mental development of the infant. However, these and further criticisms of her theory will be provided in greater detail in the following chapter of this thesis.

In addition, when considering the adult cognitive processes evident in the participants' experience of betrayal, this aspect of Klein's theory remains relatively unexplored. Consequently, the ensuing discussion is offered as a contribution to existing theoretical constructs regarding the beginnings of mental development, as contained within a Kleinian framework.

As a starting point for our discussion let us firstly recall Klein's (1963/1997) assertion in her paper on psychical loneliness that ego-integration is a life-long challenge which promoted mental development. She suggests integration is a painful process as it necessitates greater contact and assimilation of external reality, thereby progressively leaving behind the world of internal phantasy. Klein (1930a/1975) noted that particularly in the face of deprivation, the infantile body together with the wishing, instinctual psyche produces a particular phantasy. Although it belongs in the normal conscious functioning of the infant, phantasy is consequently in a sense a variant of dream life (Likierman, 2001).

Isaacs (1943/1991) took Klein's description of phantasy a step further and suggested phantasy creates the earliest system of meaning in the psyche and gives blind human urges a direction. Therefore, phantasy is an instinctual mode of thinking based on the response to worldly influences. Out of this primitive mental activity, an increasingly mature cognitive capacity later develops. Therefore, the developing individual is gradually faced with the task of further ego integration as he or she needs to confront and adapt to external reality. Part of adjusting to this external reality infers engaging in the society in which the individual lives. A related concept, is that of reality testing and also features in Kleinian texts (Likierman, 2001).

In childhood, reality testing is seen to be an intimate aspect of cognitive growth and socialisation. In psychoanalytic theory, reality testing refers to a set of ego functions which enable the individual

to distinguish between his or her internal world and external reality and adjust primitive internal components to the constraints of the external environment (Reber, 1985, p. 617). Consequently, during the course of effective socialisation and greater contact with reality, the individual harmonizes his or her perceptions and discernment regarding the environment with his or her social and cultural values. In psychoanalytic terms, this process of reality adaptation is often characterised as "….a trading in of the pleasure principle for the reality principle ' (Reber, 1985, p. 616).

A familiar Freudian concept, the reality principle is considered to be a secondary thought process bound by conceptual and verbal logic which makes an accurate appraisal of the world possible (Freud, 1901). Other than its corollary the pleasure principle, the reality principle is less primitive and indicates more rational human mental activity. Furthermore it is based on conscious logic rather than on desires, omnipotence and elaborations of wishing experiences at the expense of noticing reality as it is. Facts in this form of mental activity are not condensed into composite creations or fragmented and displaced to give way to "…the typical irrationality of the dreaming mind" (Likierman, 2001, p. 138).

Klein (1930a/1975) concurred with Freud's description of the dream-like quality which he attributed to primary thought processes and extended his idea of the pleasure principal in her formulation of the concept of unconscious phantasy. In line with his thinking, she suggested that unconscious phantasy included imagined, sensory and somatic states which in Freud's description are "visual and sensory memories". These visual and sensory memories are in essence stored pleasurable experiences associated with a satisfying object (Freud, 1901).

With increasing cognitive development, the ability to make associations and store information about stimuli, events, images or ideas after the original stimuli are no longer present, increases. Therefore, once incoming information has been processed or interpreted either minimally or extensively, it is stored either in a short-term system or a long-term system as an abstraction or memory. Consequently, the cognitively maturing individual in the light of an appropriate stimulus has multiple access to material stored in a rich memory system either on a short-term or long-term basis (Reber, 1985).

An in-depth explanation of the various memory processes goes beyond the scope of this study and the current discussion. However, as the role of memory is an important aspect of the participants' experience of betrayal (see 5.6.1.2), it is important to make brief mention of this cognitive process. In addition, as an indication of increased cognitive ability, it serves to extend Klein's conceptualisation of infantile mental processes.

In the participants' experience of betrayal, the disclosure of their partners' infidelity (see 5.6.1.3), triggers a cognitive process whereby they attempt to access stored information in the form of memories pertaining to behaviours, events and people whilst they were in the relationship. They engage in this process of remembering in order to gain an understanding and re-evaluation of their internal and external realities about their partners and the past. Memories are not necessarily abstracts of conscious awareness at the time of information processing, but may also be formed as a result of subconscious awareness. In this regard, two memory prompts in the form of retrospection and introspection are most relevant to the participants' experience of betrayal (see 5.6.1.2).

Retrospection facilitates the testing of a previously perceived external reality as the participants mentally retrace their steps through the history of the relationship. Consequently, retrospection suggests the workings of integrated, higher order cognitive processes in order to access stored interpretations of a previously perceived external reality. Therefore, this process of higher order cognitive functioning is indicative of domination by Freud's reality principle rather than by the Kleinian concept of phantasy (Likierman, 2001).

In addition, introspection is a process whereby the participants examine their perceived internal realities as bodies of knowledge in order to search for clues of incidents or actions that may have contributed to their partners' infidelity. They do this in an attempt to gain understanding and reach closure in their experience of betrayal. Introspection as a feature of greater ego-integration and cognitive functioning in the light of the external reality of betrayal, is therefore also influenced by the reality principle rather than by phantasy.

Furthermore, it is evident in the findings in this study that as Klein (1930a/1975) suggests, the increasing drive towards ego-integration is a painful process as the individual is increasingly faced

with stark external reality. Therefore in the participants' experience of betrayal, both the memory processes of retrospection and introspection elicit emotional pain and anxiety as the participants are obliged to delve into the external reality of their partners' betrayal. In addition, they are confronted with the concomitant task of having to assimilate this external event in the drive towards greater ego-integration.

Therefore, one of the primary aspects in an individual's cognitive development, is that phantasy as "…a mental corollary" (Isaacs, 1943/1991, p.272) is coerced into assuming a subordinate position in the face of developmental progress and a persistent, external environment. Secondly, as a result of an individual's drive towards greater ego-integration, both his internal and external worlds need to be accommodated and along with them, the continual process of synthesizing the death and the life instincts (Klein, 1930a/1975).

In this regard, Isaacs (1943/1991) suggests that in order to make sense of our experiences and our inner world, we continually need to refer to an internal scenario in which meaning is actualised in an exchange between subject and object. It portrays then the foundation of our mental operations as relational in nature (Likierman, 2001).

Therefore, Isaacs (1943/1991) infers the Kleinian belief that the particular scenario of which a phantasy is composed is always and specifically based on object relations in which an object is either treated in a particular way, or else itself meting out a particular kind of treatment to the subject. (Likierman, 2001). Consequently, as the individual develops physically and moves towards greater ego-integration, a simultaneous maturing cognitive capacity is required in order to continuously make sense of the stimuli provided by people and the world around him.

Further cognitive processes which are evident in the participants' experience of betrayal are those of ideation, specifically self-punitive- and paranoid ideation. Ideation pertains to ideas or to cognitive processes which are "….related to reality and derived in various ways from experience. In addition, ideas are seen to be that which is perceived directly in the mind" (Reber, 1985, p.340). In Klein's theory, an infants' realm of phantasy can create ideation when feeling threatened. For example, if a child receives a fright, his phantasy will create ideation that is in the nature of options for defensive manoeuvring, such as an aggressive elimination of the source of fear. Consequently, this process of ideation is considered to have its roots in the defence mechanisms of the psyche.

What is evident in the process of **self-punitive ideation** is that the cognitive processes associated with the ability to apply judgement and decision-making in their day-to-day functioning is compromised. Consequently, the participants' previously positive perceptions of themselves are negatively influenced and they become persecutory towards themselves (see 5.6.1.5). In addition, **paranoid ideation** gives rise to feelings of suspicion and an intense fear of engaging in a subsequent intimate relationship, only to be hurt again. Furthermore, paranoid ideation negatively influences not only the perceptions which the participants have of future intimate relationships but also their perceptions of relationships with acquaintances and friends (see 5.6.1.5).

Consequently, I would suggest that both an advanced but distorted cognitive process, as well as an unconscious communication process occurs in the participants' experience of betrayal in the following manner. Firstly, the partner as external object, unbeknown to the participants, betrays them and then abandons them. The unconscious communication which is projected onto the participants by their partners therefore may be interpreted as they are unworthy of love and commitment in an intimate relationship. However, in essence these may be seen as split off negative beliefs of their partners themselves.

Secondly, given the external reality of their partners' abandonment and betrayal, the participants are compelled to cognitively process this information. As part of the cognitive process, they search their memory banks and become engrossed in the processes of retrospection and introspection in order to understand their role in their partners' betrayal and abandonment. Consequently, due to the participants' mature cognitive functioning, their ability to reason and process information logically in the light of their external reality of betrayal raises questions as to why they should be considered unworthy and inadequate. Failing to find a logical explanation for their partners' betrayal within their existing cognitive resources, the participants internalise the negative beliefs of their partners and then identify with those aspects in the process of introjective identification. This process serves to sustain a shaken ego rather than a move towards greater ego-integration.

Therefore in the participants' experience of betrayal, external reality in the form of their partners' betrayal is more persuasive than their internal reality at that stage and they identify with their partners' negative beliefs regarding their unworthiness and inadequacy in an intimate relationship. These feelings of worthlessness and inadequacy influence an existing internal reality for the

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participants. In order to make sense of them, Klein (1930a/1975) purports that they can only be interpreted internally through some form of representation, however primitive.

As the participants come to a greater awareness of the implications of the external reality of their experience of betrayal, they continually refer to an internal scenario in which their feelings are interpreted and given meaning as a result of an object relation with their partner. However, these interpretations are distorted as a result of the projections of the partner who has been introjected as the persecuting object. Interpretation is a function of reality testing as the interpretative process involves a mental scheme within which all the incoming stimuli are identified, classified and reacted to.

Furthermore, in adulthood, the act of cognitive interpretation is essential in most of our exchanges since stimuli are meaningless without such cognitive interpretation (Reber, 1985). Therefore, in order to make sense of the external reality the participants attempt to interpret the catastrophic event of betrayal and abandonment. In addition, their partners' projections are interpreted. Consequently, the participants experience a dual interpretative processes. One source is derived from cognitive abstractions or ideas formed during the course of cognitive interpretation and a second source in which interpretation occurs as a result of the projections from their partners.

Why does the unconscious negative communication from their partners' triumph rather than the previous cognitive perceptions which the participants have of themselves as "worthy and lovable" individuals whilst in the relationship? One suggestion is that as Klein (1930a/1975) indicates, we cannot make sense of our experiences nor undeniably our identity, without referring continually to an internal scenario in which meaning is actualised in an exchange between a subject and object (Likierman, 2001).

Therefore, the importance of the loved object cannot be underestimated in determining our perceptions of ourselves. Particularly, the shared intimacy in an intimate relationship with a loved object is likely to be one of the most emotionally, physically and cognitively vulnerable relationships we as human beings will encounter. Therefore, our previous internal realities are challenged by the conscious and unconscious communication we receive from our partners as we initially engage in the relationship with increased ego-vulnerability. In this regard, I would

suggest one of the requirements of intimate relationships is a less guarded and impressionable ego in order to experience a sense of belonging and psychical intimacy.

In addition, the securely established internal good object is compromised and assumes a precarious quality. Therefore, as a result of engaging in one of our most emotionally vulnerable relationships, it is possible that our interpretations of the quality of both conscious- and unconscious communication from a partner is open to distortion whilst in the relationship. Furthermore, in the light of an external event such as betrayal, the participants' internal world is thrown into chaos and distorted as their "benignly" vulnerable egos and previously securely established internal good objects are threatened and deliberately attacked.

The idea of a "benignly vulnerable ego" of individuals in an intimate relationship, manifests as a result of what I have called a "benevolent core of relationship", which is created when individuals initially engage in an intimate relationship with one another. We momentarily divert to consider this concept. In an intimate relationship, the conscious and unconscious communication between the participant and their partner does not pass through an external vacuum. Rather, these communications pass through a connecting entity called "relationship". However, every "relationship" by virtue of its association with the conscious and unconscious communication processes of the individuals has a unique life (conscious and unconscious identity) of its own.

Therefore, I would suggest that every relationship in the initial stages of engagement has a relational, mutually derived, benevolent core of its own. This benevolent core is generated by mutual libidinal projections of each of the individuals who engage in the relationship. These mutual libidinal projections contain the hopes, dreams, expectations, beliefs, persuasions and perceptions of each of the individuals in the relationship, which through conscious and unconscious communication process are projected into the mutual core of the relationship.

In the initial stages of the relationship malevolent split off ego-parts in the form of communication processes of each of the individuals, are projected into the mutual core of relationship, to a lesser degree. Rather, these unconscious communication processes which contain the individuals' insecurities and fears are frequently repressed and in some instances denied in order to retain the prospect and expectation of a life-giving relationship. It should be emphasised that the mutual

libidinal projections of each of the individuals in relationship vary in intensity and degree as they are considered to be unique aspects of an individual's ego integration and functioning.

Consequently, in an event such an as act of betrayal, the erring partner unconsciously begins to project an increasing degree of malevolent communication processes such as rejection, the possibility of abandonment, withdrawal, into the mutual core of the relationship which over time, becomes accumulative. Therefore, when the relationship is abandoned, the mutual core of relationship disintegrates as the malevolent communication processes override and annihilate the benign aspects of this mutual core. Furthermore, once the relationship has disintegrated the participants lose the mutual libidinal projections which they have projected into the mutual core of the relationship in the form of hopes, dreams, and expectations. It is only then in the process and drive towards increasing ego-integration that these lost parts can be rediscovered and integrated.

Reclaiming the disowned parts of themselves is a task facing the participants in the depressive position and at the time of the interviews, it was evident that the participants had not embraced the challenge at that stage. However, they were becoming increasingly aware of the split off and denied aspects of themselves which were incorrectly construed as negative before being split off and which had consequently been sacrificed in service of their partner and of the relationship (see 5.6.1.4). By starting to acknowledge rather than deny these split aspects of their egos, the participants were approaching the task of integration towards wholeness. At this point, we resume our discussion on the cognitive processes in the participants' experience of betrayal.

Further cognitive processes are the **manifestation of persistent and recurring thoughts** about their partners' betrayal (see 5.6.1.5) As part of the difficulties associated with overcoming in the depressive position, the participants find it difficult to move beyond these thoughts of betrayal and therefore they **hold on to the relationship** in fantasy and they **bear their partner in mind**. Holding on to the relationship and bearing their partners in mind have two main functions. Firstly, holding on to the relationship allows the participants to experience a pseudo sense of belonging and connectedness to an imperative relationship which was prematurely taken from them. Secondly, they bear their partner in mind as part of the defence against the intense pain of their abandonment and later disclosure of their partners' betrayal. In this manner the participants attempt to protect their egos by idealising their partners (see 6.2.5).

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In addition, the participants experience rising levels of anxiety during the process of physical and emotionally withdrawal as they cognitively become aware of some of the implications of being alone again. Previously their anxiety regarding losing their partners was made tolerable by defence mechanisms and frequently suppressed. However, once their partner has abandoned the relationship, this knowledge as well as the consequences resulting from their partners' betrayal and being on their own again creates increased anxiety in the participants.

Furthermore, the content of persistent thoughts regarding their partners' betrayal consists of vivid, recurring images of their partners in the act of betrayal as well as images surrounding the logistics involved in committing an act of betrayal such as opportunity, time and place. As indicated in chapter five, the images of their partners' betrayal stirs up Oedipal anxieties, and the rival object although a reality in the act and experience of betrayal, remains unseen.

Consequently, the participants are afforded little opportunity to protect their loved object and they resign themselves to the reality of having unwillingly lost them to a rival object. This gives rise to depressive anxieties as the aggression they experience towards the rival object in fantasy cannot initially be projected outwards into external reality. Therefore, the participants are compelled to internalise their aggression and feelings of frustration and suppress them, resulting initially in increased anxiety and feelings of depression (see 5.6.1.5).

Linked to the Oedipal anxieties which the participants have regarding the fantasy of a rival object is the cognitive process of **comparison**. Comparison can be seen as a way of discerning similarities and differences regarding the participants' perceptions of themselves and their perceptions of rival objects in the experience of betrayal. Specifically, the participants compare themselves to the rival object in the form of the affairee. This cognitive process is facilitated by the external reality of the rival object whether known or unknown to the participants. The participants are informed of the personality attributes of the rival object as well as about their physical appearance should they not be known to the participants, which enables them to make an informed comparison.

However, this information is highly susceptible to distortion when coming from a secondary source as the perceptions and subjectivity of the informant needs to be taken into account.

Furthermore, should the affairee be presented in a negative light as a result of the informant's loyalty towards the participant, this may lead to further confusion and despair, as he or she is even less likely to understand the logic behind their partners' betrayal with a person deemed to be less attractive and engaging than the participant.

Persistent thoughts resulting in fantasies are experienced in the participants' experience of betrayal. These thoughts regarding their partners' betrayal, conjure up fantasies of revenge carried out on their partners which evoke increased anxiety in the participants. This occurs as the participants gain some insight into the hidden, darker aspects of their personality, governed by their superegos and therefore their inherent moral dispositions. When they realise through cognitive interpretation the extent of their previously underestimated potential towards aggression, the participants internalise these aggressive images of revenge, split them off and suppress them as "bad" aspects of their egos (see 5.6.1.5). In addition, their humiliation and neediness of their partners which they perceive to be contained in the images and fantasies of revenge are regarded as further "bad aspects" of their ego and are split off and suppressed.

It is relevant at this point of the thesis to consider how the research findings and their interpretations relate to previous literature on betrayal discussed in Chapter Two. In particular we consider some of the most salient points of agreement and disagreement between the findings and the literature review in Chapter Two of this thesis.

By definition, infidelity or an affair is a sexual involvement with someone other than the spouse or committed partner (Brown, 1991).As research indicates (Kirkpatrick, 2003, p.70) infidelity speaks of "treachery, adultery, and unfaithfulness, especially to the marriage vow". Primary to this definition, infidelity invites a breach of trust specifically with regard to the contract between couples regarding sexual exclusivity in their relationship (Pittman & Wagers, 1995). Furthermore, infidelity fuels an individual's fear of abandonment…. "a feeling so basic and primitive it goes to the core of our being" (Brown, 1991, p.1). In addition, some of the literature on infidelity indicates that the most threatening aspect to the dissolution of the relationship is not the affair itself. Rather the feelings of betrayal and helplessness are seen to be greater causes of breakdown of the relationship (Brown, 1991). The research findings and interpretations in the participants' experience of betrayal are in agreement with the literature in this regard.

Furthermore, the finding that infidelity as an act of betrayal had the capacity to shatter the expectations that the participants had of their partners as being truthful, honest and faithful is in agreement with Jones and Burdette's (1994) findings regarding the consequences of an act of betrayal. In addition the literature suggests that it undermines the trust, commitment and love persons share with their partners which is echoed in the research findings in this study.

Further research quoted in Chapter Two indicates that when betrayal has occurred, the consequences frequently include a reduction in relationship satisfaction, weakened commitment, inhibition of trust and stunted interpersonal growth. Also, in many cases the relationship is abandoned (Jones, Couch & Scott, 1997). These findings concur with the findings and interpretations in this study. In addition, a sense of alienation and threats to the psychological well-being of the individual are also indicated in both the research and findings in the study.

In addition, as indicated in Chapter Two, when examining the aspect of secrecy in infidelity, Wegner, Lane and Dimitri (1994) state that "...a secret relationship occurs when at least one member of a pair intends that knowledge of some link between the pair is hidden from one or more people" (p.287). In a relationship which houses a clandestine affair, therefore, the uninformed partner becomes the outsider and may react by looking for explanations during introspection, becoming more pleasing and accommodating. On the other hand, the outsider may cope through denial until the ultimate crisis blazes through the denial (Brown, 1991).

The literature on the consequences of infidelity is not conventionally regarded as traumatic but carries much psychic pain and poses many challenges to individuals' functioning and in particular, to their psychological well being (De Prince, 2005; Jones et al., 1997). These findings concur with the findings and interpretations of the participants' experience in this study, as they are compelled to seek medical and psychological assistance following their partners' infidelity.

Freyd (1996, 1999) also proposed the concept of "betrayal blindness" which would apply for example to instances of infidelity in romantic relationships. Betrayal blindness is the unawareness, "not-knowing" and "forgetting" displayed by individuals towards betrayal and manifests in order to preserve relationships. Although the term "betrayal blindness" did not emerge in the data, the findings and interpretations in this study of the participants' behaviour whilst in the relationship are in agreement with the literature regarding "betrayal blindness."

Furthermore, cultural models are transmitted during the first months of life through holding, nursing, songs, rhythms, bodily contact and games and are incorporated in the communication of mother and infant. This establishes a state of "sameness" and of fusion with others in the unit, which will bind the infant and the later, individuated person with the group to whom he belongs (Pines, 1994). As indicated in Chapter Five of this study, the significance of belonging is a central phenomenon, which emerged as a result of the participants' experience of betrayal.

With regard to the literature on infidelity passing through six stages (Brown, 1991), these stages were not explored in detail in this study as only the view of the participant was obtained and not that of their partner as the betrayer. In addition, the findings in this study indicate that the partners abandoned the relationship prior to his or her infidelity being disclosed, which exacerbated the participants' inability to gain closure. Also, in the participants' experience of betrayal, the third stage of infidelity, (when the affair is revealed either by exposure or disclosure), does share some similarities to the findings in the literature as the participants indicated that their perception of themselves and their partner has changed irrevocably. Furthermore, the literature review indicates that the last stage of infidelity involves forgiveness and/or reconciliation over time (Brown, 1991; Gottman, 1994). It was apparent from the data however, that the participants had not reached this stage of the infidelity process at the time of the interviews.

6.3.   Conclusions regarding the experience of betrayal.

This chapter has focused on providing an integrated discussion of the participants' experience of betrayal, within a Kleinian framework. In trailing the intricate web of interrelated conditions and consequences which transpired during the course of analysis, various phenomena which emerged from the central phenomenon - **a sense of alienation,** were explored.

Although betrayal is a global phenomenon, the focus in this study is on the experience of sexual betrayal in intimate relationships. Therefore, as indicated in the introduction of this chapter, the conditions in which the actions and interactions occur at multiple levels of betrayal fell outside the scope of this study and were not included in the integrated discussion of the findings in this chapter. In addition, fidelity in relationships offers no guarantee that its antithesis, infidelity will not occur, as the latter is a product of our human potential - and deliberate choice to betray others.

Consequently, there is no enduring solution to the phenomenon of infidelity and its legacy wreaks havoc in the emotional, cognitive and intrapsychic worlds of the betrayed individual.

In the discussion in this chapter, the participants' experience of betrayal within the context of an intimate relationship was explored with relevant emphasis on the partner as the significant other. According to the descriptions of the five participants as indicated in the previous chapter, the need to belong to another and to experience psychical connectedness, encompasses their **capacity to love** a significant other. In the context of this study therefore, the participants are initially able to give and receive love within the climate of committed, mutually exclusive physical intimacy as well as psychical intimacy. Psychical intimacy as Klein (1963/1997) indicates, forms the basis for the most complete experience of being understood by another and loss of the object is one of the early sources of psychical loneliness.

From a Kleinian perspective, these participants during the course of development, have successfully introjected and established a loved, whole object within their egos under benign circumstances. Therefore, paranoid anxieties regarding bad objects in the light of increasing hope, trust and belief in the goodness of the loved object, diminish. Naturally it is inevitable for all individuals that at particular times of stress and anxiety, trust and belief in good objects are shaken. However, depending on the intensity and duration of states of despondency and persecution, the ego is capable of reintegrating itself and of reinstating its good objects securely (Likierman, 2001).

It is relevant to add at this point that as indicated in the findings, the participants' **sense of integrated egos (selves),** which they initially bring to the relationship, become complacent in the perceived security of an intimate relationship over time. The participants experience their sense of wholeness or integration as part of their identity which instils in them a sense of belonging both within a greater societal context as well as within an intimate relationship. In being connected to others, their sense of self is strengthened. However, the participants are also at risk for experiencing intense emotional pain as they become increasingly vulnerable to their partners by virtue of being in an intimate relationship. Consequently, their egos become more exposed as defences are lowered and their capacity to intimately love their partner increases over time.

Therefore, in the participants' experience of betrayal, the resulting sense of alienation and as a result of their partners' abandonment and later disclosure of betrayal, generates overwhelming

persecutory anxiety and a tendency towards ego fragmentation in the brief but severe dissociative episodes which do occur. Consequently, the participants are confronted with persecutory anxieties of a paranoid-schizoid nature rather than the tragic anxieties of the depressive position, which exacerbate their feelings and experience of a disintegrated sense of self. Fragmentation is triggered by the death instinct which activates persecutory anxieties (Klein, 1946/1997).

In an attempt to elaborate on Kleinian thinking about the ego within the context of an intimate relationship, the participants and their partner also share what I have suggested may be called, "a benevolent core of relationship" which increases their potential to be vulnerable to another and which compromises their ability to overcome and work through the process of healing and re-engagement in subsequent relationships.

The participants experience the act of betrayal by their partner as an internally catastrophic event which shakes their belief and trust in good objects and also in themselves. As a result, the participants experience feelings of paranoia, mistrust and an increased sense of loneliness. Furthermore, the participants also experience their entire being as being influenced by the experience of betrayal and they question their values, attitudes, expectations and themselves in relation to external reality and their relationships with others. In addition, they are confronted with the realisation of lost aspects of themselves which need to be re-discovered in the process of overcoming and adjusting to change.

Internal resources such as **resilience** and **hope** also play a significant role in the participants' ability to re-establish a sense of an integrated self in their experience of betrayal. The participants show resilience in their desire and drive towards regaining feelings of inner security. In addition, they precariously cling to the receding image of a secure internal loved object in the hope of engaging in a subsequent successful intimate relationship. However, they place little hope, trust and belief in the goodness of a prospective loved object.

Furthermore, loss of hope results as the participants place little trust and belief in the goodness of a prospective love object which results in them becoming uncharacteristically cynical. Cynicism acts as a defence against the intense and unanticipated pain inflicted on the participants as a result of their partners' betrayal. Linked to feelings of cynicism is the participants' inability and

unwillingness at the stage of the interviews, to **forgive** their partners who are perceived as "flawed" individuals. This in turn causes persecutory rather than depressive anxieties.

Turning to **moral orientation,** the participants experience their partners' betrayal as a violation of accepted mutually exclusive sexual boundaries within the dyad. Furthermore, they have difficulty accepting and integrating this aspect of their partners' behaviour as it does not resonate with their perception of the mutual commitment made when engaging in the relationship. Furthermore, rather than overcoming the tragic anxieties of the depressive position which is the first step in moral development the participants are bound to these anxieties by virtue of their partners' perceived lack of morality. Therefore, the participants' own perceptions and psychical security regarding the nature of morality are questioned as an externally imposed lack of morality (badness) in their partners' act of betrayal is disclosed.

In addition, their partners' deviousness in committing an act of betrayal colours their perception of them and they are seen to be lacking in integrity and conscience. These newly formed perceptions of their partners have negative consequences for the participants to access their ability to relate to them in a **forgiving** manner at this time.

This aspect of the participants' functioning is further evidence of the death instinct which predominates over the life instinct in their experience of betrayal. Part of the domination of the death instinct over the life instinct is that the participants have little hope that their lost, loved object will be recovered as they resign themselves to the fact that they have been abandoned in favour of an unanticipated rival object. In this manner, the security of the internal good object is compromised as the participants are unable to rescue and preserve it through their ability to forgive their partners at this time. Consequently, their ability to surmount the difficulties associated with the depressive position is compromised even further, as the participants remain trapped in an egocentric chasm (5.6.1.4).

A further obstacle in their ability to forgive their partner at this time, is the **lack of guilt**, remorse and responsibility which the participants assume for the disintegration of the relationship. In addition, the participants introject their resented, external loved object and launch **revengeful attacks** on them in fantasy. However, the participants are tormented by images of themselves never being able to succeed and find love and fulfilment in an intimate relationship.

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Revisiting the Oedipal situation in the context of this study, has implications for the participants on personal and social levels. At both levels, the participants experience their partners as not having considered them worthy enough of fidelity and their subsequent excruciating humiliation forces them to initially withdraw from physical and emotional contact with others where possible. In addition, the element of **sexual exclusivity** which was not upheld by their partners instils persecutory insecurities of an Oedipal nature in the participants as they experience themselves as being usurped from their position as the "chosen one" to that of the outcast. Their abrupt abandonment and betrayal elicits feelings of **jealousy and envy** which the participants attempt to suppress as they experience these traits as uncharacteristic of their true natures.

Consequently, when confronted by persecutory anxieties associated with jealousy, in the light of rival objects, the participants unsuccessfully attempt to split off and disown this part of themselves as this indicates their potential to be emotionally insecure in an intimate relationship. Real threats from rival objects in the participants' experience of betrayal in this study is only consciously recognised retrospectively, as during the course of the relationship the participants unconsciously repress and deny, as well as consciously suppress, any potential threats to the relationship for fear of losing their partner.

In particular, Klein's second form of primary envy (see 3.18), may also play a role in the manifestation of **private gloating** in the participants' experience of betrayal, as a result of their intense suffering and deprivation due to the permanent absence of their loved object. In this manner, the participants attack the image of the goodness of the loved, but lost object indirectly and not the loved object directly, as it is absent. Therefore, the loved object remains whole and good. In addition, feelings of loathing towards the loved object may also be elicited in the light of external events which the participants perceive as bestowing goodness on their partner. The participants internalise their feelings of jealousy and envy and then project the intensity, suffering and longing for relationship onto the perceived goodness of the rival object as the new, "favoured one".

As a result of their abrupt abandonment by their partners, the participants attempt to stifle feelings of love which they still have for their partners as a defence against their absence. Klein

(1957/1997) suggests this is less painful to carry by individuals in the depressive position than the guilt which arises from the combination of love, hate and envy. Stifling feelings of love in the participants' experience of betrayal, manifests as a related defence during the course of their physical and emotional withdrawal which is marked by persecutory anxiety. A related defence namely, growing indifference in the participants' abandonment and betrayal, rather than increasing feelings of love suggests a tendency towards the death instinct rather than the life instinct and therefore persecutory anxieties rather than depressive anxieties escalates. In addition, as the participants associate with the bad aspects of their partners, their persecutory anxieties increase and they have difficulty integrating both good and bad aspects of their partners, placing their egos under threat.

In order to ward off threats to their egos, the participants employ further defences, namely **idealisation** as a source of the life instinct which manifests as a means of protection against the ravages inflicted by envy (Klein, 1957/1997). This occurs as a result of the pain and humiliation which the participants believe they have suffered due to their partners' betrayal. Idealisation of their partners also manifests while the participants are in the relationship as it allows them to split off threats to the relationship. In this manner, the partner is preserved as the good, life giving force rather than a potentially persecutory object. Similarly, idealisation as a psychic defence is also used once the relationship is terminated, as the participants attempt to come to terms with their abandonment and their partners as persecutory objects.

Turning to **ambivalence** in the participants' experience of betrayal, they internalise their initial anger, shock, anxiety and fear surrounding their partners' abandonment. In addition, they internalise their partners' projections of defensiveness and hostility which are exchanged in the initial contact they have with their partners, *subsequent* to their knowledge of their partners' betrayal. The former partners as loved objects, now have the potential to become persecutory, however, the participants split off these negative aspects of their partners. Splitting of the bad aspects occurs in order to preserve the perceived goodness of the partners as loved objects, resulting in feelings of ambivalence towards them. These splitting processes are a continuous cycle in the participants' experience of betrayal. Furthermore, they increase and decrease in aggression in a cycle of idealisation and ambivalence respectively, which occurs as the participants attempt to integrate their experience of betrayal.

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Denial is a further defence mechanism which the participants employ both prior to and during their experience of betrayal. Splitting processes of a paranoid-schizoid nature result in denial of persecutory aspects of the partners as love objects. This is evident both during the course of the relationship and once the relationship has been abandoned. During the stages of physical and emotional withdrawal, the participants realise that they denied persecutory aspects of their partner in order to defer both conscious and unconscious threats to the relationship. In this manner, while still in the relationship, they attempted to retain their partners as loved objects.

Furthermore, the participants unconsciously denied and disowned parts of themselves if these were seen as being contrary to the continuity of the relationship. Denial in the participants' experience of betrayal occurs as a result of **anxiety** regarding the loss of the loved object as well as **fear** of abandonment by the loved object. Both anxiety and fear in this instance embody an archaic quality of a paranoid-schizoid nature rather than the less intense splitting which occurs in the depressive position.

The next conclusion we draw is derived from the interplay between the **internal worlds and external realities** of the participants in their experience of betrayal. The participants mirror their internal worlds and external realities whilst in the relationship, against their current internal worlds and external realities as a result of their partners' betrayal. As a result, they perceive their relationship and their partners' behaviour to have taken on a fake rather than as previously perceived and believed, an authentic quality. Due to lack of closure, their anxiety regarding the true reason for their partners' betrayal increases over time.

In addition, as a result of the external reality of their partners' betrayal, internal distortions which manifest as idealisation and denial guard against the intense psychic pain the participants experience in an unconscious attempt to preserve their egos. Further internal distortions manifest as brief but severe dissociative episodes that occur as a result of the partners' physical abandonment of the participants.

Turning to **continuity** in the participants' experience of betrayal, this aspect of the relationship as external reality, appease the participants and they remain vulnerable to them for the duration of the relationship. However, once they are aware of their partners' betrayal, continuity of relationship is

disrupted and primitive anxieties are resurrected. Furthermore, trust in external reality and in the continuity of experience is disturbed which also has negative implications for the participants' integrated sense of inner reality and for retaining a belief in the inherent goodness of people. This suggests that the participants' internal good object as indicated in earlier paragraphs is no longer as securely established as prior to their partners' betrayal and they have difficulties considering and engaging in future intimate relationships. This aspect of the participants' experience of betrayal is echoed in the process of mourning.

Mourning is activated by the unexpected and abrupt loss of their partner. As they experience a sense of alienation from themselves and from others, they mourn not only their partners but also mutual friends and their partners' family members with whom they foresee themselves as having little future contact, as a result of the abandonment of the relationship. Fantasies, dreams, hopes and expectations of a shared future are also mourned as well as the loss of an integrated sense of self. This occurs as the participants' internal realities are shattered and in complete chaos as a result of their partners' betrayal. Persecutory anxieties are reactivated and as indicated in the previous paragraphs, the participants have increasing difficulty in retaining their good relation to their introjected loved object. In addition, the participants attempt to summon up images of an external reality of successful, intimate relationship, as a result of their partners' betrayal.

Once the relationship has been abandoned and the participants realise that they have **lost their loved object,** persecutory anxieties surface and persists, causing a disruption in their internal and external object relationships. One manifestation of this disruption occurs once the partners' act of betrayal has been disclosed and the participants perceive their partner as a persecutory object, capable of inflicting intense harm on them. Two sources give rise to feelings of persecution, the first being the participants' idealisation of their partners and therefore their reluctant vulnerability to them, should they wish to reconcile in the early stages after the abandonment of the relationship. The second source which gives rise to feelings of persecution is the increase in the participants' perception of their partners as persecutory due to their perceived lack of integrity.

According to Klein (1957/1997**), depressive anxiety** associated with the depressive position is experienced when feelings of love for the object predominate over destructive impulses. However, in the participants' experience of betrayal, depressive anxieties are surmounted by persecutory

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anxieties which lead to feelings of ambivalence and indifference towards their partners, rather than love. Consequently in the depressive position, the participants need to strive towards greater integration of themselves and to synthesize the conflicting aspects of their partner. As a result, the death instinct predominating over the life instinct is evident in this facet of the participants' experience of betrayal. As indicated in the previous paragraphs in this section, the participants are unable to access feelings of guilt and their ability to forgive their partners. Consequently, as they do not assume some responsibility for their partners' act of betrayal, these processes in the depressive position are arrested.

Feelings of guilt which arise as a result of the participants' gloating over their partners' misfortunes are firmly suppressed. Due to the participants' moral values and integration of these values into their personalities, gloating generally leads to persecution by their superegos. However, as a result of the partners' perceived moral deficit, guilt which may arise is suppressed due to the partners' violation of their consensual boundaries regarding sexual fidelity. This process is characteristic of processes in the paranoid-schizoid position rather than in the depressive position.

The next conclusion in the participants' experience of betrayal pertains to **overcoming** in the depressive position. As indicted in 6.2.16, two aspects of overcoming are evident namely, **accountability** and **anticipation**. Accountability exacerbates the participants' experience of betrayal as they do not accept responsibility for harming the relationship or their partner. As noted in the preceding paragraphs, the participants hold their partners responsible for the disintegration of the relationship and for hurting them.

Secondly, due to the participants' inability to anticipate or control their partners' intended betrayal and abandonment, they are afforded little opportunity to alter the course of these events. Consequently, the element of secrecy inherent in the act of betrayal leads to disempowerment and the participants are helpless in retaining their external loved object. In addition as emphasised in the preceding discussion, their relation to the good internal object is significantly compromised. This has further implications for overcoming as the participants' egos come under threat of fragmentation and disintegration. The reality of these threats is manifested in the **brief but severe dissociative episodes** which the participants experience shortly after their partners' abandonment.

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In addition, the participants experience **feelings of depression** which are related to difficulties in successfully overcoming the tragic states associated with the depressive position. Furthermore, as Rado (1927) indicates, the participants display some measure of **rebelliousness** which is associated with the depressive adult. This occurs as a result of the participants' feelings of **resentment** which are elicited by the loss of the loved object and their abruptly imposed aloneness. Therefore, the participants experience feelings of rebelliousness when considering the injustice of their partners' behaviour. This sense of injustice is also extrapolated to the overall scheme of life and fuels their unresolved and suppressed anger towards their partners as persecutory objects.

When considering the participants' attempts at separating their partners' **bad aspects from** the **idealised aspects,** we conclude that the participants experience their partners' betrayal in a cycle of idealisation and ambivalence. However, over time they indicate that they perceive and introject their partners as persecutory rather than idealised objects. Part of the process which hinders their successful integration of the bad aspects of their partner, is the lack of closure. Closure fuels their ambivalence towards their partners and the participants employ **rationalisation** both as a cognitive process as well as a psychic defence mechanism in attempting to make sense and manage their experience of betrayal respectively.

Turning to the process of **projective identification** in the participants' experience of betrayal, we conclude that this is a prominent aspect of unconscious communication. In particular, perceptions regarding sexual immorality and our inherent potential as human beings to betray others, is communicated in relationships. As previously indicated (6.2.18), a possible interpretation of the partners' act of betrayal in this study could also be interpreted as a consequence of the participants' split off and projected disowned parts regarding sexual immorality. These disowned parts are then internalised by their partner and expelled in the form of betrayal. This occurs in the light of the partners' overriding and accumulative internal conflicts and resultant anxiety regarding perceptions of sexual immorality. Furthermore, the role of the affairee as external seducer, significantly exacerbates the process of projective identification and the partners' act of betrayal.

A conclusion which may be drawn from the participants' experience of **being alone** as a result of the relationship having been abandoned, is they experience a profound sense of alienation as

opposed to belonging. In the participants' experience of betrayal in this study, loss of a sense of belonging in an intimate relationship, emerges as the central phenomenon in this inquiry. As indicated in preceding paragraphs in this section, this sense of alienation brought about by the abandonment of the relationship, extends beyond the boundaries of the intimate dyad to include mutual friends and their partners' family members.

In addition, as also indicated in previous paragraphs in this section, the participants feel alienated from themselves which increases their sense of **loneliness** as they continue to question aspects of themselves which although intensely experienced, escape their understanding. It is also noted that contrary to Klein's thinking on the structure of loneliness, the participants in this study emphasise a sense of belonging which is externally facilitated as more prominent than the longing and loneliness they experience due to psychical disconnectedness from themselves. Therefore, contrary to Klein's (1963/1997), hypotheses, regarding the significance of intrapsychic functioning as a source of loneliness and longing, the role of the **external object** in contributing to the participants' state of loneliness and longing is more prominent in the participants' experience of betrayal in this study.

Furthermore, the participants' experience of being alone emphasises the inaccessibility and absence of their partners. This creates a further longing for belonging and connectedness. Whilst in the relationship, the participants held their partners in mind during periods of physical absences, which afforded them a sense of continuity and psychical connectedness. This feature of the participants' functioning is also seen once the relationship has been abandoned as the participants struggle with integrating the experience of betrayal into their internal world. Part of the struggle is fuelled by the resistance and difficulty the participants experience in letting go of their partners and the relationship at a psychical level. Consequently they **hold** on to **them in their minds,** during the processes of idealisation and ambivalence.

Furthermore, the participants deliberately erect firm **boundaries** around their personal accessibility to others once the relationship has been abandoned. Although these boundaries serve to protect their vulnerable egos, they lead to a further sense of disconnectedness and alienation from others.

Due to their increased **vulnerability** as a result of being on their own again, the participants experience the world of intimate relationships as hostile and they are consequently plagued by

persecutory anxieties which lead to increased vigilance and paranoia. As a task of the depressive position, psychical integration remains elusive as the participants attempt to understand the reasons for their partners' betrayal.

Our final conclusions are drawn from the participants' **cognitive processes** which manifest in their experience of betrayal. This area is relatively unexplored in Klein's theory therefore the conclusions drawn evolve from the findings and integrated discussions in this study.

The participants attempt to access **memories** pertaining to behaviours, events and people whilst they were in the relationship, once their partners' infidelity has been disclosed. They engage in this cognitive process in an attempt to gain insight and re-assess their internal world and external realities regarding their partners and their past relationship. In this process, **retrospection** and **introspection** serve as memory prompts. Both these processes are indicative of higher order cognitive processes which submit to Freud's reality principle rather than Klein's concept of phantasy which was considered to be a primitive mental activity (Likierman, 2001).

Further cognitive processes manifest as **self-punitive** and **paranoid ideation.** These processes compromise the participants' perceptions of themselves and they become persecutory towards themselves. In addition, paranoid ideation generates intense fear of engaging in future intimate relationships, and the participants feel unable to trust their own judgement regarding prospective love objects. In addition, they have grave difficulty in trusting others as their perceptions of relationships in general are significantly compromised. Therefore, cognitive distortion is evident in the participants' experience of betrayal as a result of introjective identification of their partners' perceived negative beliefs about themselves as unworthy and unlovable individuals. This process results in the participants experiencing greater difficulties in overcoming the depressive position, and persecutory anxieties are once again elicited. Furthermore, in the drive towards greater ego-integration, overcoming in the depressive position is also inhibited.

We may also conclude from the discussion of the findings that interpretation in the participants' experience of betrayal occurs on two levels namely, via cognitive abstractions and unconscious communication in the form of projections from the partners. The second level lies at the heart of Klein's theory as she suggests that an individual continually needs to refer to an internal scenario

in which meaning of experience is actualised in an exchange between a subject and object (Likierman, 2001). Therefore, when determining our perceptions of ourselves, we cannot ignore the significance of an external object.

Furthermore, the participants experience not only psychical, physical but also cognitive vulnerability in their intimate relationships. Therefore, conscious and unconscious communication processes between the participants and their partners continuously challenge their ego integration. In this regard, I suggest that a prerequisite for engaging and experiencing true intimacy is a vulnerable ego. However, a vulnerable ego is susceptible to distorted interpretations of communication processes, both conscious and unconscious. Particularly in this study, distorted communication processes are evident.

Other cognitive processes that are elicited are the **manifestation of persistent and recurring thoughts** about their partners' betrayal. Images of their partners in the act of betrayal stirs up Oedipal anxieties which are exacerbated by the fantasies the participants have regarding the rival objects. Their helplessness increases retrospectively, as they become aware of their inability to protect their loved object. Furthermore, the participants realise they have been surrendered by their partners, in favour of a rival object.

Depressive anxieties abound as the participants suppress their rising aggression towards their partners and the rival object which cannot be projected externally. Therefore their aggression towards their partners and rival objects is projected onto them in fantasy. However, suppressed and internalised aggression increases their anxiety and feelings of depression. Furthermore, the participants experience persistent thoughts of neediness and of humiliating their partners. They conjure up aggressive fantasies of revenge which are also internalised and suppressed as their inherent moral dispositions are influenced by their superegos.

Lastly, the cognitive process of **comparison** is elicited by the external reality of a known or unknown rival object. The participants are compelled to compare themselves to the unknown rival object as they are informed of their physical attributes and characters. Alternatively, the participants form their own perceptions of the rival object if he or she is known to them. Furthermore, should the rival object be portrayed in a negative light by the participants' loyal

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friends or family members, their anxiety and anger increases as the logic behind their partners' abandonment is even less understood.

Once again, in instances where the rival object is unknown, information conveyed by the informants is susceptible to cognitive distortion. This occurs as the participants are compelled to compare themselves to images of the informants' description of the rival object. In instances where the participants know or have seen the rival object, they compare themselves to the images they had originally formed of the rival objects. The participants screen these images continuously in order to determine what attributes and characteristics they possessed which could have enticed their partners away from them.

Next we turn our focus to the final chapter in this study, which will include a critical review of the methodology as well as a critique of the strengths and limitations of the research.

CHAPTER SEVEN

"OUR GREAT NEED FOR OTHERS"

CONCLUSION

We have reached a juncture which invites final reflection on this study. Specifically we reflect on the phenomenon of betrayal in intimate relationships. In addition, due to the significance of Klein's paradigm chosen for this study, we consider certain shifts in her development of her paradigm and propose further shifts, contributions and criticisms of the Kleinian paradigm, which evolved as a result of this study. A critical review of the methodology is also considered and limitations and strengths of the research are indicated. Finally, our thinking turns to the participants who were willing to share their experience of betrayal in an intimate relationship. These considerations and reflections, conclude this study.

7. 1. The phenomenon of betrayal in intimate relationships.

The essential quality of betrayal refers to the intentional violation of trust and commitment in relationships. Violations of trust and commitment through acts of betrayal have powerful and far-reaching effects on close relationships and are arguably, the greatest threat to the structural integrity of intimate relational bonds (Couch, Jones & Moore, 1999). Of particular significance, is that an important issue in commitment and relationship stability is the vulnerability one accrues in extending overtures, trusting and specifically, in the very act of making commitments (Couch, Jones & Moore, 1999).

Consequently, the potential for rejection and betrayal represents the sacrifice we have to make in order to seek the rewards of companionship and intimacy. Nonetheless, most people do not expect to make such a sacrifice when they begin a relationship. Rather, the initiation of relationships is typically accompanied by overwhelming feelings of satisfaction, joy, excitement, passion and optimism about the future (Hatfield, 1988). In addition, one learns to expect that a partner will live up to the "requirements" of his or her role and a great deal of relationship trust is tied up in the

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hope that the partner will honour the commitment to remain faithful and responsive and, even more, to continue holding special feelings of love and respect. Therefore when betrayal occurs, it is a threat to the faith that was established as well as the predictability and dependability assumptions one relied upon in order to make that leap of faith. By implication therefore, interpersonal betrayals yield grave consequences in people's lives (Couch, Jones & Moore, 1999).

7.2. A reflection on shifts in Klein's development of her paradigm.

Paradigms or "..generally accepted perspectives of a particular discipline" (Reber, 1985) which we use for examining phenomena, are not unlike sand dunes in a desert. As Arritt (1993) states:

> "At any given moment, somewhere in the dunes which stretch as far as the eye can see, the unfailing wind is whipping sand up a slope and over its crest, from which a gritty tongue of sand is cascading down. Billions of sand grains are in motion on the surface of this windswept land, piling high into newly formed peaks and realigning the contours of the dune studded valley below" (p. 156).

Therefore, paradigms may shift significantly, yet unhurriedly over time. A shift occurs when thoughts, values and perceptions change and a new vision of reality emerges. Schluter and Lee (1993) reiterate that once something new "…emerges as a dominant colour in the seamless weaving of time…it will be recognised and may be reflected on, idealised and put to use" (p.264).

Within the Kleinian paradigm, this process has been no different. As we traced the development of Klein's theory from its early departure from Freud, to her new ideas on early mental life and her claims on the nature of love in early infancy (see chapter three), we see the gloom of her early vision, being replaced by a substantial and revolutionary counter-force. Furthermore, her conceptualisation of internal objects is an essential passage into the complexities of her depressive position texts: "A contribution of the psychogenesis of manic-depressive states" (Klein, 1935/1975) and "Mourning and its relation to manic-depressive states" (Klein,1940/1975) the former marking the beginning of a distinctively Kleinian vision (Segal, 1978).

A further shift in Klein's paradigm evolved when she realised the depressive position was the second important experience of childhood and was preceded by an equally complex but more

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archaic experience – the paranoid-schizoid position, characterised by splitting mechanisms and primitive persecutory anxiety (Likierman, 2001). When viewed together, the Kleinian positions might misdirect us into impressing a linear view on these positions from an "….inferior, sadistic and psychotic paranoid-position to a progressive, developmentally desirable and "sane" depressive position" (Likierman, 2001, p. 115). However, Klein (1937/1975) did not regard psychic growth in such a purely positive light. Rather her emphasis in describing psychic development towards the depressive position was on simultaneously overcoming ambivalence, psychotic anxieties and defences.

In addition, her emphasis was on overcoming the catastrophic and tragic sense of loss of the first external loved object, which if not successfully negotiated could lead to depressive illnesses in adult life. We also trace Klein's evaluation of the depressive position as having a moral component in addition to the tragic strand, which facilitates guilt and corresponds to an attitude of concern for the object and the ability to forgive the loved objects' limitations (Steiner, 1990/1992).

In re-evaluating the earliest psychic defences in her paradigm, Klein (1930b/1975) suggested that they were specifically schizoid in nature. She derived this conclusion from her central concept of unconscious phantasy in early infancy, which served as an operative link between instinctual urges and the earliest psychic defences. Extending as a novel idea from this concept, Klein formulated one of her most significant contributions to Object Relations theory namely, the concept of "projective identification" (Spillius, 1988). This concept was a combination of her early ideas of projection and displacement of unwanted feelings onto objects and suggested that unwanted parts of the ego are ejected from the self and omnipotently forced *into* the object.

In addition, by extending her paradigm to include the concept of envy, Klein (1957/1997) presented an idea, which emerged from lifelong reasoning within her theoretical paradigm. The concept of envy was her last major original contribution to psychoanalysis. Therefore, Klein added a further element to her paradigm which was conceived from the growing awareness that there remained yet another aspect of infantile functioning which was needed to complete her vision (Likierman, 2001).

Klein's last work on loneliness indicates a slight shift in her thinking (Likierman, 2001). In describing loneliness as "…. a yearning for an unattainable perfect internal state", Klein

(1963/1997, p. 300) appeals to our ability to show compassion and understanding for the fragility of the human psyche, which is continually lashed by turbulent instincts and internal conflicts. Here the human psyche is more sympathetically portrayed as struggling to survive whilst being plagued by the conflicts associated with the realities of life and death (Likierman, 2001).

This view tempers Klein's earlier portrayal of an infant who is mercilessly sadistic, envious and destructive in his object relationships and who in this manner comprises his ability to retain a good relation to his loved, internal object. Consequently, he brings some of the life-long psychical loneliness derived from an "unsatisfied longing for an understanding without words" (Klein, 1963/1997, p. 300), on himself and is compelled to seek social ties as a source of comfort.

However, our human need for others and our relentless search for kindred spirits in the external world also harbours our greatest potential for experiencing and causing intense pain and disappointment (Klein 1963/1997). Therefore, Klein's formulation of her theory within an Object Relations paradigm indicates a slight shift to embrace the growing significance of the external object. However, her prominent emphasis remains on the intrapsychic world of the individual.

Significant shifts were made in Klein's paradigm whilst she was developing her theory (Isaacs, 1943/1991; Winnicott, 1945/1992) and remarkable strides have been made since her death (Segal, 1978). Furthermore, this study has provided me with a unique opportunity to elaborate on and re-evaluate aspects of Klein's paradigm, which are considered applicable to the participants' experience of betrayal. In this manner, I attempted to extend some of Klein's ideas where appropriate and I also attempted to contribute to further shifts in her paradigm. These are provided in the following section.

7.3. Proposed shifts and contributions to Klein's paradigm, derived from the findings in this study.

➢ The main contribution in this study was generated by a shift of emphasis from primary relationships in infancy to the experience of infidelity in adult intimate relationships. This emphasis therefore extends and elaborates on Klein's theory.

➢ Regarding the capacity to love a significant other, I propose an emphasis on the *deliberate choice* of becoming vulnerable to the significant other (see 6.2.1). Therefore, I suggest that *decision-making* as a cognitive process, is considered a pre-requisite for engaging in an intimate relationship. As indicated in the previous chapter, Klein's paradigm did not place much emphasis on higher order cognitive processes as her thinking developed mainly as a result of her exploration of the pre-verbal stage of development (Likierman, 2001). Therefore, I suggest that the role of cognitive processes (see 6.2.20), facilitates further thought regarding the significance of external events on intrapsychic processes, within a Kleinian paradigm.

➢ Klein (1963/1997) suggests that the loss of the first crucial psychical contact between the mother and the child is one of the early sources of loneliness and that any later quest for intimacy is never fully satisfied. In addition, Klein (1963/1997) suggests that our true longing lies in our yearning for the perfect, *internal* state, rather than the need to belong to a person or group.

In this study however, the participants' main source of longing and loneliness is facilitated largely as a result of their *awareness* that they no longer *belong* to the mutual exclusivity of an intimate dyad. This sense of belonging is not generated by a feeling of possessiveness but rather by the *knowledge* that they shared a unique and sought after alliance, or committed partnership as it were, with an external loved object. In this regard, the *emotional and physical security* of an exclusive commitment of an alliance or partnership, set the individuals apart from any other relationship or connectedness they would share with others. Two aspects emerge from these findings. Firstly, once again "*knowledge*" suggests that higher order cognitive processes are involved in contributing to the participants' awareness of a loss of belonging and secondly by implication therefore, the significance of the external loved object cannot be underestimated.

➢ In addition, existing perceptions of appropriate moral behaviour, influenced by society is also seen to play a significant role in the participants' capacity for feelings of guilt. As indicated in 6.2.13 and 6.2.14 respectively, the participants' perceptions of their partners' act of betrayal facilitates deliberate suppression of feelings of guilt and therefore renders them

unable to engage in the process of forgiveness at this time. Therefore, the role of perceptions in adult relationships may be included to extend Kleinian thought regarding guilt and also allude to the inability to render forgiveness in the depressive position. Furthermore, the participants defer accountability for their partners' abandonment of the relationship as they perceive them as having acted immorally (see 6.2.16).

➤ Klein (1957/1997) proposes that feelings of jealousy are manifested in the presence of a rival object and focus on the rivalry for the good object. However, in this study, I suggest that a mingling of feelings of both envy (see 3.18) and jealousy are elicited towards the partner and the rival object once the partners' infidelity has been exposed. The perceived *goodness of relationship* that their partners and the rival objects share, as well as the perceived superior attribute/s that the rival object possesses, fuel these feelings.

➤ In the participants' experience of betrayal, it is evident that denial of persecutory aspects of the external loved object occurred while they were in the relationship as well as once the relationship had been abandoned (see 6.2.7). What is significant however, is that the participants denied these persecutory aspects of their partners regardless of the duration of the relationship (see table 4.1). In addition, the participants experienced similar consequences as a result of their partners' betrayal, irrespective of the duration of the relationship.

➤ I have suggested that a "benevolent core of relationship", conceptualised from the findings in this study, is an additional facet of intimate relationships, which may be considered within a Kleinian perspective. In particular, this aspect of relationships could contribute to further thought regarding unconscious and conscious communication processes between the individual and external loved object.

7.4.   Criticisms of Klein's paradigm.

➤ Little emphasis is placed on the interpersonal aspect of human relationships during development as Klein developed a theory based on the intrapyschic processes of the individual (Likierman, 2001). Here the first external loved object (mother) is portrayed as being in service to the developing intrapsychic world of the infant, rather than having much

significance of its own. Even when considering the aspect of loneliness, Klein (1963/1997) emphasises the individual's longing for true intimacy and psychical connectedness firstly with himself. However, in these last writings Klein (1963/1997) begins to allude to the significance of our human need for others and by implication therefore, our need for external objects.

➢ Furthermore, the concept of vulnerability in Klein's thinking is implied in the initial physical and emotional dependency and development of the infant as well as in the later loneliness of the individual (Likierman, 2001). Klein (1963/1997) however, places little emphasis *per se* on the significance of this facet in human relationships.

➢ The role of society as an external agent is not given much prominence in Klein's thinking regarding the moral development of the individual. Rather, the development of inherent moral structures of an individual, outside of societal and particularly cultural influences receives emphasis (Likierman, 2001). However, as indicated in this study, an external catastrophic event such as betrayal, has detrimental consequences for an individual not only at an intrapsychic level but also at a societal level (see 6.2.4).

➢ In her conceptualisation of primary envy, Klein (1957/1997) wished to portray a *pure* form of primary envy which was uncontaminated by the turmoil of external events (Likierman, 2001). However, as indicated in this study, the occurrence of an intensely painful external event such as betrayal, significantly influences many of the intrapsychic processes of an individual not only that of primary envy, with catastrophic consequences. Therefore external events, like external objects, have a significant influence on individuals' intrapsychic functioning and should also be considered.

➢ Klein (1957/1997) in her conceptualisation of envy and gratitude indicated that the infant has a need for repeated good experiences during growth. However, she suggested that "…..some infants are exposed to great deprivations and unfavourable circumstances and yet do not develop excessive anxieties" (p.178). This suggestion was felt to be untenable by Klein's critics as they argued that deprivation and unfavourable circumstances in infancy will facilitate excessive anxieties in later life (Likierman, 2001). Although an investigation of

Klein's suggestion falls beyond the scope of this study, as indicated in the preceding paragraphs, the interpersonal aspect of human relationships during human development as well as the significance of the external environment needs to be considered in greater detail in human development and functioning.

➢ Greenberg and Mitchell (1983) suggest that Klein's earliest interpretations focused exclusively on the libidinal aspect of individual functioning, lending her work the flavour of Freudian psychoanalysis. However, Klein's direct peers were less concerned about the sexual emphasis she placed on her interpretations given the Freudian influence and psychoanalytic perspective, which prevailed at the time (Schwartz, 1999).

➢ Klein's theory emphasises the implication of nature and instincts rather than the modifying role of external objects such as caring parents who control the instinctual demands of infants (Greenberg & Mitchell, 1983; Grosskurth, 1986; Scharff, 1992; St Clair, 1986). This perspective invited criticism from Klein's peers and the psychoanalytic community as she paid little attention to the significance of parental objects in the environment. In particular, Klein was criticised for her exclusion of the role of mothering in the mental development of the infant (Likierman, 2001).

➢ Little reference to cognitive processes is made in the development of the individual, as her emphasis was on the infant's earliest recognitions of good and bad experiences (Likierman, 2001). In particular, by suggesting that the Oedipal situation arises much earlier in an individuals' experience than stated by Freud, Klein suggested that the earliest recognition of good and bad experiences are not conceptual (Mitchell, 1986). Consequently, she pre-dates the individuals' ability to obtain a secure mental grasp on experience. However, Klein did not attempt to offer a complete account of cognitive development but rather regarded the drive towards integration as the essential factor that promotes mental development (Grosskurth, 1986).

➢ Furthermore, the development of pre-verbal and rudimentary verbal skills did receive some attention from Klein, however she had no complex awareness of the role of language in mental life (Likierman, 2001).

7.5. A critical review of the methodology.

➢ Although this research can be termed "qualitative" or "descriptive" and is not unlike other qualitative research methods in this regard, the emphasis in this study was on descriptions from the participants' *lived experience of betrayal* rather than on descriptions of their overt actions or behaviour. Consequently, in order to return to the actual experience of this phenomenon, one needs to analyse the individual's description of the experience, which cannot be statistically quantified or controlled from an observer's perspective.

➢ In this regard, the use of a qualitative grounded theory approach is often criticised on the basis that it is extremely difficult to keep a balance between creative conceptualisation and empirical science. It is not a simple matter for a researcher to make relative use of personal knowledge and experience and at the same time hold on to the reality of phenomena. However, Strauss and Corbin's (1998) approach to grounded theory in this study was appropriate as analysis of the rich data generated by the interviews offered myself as the researcher, some insight and understanding into the participants' experience of betrayal.

➢ Furthermore, in reviewing grounded theory as a methodology, Pidgeon (1996) points to a criticism, which suggests that some researchers (specifically those inexperienced in the technique) are often unable to theorize beyond the daily phenomenal world and local interactional context of their fundamental data and domain of inquiry. Should this occur, grounded theory takes on the form of mere content analysis or re-description.

Consequently Charmaz (1990) amongst others, has advocated for a constructionist revision of grounded theory as the element of constructionism is inherent in the researcher's constant interaction with the data and emerging concepts and theory

(Layder, 1993). A constructionist revision makes the researcher aware that data should *guide* but definitely not *limit* theorizing (Layder, 1993) and "daily" can (and frequently should) be interpreted in terms of the wider social context (Pidgeon, 1996, p. 83).

In addition, a constructionist revision also points to an increasingly discursive form of analysis (Potter, 1996) in order for some elements of the grounded theory method (particularly that of constant comparison, with its emphasis upon exploration of variety and

difference in meaning) to possibly serve as a medium for a form of deconstructive analysis (Pidgeon, 1996).

➢   In discovering and describing the structure of the experience of betrayal, a dialogue between the participants' world of experience and an external view of the experience was created. In addition, the grounded theory approach allowed myself as the researcher, the opportunity to extensively examine the central findings generated by the data through the lens of a Kleinian paradigm for the purpose of analytic comparison, elaboration and modification of the theory. In this manner proposed shifts in the Kleinian paradigm were generated and contributions introduced.

➢   Exploring the phenomenon of betrayal within a Kleinian paradigm suggests an emphasis on the intrapsychic world of the participant. However, by using the grounded theory approach in this study, this method allowed theory to emerge from the data , which indicated the imperative need to include the significance of external objects within the context of intimate, interpersonal relationships.

7.6.   A critique of the strengths and limitations of the study.

7.6.1. Strengths of the study.

➢ The participants in this study were initially approached by my colleagues and not by myself as the researcher, to take part in the study. Therefore, subjective bias was minimised as the participants and their histories were unfamiliar to me prior to their initial interviews. In addition, due to my unfamiliarity with the *in vivo* terms (see 4.4.1.4) used by the participants, I was afforded an even greater opportunity to explore aspects of the participants' experience of betrayal, in order to gain further insight and understanding into the meaning of their experience.

➢ Furthermore, when considering subjective bias as a strength of this study, I would suggest that although my transcriptions of the interviews had been verified by the participants, I as the

researcher, was the only person who had interviewed, analysed and interpreted the data provided by the participants. In addition, as the researcher, I translated key passages from the transcribed interviews in order to allow English speaking readers access to the findings in this study. Consequently as the sole researcher engaged in data analysis and interpretation, an element of stability is introduced into the study.

➤ Due to the nature of our brief relationship and geographical distance in some instances, the participants and myself as researcher, would in all likelihood have very little contact once the study had been completed. This arguably elicited less resistance from the participants in sharing richer descriptions of their experience of betrayal.

➤ An advantage of interviewing the participants as means of qualitative data gathering within a grounded theory approach, was that in the process of engaging in the interviews and confronting their experience of betrayal however painful, they were provided with an opportunity to recall events and talk about emotions, which had been suppressed in an attempt to continue with their lives. Specifically, Participant B stated at the end of his interview that he thought he had forgotten many facets of his experience of his wife's betrayal. However, he realised that he still needed to work through and assimilate much of the experience and resolved to resume his psychotherapy sessions.

➤ A further strength of the study was that participants who had not considered re-engaging in psychotherapy or seeking further professional assistance could be encouraged to do so if they appeared to be in significant distress. In this manner, participants who were struggling with integrating their experience of betrayal could be identified and referred for further professional assistance if necessary. Particularly Participant C who had experienced the benefits of psychotherapy previously but who had not re-engaged in the therapeutic process subsequent to her experience of betrayal, had decided to contact her psychotherapist and medical practitioner after completion of her interviews.

➤ The small, specific sample suggested that research attention was clearly focused and allowed for the exploration of depth. Therefore, concentrating on a specific group of individuals resulted in the collection of rich data. This data could in turn be analysed in detail, offering

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insight into the nature of the participants' experience that would not have emerged in paper and pencil tests. Furthermore, the qualitative study of one group offers a firm base as a means of comparison for researchers studying other groups using a similar methodology (Cameron-Smith, 2004).

➢ Although their experience of betrayal was still intensely painful for them, the positive attitude of the participants towards this study, proved to be of great benefit to the research as a whole. The trust they placed in the process and in myself as an *unfamiliar* researcher considering the limited contact we had, suggested they were willing to give of themselves. The participants shared their thoughts, feelings and experiences to an extraordinary degree and exceeded my expectations of the quality of the data gathering process.

➢ In keeping with the requirements of a grounded theory approach, I was able to sustain a balance between creative conceptualisation and empirical science by maintaining an attitude of scepticism, frequently stepping back to check whether or not the conclusions fitted the data and by following systematic research procedures which gave rigor to the study.

➢ As I became aware of the limitations of possibly becoming enveloped in a Kleinian cloud, I became constructively focused on the emerging concepts in the data, which facilitated critical analysis and conceptualisation. In addition, at this stage of the data analysis process, care was taken not to use Kleinian specific terminology. For example, use of the word "denial" in the participants' interviews emerged during the course of data analysis. However, care was taken not to make any interpretations of this concept also evident in Klein's theory.

In addition, remaining close to the data and constantly comparing it within the participants' experience of betrayal, allowed myself as the researcher to distance myself from the Kleinian paradigm. Kruger (1986) states the "communion with the phenomenon is a dialectic of closeness and distance" (p 201). Consequently, the researcher must endeavour to get close to the phenomenon in order to permit the emergence of its dimension. Simultaneously, one has to acquire sufficient distance from the phenomenon to be able to "share one's articulation

imaginatively with someone else and compel his agreement (Kruger, 1986, p.201). "The truth requires a third as witness" (p.201). Therefore, in this study, I also considered peer debriefing (see 4. 5.1.2), to be an objective dimension which was introduced in this study and which allowed for the exchange of view with colleagues regarding findings in the research process, Lastly, I would suggest that choosing a specific framework for a study within a grounded theory approach, is arguably one of the most challenging tasks facing prevention of researcher bias, specifically during the early stages of data analysis.

➢ Conclusions drawn from the findings of this study, met the objectives of extending, elaborating and modifying constructs within a Kleinian paradigm. In addition, contributions to a Kleinian paradigm as a result of this study, are also indicated.

7.6.2. Limitations of the study.

➢ One limitation of this study is related to the size and nature of the sample. Three white women and two white men, took part in the research. Two of the participants had never been married although one of these participants had lived with her partner for six years. Furthermore, two were divorced, and one of the male participants had a homosexual preference. None of the participants had children. Implications for further research may include an investigation of this phenomenon to include other population groups for example women in same sex relationships and participants with children.

➢ Furthermore, due to the limited scope of this study, only the participants' experience of betrayal was explored. It could be argued that in order to gain greater understanding and insight into the experience of betrayal in intimate relationships it would have been beneficial to explore this phenomenon from their partners' perspective as well. In addition, by including their partners' experience in committing an act of betrayal, perceptions and biases, which I as the researcher may have formed of the partners during the course of this research, could be investigated from an increasingly balanced perspective.

➢ In this research, the phenomenon of betrayal, which occurs within the wider social context, is acknowledged. However, due to the limited scope of this study only infidelity as a form of

betrayal was explored in intimate relationships. Therefore the emphasis was on descriptions from participants of their lived experience of infidelity, with relevant inclusion of societal processes as significant external factors where applicable.

- The potential subjective bias of myself as the researcher may be seen as both advantageous and disadvantageous to the study. When considering subjective bias as a limitation of this study, I would suggest that although my transcriptions of the interviews had been verified by the participants, I as the researcher, was the only person who had interviewed, analysed and interpreted the data provided by the participants. In addition, as the researcher, I translated key passages from the transcribed interviews in order to allow English-speaking readers access to the findings in this study (see 4.4.1). Thus as Giorgi (1975) suggests, the control of the data comes from the researcher's context or perspective of the data. As the sole researcher therefore, the likelihood that my personal background could have influenced my interpretations of the findings, is increased.

  In this regard, I realised when analysing the data that at times during the interviews, I had failed to question and clarify an assumed meaning, which may have provided further insight in the participants' experience of betrayal. Therefore, should a co-researcher have been involved in this study, this aspect of data gathering could have been addressed. Giorgi (1975) states that another researcher's approach to the same data might not be similar, but divergent.

- Researcher bias could also have arisen as a result of choosing a theoretical framework for this study. Firstly, given that the data was grounded in a Kleinian paradigm, it was important to allow the data to emerge rather than coercing it into a Kleinian framework. However, in the *initial* stages of data analysis I found myself constantly being pulled towards wanting to use Kleinian terminology to conceptualise data, rather than allowing concepts to emerge without classification. Therefore, I needed to continuously divorce myself from the Kleinian theoretical framework at that stage of the data analysis, in order to attempt to remain true to the data.

7.7. Concluding comments.

It is evident that in this study, the experience of betrayal in intimate relationships indicates catastrophic and debilitating consequences for the participants. In addition, coming to the end of this research, I am also aware that we may be seduced into concluding that the death instinct as represented by the phenomenon of betrayal, predominantly prevails in this study. Such a conclusion however, would imply that we risk losing sight of the very subtle but triumphant life instinct that the participants embody in their narrations of renewed hope and displays of resilience.

In the face of renewed hope and resilience, the participants move from a place of estrangement to a place where they attempt to reclaim those parts of their known selves, sacrificed in the process of loving another. Reclaiming our lost parts is also facilitated in the process of interpersonal exchange. As Scharff (1992) suggests, we cannot conceive of ourselves without invoking the reflection of the gaze of another. In addition, in the process of reclaiming the lost parts of ourselves, we also reclaim and secure our internal loved object (Klein, 1940/1975).

This study introduced five participants who were prepared to sacrifice rather than protect their vulnerability in their quest for belonging and intimacy. Regrettably, these participants had to pay an immense price for this sacrifice. However, their sacrifice also provides them with new opportunities as they move from alienating themselves and others towards a renewed sense of identity. Furthermore, in this process of renewal, the participants will revisit and strengthen their personal boundaries as the bleak prospect of loneliness drives them to seek out others and to renew their social ties. It is at this stage then, as the participants courageously rekindle their quest for belonging and connectedness, a quest much like our own, that we take our leave of them.